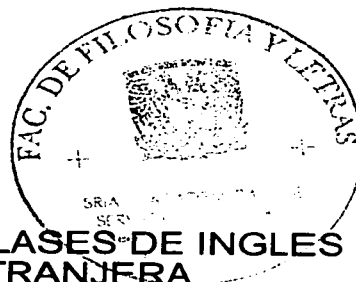




UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA DE MEXICO

FACULTAD DE FILOSOFIA Y LETRAS

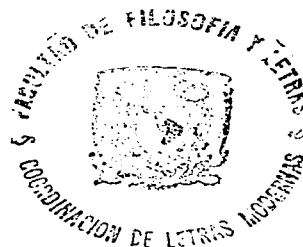


EL TEXTO LITERARIO EN CLASES DE INGLES COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

T E S I S A
QUE PARA OBTENER EL GRADO DE:
LICENCIADA EN LENGUA Y
LITERATURAS MODERNAS (INGLESAS)
P R E S E N T A :
MARIA DEL ROCIO MARTINEZ JUAREZ



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**EL TEXTO LITERARIO EN CLASES DE INGLÉS
COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA**

**Tesina para obtener el grado de Licenciada en Lengua
Y Literaturas Modernas (Inglesas)**

Presenta

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Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la UNAM

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*La redacción de este trabajo me llevó dos años,
y habría seguido inconcluso de no ser
por el apoyo de mi familia y amigos.*

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por su tiempo y sus conocimientos compartidos.*

A Dios, por ponerlos en mi camino.

*Para mi mamá,
quien es mi espíritu de lucha.*

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Introducción

Debido al interés personal de relacionar mi experiencia como estudiante de literatura con mi experiencia en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera y a raíz de la intuitiva utilización de la literatura en los cursos de inglés que he observado, nace la inquietud por desarrollar este trabajo cuyo objetivo principal es enfatizar la importancia del uso del material literario como un medio de comunicación y como un medio que promueve la comunicación en la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera.

Una de las labores de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera (LE), y en general de todas las lenguas, es la búsqueda constante de materiales que, además de promover el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa de los alumnos, resulten interesantes para ellos, ya sea por el contenido mismo del material o por la utilidad que le encuentren en su vida. Un material con tales características y que tenemos a nuestro alcance es el literario. Su uso en el salón de clases puede generar situaciones comunicativas en donde los alumnos aparte de mejorar su manejo de la lengua meta –funciones comunicativas de la lengua, estructura gramatical y vocabulario, por ejemplo- adquieran un conocimiento más profundo de su uso, de sus hablantes, e incluso de sí mismos.

A diferencia de otros textos como el científico, el texto literario ofrece al lector una experiencia intelectual y emocional. La literatura se ocupa esencialmente del hombre, desde lo que hace públicamente hasta sus pensamientos más profundos e íntimos. Esta es la materia prima del escritor.

"La literatura ocupa un lugar preponderante en la sociedad. Se ocupa esencial y continuamente de la imagen del hombre, de la conformación y los motivos de la conducta humana." (Steiner, 1982, 24)

La lectura de esta recreación del mundo del hombre, su comprensión y análisis, constituye la labor intelectual del lector. Los sentimientos y/o ideas que el texto despierte en el lector conforman la experiencia emocional de la lectura.

Nuestros alumnos se acercan a la literatura básicamente por dos razones: por ser parte de un programa de estudios o por interés personal. En el primer caso, la atención del lector se centra principalmente en seleccionar información para llevar a cabo cierta tarea, como el análisis de un cuento o el desarrollo de estrategias de vocabulario. Este tipo de lectura está regulada por la experiencia y conocimientos previos del lector más las actividades diseñadas por el profesor. Mientras que cuando es por interés personal, la atención del lector incluye las sensaciones, emociones, sentimientos y asociaciones que las ideas, imágenes y/o personajes originan o despiertan en él. Aquí el lector está atento al contenido de la obra, así como también a lo que experimenta a través de ella. Aunque se reconoce la carga emotiva que la lectura de un texto literario conlleva, en el salón de clases generalmente se tiende a minimizarla dándole un mayor énfasis a lo que de ésta se puede aprender. Sin embargo, la combinación de ambos tipos de lectura con textos literarios en el salón de clases de LE puede conducir a los estudiantes hacia una experiencia más profunda, placentera y fructífera con el texto. También puede generar un espacio de comunicación genuina en donde sus conocimientos de la lengua sean el medio para expresar su experiencia con el texto.

El presente trabajo sugiere una metodología a través de la cual el profesor de LE use el texto literario como una herramienta para promover una comunicación que genere una labor intelectual literaria dentro del contexto de la enseñanza de LE y que rescate la experiencia emocional de los lectores. Está dirigido a profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera que no necesariamente deben tener una formación en el área de literatura o trabajar con alumnos pertenecientes a la misma. La investigación se inicia con la ubicación de la lectura de textos literarios como un acto comunicativo y que promueve la comunicación, y

las ventajas que ambas cualidades le ofrecen al estudiante de LE. Los siguientes dos capítulos se concentran en la labor intelectual que debe realizar el lector de LE: el capítulo 2 trata sobre los enfoques y las estrategias que el lector de LE aplica cuando se encuentra frente a un texto literario y continúa con la teoría de la recepción en el capítulo 3 para explicar la participación del alumno-lector de LE en la reconstrucción de la obra literaria. En el capítulo 4 se presenta la teoría de la respuesta del lector como una propuesta pedagógica que rescata la experiencia emocional de los lectores de literatura con el objetivo de mejorar la comprensión del texto y, por lo tanto, la experiencia con el mismo. Finalmente en el capítulo 5 se presenta una propuesta metodológica para trabajar un texto literario en clases de LE acompañada de cinco materiales que funcionan como ejemplo y como apoyo.

CAPÍTULO I El texto literario como un medio de comunicación en clases de inglés como lengua extranjera

El enfoque comunicativo

El enfoque comunicativo es una metodología ampliamente utilizada en la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera. Tiene como principal objetivo el desarrollo de la capacidad comunicativa de los alumnos en situaciones reales o ficticias en el salón de clases. Este desarrollo se promueve a través del aprendizaje de un conjunto de conocimientos y estrategias que les permite interactuar de manera oral y escrita en diferentes contextos. En este enfoque la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera se concibe como la enseñanza de una nueva forma de comunicarse para poder interactuar con otros seres humanos.

Una de las características de esta metodología es que la lengua se considera como un instrumento con el que los seres humanos interactúan. A través de ella las personas satisfacen su necesidad de comunicar algún mensaje. Por lo tanto, en las actividades comunicativas se enfatiza el uso de la lengua como un medio para tener una comunicación exitosa y no el uso correcto de la lengua. Sin embargo, esta "tolerancia lingüística" no excluye de ninguna manera el uso de ejercicios gramaticales explícitos y el uso de términos gramaticales; por el contrario, los utiliza como un apoyo para el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa de los alumnos (Rall, 1989).

Para generar la necesidad de comunicarse, en los alumnos debe crearse un propósito comunicativo real. Este propósito depende directamente del contexto que se selecciona. Entre más cercano a la realidad del alumno sea el contexto en el que se trabaje, más probabilidades habrá de que el alumno sienta la necesidad de desarrollar su competencia comunicativa, pues estará intelectual, emocional y socialmente más relacionado con ella. Este propósito comunicativo o función social de la lengua, como lo pueden ser la descripción de actividades cotidianas,

dar opiniones y hacer invitaciones, requiere de un material que también esté relacionado con el contexto del alumno. Por esta razón, en este tipo de actividades es importante el uso de un material auténtico que responda a sus necesidades; un material que le resulte útil y formativo y a través del cual mejore su manejo de la LE y pueda comprender mejor el contexto donde ésta se usa.

La negociación de significados es otra característica de las actividades comunicativas. Para que el alumno de la LE transmita su mensaje, comprenda y de respuesta a otros, necesita tanto un conjunto de conocimientos lingüísticos, sociolingüísticos y culturales, como una serie de estrategias que le permitan superar las interferencias que surjan durante este proceso. Las interferencias pueden ser ocasionadas por el desconocimiento que tenga el alumno del significado de algún elemento lingüístico o del significado que cierto elemento tenga en la cultura extranjera. La negociación de significados tiene una doble función: por un lado, conciencia al alumno de la competencia comunicativa que posee y de los elementos que necesita aprender; y por otro, establece un diálogo entre culturas donde lo interesante no son las similitudes, sino las diferencias; un diálogo donde la LE se percibe como una de las múltiples expresiones humanas y donde se amplía el conocimiento tanto de la lengua como de la propia cultura.

Un medio para desarrollar la capacidad comunicativa de los alumnos de LE es la lectura. Por ser el texto el lugar donde determinado autor y lector se reúnen, es el lugar para que el lector de LE desarrolle su competencia comunicativa a través de la aplicación de sus conocimientos y estrategias para interactuar con el autor.

La lectura: el texto como un medio para que el lector y escritor se comuniquen

Es muy común encontrar entre los profesores de lengua el concepto de lectura como una habilidad receptiva en el sentido más estricto de la palabra.

Incluso se llega a cuestionar su posible contribución en clases basadas en el enfoque comunicativo. Esto se debe, quizá, a un intento frustrado de querer encontrar en la lectura el mismo tipo de comunicación que se da a través de la producción oral. Sin embargo, el hecho de que esto no sea posible no significa que la lectura carezca de una función comunicativa.

La lectura es ante todo una actividad interactiva donde el escritor establece un diálogo con el lector. Ambos comparten la necesidad de comunicarse: el escritor escribe con un propósito comunicativo específico; su intención puede ser informar, argumentar o narrar; el lector, por su parte, se acerca al texto también con un propósito comunicativo específico, el cual va a regular el diálogo que sostenga a través del texto. Este propósito puede consistir desde simplemente extraer información hasta compartir toda una experiencia intelectual y emocional con el autor, donde el mensaje de éste puede afectar poco o mucho el conocimiento del mundo que posee el lector.

La interacción entre autor y lector depende de los conocimientos e ideas previas con las que el lector aborda al texto, así como las ideas y conocimientos que el autor comunica a través del mismo. En este sentido el significado de un texto depende de quien sea el lector, así como de su contexto. Por lo tanto, la lectura es una construcción, y no una recepción pasiva de significados que se da a través de la negociación de los mismos entre autor y lector. Entre más posibilidades tenga el lector de comprender el código lingüístico del texto y le resulte relevante el contenido del mismo, mayor será el interés del lector por negociar y construir los nuevos significados.

Aparte de ser un proceso intelectual, la lectura es una actividad social que permite establecer redes entre los lectores y autores. Cuando diferentes lectores realizan la misma lectura, comparten una experiencia que los convierte en

miembros de la misma comunidad discursiva'. Por esta razón pueden discutir sobre los diferentes elementos que conforman la organización del texto. Ser miembro de la comunidad discursiva del autor garantiza una mejor comprensión de sus textos.

Si al alumno se le enseña que la lectura es también una experiencia social porque junto con sus compañeros puede negociar su comprensión del texto, entonces estará consciente de que la lectura es una actividad en la que su participación a través de sus conocimientos y reacciones ante el texto construye el significado del mismo. Cuando el alumno contribuye a la interpretación de sus compañeros aclarando dudas y compartiendo la necesidad de traducir la lectura que realizó a sus propias palabras, hace de esta actividad además de un diálogo entre autor y lector, un diálogo entre lectores de la misma comunidad discursiva. De esta manera, la lectura se convierte en un medio para promover la comunicación en el salón de clases.

De entre los diferentes tipos de textos, el literario es un material excelente para promover la comunicación en la clase de LE y, por lo tanto, la competencia comunicativa del alumno.

La literatura como un medio para incrementar la competencia comunicativa del estudiante de inglés como lengua extranjera

La lectura de literatura es una actividad comunicativa en donde el escritor es el emisor, el lector es el receptor y la obra literaria, el mensaje. La respuesta de éste, es decir, su reacción ante el texto, lo convierte en el emisor de un mensaje cuyo receptor puede ser cualquier otro lector de la obra: el autor mismo, los críticos, y en el caso de las clases de lengua, el maestro y los compañeros de clase, por ejemplo.

* v. Leki, I., "Reciprocal themes in ESL reading and writing", 1, in *Reading in the composition classroom. Second language perspectives*. USA, Heinle and Heinle Publishers, 1993. pag. 20

Los textos literarios son lecturas y relecturas de descubrimiento. La comprensión de un texto consiste en la construcción de significados haciendo uso del contexto y conocimientos previos del lector. En textos como el científico o los instructivos, los lectores hacen uso de ambos elementos para construir un mensaje en el que todos coinciden. Sin embargo, la labor del lector de textos literarios es más compleja. Dependiendo del conocimiento del mundo y contexto que comparta con la obra, así como de su propósito, el lector descubre algunos de sus significados, dejando el resto para otras posibles relecturas. Entre más elementos comparta con ella, mayor cantidad de significados encontrará; entre más significados encuentre, más profunda será su experiencia con el texto. La comprensión del lector se enfoca en lo que podría ser. Su labor principal, entonces, consiste en reconstruir la experiencia, situación o historia a partir de la negociación de significados entre él y la obra. Tal reconstrucción se lleva a cabo siguiendo lo que Widdowson (1982) denomina procedimientos de interpretación:

"[First readers make] sense of the [text] by referring...to other parts of the [text]. Then they may turn to the underlying argument (the message or meaning) and, finally, formulate a personal attitude toward some aspect of what they have read." (Cit. Pos. Gajdusek y vanDommelen, 1993, 199)

Por lo tanto, cada lectura es un encuentro único entre el presente del lector y la intemporalidad de la obra. Los significados que el lector reconstruya en una primera lectura son modificados en una relectura. El intercambio de interpretaciones entre los lectores de una misma obra puede reconstruir otros significados. El lector de LE, al estar ante un texto que se encuentra fuera de su contexto original, puede aportar nuevas interpretaciones no previstas por el autor. Esta multiplicidad de interpretaciones fomenta, por un lado, la tolerancia en la comunicación, pues el alumno se da cuenta de que no existe sólo una interpretación correcta; y, por otro lado, la participación del lector como responsable de su interpretación al observar que su experiencia es parte del significado del texto.

La reconstrucción de una obra requiere, además de la competencia comunicativa del lector, de una segunda competencia para recrear el mundo que está ante sus ojos: su imaginación. Ésta se puede definir como el juego libre de la mente, tanto intelectual como sensible (Cit. pos. Sánchez, 1995, 414). El lector sólo puede aceptar el mundo ficticio como representación convincente de una realidad posible si deja que su imaginación la conforme como una ilusión, como una imitación de la realidad. Al ser un mundo creado por el escritor, los referentes de ésta no existen como tal en la realidad, y es labor del lector aportarlos. Esto implica la suspensión de las convenciones y referentes de la vida cotidiana necesarios para comprender otros discursos y la activación de la imaginación del lector a través de inferencias nuevas y creadoras.

"La participación del lector es, pues, cognoscitiva e imaginativa: tiene que utilizar sus conocimientos y capacidades para reconstruir todo el mundo de ficción que se presenta ante sus ojos [...] El emisor da muchos datos, pero es el lector quien crea el marco en el que suceden las cosas."
(Cit. pos. Sánchez, 1995, 31)

En consecuencia, el lector ordena los elementos de la obra, semejante al proceso organizador que el creador de la misma lleva a cabo de manera consciente; cohabita su mundo, compartiendo las ideas y sentimientos de sus personajes. Sigue el desarrollo de la trama con interés para saber su desenlace, el destino de ese mundo de ficción. Este mundo imaginario es un recurso excelente en las clases de inglés como lengua extranjera. A través de él, el estudiante puede mejorar su competencia comunicativa, tanto oral como escrita, en un contexto significativo.

El texto literario ofrece otras ventajas al alumno-lector de lengua extranjera. En primer lugar, el texto literario es material auténtico. Pese a que la literatura no ha sido creada para enseñar un idioma, el hecho de que esté dirigida para los hablantes nativos de inglés permite a los estudiantes de esta lengua familiarizarse con los diferentes usos y formas del inglés, con las convenciones de la lengua escrita —estilo, registros, tipos de textos de diferentes grados de dificultad— y con

aspectos culturales. La literatura también nos permite elegir tanto como profesores y como alumnos entre una abundante y variada cantidad de obras que se convierten en un excelente complemento de los materiales que se utilizan en el salón de clases.

Otra ventaja es que el alumno amplía su conocimiento de la lengua. Generalmente, los textos literarios son incluidos en los cursos de inglés porque se piensa que los alumnos van a aumentar su vocabulario. Sin embargo, el aprendizaje de nuevo vocabulario ocurre de manera incidental, es decir, el alumno o el maestro es el que decide si se memorizan o no ciertas palabras, y en el caso de que así sea, ellos deciden cuales. Mas bien durante la lectura, el alumno está expuesto tanto a vocabulario que ya reconoce (vocabulario pasivo) o maneja (vocabulario activo), como también a palabras que nunca antes había visto. Por un lado, el material literario representa la oportunidad para que el alumno vea el vocabulario con el que ya está familiarizado en un contexto real y distinto; y, por otro lado, representa la oportunidad para que aplique o desarrolle sus estrategias de vocabulario, como lo sería la inferencia de significados por contexto. Lo mismo sucede con las estructuras sintácticas. Ambos aspectos, sintácticos y léxicos, son el medio para la comprensión del texto y no un fin en sí mismos. Su comprensión le permite al lector de LE tener acceso a un mensaje probablemente de un nivel más elevado que aquel de su competencia lingüística y le facilita adquirir nuevos conocimientos. La literatura, por lo tanto, ofrece un contexto en el cual estos aspectos son presentados de una manera más memorable; un contexto en donde los alumnos adquieren un conocimiento más profundo de la lengua; y un contexto que, por lo elaborado o sencillo de la lengua, le permite tener una mayor conciencia de la forma y uso de la misma.

La literatura ofrece el contexto y la inspiración para una gran variedad de actividades para desarrollar las cuatro macrohabilidades: producción oral y escrita, comprensión auditiva y de lectura. Con la literatura el alumno de LE puede desarrollar estrategias de lectura que utiliza ante cualquier otro tipo de texto,

abarcando desde el avance de la lectura (previewing)^{*} hasta la lectura crítica. Aún más, la literatura puede motivar a los alumnos a leer, e incluso a desarrollar el hábito de la lectura tanto dentro como fuera de la clase. Su contenido interesante y agradable, además de sugerir una serie de actividades de producción oral y comprensión auditiva, también los motiva a establecer una comunicación oral y escrita. El discurso literario constituye un modelo o varios modelos de producción escrita en LE. Por medio de su lectura, los alumnos se familiarizan con diferentes tipos de discursos –distinguiendo los diferentes estilos–, organización textual de acuerdo con la intención del autor, y usos de la lengua y formas de usar la puntuación, por ejemplo. Todos ellos son elementos que después puede aplicar cuando escribe. La actitud crítica que se fomenta tanto con la lectura del material, como con la interacción con sus compañeros y las diferentes actividades que realice con ellos, favorecen la escritura como una habilidad crítica y precisa. También pueden motivar a escribir por placer. Muchas veces en las clases de lengua se encuentran personas con una gran sensibilidad literaria para quienes la lectura de literatura en LE puede resultar en un estímulo más, aparte de los que ya tengan, para escribir, incluso en la LE; y aunque esto no sería ninguno de los objetivos del curso, sino algo accidental o extra, es una posibilidad que ningún otro tipo de texto ofrece.

En la literatura podemos encontrar nuestras experiencias más privadas: ideas, pensamientos, sentimientos, fantasías y sueños que otros seres humanos tuvieron y que dieron forma en poemas, cuentos o novelas. Con ellos coincidimos, pero también podemos encontrar algunas diferencias, quizá sutiles, que tenemos con la cultura extranjera. Y es que la literatura, pese a ser un conjunto de mundos de ficción, lleva consigo lo que conforma la cultura de la sociedad en la que los textos fueron concebidos, como valores, creencias y preocupaciones. Por medio de ella el estudiante conoce los pensamientos, sentimientos y costumbres de los hablantes nativos del inglés, lo que temen o disfrutan, en lo que creen y lo que imaginan.

^{*} Se explica la aplicación de esta estrategia de lectura en el capítulo 2

"This vivid imagined world can quickly give the foreign reader a feel for the codes and preoccupations that structure a real society."

(Collie and Slater, 1996, 4)

Compartir esta otra forma de ser ayuda al lector a comprender mejor al ser humano, a sí mismo. De aquí que el lector, además de tener una experiencia intelectual, pueda establecer una relación personal con el texto a partir del proceso de exploración y descubrimiento al que su lectura invita: la literatura en LE proporciona al alumno ciertos patrones de comportamiento, como tradiciones, costumbres y valores, que al relacionarse con su experiencia le permiten reflexionar sobre las similitudes y diferencias entre esta cultura y la propia, contribuyendo a una mejor comprensión de la obra, a una impresión más precisa de ambas culturas, a una ampliación de sus horizontes como estudiante de LE y como ser humano. Cuando el alumno es conciente de esto, está asegurando una comunicación más exitosa con los hablantes de la lengua meta.

"...perhaps most importantly, it can enable the students, through objective analysis, reflection, and discussion, to gain deeper insights into their own cultural values and literary traditions, in the same way that the study of another language helps us perceive the structure of our own."

(Cit. pos. Stern, 1987, 47)

Otra de las ventajas de incluir los textos literarios en el salón de LE es que ofrece al lector una experiencia estética. Esto desarrolla la habilidad para apreciar las diferentes funciones de la lengua y tiene la capacidad de producir diversas emociones en el lector.

"The extra dimension [that literature offers the ESL/EFL student] is what may be called the literary experience, the capacity for entering into the state of mind of the poet as he or she expresses an emotion, the recognition and sharing of human relationships as they are portrayed in the character of a short story or a play—in short the capacity of being moved."

(Cit. pos. Stern, 1987, 47)

Como es el ser humano y lo que le rodea la materia prima de la literatura, el lector de lengua extranjera puede encontrar en ella elementos que le hagan reflexionar, analizar o cuestionar su realidad, su existencia. De aquí puede surgir una necesidad por interactuar con el texto y con sus compañeros a través del mismo, en donde la lengua, de ser el fin, se convierta en el medio para saber del otro y de sí mismo, de tal forma que no sólo satisfaga sus necesidades como aprendiente del inglés, sino también como ser humano. En este sentido se puede afirmar que la literatura tiene una función formativa.

La literatura es un recurso creativo y significativo para promover la comunicación en LE. El uso de alternativas metodológicas viables para lograr que los alumnos comprendan la obra, la disfruten y encuentren en ella elementos significativos para su aprendizaje de la LE y su experiencia como lectores es labor indispensable del profesor de lengua. Conocer la labor que realiza el lector de LE ante un texto, la forma en que usa su conocimiento previo y las estrategias de lectura para tener acceso al texto es el primer paso en el diseño de una metodología aplicable al uso de textos literarios en clases de inglés como LE.

CAPÍTULO II Enfoques y estrategias de lectura aplicables a textos literarios

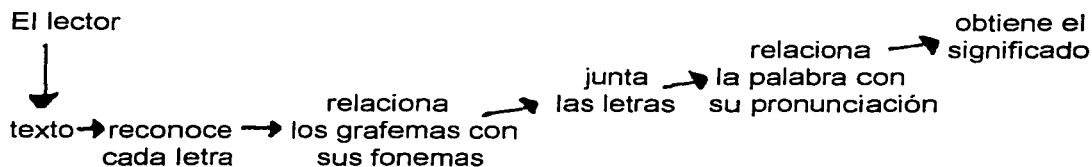
Modelos aplicables en la lectura de textos literarios

Los modelos de lectura explican las actividades mentales de los lectores para comprender un texto. También se denominan enfoques porque cada uno tiene una forma particular de considerar el proceso de lectura y la participación del lector en ésta. Los modelos que han tenido mayor influencia en la investigación sobre la enseñanza de LE y que son aplicables a textos literarios son:

1. Modelo o enfoque de procesamiento ascendente (bottom-up)
2. Modelo o enfoque de procesamiento descendente (top-down)
3. Modelo o enfoque de procesamiento interactivo

a) Modelo de procesamiento ascendente (bottom-up)

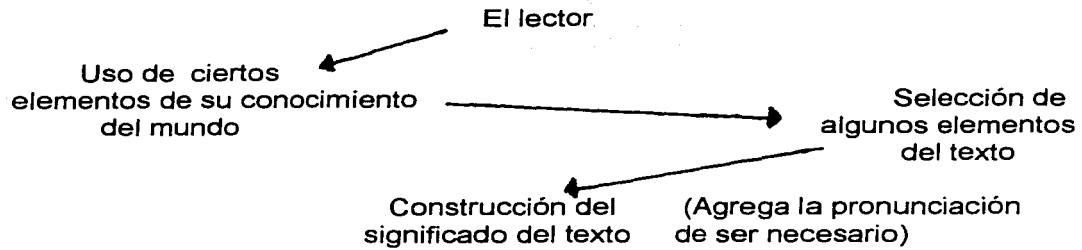
En este modelo se considera que el texto escrito está ordenado jerárquicamente, y que el lector comienza su lectura y construcción de significados a partir del reconocimiento de las características de cada uno de los elementos que conforman el texto y de la forma en que están organizados. Aquí el lector empieza identificando las letras, con sus fonemas correspondientes, después las palabras, frases, oraciones y finalmente párrafos procesando el texto en una serie de etapas. El significado se obtiene después de que cada elemento ha sido decodificado y sumado a otros. El siguiente esquema explica este proceso:



En este enfoque la lectura es vista como un proceso de desciframiento de símbolos escritos, trabajando desde las unidades más pequeñas (letras) hasta las más grandes (todo el texto), en donde el lector construye el significado a partir de los elementos que residen sólo en el texto (Nunan, 1991). Aunque este modelo parece dar una descripción lógica y razonable de lo que sucede durante el proceso de la lectura, ha sido criticado severamente por dos razones principalmente: por una lado, no es posible asignar la pronunciación de las letras y palabras sino hasta que el contexto en el que se encuentran haya sido comprendido; y por otro lado, el tiempo que le tomaría al lector dicho proceso, desde reconocer cada letra hasta obtener el significado de la palabra, no le permitiría retener en la memoria los significados suficientes o necesarios para comprender el texto. Investigadores como Smith, Goodman y Burke (Cit. pos. Nunan, 1991) plantean precisamente lo contrario, es decir, la lectura como un proceso en el que el lector no sólo se encarga de extraer los significados del texto, sino que también contribuye con sus conocimientos en la construcción de los mismos.

b) Modelo de procesamiento descendente (top-down)

De acuerdo con este modelo, el proceso de lectura empieza en la mente del lector. Él formula ciertas hipótesis acerca del significado del texto para después confirmarlas a través de la identificación de los elementos del mismo. El conocimiento que tenga el lector sobre el tema, su conocimiento del mundo, sus expectativas acerca de cómo funciona el idioma, su motivación, interés y actitudes hacia el contenido del texto son parte del proceso. La lectura, desde esta perspectiva, se considera una actividad en la que el lector reconstruye el significado a partir de su interacción con el texto. El siguiente esquema lo explica:



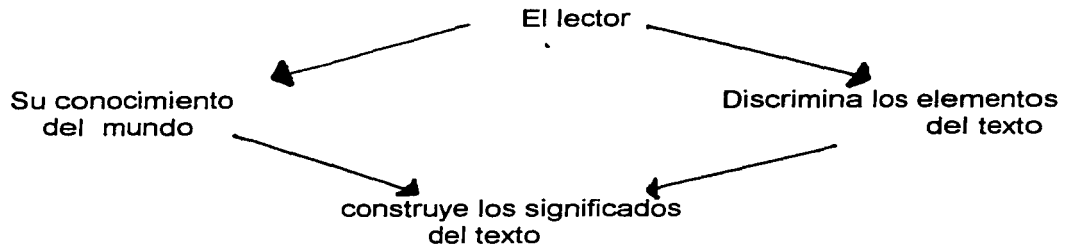
La contribución del lector al significado es un ingrediente esencial en la comprensión de un texto. La lectura es un proceso constructivo de inferencias caracterizado por la formación de hipótesis acerca del texto y su confirmación con él. Esto ha llevado a autores como Oller (Cit. pos. Nunan, 1991, 66) a considerar la importancia que tienen los elementos psicolingüísticos y lingüísticos en la lectura. Oller afirma que entre más familiarizado esté el lector con el tema del texto, más predecible será la secuencia de los aspectos lingüísticos y, por lo tanto, el lector comprenderá el texto más fácilmente. Y por el contrario, entre menos conocimientos posea respecto al tema, le será más difícil la reconstrucción del texto.

Al igual que el enfoque ascendente, el enfoque descendente ha recibido críticas, como el hecho de que no hace distinción entre lectores principiantes y lectores fluidos, y que una lectura basada en tal número de hipótesis absorbería bastante tiempo. Por esta razón, Stanovich (Cit. pos. Nunan, 1991, 66) propuso un enfoque que pretende lograr un equilibrio entre ambos enfoques. Lo llamó modelo interactivo.

c) Modelo interactivo

Este modelo propone que para construir el significado el lector selecciona información provista simultáneamente por diversas fuentes. Estas fuentes incluyen todos los elementos vistos por separado en los enfoques ascendentes y

descendientes, es decir, conocimiento fonológico, léxico, sintáctico, semántico y discursivo. El siguiente esquema lo explica:



La selección que hace el lector de dichos recursos no responde a ningún orden particular, sino a la necesidad que tenga de compensar las deficiencias de un tipo, e.g. sintácticas, con otros recursos, semánticos; por esta razón, también se denomina este modelo como interactivo-compensatorio.

A diferencia de los procesos de secuencia que proponen los enfoques ascendente y descendente, el modelo interactivo percibe a la lectura como un proceso paralelo y simultáneo de todas las fuentes de información en donde existe la interacción entre los procesos de niveles más altos, como el uso del conocimiento previo, con los más bajos, discriminación de grafemas por ejemplo, y viceversa. También le da la posibilidad a los lectores con pocas habilidades de lectura de compensar esta deficiencia haciendo uso de otras fuentes, quizá de depender más de los procesos de niveles altos.

El lector de LE debe ser flexible e interactivo con el texto. Si depende exclusivamente del contexto y conocimiento previo, seguramente va a cometer varios errores de comprensión. Si solamente parte de los elementos del texto, realizará predicciones ineficientes de significado. Necesita utilizar todos los recursos con los que cuenta para construir el significado del texto, es decir, tanto los elementos del enfoque descendente como ascendente cada vez que sea

necesario. También necesita compensar sus deficiencias en el manejo de los elementos de la LE con otros conocimientos, incluso de la lengua materna. Lo mismo sucede con el lector de literatura en LE. Por esta razón el modelo interactivo es el que mejor explica la actividad del alumno-lector de literatura en LE. Es importante que cuando se diseñen las actividades para trabajar el texto literario los profesores tomen en cuenta los conocimientos que ya poseen sus alumnos ya que con ellos pueden resolver los problemas de comprensión que probablemente encuentren.

Estrategias de lectura aplicables a textos literarios

Además de sus conocimientos, los lectores de literatura en LE requieren de una serie de estrategias que les permitan tener acceso al texto más fácilmente. Las estrategias de lectura se definen como las habilidades o pasos que los lectores siguen para la realización de un propósito determinado, para comprender un texto (Aebersold y Field, 1997). Las estrategias de lectura que se pueden desarrollar y utilizar con los textos literarios para promover la competencia de lectura de los alumnos son:

a) Avance de la lectura (previewing): Esta estrategia permite a los estudiantes establecer sus propias expectativas respecto a la información que encontrarán en el texto y la forma en que está organizada. Les ayuda a predecir lo que van a leer y les da un marco de referencia para ayudarles a entender la relación de la información y su importancia en la comprensión del texto. Son varias características del texto que se toman en cuenta para utilizar esta estrategia. Algunas son las siguientes:

- | | | |
|----------|-------------------|--------------------|
| * Título | * Subtítulos | * Gráficas, tablas |
| * Autor | * Encabezados | * Espacios |
| *Fuente | * Fotos y dibujos | * Tipografía |

- b) **Lectura rápida (skimming):** Consiste en una lectura rápida y superficial del texto con el fin de obtener una impresión general del mismo, de su contenido y organización, como las claves para identificar las ideas principales o los pasos en un argumento. Gracias a esta percepción global es posible que en lecturas subsecuentes el lector entienda el texto con mayor detalle.
- c) **Lectura específica (scanning):** El lector utiliza esta estrategia para encontrar datos específicos y presentados de manera predecible para el lector como una fecha o nombre. Esta estrategia familiariza al lector con el texto y es adecuada para un alumno principiante.
- d) **Inferencia:** Esta es una de las dos estrategias en las que el lector plantea o entiende información que no está explícitamente escrita en el texto. A través de claves sintácticas, lógicas o culturales, el lector descubre el significado de la información que desconoce.
- e) **Predicción:** Al igual que en la inferencia, a partir de claves sintácticas, lógicas o culturales el alumno formula hipótesis acerca de la información del texto. Esta es una habilidad básica en la aplicación de otras estrategias y contribuye en la construcción de significados.
- f) **Lectura de búsqueda:** Al igual que la lectura específica, esta estrategia tiene como objetivo localizar información específica, pero difiere de ella en que el lector no sabe exactamente la manera en que dicha información puede aparecer.
- g) **Lectura crítica:** El objetivo principal de la educación en general es formar personas críticas, personas con una actitud activa frente a la información que reciben como hechos, teorías y opiniones. La lectura crítica requiere de la interacción entre el lector y el texto. A través de ella el lector sabe que tan significativa y útil es la información con respecto al tema que se trata, e incluso

en su vida misma. Las operaciones que realiza el lector crítico son las siguientes:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| * Comparar | * Observar | * Interpretar | * Clasificar |
| * Resumir | *Evaluar y criticar | * Analizar | * Sintetizar |
| * Hacer inferencias
y sustentarlas | *Predecir | * Buscar
suposiciones | |

Además, hace distinciones importantes entre conceptos clave: verdad y opinión, hecho y opinión, hecho e interpretación; y cuestiona la información del texto para saber si ésta es válida y confiable.

Es importante señalar que la utilización de las estrategias mencionadas no es de manera aislada. Dependiendo de factores como los objetivos del lector y el tipo de texto, se van combinando durante las diferentes lecturas del mismo. Los ejercicios que se utilicen para desarrollar las estrategias deben ser vistos como herramientas para que le ayuden al lector a comprender la información.

La utilización de textos literarios no debería limitarse a los niveles avanzados de competencia comunicativa. Sería muy conveniente que los estudiantes se familiarizaran con este tipo de material desde los primeros niveles. Existen textos literarios graduados a cualquier nivel de enseñanza del inglés en el mercado. Sin embargo, su uso en el salón de clases queda determinado por el criterio del profesor, el tiempo disponible y la extensión del programa.

CAPÍTULO III La enseñanza de la literatura en clases de inglés como LE basada en la teoría de la recepción

La teoría de la recepción, que irrumpió de lleno a fines de los 60s en la ciencia literaria germánica, explica la participación del lector en el proceso de comprensión de un texto literario. El lector es el receptor de un acto comunicativo que sólo con su participación se puede concretizar. El uso de textos literarios en clases de inglés como LE debe tomar en cuenta la recepción que tienen entre los alumnos, pues es a través de ella como se conoce si el alumno ha podido establecer un diálogo con el texto (comprensión de lectura) y si los objetivos que se plantearon para dicha actividad se llevan a cabo.

Esta teoría parte de la actualización de la relación situacional lengua-oyente en autor-texto-lector. En el salón de clases, dicha relación se convierte en autor-lectura escolar-alumno. Como la expresión lingüística sobre el texto no hace posible una relación interpersonal entre el autor (emisor) y el lector (receptor), la comunicación literaria se concibe como un proceso en el que el receptor, con base en los elementos que encuentra en el texto, lo actualiza, es decir, "la obra literaria sólo se constituye como tal cuando se enfrentan el texto y el lector" (Vital, 1994, 12). En esta comunicación el texto es el elemento creativo, mientras que el lector es el que aprecia la belleza y las emociones de tal elemento. Por esta razón, Wolfgang Iser concluye que "la obra literaria tiene dos polos que pueden denominarse el polo artístico y el estético: el polo artístico es el texto del autor, y el estético la realización que hace el lector" (Ibid. 12). El texto y el lector aparecen, entonces, como variables apoyadas una en otra y referidas una a otra, cuya comunicación sólo se puede captar en el proceso de la recepción.

Los textos literarios no son estructuras estáticas, sino lecturas accionadoras de procesos específicos de recepción. Por lo tanto, su uso en el salón de clases debe concebirse y practicarse como un análisis de dichos procesos. Como la recepción está constituida por la actualización que realiza el lector, sólo se puede

exigir que como criterio para sustentar una recepción adecuada el lector debe documentar todas sus afirmaciones por medio de elementos que se encuentran en el texto. El avance en la comprensión consiste en la reflexión progresiva de la recepción del texto y de los conocimientos, ideas o prejuicios del lector y su modificación cuando sea necesario.

Como es solamente en el proceso de la recepción en donde se puede observar el avance en la comprensión y la modificación que ha hecho ésta en los conocimientos del lector, la didáctica de la literatura debe tratar tanto las resultantes observables o deducibles de recepción, así como determinados objetivos de aprendizaje que influyan en el proceso de recepción. El profesor de LE, por lo tanto, debe considerar en su metodología las diferentes recepciones que tenga el texto entre sus alumnos, es decir, si se ha establecido una comunicación entre (autor) texto-lector, y las resultantes deseadas de los procesos de recepción, las cuales presuponen el análisis del grupo, sus conocimientos previos, expectativas, actitudes, etc.

Para que se establezca una comunicación entre el texto y el lector, el primero utiliza un "código" literario, el cual está constituido por algunos de los términos técnicos en los que se basa la teoría de la recepción y es importante que el profesor los conozca para ayudar, cuando sea necesario, en la recepción del texto.

Uno de ellos es la 'estructura apelativa'. Esta "se define como el conjunto de elementos intratextuales cuya función básica consiste en exigir la participación del lector, quien de ese modo se ve apelado o llamado a completar el sentido del texto" (ibid. 21). Estos elementos pueden ser las notas de pie de página, el prólogo del autor implícito o ficticio, los títulos y subtítulos. Dicha apelación tiene como objetivo ayudar al lector a completar el significado del texto, respondiendo a posibles preguntas del lector necesarias para comprenderlo. En este sentido se

puede decir que la estructura apelativa conlleva a una negociación entre texto y lector.

Uno de los elementos intratextuales más comunes son los vacíos o blancos de información. Estos "se distinguen por ser una ausencia de datos que obliga al lector implícito a participar aportándolos" (Ibid. 21). Un ejemplo podría ser la ausencia en el relato de una escena en que debe haber sucedido un evento para justificar el contenido del texto. Estas lagunas intencionales son estímulos importantes para la lectura creativa, para la imaginación. El lector implícito es quien debe aportar tal información, llenando ese vacío. Este lector es la entidad humana que se tuvo presente durante la creación de la obra y capaz de responder a todas sus exigencias "relacionando los elementos presentes en el texto con los ausentes pero necesarios para su comprensión" (Ibid. 22). Es el lector a quien el autor tuvo en la mente durante la creación de su obra. Un lector real podría ser el lector implícito de una obra, pero el lector implícito no siempre puede ser el lector real.

Estos elementos intratextuales se encuentran dentro de un contexto. Van Dijk lo define como "una abstracción altamente idealizada de [...] una situación comunicativa cualquiera, que incluye todos los elementos presentes en un diálogo, y aquellos hechos que determinan sistemáticamente la adecuación de las expresiones convencionales." (Ibid. 22) El contexto se refiere a todas las circunstancias que rodean la obra, es decir, extratextuales, y que influyen fuertemente la relación entre autor-texto-lector. Como ejemplo tenemos el momento histórico de la obra o el ambiente circundante en el cual ésta se desarrolla.

Al encuentro efectuado por el lector real y el texto se denomina "concretización". Lectura o actualización del texto son sus sinónimos. El lector real sólo concretiza una parte de la totalidad del potencial de sentido del texto. Es el lector implícito quien realiza la suma de las concretizaciones pertinentes. La lectura que realiza cada lector real es diferente, pues las concretizaciones que

hace cada uno también lo son. Aún cuando sea el mismo lector real quien haga dos o más concretizaciones del mismo texto, va a realizar dos o más concretizaciones distintas pues las exigencias y preferencias ante ella van a ser distintas.

Estas exigencias y preferencias conforman parte de lo que se denomina "horizonte de expectativas". Este horizonte se refiere "al conjunto de ideas, opiniones, reglas y prejuicios que son determinantes en la actitud del lector real en el instante en que se enfrenta al texto" (ibid. 24), es decir, se refiere a los deseos y expectativas con los que el lector acoge el texto. Por esta razón el horizonte de expectativas se encuentra en el contexto de la comunicación literaria y determina la recepción activa de los lectores.

Cada cultura tiene su propia y particular forma de comunicarse a través de su literatura. De la manera en que el lector perciba la estructura del texto depende la realización de este acto comunicativo. Por ello, la recepción del lector en lengua materna no es la misma a la del lector en LE. Las concretizaciones a las que se llegue en el salón de clases de LE pueden incluso no haber sido consideradas en el momento de la concepción de la obra.

Lo anterior se debe a diferencias que tienen que ver directamente con la constitución del texto en lengua materna y LE y entre el lector de lengua materna y LE. En el caso del texto en sí, la diferencia del medio lingüístico condiciona el proceso de comunicación y su conducción en clase. Las características sintáctico-estilísticas y semántico-lexicales no son idénticas a las de la lengua materna; determinados conceptos tienen otros valores simbólicos y ocasionan otras asociaciones; y el texto en LE se encuentra en una relación literaria e histórico-social diferente a las del lector. Éstas pueden limitar u obstruir la recepción del texto, para lo cual la metodología del profesor debe colaborar aportando los elementos requeridos para que el lector pueda resolver sus problemas e interprete el texto dentro del marco de interpretaciones que el mismo permita.

Respecto a las diferencias propiamente entre los lectores de lengua materna y LE Heuermann, et al. (1987) citan las siguientes:

- a) Competencia lingüística.- Es diferente la competencia frente a un texto en LE que frente a uno en lengua materna.
- b) Conocimiento previo.- La lectura estará mucho menos influenciada por este elemento en LE, lo cual, aunque puede dificultar su recepción, también puede alterarla de tal forma que se produzcan originales impresiones del texto.
- c) Personalidad del alumno.- Este aspecto modifica la recepción de un texto tanto en lengua extranjera como en lengua materna.
- d) Las motivaciones y las intenciones de lectura.- Ambas se pueden transferir principalmente hacia el intento de desarrollar y perfeccionar la competencia lingüística, y en general la competencia comunicativa.
- e) El medio social del lector.- Dependiendo de la distancia cultural y social que haya con el texto, el lector de LE puede percibir el contenido del material como algo exótico, completamente ajeno a su realidad, o por el contrario, sentirse fuertemente aludido o incluido en él.

Las condiciones especiales a las que está sujeto el proceso de la comunicación entre el texto literario y el lector de LE hacen doblemente compleja la participación de éste último. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, es doblemente mayor el reto para que él pueda establecer dicha comunicación y extraiga el cúmulo de conocimientos que ésta le ofrece.

Capítulo IV Una pedagogía para las clases de inglés como LE basada en la teoría de la respuesta del lector

La teoría de la respuesta del lector, al igual que otras teorías de la recepción, hace hincapié en el papel indispensable del lector en la comunicación literaria: tanto la participación activa del lector como sus experiencias crean una interpretación del texto literario. Sin embargo, esta teoría, desarrollada por la crítica y profesora de literatura norteamericana Louise Rosenblatt, constituye una pedagogía en la que en primer lugar se considera a un lector no idealizado, sino real, es decir, a lo que sucede cuando un determinado lector se enfrenta a cierto texto en un contexto específico. También se busca desarrollar en el lector una actitud consciente, crítica y abierta ante sus propias interpretaciones y la de los otros lectores, en la que su capacidad de racionalizar las emociones generadas por el texto conlleve a crear juicios críticos y autocríticos. Aquí la lectura es concebida como un hecho personal y social en la que las transacciones del lector con el texto y del lector con las de otros lectores den forma a una experiencia nueva que puedan transferir a su vida como lectores y como personas.

De acuerdo con esta teoría, la lectura de un texto literario consiste en una transacción entre el lector y el texto. El lector lleva al texto su conocimiento previo, sus experiencias pasadas y guiado por las ideas y sentimientos que éste le ofrece da forma a su experiencia con el texto, a una experiencia nueva. El texto se concibe no como un objeto "ya terminado", sino como un evento que el lector construye conforme avanza en su lectura, un poema, que le da la oportunidad al lector de experimentar las diferentes posibilidades que la vida ofrece a los seres humanos. La construcción de significados es el resultado de una influencia constante y recíproca, dinámica y en forma de espiral, entre el texto y el lector. La experiencia nueva, el poema, es el resultado de dicha transacción.

"A poem is a happening, an event, in which the listener or reader draws on images and feelings and ideas stirred up by the words of the text; out of these is shaped the lived-through experience." (Rosenblatt, 1980, 386)

La profundidad de dicha experiencia, el poema que resulte, depende de la intención del lector, de los elementos que tome en cuenta durante su lectura. Rosenblatt establece dos polos de un continuo: la lectura eferente y la lectura estética. En la primera el lector se preocupa por extraer o seleccionar cierta información y subordina o ignora la parte afectiva. Esto sucede con los instructivos y textos científicos, por ejemplo. Mientras que en el segundo tipo de lectura los elementos cognitivos y afectivos se fusionan, el lector amplía su foco de atención para percibir los elementos estéticos de la obra, y lo que experimenta durante ella. De acuerdo con el propósito que se tenga, las lecturas del mismo texto pueden ser en ciertos momentos eferentes y en otros estéticas, al moverse dentro del continuo, como sería el caso de las lecturas realizadas en las clases de inglés como LE. Por lo tanto, lo literario de la experiencia con el texto depende no del texto en sí, sino de la forma en que el lector se acerque a él.

El lector es el responsable de su experiencia con el texto. Su participación guiada por los elementos que conforman el texto determina la forma de su poema. En el salón de clases se le debe de proveer, a través de diferentes estrategias, la oportunidad de expresar sus reacciones ante el texto, de explorarlas y valorarlas. La primera se refiere al ambiente del salón de clases. Éste debe ser informal y amistoso para que los lectores se sientan con la libertad y confianza de expresar sus ideas y emociones. Aquí lo que importa es qué tan genuinos y significativos son sus comentarios.

El texto es otro elemento importante. La selección del texto debe tomar en cuenta el contexto de los lectores: sus experiencias, madurez, conocimientos lingüísticos, problemas o dificultades personales, aspiraciones, etc., y no solamente la calidad del material en sí. Los textos cuya estructura sintáctica, tema, elementos culturales, etc., resulten demasiado ajenos para el lector obstaculizan o incluso niegan la comunicación.

"If they [students] cannot grasp the plot or make meaning out of the work, then they really aren't interacting with the text." (Rosenblatt, 1995, 28)

Mientras que si el texto se relaciona con la vida del lector, provocará respuestas, establecerá puntos de encuentro entre la experiencia narrada y la del lector que harán de su lectura una experiencia significativa. Esto implica que el profesor no sólo posea un considerable conocimiento de textos literarios, sino también de sus alumnos.

Durante los diferentes encuentros del lector con el texto, el profesor debe tener una actitud flexible y atenta a las diferentes respuestas. Los lectores hacen uso de toda su experiencia pasada para proveer de significado al texto. Por lo tanto, no se puede esperar que diferentes lectores de un mismo texto construyan los mismos significados. Cada uno tendrá una interpretación única y personal del contenido, y habrá tantas interpretaciones como significados extraigan los diferentes lectores del texto. Por esta razón, en la teoría de la respuesta del lector no se considera la existencia de una sola interpretación correcta; más bien se considera el hecho de que los lectores compartan sus interpretaciones, sus respuestas, sus experiencias con el texto y construyan, a partir de esto, nuevas interpretaciones. El papel del profesor consiste en promover respuestas individuales al texto a través de dinámicas que los motiven a expresar lo que piensan, en lugar de promover una sola interpretación. Debe hacer sentir a los alumnos que sus comentarios son bienvenidos y tomados en cuenta. Para ello, el profesor debe ser sensible a sus comentarios: debe ayudarlos a profundizar en aquéllos que tengan posibilidades, a aclarar o elaborar sus ideas, a intercambiar respuestas y a establecer puntos de contacto entre ellas. Su labor, entonces, es guiarlos en esta experiencia. En lugar de promover la idea tradicional de que el profesor los va a conducir a respuestas más bien impuestas, y a veces sin significado para los lectores, les ayudará a desarrollar su comprensión en el contexto de sus propias emociones e ideas originadas por su lectura. Esta actitud creará un ambiente donde ellos experimenten la libertad y responsabilidad de construir su propio conocimiento.

Una vez que el profesor ha creado el ambiente apropiado para el intercambio de ideas y de que los alumnos han emitido sus primeras reacciones, la revisión de estas primeras transacciones con el texto a la luz de las opiniones de los demás lectores es el paso siguiente. El libre intercambio de ideas implica que el alumno-lector examine su interpretación del texto. Se debe preguntar qué elementos de éste justifican su reacción y descubrir qué información de su conocimiento del mundo afectó su lectura. Sus conocimientos lingüísticos, sus preocupaciones, sus necesidades e incluso su experiencia con los textos literarios son algunos ejemplos de conocimiento previo que lo puede conducir a ignorar cierta información, a reaccionar de forma exagerada o incluso a darle un significado que no tiene. Esto hace que el lector regrese cuantas veces considere necesario al texto para ver si su interpretación está basada en su contenido, si tomó en cuenta el ritmo, los símbolos, las metáforas, el tono, los personajes, etc., o necesita ampliar su foco de atención. Durante este proceso puede surgir la necesidad de buscar información adicional como lo es el contexto de la obra y del autor o algún hecho histórico que sólo cobrará significado si el alumno lo incluye como parte de su experiencia con la obra.

Esta revisión y comprensión de su propia respuesta promueve en el lector una actitud crítica y autocrítica. Por un lado, el alumno valorará las diferentes interpretaciones tanto de sí mismo como de sus compañeros y decidirá cuáles son más apropiadas. Por otro lado, será consciente de las ideas respecto a formas de sentir y de actuar que ha adquirido para poder comprender su propia respuesta, lo cual implica una mayor comprensión de sí mismo y del mundo que lo rodea.

"I view it, rather, as essential to the beginning of a process or organic growth, in which the capacity for thinking rationally about emotional responses can be expanded. Such reading can nourish both aesthetic and social sensitivities and can foster the development of critical and self-critical judgment." (Rosenblatt, Louise, 1995, xviii)

Rosenblatt subraya que dicha exploración sólo es válida en tanto que esté relacionada con las primeras respuestas de los lectores. Para ello, el profesor debe estar consciente de las actitudes hacia los seres humanos y la sociedad que está ayudándoles a entender, evitar inculcar su propia postura hacia los mismos y ayudarles en sus esfuerzos por entenderse a ellos mismos y a la estructura de la sociedad. También debe guiarlos hacia una experiencia estética con el texto y promover el intercambio de comentarios críticos respecto a sus interpretaciones. Todo esto con el objetivo de que realice una mejor lectura del texto en cuestión y de otros futuros.

La aplicación de esta teoría en el salón de clases de LE implica la modificación y/o concientización de algunos conceptos. El primero es el uso del tiempo. Regularmente, y debido a la naturaleza de los cursos de lengua, las lecturas y las actividades en torno a ellas se realizan una tras otra, a veces contra reloj. La lectura de un texto literario, como de cualquier obra de arte, requiere de mayor tiempo para su interpretación y apreciación. El lector debe, también, concebirse a sí mismo como recreador de un universo, en donde los descubrimientos y redescubrimientos que encuentre en el contenido de la obra, de los demás y de sí mismo conformarán su propia experiencia con el texto. Por su parte, el profesor debe estar dispuesto a ayudar a sus alumnos a explorar su experiencia con el texto, a guiarlos a partir de sus propios encuentros, y, si lo desea, compartir con ellos su encuentro con el mismo, pero sin que esto obstruya o limite la de ellos. Y sobre todo, el concepto de la lengua extranjera como un medio de comunicación profunda y genuina con el texto, con los otros lectores y consigo mismo.

Los beneficios que esta pedagogía ofrece al salón de clases de LE son los siguientes:

1. Promueve el desarrollo de su comprensión de lectura.
2. Amplía el contexto personal de las emociones e ideas en las que su respuesta se incorpora.

3. Aumenta su sensibilidad estética.
4. Desarrolla una actitud crítica ante la lectura.
5. Adquiere una mayor sensibilidad hacia las necesidades y problemas de otros lejos de él en el tiempo y el espacio.
6. Logra una mejor comprensión de los seres humanos y de sí mismo.
7. Desarrolla su habilidad lingüística, emocional e intelectual para sustentar sus interpretaciones.

La teoría de la respuesta del lector en clases de inglés como LE se sugiere como una pedagogía formadora de lectores capaces de escuchar y comprender tanto al otro como a sí mismos. Este es el principio para establecer una comunicación exitosa entre culturas, lo cual es, quizá, el objetivo principal que tienen los estudiantes de una lengua extranjera.

CAPÍTULO V Una metodología aplicable a textos literarios en clases de inglés como lengua extranjera

Tomando en consideración la investigación realizada, la metodología que se sugiere pretende ser una serie de consideraciones recomendables para trabajar un texto literario en la clase de inglés como LE. De acuerdo con el tipo de texto, los alumnos-lectores y el programa académico, el profesor podrá modificar o adaptar la metodología aquí presentada en su diseño de actividades.

Etapas de lectura

a) Prelectura

Esta etapa es de suma importancia en el proceso de lectura, en especial si se trata de un texto literario. En ella se generan las primeras impresiones que crearan la motivación, el interés o la curiosidad por realizar la lectura.

Existen tres razones principalmente para preparar a los estudiantes para leer:

1. Establecer el propósito de la lectura. Tanto los alumnos como el profesor deben tener claro por qué y para qué van a realizar cierta lectura. Aquí se debe considerar la relación entre el contenido del texto y la familiaridad de los lectores con tal contenido, el objetivo u objetivos que el profesor va a lograr a través de ella y las razones que también los lectores tengan para realizarla.
2. Activar el conocimiento previo del lector. Ayudar a los alumnos a recordar cualquier información que sepan acerca del tema(s) de la lectura, ya sea conocimiento resultado de su experiencia personal o de otra fuente, para que la tomen en cuenta durante su lectura, incrementa las posibilidades de construir significados en el texto y aumenta su interés en la lectura. También se revisa o introduce vocabulario necesario para comprender el texto y/o para

las actividades en torno a él. Si bien es cierto que los alumnos-lectores utilizarán sus estrategias de vocabulario y de uso de diccionario para comprender el texto, una preparación léxica previa puede hacer esta tarea más accesible, en especial con niveles básicos. La activación del conocimiento previo también puede traer al salón de clases factores culturales que ayuden a entender el material o hacerlo más significativo. Cuando los elementos presentes en la obra sean universales, se aclaren por contexto o simplemente no sean referencias específicas de una cultura, no es necesario hacer énfasis en ellos; sin embargo, cuando puedan afectar la comprensión del alumno, ya sea generar una mala interpretación, o, por el contrario, enriquecerla, es muy conveniente presentarla en esta etapa, la cual se sugiere de manera breve para posponer su discusión una vez que los alumnos hayan leído el texto, es decir, en el contexto de la lectura.

3. Establecer expectativas reales acerca del contenido del texto. Una orientación acerca del contenido del texto les da a los alumnos un marco referencial en el que pueden crear sus expectativas y basar sus predicciones. Las expectativas que de antemano el profesor sabe que el texto no va a satisfacer deben ser descartadas o modificadas en esta etapa, pues podrían afectar de manera negativa la labor del lector, su interés y comprensión por ejemplo.

Las actividades de prelectura, además de lo anterior y ya sean de producción oral, escrita y de comprensión auditiva e incluso de lectura, deben desarrollarse en un ambiente agradable y amistoso, en donde al alumno se le transmita la tarea de leer el texto como una oportunidad divertida e interesante para desarrollar su competencia comunicativa, y no como un tormento en donde se vaya a poner a prueba su conocimiento. Algunos ejercicios que se pueden diseñar para esta etapa son los siguientes:

1. Explicación oral (act. 1, ej. metodológico 1)
2. Mímica y dibujos (act. 2, ej. metodológico 4)

3. Sopa de letras (act. 1, ej. metodológico 2)
4. Lectura de: caricaturas (act. 1, ej. metodológico 5), citas (act. 1, ej. metodológico 3), extractos (act. 2, ej. metodológico 3), oraciones del texto en desorden (act. 2, ej. metodológico 1) y párrafos introductorios (act. 3, ej. metodológico 1).
5. Preguntas orales y/o escritas (act. 2, ej. metodológico 1; act 1, ej. metodológico 3; act. 1, ej. metodológico 4)
6. Tablas (act. 2, ej. metodológico 2; act. 1, ej. metodológico 3; act. 1, ej. metodológico 5)
7. Juegos (act. 2, ej. metodológico 3)

b) Durante la lectura

Aunque el encuentro entre el lector con el texto es una labor individual, el hecho de que los profesores estén conscientes de lo que sus alumnos realizan cuando leen y que los alumnos mismos también estén conscientes de dicho proceso mejora su competencia de lectura. Para que los alumnos sean mejores lectores necesitan saber cómo leen y de lo que pueden hacer para mejorar su lectura.

Como ya lo hemos dicho, durante el proceso de lectura, la mente del lector realiza una variedad de procesos ascendentes y descendentes que se llevan a cabo aparentemente al mismo tiempo. Los lectores con experiencia realizan estos procesos de manera automática, mientras los que tienen su competencia de lectura menos desarrollada necesitan aprender, comprender y desarrollar tales procesos. La labor del profesor es hacer a los alumnos conscientes de esos procesos para que si los alumnos no los llevan a cabo cuando leen en la lengua extranjera, empiecen conscientemente a practicarlos y así desarrollar su habilidad de lectura.

PUZZLE

INSTRUCTIONS: First, find all of the words at the right in the diagram and circle them very carefully. Look in all directions for the words. When you have finished, there will be some letters that you did not use. Write these letters, from left to right, in the spaces at the bottom of the page. You'll have a famous quotation.

letters
flowers
kind
girl
flirt
promises
couple
blush
gentle
pretext
beautiful
love at first sight
kisses
date
heart
marry
boy

“ _____

_____ ”

by Mignon McLaughlin

PUZZLE

INSTRUCTIONS: First, find all of the words at the right in the diagram and circle them very carefully. Look in all directions for the words. When you have finished, there will be some letters that you did not use. Write these letters, from left to right, in the spaces at the bottom of the page. You'll have a famous quotation.

A L S B N C C E
U P L E G N T L E
S F F U L M A R P R I E A
K I R S L O W A R E S E Q K
S E I T R H D S L O F A O L L I N
G U N G V S E A T F I M E T H S E S
I R L O N Y S M T X O T R A E P
D
N
B
N

- letters
- flowers
- kind
- girl
- flirt
- promises
- couple
- blush
- gentle
- pretext
- beautiful
- love at first sight
- kisses
- date
- heart
- marry
- boy

“ _____

_____ ”

by Mignon McLaughlin

Aparte de las estrategias de lectura, el lector usa otras para construir los significados del texto. Una de ellas es las estrategias de vocabulario. Utilizan el vocabulario presentado en la etapa de prelectura dentro del contexto de la obra, infieren el significado de palabras desconocidas y extraen aquéllas que no pueden definir y están dificultando su comprensión para aclararlas con el grupo y el profesor.

Durante esta etapa también pueden surgir dudas respecto a los aspectos gramaticales. Es recomendable dejar que en un principio los alumnos resuelvan sus dudas por sí mismos, pues de esta manera fortalecen sus conocimientos gramaticales al tratar de entender las irregularidades o diferencias y determinar la razón que tuvo el escritor al escogerlas. La revisión de tales estructuras después de que las han tratado de entender es considerada menos como un ejercicio gramatical y sí como una forma motivadora de aclarar el contenido del texto. Esta revisión debe incluir la forma en que las estructuras gramaticales reflejan y expresan el significado. Cada palabra y estructura fue cuidadosamente seleccionada por el autor para crear el tono y tema de la obra. Su reconocimiento y comprensión por parte del lector forma parte de la apreciación estética de la obra.

Dependiendo de la longitud del texto y del tipo de alumnos, el texto puede ser abordado de principio a fin en una sola actividad de lectura o dividirse en secciones. En la primera lectura, generalmente las actividades se deben centrar en la comprensión literal del texto, es decir que el alumno las pueda llevar a cabo en relación con referencias específicas del mismo para que en una segunda lectura u otras posteriores el alumno trabaje a un nivel más profundo, haciendo interpretaciones, inferencias y predicciones acerca del contenido de la obra. Es importante mencionar que los alumnos de niveles básicos requieren de una mayor orientación o guía en este nivel de lectura, mientras que los lectores de niveles más avanzados probablemente la puedan abordar durante su primera lectura.

Las estrategias que pueden usar los alumnos para ir revisando y mejorando su comprensión son:

- a) Estrategias de construcción de significados. Acompañan la comprensión del texto. Preguntas guía, las cuales permiten a los alumnos conocer el tipo de preguntas que deben hacerse si no seleccionaron la respuesta correcta y marcar el texto haciendo anotaciones al margen o resaltando alguna idea, son algunos ejemplos.
- b) Estrategias para monitorear la comprensión. A través de ellas, el lector se detiene y revisa la comprensión que lleva hasta ese momento para verificar si es la apropiada. Detenerse para verificar las ideas principales y confirmar hipótesis, reconocer y ajustarse al nuevo conocimientos y hacer preguntas del contenido son algunos ejemplo.
- c) Estrategias de ajuste. Cuando los alumnos se dan cuenta que su comprensión no es la apropiada, necesitan saber cómo revisar y quizá modificar las estrategias que han estado utilizando de manera rápida y automática.

Son varias y muy diversas las actividades que un texto literario sugiere. Estas pueden tener como objetivo promover el desarrollo de las cuatro habilidades, la competencia lingüística, ampliar el conocimiento sobre los aspectos culturales de la obra, y apreciar su valor estético. Dependiendo del objetivo(s) y necesidades de los alumnos, el profesor puede planear una serie de actividades creativas, divertidas e interesantes dentro del contexto de la enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera y con un enfoque comunicativo. Algunos ejercicios que se pueden diseñar para esta etapa son los siguientes:

1. Tablas (acts. 4 y 9, ej. metodológico 1; acts. 3, 4 y 8, ej. metodológico 2; act.. 11. ej. metodológico 3; act. 4 y 9, ej. metodológico 5).
2. Falso y verdadero (act. 8, ej. metodológico 1)

3. Preguntas orales o escritas (acts. 6 y 11, ej. metodológico 1; act. 5, ej. metodológico 2; act. 3 y 12, ej. metodológico 3; act. 4, ej. metodológico 4; act. 5, ej. metodológico 5)
4. Poner en orden el texto (act. 3, ej. metodológico 4; act. 2, ej. metodológico 5)
5. Dibujos (act. 3, ej. metodológico 5)
6. Juegos (act. 6, ej. metodológico 2; act. 10, ej. metodológico 3)
7. Completar oraciones (act. 10, ej. metodológico 1; act. 4 y 5, ej. metodológico 3)
8. Escritura creativa (act. 7, ej. metodológico 1; act. 4, ej. metodológico 2;
9. Diagramas (act. 5, ej. metodológico 1; act. 6, ej. metodológico 3)
10. Jigsaw reading* (act. 7, ej. metodológico 3)
11. Esquemas (act. 8, ej. metodológico 3)
12. Selección de palabras (act. 7, ej. metodológico 2)
13. Lectura en voz alta (act. 5, ej. metodológico 4; act. 6, ej. metodológico 5)

c) Poslectura

Las actividades de la poslectura tienen como objetivo general promover y fortalecer la comunicación entre el texto y el lector. Por medio de ellas, los lectores comparten su experiencia con el texto: sus reacciones ante el texto y sus evaluaciones del mismo. Este es el momento para que expresen sus opiniones acerca de los personajes, la trama, etc. y sean "leídas" por los otros lectores, es decir, que tanto el lector explore su reacción con base en su comprensión del texto, la comprensión de los demás lectores y su conocimiento del mundo. Sus reacciones pueden tomar diversas formas: "¡me encantó!" o "¡qué historia tan aburrida!", que es un nivel muy básico de respuesta, pero necesario para alcanzar niveles más altos como la evaluación del texto o de alguno de sus elementos. Aquí la labor del profesor consiste en ayudar a sus alumnos con sus propias apreciaciones de la lectura.

* En esta actividad se divide al grupo en equipos. cada miembro lee una parte del texto y finalmente comparte su lectura con su equipo para que juntos construyan el significado(s) de todo el texto.

Durante esta etapa tendrá una vez más el alumno-lector la oportunidad de revisar su comprensión del texto: regresar a él, y modificar si es necesario. También podrá resolver con la ayuda de sus compañeros alguna dificultad con el idioma y usar los elementos léxicos o gramaticales presentados o analizados en las etapas anteriores. También es el momento para analizar y valorar los aspectos culturales, similitudes y diferencias entre la cultura extranjera y la propia.

Las actividades son muy variadas y abarcan los diferentes aspectos que conforman la competencia comunicativa del lector. Sin embargo, se sugiere que con ellas se explote la imaginación y creatividad del lector, su sensibilidad artística y otras habilidades –dramáticas, por ejemplo- y se promueva el desarrollo de una actitud crítica en lo posible. Algunos ejercicios que se pueden diseñar para esta etapa son los siguientes:

1. Discusiones (act. 12, ej. metodológico 1; act. 9, ej. metodológico 2)
2. Tablas (act. 9, ej. metodológico 2; act. 13, ej. metodológico 3)
3. Improvisaciones (act. 14, ej. metodológico 1; act. 14, ej. metodológico 3)
4. Juegos (act. 13, ej. metodológico 1)
5. Completar oraciones (act. 13, ej. metodológico 1)
6. Ilustraciones (act. 5, ej. metodológico 4; act. 8, ej. metodológico 5)
7. Canciones hechas por un artista o los mismos alumnos (act. 11, ej. metodológico 2; act. 7, ej. metodológico 5)
8. Escritura creativa (act. 10, ej. metodológico 2; act. 15, ej. metodológico 3; act. 6, ej. metodológico 4)

Algunas recomendaciones para el profesor al utilizar textos literarios en clases de inglés como LE

1. Enfatizar el uso de la lengua como un medio para comunicarse exitosamente con el texto, con otros lectores y consigo mismo.
2. Seleccionar el material de acuerdo con la competencia lingüística de los alumnos, conocimientos previos, personalidad y aspectos culturales y sociales para que estos no obstaculicen o nieguen su comprensión del texto.
3. Diseñar actividades que estimulen la participación del lector con su imaginación y creatividad.
4. Diseñar actividades que aporten los elementos necesarios para que el lector resuelva sus problemas de comprensión y pueda interpretar el texto dentro del marco de interpretaciones que el mismo permita.
5. Crear un ambiente informal y amistoso para que los lectores expresen sus ideas y emociones con libertad y confianza.
6. Tener una actitud flexible y atenta a las diferentes interpretaciones de los alumnos para ayudarlos a profundizar en las mismas, aclarar o elaborar ideas, intercambiar respuestas y establecer puntos de contacto entre ellas.
7. Tener presente el texto en su totalidad, en lo posible, durante el diseño de las actividades y la realización de las mismas en el salón de clases.
8. Promover en los alumnos el desarrollo de una actitud crítica y abierta ante sus propias interpretaciones y la de los demás lectores.
9. Compartir la experiencia propia con el texto sin imponerla como la única posible interpretación.

10. Diseñar actividades en donde se explore la experiencia intelectual y emocional del lector con el texto.
11. Ayudar a los alumnos a racionalizar las emociones generadas por el texto para crear juicios críticos y autocríticos.

Algunas consideraciones generales del uso de cuentos cortos en clases de inglés como LE

1. La lectura de estos textos, debido a su extensión, puede realizarse en una o dos sesiones. Los cuentos de una extensión mayor pueden ser divididos y trabajados en varias sesiones, cuidando que esto no afecte las otras actividades del curso.
2. Existe una mayor posibilidad de una relectura por parte del alumno, ya sea en el salón de clases o por su propia cuenta. La relectura es un elemento clave para la apreciación del cuento corto. Debido a lo conciso de su contenido, la riqueza del cuento corto no siempre es revelada en una primera lectura.
3. Estos textos ofrecen una amplia variedad de temas y actividades en el salón de clases. El maestro puede trabajar varios cuentos durante el curso, de esta manera existe una mayor posibilidad de satisfacer los gustos e intereses de los alumnos.
4. Por su extensión, las actividades deben ayudar al alumno a apreciar la calidad de la obra, su universo, y responder ante ella a un nivel emocional e intelectual.
5. El tiempo de la clase no debe ser dedicado totalmente a la lectura del texto. Algunas veces se les puede asignar a los alumnos actividades que requieran de haber leído el texto con anterioridad, en casa por ejemplo, o que los prepare (ejercicios de prelectura) para leerlo fuera de la clase.

A continuación se presenta la forma en que se podrían trabajar tres cuentos en el salón de clases de LE. Aunque todos los ejercicios pueden realizarse durante varias sesiones en el salón de clases, algunos de ellos, los que impliquen un trabajo individual, pueden dejarse como tarea y revisar las respuestas en clase. Otra opción es que por cuestiones de tiempo, objetivos del curso, nivel de competencia lingüística de los alumnos y sus necesidades e intereses, el profesor

seleccione sólo algunos pasajes del texto, aquéllos que considere importantes y significativos para la comprensión de la obra, y trabaje con ellos en el salón de clases, dejando el resto para disfrutarlos de manera privada fuera de la clase.

Ejemplo metodológico 1

"Charles"

Prelectura

Actividad 1: Producción oral

Objetivo: Familiarizar a los alumnos con el tema del cuento.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de tres o cuatro personas, los alumnos discuten las siguientes preguntas:

What should a parent do when his / her child...

1. fails a subject in school?
2. lies to him / her often?
3. hits or bothers his / her classmates often?
4. talks back at him / her?
5. plays jokes on his / her classmates?

2. Los alumnos comentan sus respuestas con el grupo.

Actividad 2: Vocabulario

Objetivo: Familiarizar a los alumnos con el vocabulario nuevo, necesario para su comprensión.

Instrucciones:

1. El profesor escribe en el pizarrón las siguientes palabras y frases:

- a) corduroy overalls
- b) swaggering character
- c) to spank
- d) to be fresh
- e) see here, young man
- f) see-saw
- g) to plot
- h) to have your hands full

2. El profesor o los alumnos explican su significado.

Answers:

- a) Clothes worn by very young children made of strong cotton
- b) To behave in a proud or boastful way
- c) To slap (especially a child) with a flat hand, especially on the buttocks as a punishment.
- d) Impolite or impertinent
- e) A phrase used by a parent to emphasize the importance of a rebuke that is coming. A form of address used to a boy when scolding him.
- f) A board balanced in the middle, on the ends of which two children sit and go up and down as the board does
- g) Make a secret plan to do something
- h) Be busy or totally occupied

3. Con base en las palabras y frases vistas, los alumnos hacen predicciones con respecto al tema del cuento.

Actividad 3: Lectura

Objetivo: Familiarizar a los alumnos con el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. En parejas, los alumnos reciben un sobre que contiene el primer párrafo de la historia (introducción) dividido por oraciones, en tiras de papel y en desorden. El párrafo se dividió de la siguiente manera:
 - a) The day my son Laurie started kindergarten he renounced corduroy overalls with bibs and began wearing blue jeans with a belt;
 - b) I watched him go off the first morning with the older girl next door,
 - c) seeing clearly that an era of my life was ended,
 - d) my sweet-voiced nursery-school to be replaced by a long-trousered, swaggering character
 - e) who forgot to stop at the corner and wave good-bye to me
2. Los alumnos ordenan el párrafo.
3. Se revisa el orden con todo el grupo y se les pregunta qué elementos tomaron en cuenta para llevar a cabo la tarea.
4. El maestro realiza algunas preguntas de manera oral para ayudar a que los alumnos se formen una idea sobre el contexto y los personajes. Algunas de ellas podrían ser:
 - a) How many characters are there?
 - b) Who are they?
 - c) How old are they?
 - d) What day does the story begin on?
 - e) Why is that day so important for them?
 - f) In general, how do people feel on that day? Parents? Kids? Teachers?
 - g) How was Laurie's first day of classes?

5. Con base en sus respuestas, los alumnos hacen predicciones sobre la información del siguiente párrafo.

Actividad 4: lectura

Objetivo: Confirmar predicciones y motivar a continuar la lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. De manera individual los alumnos leen el siguiente párrafo (segundo) de la historia y confirman sus predicciones.
2. Con todo el grupo se hacen breves comentarios acerca de sus predicciones y el contenido del texto.

Lectura

Actividad 5: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Desarrollar las estrategias de lectura de los alumnos

Instrucciones:

1. Los alumnos leen la siguiente sección del texto.
2. En parejas completan el siguiente cuadro de acuerdo con la información que provee el texto.

Exercise

Instructions: Read the following section of the story and complete the chart below. Only write information that the text mentions.

	Day	What did Charlie do?	Why did he do it?	How did the teacher react?	What's Laurie's parents' reaction?
First week					
Second week					

3. Se revisa el cuadro con todo el grupo y se hacen comentarios al respecto.

Actividad 6: Vocabulario

Objetivo: Desarrollar estrategias de vocabulario.

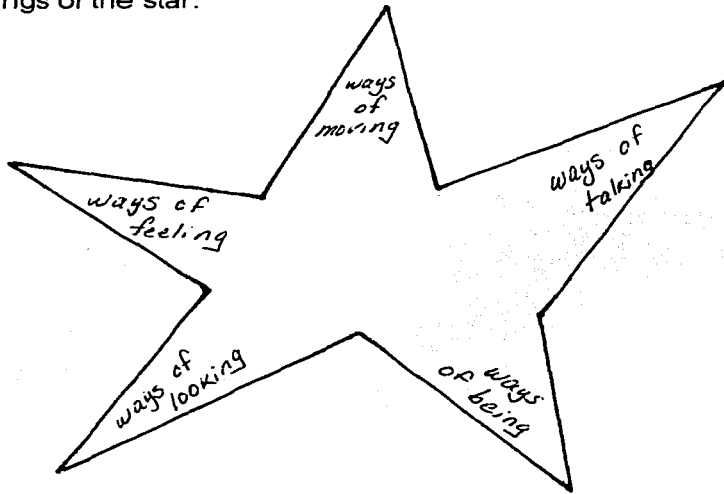
Instrucciones:

1. En esta parte de la historia aparecen varias palabras que describen formas de:
 - a) hablar
 - b) mirar
 - c) ser
 - d) sentir
 - e) moverse

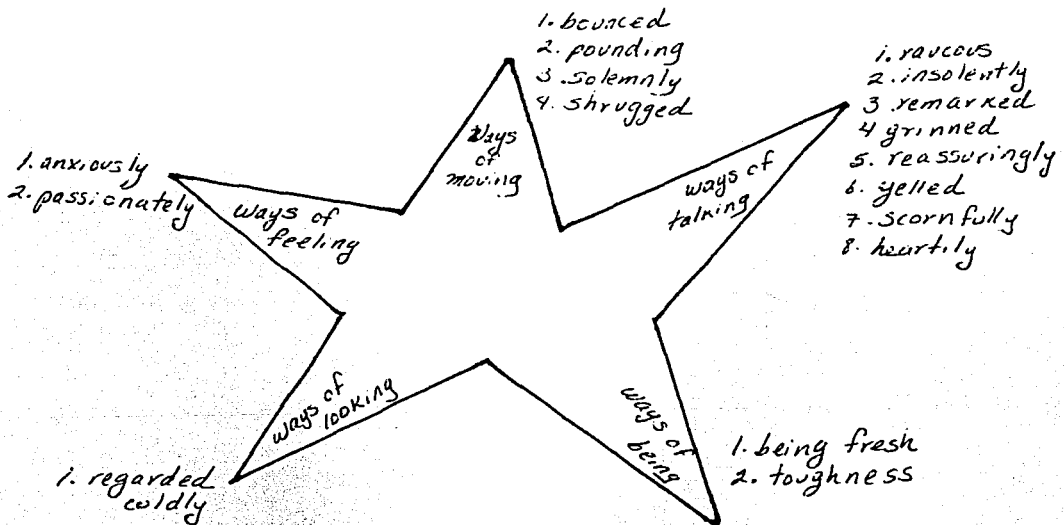
Los alumnos, en parejas, buscan y acomodan las palabras en el siguiente diagrama de estrella:

Exercise

Instructions: In this part of the story there are some words that describe ways of talking, looking, feeling, moving and being. Look for them and list them according to the headings of the star.



2. Se revisan las respuestas con todo el grupo. Los alumnos tratan de explicar su significado. Se espera que el diagrama quede de la siguiente manera:



3. Se divide a los alumnos en equipos y a cada uno se le asigna un grupo de las palabras vistas en el diagrama para que a través de diversas técnicas como la mímica, dibujos, pequeñas conversaciones, excepto la explicación, ejemplifiquen el significado de esas palabras.
4. Se revisa la actividad con todo el grupo y se hacen comentarios al respecto.

Actividad 7: Predicción

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de la predicción de manera consciente, la creatividad de los alumnos y el interés en la historia.

Instrucciones:

1. El profesor le hace al grupo la misma pregunta que el padre de Laurie le hace a su hijo respecto a Charles.

What do you think they are going to do about Charles?

2. El profesor recolecta sus predicciones que pueden ser utilizadas para introducir la lectura de la siguiente sección.

Actividad 8: Lectura y producción escrita

Objetivo: Desarrollar sus estrategias de lectura y de producción escrita

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de tres personas, los alumnos hacen una segunda lectura de la misma sección del texto y se fijan en elementos que les puedan ayudar a hacer una descripción de uno de los siguientes personajes:
 - a) Laurie's mother
 - b) Laurie's father
 - c) Laurie's teacher

2. Escriben un párrafo breve. Cada oración debe agregar una característica o detalle de los personajes, excepto una que debe aportar información falsa.
3. Los alumnos intercambian sus descripciones con otro equipo y determinan cuál es la oración incorrecta.
4. Se revisan las respuestas con todo el grupo. Cada equipo, tanto el que hizo la descripción como el que la leyó, debe explicar sus elecciones.

Actividad 9: Lectura

Objetivo: Desarrollar las estrategias de lectura

Instrucciones:

1. De manera individual, los alumnos leen la siguiente sección del texto y contestan el ejercicio de comprensión de falso y verdadero (hoja de trabajo 1). Se les explica que en caso de que la respuesta sea "falso", deben aportar la respuesta correcta.
2. Se revisan las respuestas con el grupo.

Answers:

1. F They use Charles' name to call everything related to something bothersome or to accidents
2. F That surprised his parents, but not him.
3. F His mother thought it was a real change.
4. T
5. F He told exactly what happened only to his father.
6. T
7. F One of his classmates, a girl, was punished for his fault on Friday. He was punished on Monday.
8. T

Actividad 10: Lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. En parejas, los alumnos completan la tabla (hoja de trabajo 2), aportando con base en sus interpretaciones (inferencias) e imaginación lo que podrían haber estado pensando los personajes cuando hicieron los comentarios.
2. Se revisan sus respuestas con todo el grupo.

Actividad 11: Predicción

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo consciente de la predicción como estrategia de lectura, su imaginación y su interés por el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. Individualmente los alumnos completan las siguientes oraciones respecto a lo que creen sucederá en la última parte del cuento.

Exercise

Instructions: What do you think is going to happen? Complete the following sentences.

- a) I think Charles' mother...
- b) I think Laurie's mother....
- c) I think Laurie and Charles' teacher...
- d) I think at the end...

3. Se revisan las respuestas con el grupo y se llega a un acuerdo sobre cuáles son las más probables.

Actividad 12: Lectura

Objetivo: Desarrollar sus estrategias de lectura, confirmar sus predicciones y recavar sus primeras respuestas ante el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. Individualmente, los alumnos leen la última parte del cuento.
2. Con el grupo, los alumnos comparten los resultados de sus predicciones y sus primeras impresiones del texto. Para motivar a los alumnos, el profesor puede hacer preguntas como:
 - a) Did any of your predictions match with the ending of the story?
 - b) Did you like the end? Why?
 - c) Could it be improved?
 - d) Is that what you expected to happen? Why?

Poslectura

Actividad 13: Producción oral

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de la producción oral a través de la discusión del texto, de la interpretación y del análisis de las reacciones de los lectores ante el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. En grupos de 4 o 5 personas, los alumnos escogen algunas de las preguntas del ejercicio y discuten sus respuestas.

Exercise.

Instructions: Choose four of the following questions and discuss them with the group. **Remember:** there are no good or bad answers, just more appropriate or less appropriate ones, depending on the content of the text.

1. Why do you think Laurie created Charles?
2. Why do you think Laurie behaved like that in school?
3. Why do you think we are never told Laurie's parents' names?
4. If you were one of Laurie's parents, what attitude would you take? Why?
5. If you had to choose a moral lesson for the story, which one would it be?
 - a) Don't trust people (not even if it's your own child!)
 - b) The relationship between parents and children should be based on confidence and honesty.
 - c) Bringing up a child is like planting a tree.
 - d) A witty person is worth two
 - e) Every dog has his day
 - f) Your own: _____
6. Do you identify with any of the characters? Why?
7. Do you dislike any of the characters? Why?
8. What do you think is the major point of the story?
9. Does this story remind you of any other artistic work (a movie, another story, a painting, etc)? Why?

Durante la actividad, el profesor ayuda a los alumnos a profundizar en sus respuestas.

2. Se comparten las respuestas con el grupo. Los alumnos mismos, a través de sus comentarios, contribuyen a la profundización o modificación de las mismas.

Actividad 14: Vocabulario

Objetivo: Promover el reconocimiento y aplicación del vocabulario nuevo.

Instrucciones:

- Los alumnos, ya sea de manera individual o en parejas, buscan en la sopa de letras diez palabras del vocabulario nuevo que fueron presentadas durante las etapas de prelectura y lectura.

Las palabras son:

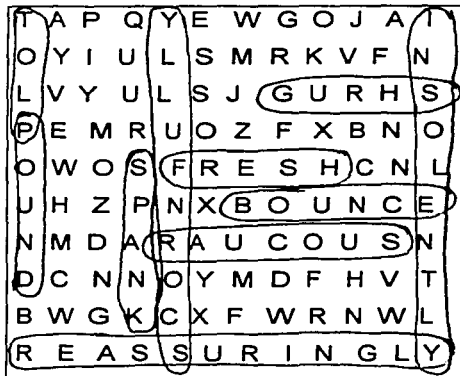
- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| a) fresh | b) spank |
| c) insolently | d) plot |
| e) scornfully | f) bounce |
| g) pound | h) shrug |
| i) raucous | j) reassuringly |

Exercise

Instructions: In the puzzle below there are 10 words that were taken from the story, and they may be new for you. Look for them and circle them. They may be across, down, diagonally or backwards.

T	A	P	Q	Y	E	W	G	O	J	A	I
O	Y	I	U	L	S	M	R	K	V	F	N
L	V	Y	U	L	S	J	G	U	R	H	S
P	E	M	R	U	O	Z	F	X	B	N	O
O	W	O	S	F	R	E	S	H	C	N	L
U	H	Z	P	N	X	B	O	U	N	C	E
N	M	D	A	R	A	U	C	O	U	S	N
D	C	N	N	O	Y	M	D	F	H	V	T
B	W	G	K	C	X	F	W	R	N	W	L
R	E	A	S	S	U	R	I	N	G	L	Y

2. Se revisan las respuestas con el grupo. También el significado de las palabras de ser necesario.



3. Los alumnos completan una conversación (hoja de trabajo 3), usando algunas de las palabras de la sopa de letras. Puede realizarse esta actividad de manera individual o en parejas.

4. Se revisan las respuestas con el grupo.

Answers:

- | | | | |
|------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1. spanked | 2. fresh | 3. bouncing | 4. pounding |
| 5. raucous | 6. insolently | 7. scornfully | 8. plotting |

5. Algunas parejas de alumnos leen la conversación en voz alta, cuidando la pronunciación, gestos y entonación.

Actividad 15: Producción oral

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de la producción oral a partir de la interpretación del texto y de sus reacciones ante el mismo.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de tres personas, los alumnos preparan el diálogo de la escena que ellos creen podría suceder cuando la madre de Laurie regresa de la escuela. Se puede usar la conversación del ejercicio de vocabulario como ejemplo.
2. Los alumnos preparan la escena. El profesor ayuda en caso de ser necesario.
3. Los alumnos presentan la escena ante la clase, asumiendo alguno de los roles de los personajes.
4. Se hacen comentarios.

Hoja de trabajo 1

Exercise

Instructions: According to this section of the story decide whether the following sentences are true (T) or false (F). In case it is false, provide the correct statement.

1. Laurie's family used Charles' name to call everything related to bad luck or bad behavior. _____

Correct answer: _____

2. The unexpected change in Charles' behavior in class surprised everybody, even Laurie. _____

Correct answer: _____

3. Laurie's parents thought this new attitude was temporary. _____

Correct answer: _____

3. At the end of the fourth week, Charles went back to his disrespectful and tough behavior. _____

Correct answer: _____

5. Laurie told his parents exactly what Charles did and said that day. _____

Correct answer: _____

6. Laurie's mother wanted to go to the PTA meeting to meet Charles' mother.

Correct answer: _____

7. Charles was punished for saying bad words on Friday and Monday

Correct answer: _____

8. Laurie's parents wanted to invite Charles' mother over to their house.

Correct answer: _____

Hoja de trabajo 2

Exercise

Instructions: According to your reading and imagination, say what you suppose the character was thinking when he made the following statements.

What each character says	What the character is thinking
1. Laurie: He was her helper, that's all.	
2. Laurie's mother: Can this be true about Charles? Can something like this happen?	
3. Laurie's father: Wait and see. When you get a Charles to deal with, this may mean he's only plotting.	
4. Laurie: I'll have to whisper it to you, it's so bad.	
5. Laurie's father: Did Charles tell the little girl to say that?	

<p>6. Laurie: She said it twice. Charles told Her to say it twice.</p>	
<p>7. Laurie: Nothing. He was passing out the crayons.</p>	
<p>8. Laurie's father: She'll be there. I don't See how they could hold a PTA meeting without Charles' mother.</p>	

Hoja de trabajo 3

Exercise

Instructions: This is a conversation that could have taken place when Laurie's mother comes back home from the meeting. Complete it using the words from the puzzle. You don't need to use all of them.

Laurie's mother: Hi, love.

Laurie's father: Hi. Where's Charles' mother?

Laurie's mother: She's right in front of you.

Laurie's father: What are you saying?!

Laurie's mother: There's no Charles at all. Laurie made him up, but not the stories. His teacher told me that he's been having some difficulties in adjusting to the class.

Laurie's father: So, he's the one who has been (1)_____ for being (2)_____!

Laurie's mother: Yes, and punished for (3)_____ a see-saw that made a girl bleed, (4)_____ his feet during class and talking in a (5)_____ voice!

Laurie's father: Well, sometimes he answers (6)_____ and (7)_____, but I thought it was just his age.

Laurie's mother: One thing is for sure. He has been (8)_____ all this. We have to find out the reason. He cannot continue behaving like this.

Laurie's father: Yes, you're right.

CHARLES

by Shirley Jackson

Shirley Jackson (1919-1965) was born in California. Many of her stories and novels are works about horrors, usually set in everyday surroundings. Her works include *The Lottery*, *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, and *The Haunting of Hill House*. The following story, a delightful one about a boy in kindergarten, is in sharp contrast to these works.

The day my son Laurie started kindergarten he renounced corduroy overalls with bibs and began wearing blue jeans with a belt. I watched him go off the first morning with the older girl next door, seeing clearly that an era of my life was ended, my sweet-voiced nursery-school tot replaced by a long-trousered, swaggering character who forgot to stop at the corner and wave good-bye to me.

He came home the same way, the front door slamming open, his cap on the floor, and the voice suddenly become raucous shouting. "Isn't anybody here?"

At lunch he spoke insolently to his father, spilled his baby sister's milk, and remarked that his teacher said we were not to take the name of the Lord in vain.

"How was school today?" I asked, elaborately casual.

"All right," he said.

"Did you learn anything?" his father asked.

Laurie regarded his father coldly. "I didn't learn nothing," he said.

"Anything," I said. "Didn't learn anything."

"The teacher spanked a boy, though." Laurie said,

addressing his bread and butter. "For being fresh," he added, with his mouth full.

"What did he do?" I asked. "Who was it?"

Laurie thought: "It was Charles," he said. "He was fresh. The teacher spanked him and made him stand in a corner. He was awfully fresh."

"What did he do?" I asked again, but Laurie slid off his chair, took a cookie, and left, while his father was still saying, "See here, young man."

The next day Laurie remarked at lunch, as soon as he sat down, "Well, Charles was bad again today." He grinned enormously and said, "Today Charles hit the teacher."

"Good heavens," I said, mindful of the Lord's name. "I suppose he got spanked again?"

"He sure did," Laurie said. "Look up," he said to his father.

"What?" his father said, looking up.

"Look down," Laurie said. "Look at my thumb. Gee, you're dumb." He began to laugh insanely.

"Why did Charles hit the teacher?" I asked quickly.

"Because she tried to make him color with red crayons," Laurie said. "Charles wanted to color with green crayons so he hit the teacher and she spanked him and said nobody play with Charles but everybody did."

The third day—it was Wednesday of the first week—Charles bounced a see-saw on to the head of a little girl and made her bleed, and the teacher made him stay inside all during recess. Thursday Charles had to stand in a corner during story-time

because he kept pounding his feet on the floor. Friday Charles was deprived of blackboard privileges because he threw chalk.

On Saturday I remarked to my husband, "Do you think kindergarten is too unsettling for Laurie? All this toughness, and bad grammar, and this Charles boy sounds like such a bad influence."

"It'll be all right," my husband said reassuringly. "Bound to be people like Charles in the world. Might as well meet them now as later."

On Monday Laurie came home late, full of news. "Charles," he shouted as he came up the hill; I was waiting anxiously on the front steps. "Charles," Laurie yelled all the way up the hill, "Charles was bad again."

"Come right in," I said, as soon as he came close enough. Lauch is waiting.

"You know what Charles did?" he demanded, following me through the door. "Charles yelled so in school they sent a boy in from first grade to tell the teacher she had to make Charles keep quiet, and so Charles had to stay after school. And so all the children stayed to watch him."

"What did he do?" I asked.

"He just sat there," Laurie said, climbing into his chair at the table. "Hi, Pop, y'old dust mop."

"Charles had to stay after school today," I told my husband. "Everyone stayed with him."

"What does this Charles look like?" my husband asked Laurie. "What's his other name?"

"He's bigger than me," Laurie said. "And he doesn't

have any rubbers and he doesn't ever wear a jacket."

Monday night was the first Parent-Teachers meeting, and only the fact that the baby had a cold kept me from going. I wanted passionately to meet Charles's mother. On Tuesday Laurie remarked suddenly, "Our teacher had a friend come to see her in school today."

"Charles's mother?" my husband and I asked simultaneously.

"Naaah." Laurie said scornfully. "It was a man who came and made us do exercises, we had to touch our toes. Look." He climbed down from his chair and squatted down and touched his toes. "Like this," he said. He got solemnly back into his chair and said, picking up his fork "Charles didn't even do exercises."

"That's fine," I said heartily. "Didn't Charles want to do exercises?"

"Naaah." Laurie said. "Charles was so fresh to the teacher's friend he wasn't let do exercises."

"Fresh again?" I said.

"He kicked the teacher's friend," Laurie said. "The teacher's friend told Charles to touch his toes like I just did and Charles kicked him."

"What are they going to do about Charles, do you suppose?" Laurie's father asked him.

Laurie shrugged elaborately.

"Throw him out of school. I guess," he said.

Wednesday and Thursday were routine: Charles yelled during story hour and hit a boy in the stomach and made him cry. On Friday Charles stayed after school again and so did all the other children.

With the third week of kindergarten Charles was an

institution in our family: the baby was being a Charles when she cried all afternoon; Laurie did a Charles when he filled his wagon full of mud and pulled it through the kitchen; even my husband, when he caught his elbow in the telephone cord and pulled telephone, ashtray, and a bowl of flowers off the table, said, after the first minute, "Looks like Charles."

During the third and fourth weeks it looked like a reformation in Charles: Laurie reported grimly at lunch on Thursday of the third week, "Charles was so good today the teacher gave him an apple."

"What?" I said, and my husband added warily, "You mean Charles?"

"Charles," Laurie said. "He gave the crayons around and he picked up the books afterward and the teacher said he was her helper."

"What happened?" I asked incredulously.

"He was her helper, that's all," Laurie said, and shrugged.

"Can this be true, about Charles?" I asked my husband that night. "Can something like this happen?"

"Wait and see," my husband said cynically. "When you've got a Charles to deal with, this may mean he's only plotting."

He seemed to be wrong. For over a week Charles was the teacher's helper; each day he handed things out and he picked things up, no one had to stay after school.

"The P.T.A. meeting's next week again," I told my husband one evening. "I'm going to find Charles's mother there."

"Ask her what happened to Charles," my husband said. "I'd like to know."

"I'd like to know myself." I said.

On Friday of that week things were back to normal. "You know what Charles did today?" Laurie demanded at the lunch table, in a voice slightly awed. "He told a little girl to say a word and she said it and the teacher washed her mouth out with soap and Charles laughed."

"What word?" his father asked unwisely, and Laurie said, "I'll have to whisper it to you, it's so bad." He got down off his chair and went around to his father. His father bent his head down and Laurie whispered joyfully. His father's eyes widened.

"Did Charles tell the little girl to say *that*?" he asked respectfully.

"She said it *twice*," Laurie said. "Charles told her to say it *twice*."

"What happened to Charles?" my husband asked.

"Nothing," Laurie said. "He was passing out the crayons."

Monday morning Charles abandoned the little girl and said the evil word himself three or four times, getting his mouth washed out with soap each time. He also threw chalk.

My husband came to the door with me that evening as I set out for the P.T.A. meeting, "invite her over for a cup of tea after the meeting," he said. "I want to get a look at her."

"If only she's there." I said prayerfully.

"She'll be there," my husband said. "I don't see how they could hold a P.T.A. meeting without Charles's mother."

At the meeting I sat restlessly, scanning each comfortable matronly face, trying to determine which one

hid the secret of Charles. None of them looked to me haggard enough. No one stood up in the meeting and apologized for the way her son had been acting. No one mentioned Charles.

After the meeting I identified and sought out Laurie's kindergarten teacher. She had a plate with a cup of tea and a piece of chocolate cake. I had a plate with a cup of tea and a piece of marshmallow cake.

We maneuvered up to one another cautiously, and smiled.

"I've been so anxious to meet you," I said. "I'm Laurie's mother."

"We're all so interested in Laurie," she said.

"Well, he certainly likes kindergarten," I said. "He talks about it all the time."

"We had a little trouble adjusting the first week or so," she said primly, "but

now he's a fine little helper. With occasional lapses, of course."

"Laurie usually adjusts very quickly," I said. "I suppose this time it's Charles's influence."

"Charles?"

"Yes," I said, laughing. "you must have your hands full in that kindergarten, with Charles."

"Charles?" she said. "We don't have any Charles in the kindergarten."

Ejemplo metodológico 2

"A fable"

Prelectura

Actividad 1: Vocabulario

Objetivo: Familiarizarse con el vocabulario nuevo y el tema del cuento

Instrucciones:

1. Los alumnos reciben una copia de la sopa de letras (hoja de trabajo 1).
2. Se leen las instrucciones para realizar el ejercicio con todo el grupo.
3. Se revisa el significado de las palabras.
4. Los alumnos realizan la actividad de manera individual o en parejas.
5. Se revisa la cita con el grupo y los alumnos expresan su opinión respecto a ella.

Cita: "A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, always with the same person."

Actividad 2: Producción oral

Objetivo: Familiarizarse con el tema del cuento.

Instrucciones:

1. Según su punto de vista, los alumnos contestan individualmente el siguiente ejercicio.

Exercise

Instructions: According to your point of view, complete the following statements.

1. Good things about marriage.
2. Bad things about marriage.
3. The most important thing(s) to get married.
4. The most important quality(qualities) in a couple.
5. The way to be happy in marriage.

2. En equipos de tres o cuatro personas, los alumnos consensan sus respuestas.
3. Reportan sus conclusiones a todo el grupo.

Lectura

Actividad 3: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. El profesor introduce el cuento como una crítica al matrimonio.
2. Los alumnos de manera individual leen los primeros dos párrafos de la historia y completan la siguiente tabla.

Exercise

Instructions: Read the first two paragraphs of the story and complete the chart below.

Day:

Time:

Place:

Destination:

Characters:

3. Se revisan las respuestas con el grupo.

Actividad 4: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura y la imaginación de los alumnos.

Instrucciones:

1. Se comenta sobre la reacción de uno de los personajes (the young man) al encontrarse con los otros dos (la mamá y su hija).
2. Los alumnos leen la primera conversación y completan la siguiente tabla. Este ejercicio puede realizarse de manera individual o con todo el grupo.

Exercise

Instructions: What's the characters' reactions like when they met? Read the first conversation and complete the columns of the characters' reactions.

Young man's reaction	Reason(s)	Daughter's reaction	Reason(s)	Mother's reaction	Reason(s)

Based on your reading and your opinion, give reason the characters had to have that reaction.

3. Se revisan las respuestas con el grupo en caso de haberse realizado el ejercicio de manera individual.
4. En equipos de tres personas, los alumnos agregan algunos comentarios o preguntas antes y después de la conversación que crean los personajes pudieron hacer.
5. Algunos equipos leen su nueva versión de la conversación ante el grupo.

Actividad 5: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. Con base en su lectura, los alumnos predicen la siguiente parte del cuento. El profesor puede hacer preguntas como:
 - a) Do you think he is going to try to talk to the young girl?
 - b) How is he going to do it?
 - c) Is she going to be nice or rude?
 - d) Is her mother going to be kind or rude?
2. Los alumnos leen los siguientes dos párrafos y confirman sus predicciones.
3. Los alumnos hacen comentarios de sus predicciones con el grupo.

Actividad 6: Lectura de comprensión

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura y el interés por el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de tres personas, los alumnos reciben la segunda conversación de la historia en tarjetas marcadas de la siguiente manera (hoja de trabajo 2):

- a) un signo de interrogación (?) que indica pregunta
- b) una "A" que indica respuesta
- c) una "O" que indica orden
- d) una "C" que indica comentario

También se menciona que se han omitido los comentarios del narrador.

2. Los alumnos realizan la actividad como un juego de memoria. Se les da el principio de la conversación y ellos continúan destapando uno a la vez las tarjetas que podrían ser la siguiente parte. Dejan volteadas las tarjetas que no sean apropiadas y acomodan a parte las que sí lo sean. El primer equipo en terminar y cuya conversación haya sido aceptada por el profesor como apropiada es el que marca el fin de la actividad.

3. El equipo ganador lee su conversación y señala los elementos que tomaron en cuenta para organizarla.

4. El profesor da a los alumnos la conversación que aparece en el cuento.

Actividad 7: Vocabulario

Objetivo: Reconocimiento y aplicación de adjetivos.

Instrucciones:

1. De manera individual o en parejas, los alumnos reciben el siguiente ejercicio.

Exercise

Instructions: What are the characters like? Choose words from the box that best describe the characters of the story. Add any other characteristic(s) that you consider that describes their personality.

funny	superficial	intelligent	ambitious	shy
dreamer	realistic	direct	anxious	naive
submissive	courageous	self-confident	selfish	nice

Young man

Daughter

Mother

- En pequeños grupos, los alumnos comentan sus elecciones y las razones que tuvieron para hacerlo.
- Los alumnos comparten sus respuestas con todo el grupo.

Actividad 8: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. Con base en su lectura, los alumnos en parejas hacen predicciones respecto a la última sección del texto. Consideran las acciones que la joven pareja debe llevar a cabo para casarse. Llenan la siguiente tabla.

Implications of getting married	Solutions

2. Los alumnos leen la última parte y la comparan con sus predicciones. Hacen las modificaciones necesarias.
3. Comparten la comparación de sus predicciones con el contenido del grupo y sus primeras impresiones del cuento.

Poslectura

Actividad 9

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura y explorar la respuesta del lector ante el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. Con base en el texto, los alumnos realizan el mismo ejercicio que hicieron en la etapa de prelectura.

Exercise

Instructions: According to the story, complete the following statements.

1. Good things about marriage.
2. Bad things about marriage.
3. The most important thing(s) to get married.
4. The most important quality(qualities) in a couple.
5. The way to be happy in marriage.

2. Comparan ambos ejercicios y en equipos de tres personas contestan las siguientes preguntas:
 - a) What differences and similarities did you find between your opinion about marriage and the story?
 - b) What values are present in both of them?
 - c) Why do you think the author decide to narrate the story like that?
 - d) Why is the story called "A fable"?
 - e) What's the message of the story?
 - f) Would you change any part of it? Why? How?

3. Los alumnos comparten sus respuestas con el grupo.

Actividad 10: Producción escrita

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de la producción escrita y expresar sus respuestas ante el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. Los alumnos imaginan que son reporteros y escriben para la sección de sociales de un periódico. La noticias del día es la boda que se llevó a cabo en el metro de Nueva York.
2. El profesor y los alumnos mencionan la organización que debe tener la noticia.
3. En parejas, los alumnos deciden el nombre y tipo de periódico para el que trabajan, los elementos que van a mencionar y el tono que van a usar.
4. Los alumnos redactan la noticia. El profesor los auxilia en caso de ser necesario.
5. El profesor revisa la redacción y ortografía de las noticias y los alumnos hacen las correcciones necesarias.
6. Los alumnos ilustran su noticia con algún elemento de la historia o relacionado con ella.

7. Los alumnos comparten su noticia con sus compañeros de clase y de otros niveles, ya sea colocándolos alrededor del salón de clases e invitando a la gente a leerlos o en algún otro espacio público como el tablero de anuncios de la escuela.

Actividad 11: Comprensión auditiva

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de la creatividad de los alumnos, expresar su respuesta ante el texto y el desarrollo de la pronunciación y entonación en la lengua extranjera.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de cuatro personas, los alumnos escriben una canción que narre la historia de los personajes. El profesor pueda mencionar algunos ejemplos de este tipo de canciones—"Penélope" de Joan Manuel Serrat, por ejemplo. Se les pide que la organización de la canción sea sencilla como:
 - a) Primera estrofa
 - b) Coro
 - c) Segunda estrofa
2. Una vez que la han escrito y ensayado, la presentan ante el grupo. Esto puede llevarse a cabo como si fuera un algún programa de concursos.
3. Los alumnos comentan con todo el grupo su experiencia en esta actividad. En caso de que lo deseen, se pueden fotocopiar sus canciones para todos sus compañeros.

Hoja de trabajo 2

"Pardon me, You're a very pretty girl".

"Thank you."

"Don't talk to him, don't answer him. I'm warning you. Believe me."

"I'm in love with you."

"I don't believe you."

"Don't answer him."

"I really do. In fact, I'm so much in love with you that I want to marry you."

"Do you have a job?"

"Yes, today is my first day. I'm going to Manhattan to start my first day of work."

"What kind of work will you do?"

"I don't know exactly. You see, I didn't start yet."

"It sounds exciting."

"It's my first job, but I'll have my own desk and handle a lot of papers and carry them around in a briefcase, and it will pay well, and I'll work my way up."

"I love you."

"Will you marry me?"

"I don't know. You'll have to ask my mother."

A FABLE

THE YOUNG MAN WAS clean shaven and neatly dressed. It was early Monday morning and he got on the subway. It was the first day of his first job and he was slightly nervous; he didn't know exactly what his job would be. Otherwise he felt fine. He loved everybody he saw. He loved everybody on the street and everybody disappearing into the subway, and he loved the world because it was a fine clear day and he was starting his first job.

Without kicking anybody, the young man was able to find a seat on the Manhattan-bound train. The car filled quickly and he looked up at the people standing over him envying his seat. Among them were a mother and daughter who were going shopping. The daughter was a beautiful girl with blond hair and soft-looking skin, and he was immediately attracted to her.

"He's staring at you," the mother whispered to the daughter.

"Yes, Mother, I feel so uncomfortable. What shall I do?"

"He's in love with you."

"In love with me? How can you tell?"

"Because I'm your mother."

"But what shall I do?"

"Nothing. He'll try to talk to you. If he does, answer him. Be nice to him. He's only a boy."

The train reached the business district and many people got off. The girl and her mother found seats opposite the young man. He continued to look at the girl who occasionally looked to see if he was looking at her.

The young man found a good pretext for standing in giving his seat to an elderly man. He stood over the girl and her mother. They whispered back and forth and looked up at him. At another stop the seat next to the girl was vacated, and the young man blushed but quickly took it.

"I knew it," the mother said between her teeth. "I knew it, I *knew* it."

The young man cleared his throat and tapped the girl. She jumped.

"Pardon me," he said. "You're a very pretty girl."

"Thank you," she said.

"Don't talk to him," her mother said. "Don't answer him. I'm warning you. Believe me."

"I'm in love with you," he said to the girl.

"I don't believe you," the girl said.

"Don't answer him," the mother said.

"I really do," he said. "In fact, I'm so much in love with you that I want to marry you."

"Do you have a job?" she said.

"Yes, today is my first day. I'm going to Manhattan to start my first day of work."

"What kind of work will you do?" she asked.

"I don't know exactly," he said. "You see, I didn't start yet."

"It sounds exciting," she said.

"It's my first job, but I'll have my own desk and handle a lot of papers and carry them around in a briefcase, and it will pay well, and I'll work my way up."

"I love you," she said.

"Will you marry me?"

"I don't know. You'll have to ask my mother."

The young man rose from his seat and stood before the girl's mother. He cleared his throat very carefully for a long time. "May I have the honor of having your daughter's hand in marriage?" he said, but he was drowned out by the subway noise.

The mother looked up at him and said, "What?" He couldn't hear her either, but he could tell by the movement of her lips and by the way her face wrinkled up that she said, "What."

The train pulled to a stop.

"May I have the honor of having your daughter's hand in marriage!" he shouted, not realizing there was no subway noise. Everybody on the train looked at him, smiled, and then they all applauded.

"Are you crazy?" the mother asked.

The train started again.

"What?" he said.

"Why do you want to marry her?" she asked.

"Well, she's pretty—I mean, I'm in love with her."

"Is that all?"

"I guess so," he said. "Is there supposed to be more?"

"No. Not usually," the mother said. "Are you working?"

"Yes. As a matter of fact, that's why I'm going into Manhattan so early. Today is the first day of my first job."

"Congratulations," the mother said.

"Thanks," he said. "Can I marry your daughter?"

"Do you have a car?" she asked.

"Not yet," he said. "But I should be able to get one pretty soon.

And a house, too."

"A house?"

"With lots of rooms."

"Yes, that's what I expected you to say," she said. She turned to her daughter. "Do you love him?"

"Yes, Mother, I do."

"Why?"

"Because he's good, and gentle, and kind."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Then you really love him."

"Yes."

"Are you sure there isn't anyone else that you might love and might want to marry?"

"No, Mother," the girl said.

"Well, then," the mother said to the young man. "Looks like there's nothing I can do about it. Ask her again."

The train stopped.

"My dearest one," he said, "will you marry me?"

"Yes," she said.

Everybody in the car smiled and applauded.

"Isn't life wonderful?" the boy asked the mother.

"Beautiful," the mother said.

The conductor climbed down from between the cars as the train started up and, straightening his dark tie, approached them with a solemn black book in his hand.

Ejemplo metodológico 3

"Two kinds"

Prelectura

Actividad 1: Producción oral

Objetivo: Familiarizar a los alumnos con el tema del cuento.

Instrucciones:

1. El profesor escribe en el pizarrón la siguiente cita extraída del cuento.

"Only two kinds of daughters, those who are obediente and those who follow their own mind."

Amy Tan, "Two kinds"

2. En equipos, los alumnos hacen comentarios respecto a la cita, las implicaciones de la crianza y educación de un hijo y a su experiencia como hijos y/o padres. Pueden formularse las preguntas como las siguientes:

- a) What's your relationship with your parents like?
- b) Could you mention some beautiful moments of your childhood?
- c) Mention some hard moments of your childhood?
- d) What do you think of the way you were brought up?
- e) If you could, what part of your childhood would you change?
- f) What do you think of the way you are bringing up your children?
- g) What modifications do you need to make?

3. Los alumnos reportan algunos de sus comentarios con todo el grupo.

4. Los alumnos preparan una tabla donde van a ir registrando las experiencias o reacciones de los personajes con las que se identifiquen y la semejanza con su vida.

Character's experience or reaction	My own experience or reaction

Actividad 2: Lectura de comprensión

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de estrategias de lectura y analizar aspectos culturales.

Instrucciones:

1. Se divide a los alumnos en dos secciones. Una sección (A) recibe las siguientes líneas tomadas de la introducción del cuento:

- a) My mother believed you could be anything you wanted to be in America.
- b) You could become rich.
- c) "Of course you can be prodigy, too," my mother told me when I was nine.
- d) She had come here in 1949 after losing everything in China.
- e) But she never looked back with regret.
- f) There were so many ways for things to get better.

La otra sección (B) recibe un texto breve sobre el sueño norteamericano (The American dream).

July 19, 1984

Speech accepting the Democratic vice presidential nomination as delivered at the Democratic National Convention in San Francisco.

Ladies and gentleman of the convention: My name is Geraldine A. Ferraro. I stand before you to proclaim tonight: America is the land where dreams can come true for all of us.

Tonight, the daughter of working Americans tells all Americans that the future is within our reach- if we're willing to reach for it.

Our faith that we can shape a better future is what the American dream is all about.

The promise of our country is that the rules are fair. If you work hard and play by the rules, you can earn your share of America's blessings.

<http://gos.sbc.edu/ferraro.html>

2. Los alumnos leen el material y se reúnen en equipos de cuatro personas (dos de la sección A y dos de la sección B).
3. Comparten la información y discuten el concepto del "sueño norteamericano".
4. Hacen predicciones sobre el cuento:
 - a) personajes
 - b) trama
 - c) contexto

- d) final
- e) otros

5. Escriben sus predicciones en una hoja para entregar con sus nombres y el profesor las guarda en una caja ("la cápsula del tiempo") que volverá a abrir hacia el final de la lectura del texto.

Lectura

Actividad 3: Lectura de comprensión

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura

Instrucciones:

1. Individualmente los alumnos leen la sección 1 del cuento. El profesor les pide que a partir de ese momento marquen en el texto las ideas que les llamen la atención o ideas que el texto les sugiera para comentarlas posteriormente con el grupo.
2. De manera oral los alumnos contestan las siguientes preguntas:
 - a) Why did the girl's mother take her to a beauty training school?
 - b) Why did she change her mind about her daughter's new look?
 - c) How did the girl take her mother's ideas?
3. Los alumnos comparten con el grupo cualquier anotación o idea que hayan marcado en el texto.

Actividad 4: Lectura de comprensión

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. Individualmente los alumnos leen la sección 2 del cuento. En esta sección se han eliminado algunas ideas que son consecuencia de alguna acción mencionada previamente por los personajes. Los alumnos proveen esas ideas.
2. Los alumnos consensan sus propuestas primero en equipos pequeños y después con el grupo.
3. El profesor les muestra la versión original de esa sección.

Actividad 5: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Analizar el tono de la historia.

Instrucciones:

1. El profesor explica el concepto literario de "tono".

En literatura, el tono se refleja en las palabras elegidas que conforman el discurso. Por ejemplo, si el escritor quiere evocar un tono depresivo, describe a un pueblo como "pobre", "lúgubre", "sin sueños", "sin esperanza", etc. Por el contrario si quiere escribir una historia en un tono alegre, describiría el lugar usando palabras e ideas con un significado agradable como "abundancia", "próspero" y "desarrollado".

En literatura, el tono se refleja en las palabras elegidas que conforman el discurso. Por ejemplo, si el escritor quiere evocar un tono depresivo, describe a un pueblo como "pobre", "lúgubre", "sin sueños", "sin esperanza", etc. Por el contrario si quiere escribir una historia en un tono alegre, describiría el lugar usando palabras e ideas con un significado agradable como "abundancia", "próspero" y "desarrollado".

2. El profesor da un ejemplo.

Sección 1, párrafo 4:

"You look like Negro Chinese," she lamented, as if I had done this on purpose.

El tono de este párrafo puede ser descrito como de desconcierto porque la narradora plantea una contradicción entre la actitud de su madre y su disponibilidad por complacerla. Las palabras en este párrafo que reflejan el tono son : Negro Chinese, lamented, as if I had done it on purpose.

3. Los alumnos analizan el tono de otras partes del texto (hoja de trabajo 1)

4. Comparten sus respuestas con todo el grupo.

Actividad 6: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. Los alumnos leen la sección 3 del cuento.

2. En grupos de tres personas, eligen de 8-10 oraciones o conjunto de oraciones que mejor resuman la trama de esta parte del cuento. Un ejemplo podría ser:

1. And then one day my mother was watching the Ed Sullivan Show on TV.
2. She seemed entranced by the music.
3. "Ni kan," my mother said, calling me over with hurried hand gestures. "Look here."
4. It was being punded out by a little Chinese girl.
5. In spite of these warning signs, I wasn't worried. Our family had no piano and we couldn't afford to buy one.
6. Three days after watching the Ed Sullivan Show my mother told me what my schedule would be for piano lessons and piano practice.
7. I felt as though I had been sent to hell.
8. Mr Chong was a retired piano teacher.
9. He was deaf.
10. Over the next year I practiced dutifully in my own way, but I decided to put a stop to my mother's foolish pride.

3. Los alumnos las organizan en un diagrama de flujo. De ser necesario el profesor explica las características de éste con un ejemplo (hoja de trabajo 2).
4. Los alumnos presentan su diagrama-resumen a otros equipos.

Actividad 7: Comprensión de lectura.

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de tres personas, los alumnos leen la sección 4 del cuento. Esta sección ha sido dividida en tres partes. Cada alumno lee una parte, de la cua

es responsable. Se les pide que imaginen que la lectura del cuento es como si estuvieran viendo una película en la televisión y que desconocen las otras dos partes del cuento porque en ese momento sonó el teléfono o tocaron el timbre.

2. Durante su lectura formulan preguntas que les pueden ayudar a comprender mejor la parte del texto que les tocó y que creen podrían contestar sus compañeros, como si les pidiera que le contaran la parte de la película que no vieron.
3. Los alumnos reconstruyen esta sección del cuento con sus compañeros de equipo.
4. Se revisa la trama de esta sección con todo el grupo.

Actividad 8: Producción oral

Objetivo: Analizar los personajes.

Instrucciones:

1. De manera individual, los alumnos describen la relación entre la madre y su hija (lluvia de ideas).
2. En parejas comparten sus ideas y hacen las modificaciones necesarias.
3. Se unen a otra pareja e intercambian y discuten sus apreciaciones.
4. Posteriormente hacen un esquema en donde describen la relación de los personajes y las razones dadas por el texto o inferidas por ellos que la explican.
5. Intercambian sus apreciaciones y esquemas con otros equipos.

Actividad 9: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. Los alumnos leen individualmente la sección 5 del texto.
2. Los alumnos realizan el siguiente ejercicio:

Exercise

Instructions: Why did they find it so hard to get along with each other?

List the reasons you think each character had.

Mother's reasons

Daughter's reasons

3. Algunos alumnos escriben en el pizarrón sus respuestas. Se discuten con todo el grupo.

Actividad 10: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Confirmar las predicciones hechas en la etapa de prelectura.

Instrucciones:

1. Se organizan los alumnos en los equipos que formaron en la etapa de prelectura para hacer las predicciones del texto.
2. El profesor les regresa su hoja de las predicciones (las saca de la cápsula del tiempo).
3. Los alumnos leen y comparan sus predicciones con el contenido del texto. Comparten las similitudes y diferencias con todo el grupo.

Actividad 11: Aspectos lingüísticos

Objetivo: Concienciar al alumno sobre la relación existente entre la vida del hablante (su "background") y su uso de la lengua.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de tres personas, los alumnos completan una tabla donde se citan algunas frases dichas por uno de los personajes (hoja de trabajo 3).
2. Los alumnos revisan la primera parte del ejercicio y discuten la segunda parte.
3. Los alumnos escriben sus conclusiones y las comparten con todo el grupo.

Actividad 12: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. Los alumnos leen individualmente la última sección del texto.
2. Los alumnos discuten en equipos de cuatro personas las siguientes preguntas:

- a) How does her perception of the piano at the end of the story differ from the one she had as a child? Why?
 - b) Explain in your own words the last sentence of the story, "And after I played them both a few times, I realized they were two halves of the same song".
 - c) How is this conclusion related to the quotation given at the beginning, "Only two kinds of daughters, those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind"?
3. Los alumnos comparten sus respuestas con sus demás compañeros quienes las enriquecen con sus propias respuestas y comentarios.

Poslectura

Actividad 13: Producción oral y escrita

Objetivo: Analizar la reacción del lector ante el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. Los alumnos revisan individualmente la tabla donde registraron las experiencias o reacciones de los personajes con las que se identificaron.
2. Los alumnos reflexionan sobre cómo esta identificación influyó en su interés por la lectura y su comprensión.
3. Los alumnos comparten sus experiencias en equipos de cuatro personas.
4. Individualmente, los alumnos escriben una nota publicitaria del cuento. El profesor puede mostrar algunos ejemplos (hoja de trabajo 4).

5. Se reúnen nuevamente los mismos equipos de cuatro personas y leen sus notas. Hacen las modificaciones gramaticales y de redacción necesarias.

Actividad 14: Producción oral

Objetivo: Analizar la reacción del lector ante el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de cinco personas, los alumnos eligen una escena del cuento.
2. Los alumnos se preparan para representarla. Si bien pueden memorizar los diálogos, también pueden leerlos. Revisan sus pronunciación, entonación, gestos y movimientos.
3. Representan las escenas conforme al orden en que aparecen en el cuento.
4. Los alumnos hacen comentarios respecto a su experiencia en esta actividad.

Actividad 15: Producción escrita

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de la producción escrita y explorar la reacción del lector ante el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de cinco personas, los alumnos diseñan una versión simplificada del cuento para sus compañeros de niveles básicos y/o intermedios.
2. Diseñan la portada del cuento, la cual debe ilustrar algún elemento de la historia.
3. En la cubierta de atrás colocan las notas publicitarias que realizaron individualmente.

4. El profesor los ayuda con ideas o cuestiones lingüísticas y revisa el producto final.
5. Los alumnos hacen las correcciones o modificaciones necesarias.
6. Los alumnos dan a leer sus nuevas versiones a sus compañeros de otros cursos.
7. Los alumnos comparten con todo el grupo las experiencias de los lectores de su versión simplificada.

Hoja de trabajo 1

Exercise

Instructions: Based on the example given, determine the tone of the following quotations taken from the text and give your reasons.

Section 2, paragraph 6:

1. In fact, in the beginning, I was just as excited as my mother, maybe even more.

The tone of these lines is _____ because _____
 _____ and the narrator uses words
 like _____.

Section 1, paragraph 7:

2. But sometimes the prodigy in me became impatient. "If you don't hurry up and get me out of here, I'm disappearing for good," it warned.

The tone of these lines is _____ because _____
 _____ and the narrator uses words
 like _____.

Section 2, paragraph 7:

3. And after seeing my mother's disappointed face once again, something inside of me began to die. I hated the tests, the raised hopes and failed expectations.

The tone of these lines is _____ because _____
 _____ and the narrator uses words
 like _____.

Section 2, paragraph 8:

4. I had new thoughts, willful thoughts, or rather thoughts filled with lots of won'ts. I won't let her change me, I promised myself. I won't be what I'm not.

The tone of these lines is _____ because _____
 _____ and the narrator uses words
 like _____.

Section 2, paragraph 9:

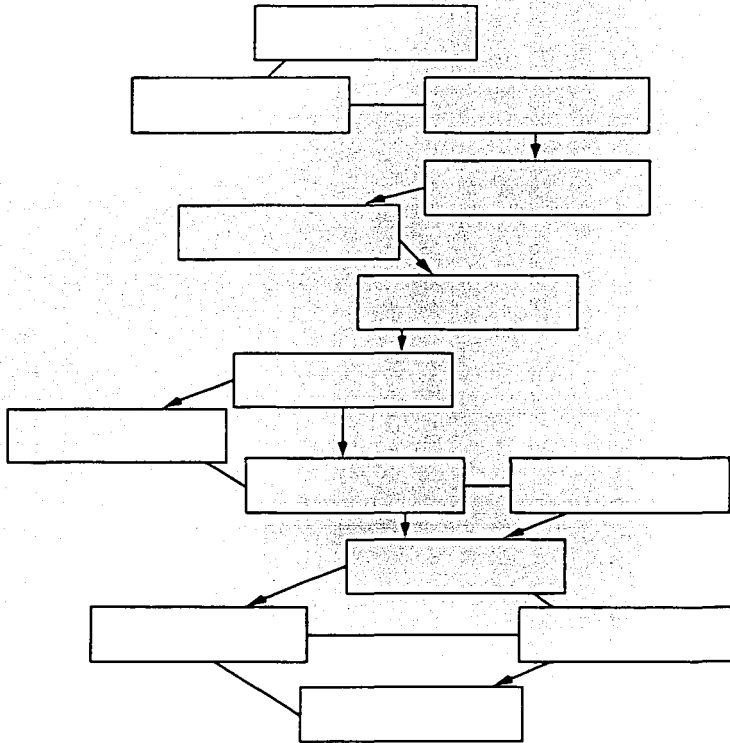
5. And the next day, I played a game with myself, seeing if my mother would give up on me before eight bellows. After a while I usually counted only one, maybe two bellows at most. At last she was beginning to give up hope.

The tone of these lines is _____ because _____
 _____ and the narrator uses
 words like _____.

Hoja de trabajo 2

Diagrama de flujo

The time flow in this chart is from top to bottom: that is, earlier events are higher than later events. Boxes on the same level indicate events happening at the same time. An arrow (↓) indicates that one event has *caused* another.



Hoja de trabajo 3

Statements said by the girl's mother	How would you say it?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Play nothe right, but doesn't sound good! (page 145) 2. Who ask you be genius? Only ask you be your best. For you sake. You think I want you be genius? Hhhh! What for! Who ask you! (page 146) 3. Our problem worser than yours. If we ask Jing-me wash dish, she hear nothing but music. It's like you can't stop this natural talent. (page 149) 4. No, this your piano, always your piano. You only one can play. (page 154) 5. You pick up fast. You have natural talent. You could been genius if you want to. (154) 6. You just not trying. (page 154) 	

Why do you think the mother spoke like that? Consider her background and context. Why do you think people that migrate to an English speaking country sometimes speak like her?

Hoja de trabajo 4

"AN ENERGETIC, ARTLESS AND ARRESTING VOICE . . .

"THE JOY LUCK CLUB. Amy Tan's first novel, was both a critical success and a phenomenal bestseller. Her new novel is bigger, bolder and better. . . . In 'THE KITCHEN GOD'S WIFE, Amy Tan has honed [her] folk-story talent to create a larger, richer and more integrated world. . . . [Its] glowing moments light up the age."

The Washington Post Book World

She is a wonderful writer with a rare power to touch the heart. . . . THE KITCHEN GOD'S WIFE is an absorbing narrative of Winnie Louie's life, which she tells—or offers—as a gift to her daughter Pearl. Much happens in the telling: long-held secrets are revealed, and a family's myths are transferred ceremoniously to the next generation. . . . Tan returns to the richly textured world she began to explore in the earlier book, the world of California's immigrant Chinese . . . with its brilliant tapestry of characters and conflicts here and overseas. . . . Tan is one of the prime storytellers writing fiction today."

Newsweek

"Powerful... full of magic...you won't be doing anything of importance until you have finished this novel!"

Los Angeles Times Book Review

In *The Joy Luck Club*, vignettes alternate back and forth between the lives of four Chinese women in pre-1949 China and the lives of their American-born daughters in California. . . . In the hands of Amy Tan, who has a wonderful eye for what is telling; a fine ear for dialogue, a deep empathy for her subject matter and a guilelessly straightforward way of writing, they sing with a rare fidelity and beauty."

The New York Times Book Review

"That rare, mesmerizing novel one always seeks but seldom finds... a pure joy to read!"

Chicago Tribune

Amy Tan's brilliant novel flits in and out of many realities but all of them contain mothers and daughters. . . .

Each story is a fascinating vignette, and together they weave the reader through a world where the Moon Lady can grant any wish, where a child, promised in marriage at two and delivered at 12, can, with cunning, free herself; where a rich man's concubine secures her daughter's future by killing herself and where a woman can live on, knowing she has lost her entire life."

The Washington Post Book World

"THE WISEST AND MOST CAPTIVATING NOVEL TAN HAS WRITTEN."

—The Boston Sunday Globe

"TRULY MAGICAL . . . UNFORGETTABLE . . . The first-person narrator is Olivia Laguni, and her unrelenting nemesis from childhood on is her half-sister, Kwan Li. . . . It is Kwan's haunting predictions, her implementation of the secret senses, and her linking of the present with the past that cause this novel to shimmer with meaning—and to leave it in the readers' mind when the book has long been finished."

—The San Diego Tribune

"HER MOST POLISHED WORK . . . Tan is a wonderful storyteller, and the story's many strands—Olivia's childhood, her courtship and marriage, Kwan's ghost stories and village tales—propel the work to its climactic but bittersweet end."

—USA Today

"TAN HAS ONCE MORE PRODUCED A NOVEL WONDERFULLY LIKE A HOLOGRAM: turn it this way and find Chinese-Americans shopping and arguing in San Francisco; turn it that way and the Chinese of Changmian Village in 1864 are fleeing into the hills to hide from the rampaging Manchus. . . . THE HUNDRED SECRET SENSES doesn't simply return to a world but burrows more deeply into it, following new trails to fresh revelations."

—Newsweek

Jing-Mei Woo

Two Kinds

My mother believed you could be anything you wanted to be in America. You could open a restaurant. You could work for the government and get good retirement. You could buy a house with almost no money down. You could become rich. You could become instantly famous.

"Of course you can be prodigy, too," my mother told me when I was nine. "You can be best anything. What does Auntie Lindo know? Her daughter, she is only best tricky."

America was where all my mother's hopes lay. She had come here in 1949 after losing everything in China: her mother and father, her family home, her first husband, and two daughters, twin baby girls. But she never looked back with regret. There were so many ways for things to get better.

Section 1



We didn't immediately pick the right kind of prodigy. At first my mother thought I could be a Chinese Shirley Tem-

ple. We'd watch Shirley's old movies on TV as though they were training films. My mother would poke my arm and say, "Ni kan"—You watch. And I would see Shirley tapping her feet, or singing a sailor song, or pursing her lips into a very round O while saying, "Oh my goodness."

"Ni kan," said my mother as Shirley's eyes flooded with tears. "You already know how. Don't need talent for crying!"

Soon after my mother got this idea about Shirley Temple, she took me to a beauty training school in the Mission district and put me in the hands of a student who could barely hold the scissors without shaking. Instead of getting big fat curls, I emerged with an uneven mass of crinkly black fuzz. My mother dragged me off to the bathroom and tried to wet down my hair.

"You look like Negro Chinese," she lamented, as if I had done this on purpose.

The instructor of the beauty training school had to lop off these soggy clumps to make my hair even again. "Peter Pan is very popular these days," the instructor assured my mother. I now had hair the length of a boy's, with straight-across bangs that hung at a slant two inches above my eyebrows. I liked the haircut and it made me actually look forward to my future fame.

In fact, in the beginning, I was just as excited as my mother, maybe even more so. I pictured this prodigy part of me as many different images, trying each one on for size. I was a dainty ballerina girl standing by the curtains, waiting to hear the right music that would send me floating on my tiptoes. I was like the Christ child lifted out of the straw manger, crying with holy indignity. I was Cinderella stepping from her pumpkin carriage with sparkly cartoon music filling the air.

In all of my imaginings, I was filled with a sense that I would soon become *perfect*. My mother and father would adore me. I would be beyond reproach. I would never feel the need to sulk for anything.

But sometimes the prodigy in me became impatient. "If you don't hurry up and get me out of here, I'm disappearing for good," it warned. "And then you'll always be nothing."

Section 2

Every night after dinner, my mother and I would sit at the Formica kitchen table. She would present new tests, taking her examples from stories of amazing children she had read in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*, or *Good Housekeeping Reader's Digest*, and a dozen other magazines she kept in a pile in our bathroom. My mother got these magazines from people whose houses she cleaned. And since she cleaned many houses each week (1) _____ . She would look through them all, searching for stories about remarkable children.

The first night she brought out a story about a three-year-old boy who knew the capitals of all the states and even most of the European countries. A teacher was quoted as saying the little boy could also pronounce the names of the foreign cities correctly.

"What's the capital of Finland?" my mother asked me, looking at the magazine story.

All I knew was the capital of California, because Sacramento was the name of the street we lived on in Chinatown. (2) "_____!" I guess, saying the most foreign word I could think of. She checked to see if that was possibly one way to pronounce "Helsinki" before showing me the answer.

The tests got harder—multiplying numbers in my head, finding the queen of hearts in a deck of cards, trying to stand

on my head without using my hands, predicting the daily temperatures in Los Angeles, New York, and London.

One night I had to look at a page from the Bible for three minutes and then report everything I could remember. "Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance and . . . that's all I remember, Ma," I said.

And after seeing my mother's disappointed face once again, (3) _____ I hated the tests, the raised hopes and failed expectations. Before going to bed that night, I looked in the mirror above the bathroom sink and when I saw only my face staring back—and that it would always be this ordinary face—I (4) _____. Such a sad, ugly girl! I made high-pitched noises like a crazed animal, trying to scratch out the face in the mirror.

And then I saw what seemed to be the prodigy side of me—because I had never seen that face before. I looked at my reflection, blinking so I could see more clearly. The girl staring back at me was angry, powerful. This girl and I were the same. I had new thoughts, willful thoughts, or rather thoughts filled with lots of won'ts. (5) _____

So now on nights when my mother presented her tests, I performed listlessly, my head propped on one arm. I pretended to be bored. And I was. I got so bored I started counting (6) _____ while my mother drilled me in other areas. The sound was comforting and reminded me of (7) _____. And the next day, I played a game with myself, seeing if my mother would give up on me before eight bellows. After a while I usually counted only one, maybe two bellows at most. At last she (8) _____

* * *

Heidi

Two or three months had gone by without any mention of my being a prodigy again. And then one day my mother was watching *The Ed Sullivan Show* on TV. The TV was old and the sound kept shorting out. Every time my mother got halfway up from the sofa to adjust the set, the sound would go back on and Ed would be talking. As soon as she sat down, Ed would go silent again. She got up, the TV broke into loud piano music. She sat down. Silence. Up and down, back and forth, quiet and loud. It was like a stiff embraceless dance between her and the TV set. Finally she stood by the set with her hand on the sound dial.

She seemed entranced by the music, a little frenzied piano piece with this mesmerizing quality, sort of quick passages and then teasing lilting ones before it returned to the quick playful parts.

"Ni kan," my mother said, calling me over with hurried hand gestures. "Look here."

I could see why my mother was fascinated by the music. It was being pounded out by a little Chinese girl, about nine years old, with a Peter Pan haircut. The girl had the sauciness of a Shirley Temple. She was proudly modest like a proper Chinese child. And she also did this fancy sweep of a curtsy, so that the fluffy skirt of her white dress cascaded slowly to the floor like the petals of a large carnation.

In spite of these warning signs, I wasn't worried. Our family had no piano and we couldn't afford to buy one, let alone reams of sheet music and piano lessons. So I could be generous in my comments when my mother bad-mouthed the little girl on TV.

"Play note right, but doesn't sound good! No singing sound," complained my mother.

"What are you picking on her for?" I said carelessly.

"She's pretty good. Maybe she's not the best, but she's trying hard." I knew almost immediately I would be sorry I said that.

"Just like you," she said. "Not the best. Because you not trying." She gave a little huff as she let go of the sound dial and sat down on the sofa.

The little Chinese girl sat down also to play an encore of "Anitra's Dance" by Grieg. I remember the song, because later on I had to learn how to play it.

Three days after watching *The Ed Sullivan Show*, my mother told me what my schedule would be for piano lessons and piano practice. She had talked to Mr. Chong, who lived on the first floor of our apartment building. Mr. Chong was a retired piano teacher and my mother had traded house-cleaning services for weekly lessons and a piano for me to practice on every day, two hours a day, from four until six.

When my mother told me this, I felt as though I had been sent to hell. I whined and then kicked my foot a little when I couldn't stand it anymore.

"Why don't you like me the way I am? I'm *not* a genius! I can't play the piano. And even if I could, I wouldn't go on TV if you paid me a million dollars!" I cried.

My mother slapped me. "Who ask you be genius?" she shouted. "Only ask you be your best. For you sake. You think I want you be genius? Hnnh! What for! Who ask you!"

"So ungrateful," I heard her mutter in Chinese. "If she had as much talent as she has temper, she would be famous now."

Mr. Chong, whom I secretly nicknamed Old Chong, was very strange, always tapping his fingers to the silent music of an invisible orchestra. He looked ancient in my eyes. He

had lost most of the hair on top of his head and he wore thick glasses and had eyes that always looked tired and sleepy. But he must have been younger than I thought, since he lived with his mother and was not yet married.

I met Old Lady Chong once and that was enough. She had this peculiar smell like a baby that had done something in its pants. And her fingers felt like a dead person's, like an old peach I once found in the back of the refrigerator; the skin just slid off the meat when I picked it up.

I soon found out why Old Chong had retired from teaching piano. He was deaf. "Like Beethoven!" he shouted to me. "We're both listening only in our head!" And he would start to conduct his frantic silent sonatas.

Our lessons went like this. He would open the book and point to different things, explaining their purpose: "Key! Treble! Bass! No sharps or flats! So this is C major! Listen now and play after me!"

And then he would play the C scale a few times, a simple chord, and then, as if inspired by an old, unreachable itch, he gradually added more notes and running trills and a pounding bass until the music was really something quite grand.

I would play after him, the simple scale, the simple chord, and then I just played some nonsense that sounded like a cat running up and down on top of garbage cans. Old Chong smiled and applauded and then said, "Very good! But now you must learn to keep time!"

So that's how I discovered that Old Chong's eyes were too slow to keep up with the wrong notes I was playing. He went through the motions in half-time. To help me keep rhythm, he stood behind me, pushing down on my right shoulder for every beat. He balanced pennies on top of my wrists so I would keep them still as I slowly played scales

and arpeggios. He had me curve my hand around an apple and keep that shape when playing chords. He marched stiffly to show me how to make each finger dance up and down, staccato like an obedient little soldier.

He taught me all these things, and that was how I also learned I could be lazy and get away with mistakes, lots of mistakes. If I hit the wrong notes because I hadn't practiced enough, I never corrected myself. I just kept playing in rhythm. And Old Chong kept conducting his own private reverie.

So maybe I never really gave myself a fair chance. I did pick up the basics pretty quickly, and I might have become a good pianist at that young age. But I was so determined not to try, not to be anybody different that I learned to play only the most ear-splitting preludes, the most discordant hymns.

Over the next year, I practiced like this, dutifully in my own way. And then one day I heard my mother and her friend Lindo Jong both talking in a loud bragging tone of voice so others could hear. It was after church, and I was leaning against the brick wall wearing a dress with stiff white petticoats. Auntie Lindo's daughter, Waverly, who was about my age, was standing farther down the wall about five feet away. We had grown up together and shared all the closeness of two sisters squabbling over crayons and dolls. In other words, for the most part, we hated each other. I thought she was snotty. Waverly Jong had gained a certain amount of fame as "Chinatown's Littlest Chinese Chess Champion."

"She bring home too many trophy," lamented Auntie Lindo that Sunday. "All day she play chess. All day I have no time do nothing but dust off her winnings." She threw a scolding look at Waverly, who pretended not to see her.

"You lucky you don't have this problem," said Auntie Lindo with a sigh to my mother.

And my mother squared her shoulders and bragged: "Our problem worser than yours. If we ask Jing-mei wash dish, she hear nothing but music. It's like you can't stop this natural talent."

And right then, I was determined to put a stop to her foolish pride.

Section 4 Part A

A few weeks later, Old Chong and my mother conspired to have me play in a talent show which would be held in the church hall. By then, my parents had saved up enough to buy me a secondhand piano, a black Wurlitzer spinet with a scarred bench. It was the showpiece of our living room.

For the talent show, I was to play a piece called "Pleading Child" from Schumann's *Scenes from Childhood*. It was a simple, moody piece that sounded more difficult than it was. I was supposed to memorize the whole thing, playing the repeat parts twice to make the piece sound longer. But I dawdled over it, playing a few bars and then cheating, looking up to see what notes followed. I never really listened to what I was playing. I daydreamed about being somewhere else, about being someone else.

The part I liked to practice best was the fancy curtsy: right foot out, touch the rose on the carpet with a pointed foot, sweep to the side, left leg bends, look up and smile.

My parents invited all the couples from the Joy Luck Club to witness my debut. Auntie Lindo and Uncle Tin were there. Waverly and her two older brothers had also come. The first two rows were filled with children both younger and older than I was. The littlest ones got to go first. They recited simple nursery rhymes, squawked out tunes on miniature violins, twirled Hula Hoops, pranced in pink ballet tutus, and

when they bowed or curtsied, the audience would sigh in unison, "Awww," and then clap enthusiastically.

When my turn came, I was very confident. I remember my childish excitement. It was as if I knew, without a doubt, that the prodigy side of me really did exist. I had no fear whatsoever, no nervousness. I remember thinking to myself, This is it! This is it! I looked out over the audience, at my mother's blank face, my father's yawn, Auntie Lindo's stiff-lipped smile, Waverly's sulky expression. I had on a white dress layered with sheets of lace, and a pink bow in my Peter Pan haircut. As I sat down I envisioned people jumping to their feet and Ed Sullivan rushing up to introduce me to everyone on TV.

And I started to play. It was so beautiful. I was so caught up in how lovely I looked that at first I didn't worry how I would sound. So it was a surprise to me when I hit the first wrong note and I realized something didn't sound quite right. And then I hit another and another followed that. A chill started at the top of my head and began to trickle down. Yet I couldn't stop playing, as though my hands were bewitched. I kept thinking my fingers would adjust themselves back, like a train switching to the right track. I played this strange jumble through two repeats, the sour notes staying with me all the way to the end.

When I stood up, I discovered my legs were shaking. Maybe I had just been nervous and the audience, like Old Chong, had seen me go through the right motions and had not heard anything wrong at all. I swept my right foot out, went down on my knee, looked up and smiled. The room was quiet, except for Old Chong, who was beaming and shouting, "Bravo! Bravo! Well done!" But then I saw my mother's face, her stricken face. The audience clapped weakly, and as I walked back to my chair, with my whole face

quivering as I tried not to cry, I heard a little boy whisper loudly to his mother, "That was awful," and the mother whispered back, "Well, she certainly tried."

And now I realized how many people were in the audience, the whole world it seemed. I was aware of eyes burning into my back. I felt the shame of my mother and father as they sat stiffly throughout the rest of the show.

We could have escaped during intermission. Pride and some strange sense of honor must have anchored my parents to their chairs. And so we watched it all: the eighteen-year-old boy with a fake mustache who did a magic show and juggled flaming hoops while riding a unicycle. The breasted girl with white makeup who sang from *Madama Butterfly* and got honorable mention. And the eleven-year-old boy who won first prize playing a tricky violin song that sounded like a busy bee.

After the show, the Hsus, the Jongs, and the St. Clairs from the Joy Luck Club came up to my mother and father.

"Lots of talented kids," Auntie Lindo said vaguely, smiling broadly.

"That was somethin' else," said my father, and I wondered if he was referring to me in a humorous way, or whether he even remembered what I had done.

Waverly looked at me and shrugged her shoulders. "You aren't a genius like me," she said matter-of-factly. And if I hadn't felt so bad, I would have pulled her braids and punched her stomach.

But my mother's expression was what devastated me: a quiet, blank look that said she had lost everything. I felt the same way, and it seemed as if everybody were now coming up, like gawkers at the scene of an accident, to see what parts were actually missing. When we got on the bus to go home, my father was humming the busy-bee tune and my

mother was silent. I kept thinking she wanted to wait until we got home before shouting at me. But when my father unlocked the door to our apartment, my mother walked in and then went to the back, into the bedroom. No accusations. No blame. And in a way, I felt disappointed. I had been waiting for her to start shouting, so I could shout back and cry and blame her for all my misery.

Part C

I assumed my talent-show fiasco meant I never had to play the piano again. But two days later, after school, my mother came out of the kitchen and saw me watching TV.

"Four clock," she reminded me as if it were any other day. I was stunned, as though she were asking me to go through the talent-show torture again. I wedged myself more tightly in front of the TV.

"Turn off TV," she called from the kitchen five minutes later.

I didn't budge. And then I decided. I didn't have to do what my mother said anymore. I wasn't her slave. This wasn't China. I had listened to her before and look what happened. She was the stupid one.

She came out from the kitchen and stood in the arched entryway of the living room. "Four clock," she said once again, louder.

"I'm not going to play anymore," I said nonchalantly. "Why should I? I'm not a genius."

She walked over and stood in front of the TV. I saw her chest was heaving up and down in an angry way.

"No!" I said, and I now felt stronger, as if my true self had finally emerged. So this was what had been inside me all along.

"No! I won't!" I screamed.

She yanked me by the arm, pulled me off the floor,

snapped off the TV. She was frighteningly strong, half pulling, half carrying me toward the piano as I kicked the throw rugs under my feet. She lifted me up and onto the hard bench. I was sobbing by now, looking at her bitterly. Her chest was heaving even more and her mouth was open, smiling crazily as if she were pleased I was crying.

"You want me to be someone that I'm not!" I sobbed. "I'll never be the kind of daughter you want me to be!"

"Only two kinds of daughters," she shouted in Chinese. "Those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind! Only one kind of daughter can live in this house. Obedient daughter!"

"Then I wish I wasn't your daughter. I wish you weren't my mother," I shouted. As I said these things I got scared. I felt like worms and toads and slimy things were crawling out of my chest, but it also felt good, as if this awful side of me had surfaced, at last.

"Too late change this," said my mother shrilly.

And I could sense her anger rising to its breaking point. I wanted to see it spill over. And that's when I remembered the babies she had lost in China, the ones we never talked about. "Then I wish I'd never been born!" I shouted. "I wish I were dead! Like them."

It was as if I had said the magic words. Alakazam!—and her face went blank, her mouth closed, her arms went slack, and she backed out of the room, stunned, as if she were blowing away like a small brown leaf, thin, brittle, lifeless.

Action 5

It was not the only disappointment my mother felt in me. In the years that followed, I failed her so many times, each time asserting my own will, my right to fall short of expect-

tations. I didn't get straight As. I didn't become class president. I didn't get into Stanford. I dropped out of college.

For unlike my mother, I did not believe I could be anything I wanted to be. I could only be me.

And for all those years, we never talked about the disaster at the recital or my terrible accusations afterward at the piano bench. All that remained unchecked, like a betrayal that was now unspeakable. So I never found a way to ask her why she had hoped for something so large that failure was inevitable.

And even worse, I never asked her what frightened me the most: Why had she given up hope?

For after our struggle at the piano, she never mentioned my playing again. The lessons stopped. The lid to the piano was closed, shutting out the dust, my misery, and her dreams.

So she surprised me. A few years ago, she offered to give me the piano, for my thirtieth birthday. I had not played in all those years. I saw the offer as a sign of forgiveness, a tremendous burden removed.

"Are you sure?" I asked shyly. "I mean, won't you and Dad miss it?"

"No, this your piano," she said firmly. "Always your piano. You only one can play."

"Well, I probably can't play anymore," I said. "It's been years."

"You pick up fast," said my mother, as if she knew this was certain. "You have natural talent. You could be a genius if you want to."

"No I couldn't."

"You just not trying," said my mother. And she was neither angry nor sad. She said it as if to announce a fact that could never be disproved. "Take it," she said.

But I didn't at first. It was enough that she had offered it to me. And after that, every time I saw it in my parents' living room, standing in front of the bay windows, it made me feel proud, as if it were a shiny trophy I had won back.

Section 6

Last week I sent a tuner over to my parents' apartment and had the piano reconditioned, for purely sentimental reasons. My mother had died a few months before and I had been getting things in order for my father, a little bit at a time. I put the jewelry in special silk pouches. The sweaters she had knitted in yellow, pink, bright orange—all the colors I hated—I put those in moth-proof boxes. I found some old Chinese silk dresses, the kind with little slits up the sides. I rubbed the old silk against my skin, then wrapped them in tissue and decided to take them home with me.

After I had the piano tuned, I opened the lid and touched the keys. It sounded even richer than I remembered. Really, it was a very good piano. Inside the bench were the same exercise notes with handwritten scales, the same second-hand music books with their covers held together with yellow tape.

I opened up the Schumann book to the dark little piece I had played at the recital. It was on the left-hand side of the page, "Pleading Child." It looked more difficult than I remembered. I played a few bars, surprised at how easily the notes came back to me.

And for the first time, or so it seemed, I noticed the piece on the right-hand side. It was called "Perfectly Contented." I tried to play this one as well. It had a lighter melody but the same flowing rhythm and turned out to be quite easy. "Pleading Child" was shorter but slower; "Perfectly Contented" was longer but faster. And after I played them both a few times, I realized they were two halves of the same song.

Algunas consideraciones generales del uso de poesía en clases de inglés como LE

1. La lectura de estos textos, debido a su extensión, se puede llevar a cabo en una sola sesión.
2. Regularmente los poemas exploran temas de carácter universal que atañen a las experiencias, ideas y sentimientos de los alumnos.
3. Los poemas ofrecen una experiencia fonética: pronunciación de las palabras, énfasis y ritmo.
4. La poesía sugiere actividades de producción escrita creativas, y aunque pueden constituir un reto para el alumno, son divertidas y motivantes.
5. La poesía tiene la capacidad de generar diversas respuestas, reacciones profundas ante el texto, por parte del lector.
6. Existen varios poemas de temas poco complejos y con una estructura sencilla apropiados para los estudiantes de inglés como LE, en especial de niveles básicos.

A continuación se presenta la forma en que se podrían trabajar dos poemas en el salón de clases de LE. A diferencia de los cuentos, los ejercicios de ambos poemas pueden realizarse en dos o tres sesiones, dependiendo del ritmo de trabajo de los alumnos. Sin embargo, el profesor puede asignar algunos, los que impliquen un trabajo individual, como tarea y revisar las respuestas en clase.

Ejemplo metodológico 4

"This is just to Say"

Prelectura

Actividad 1: Producción oral

Objetivo: Activar el conocimiento previo de los alumnos respecto al uso de las notas y formas de escribirlas, y establecer el tipo de poema que van a leer.

Instrucciones:

1. El profesor hace las siguientes preguntas:

- a) *Why do we write notes?*
- b) *How do you begin a note?*
- c) *How do you end a note?*

2. Con la ayuda del grupo el profesor anota las respuestas en el pizarrón.

Actividad 2: Vocabulario

Objetivo: Familiarizar a los alumnos con el vocabulario nuevo cuya comprensión es importante para captar el sentido del poema.

Instrucciones:

El profesor por medio de mímica y dibujos explica el significado de las siguientes palabras:

- a) plums
- b) ice box
- c) saving
- d) forgive

En caso de que alguno de los alumnos conozca su significado, se le pide que la(s) explique usando las técnicas mencionadas.

Lectura

Actividad 3: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. En parejas, los alumnos reciben una copia del poema, que ha sido dividido y escrito en tiras de papel para que ellos lo ordenen. Se propone la siguiente división:

This is just to Say

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

by William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the ice box

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

2. Los alumnos lo ordenan.

3. Se revisa con el grupo. Durante esta etapa los alumnos mencionan los elementos que tomaron en cuenta para ordenarlo y también comparan la forma en que está escrito con las características mencionadas durante la etapa de prelectura.

Actividad 4: Lectura

Objetivo: Desarrollar las estrategias de lectura, tanto de comprensión como de interpretación, y comparar aspectos culturales.

Instrucciones:

1. En parejas, los alumnos contestan las siguientes preguntas:

Exercise

Instructions: Answer the following questions with one of your classmates.

- a) According to the poem, What are plums like?
- b) According to you, who has plums for breakfast? Where is this custom from?
- c) What fruits do we usually have for breakfast?
- d) What are they like?
- e) What other things (images) does the note mention?
- f) Why did the poet write the note?
- g) Who did he write the note to?
- h) How is that person going to react? Why?
- i) How does the writer of the note feel? Why?

Durante esta actividad el profesor circula en la clase para ayudar a los alumnos en caso de tener alguna dificultad con sus respuestas.

2. Se revisan las respuestas con el grupo. Tanto los comentarios que realicen los alumnos como el profesor respecto a la asertividad de las respuestas deben

permitir explorar o elaborar más las mismas. No se permiten comentarios desmotivantes. En caso de que la respuesta no esté fundamentada por el texto, se le ayuda al alumno a reconsiderarla a partir de los elementos que sí están presentes.

Actividad 5: Pronunciación

Objetivo: Desarrollar la pronunciación de los alumnos en la LE

Instrucciones:

1. El profesor lee en voz alta una o más veces el poema.
2. El profesor explica la pronunciación de algunas palabras y el tono en general del poema.
3. Los alumnos, en parejas, leen el poema en voz alta, escuchándose y corrigiéndose entre ellos.
4. Algunos voluntarios o alumnos escogidos por el profesor leen el texto en voz alta ante el grupo. Se hacen comentarios al respecto.

Poslectura

Actividad 6: La respuesta del lector

Objetivo: Promover que los alumnos expresen su reacción ante el texto con creatividad.

Dependiendo de la edad de los alumnos, se puede realizar una de las siguientes dos actividades.

Actividad 6A

Instrucciones:

1. Individualmente, los alumnos interpretan el poema mediante un dibujo de acuerdo con su respuesta personal ante el texto.
2. Una vez terminado, se les pide que lo cuelguen alrededor del salón para compartirlo con sus compañeros y, de ser necesario, explicarlo.
3. Los alumnos hacen comentarios respecto a su experiencia durante esta actividad con todo el grupo.

Actividad 6B

Instrucciones:

1. Se les hace a los alumnos las siguientes preguntas:
 - a) What would you do if the note was for you?
 - b) What would you add to that note?
2. El profesor escribe en el pizarrón las sugerencias de los alumnos.
3. Se les pide a los alumnos que reescriban la nota (el poema) agregándole lo necesario para que parezca una nota escrita por ellos mismos.
4. Dependiendo de la cantidad de alumnos, con todo el grupo o en equipos leen sus notas y se hacen comentarios de las mismas.

Actividad 7: Producción escrita

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de la producción escrita en LE.

Instrucciones:

De manera individual, los alumnos escriben una nota para alguien, un amigo, novio, etc. Realizan los siguientes pasos:

- a) Primero establece a quién se la van a escribir y por qué.
- b) Después deciden qué mensaje le van a enviar y cómo. El profesor hace comentarios acerca de la organización y estructura del poema, de la nota.
- c) Los alumnos la escriben. El profesor circula alrededor de la clase para ayudarlos en caso de que sea necesario.
- d) Los alumnos doblan la nota y la colocan en una bolsa que el profesor va a circular.
- e) Los alumnos escogen una nota, que no sea la suya, y la leen imaginando que son ellos a los que se la escribieron.
- f) De acuerdo con la información de la nota, buscan a la persona que la escribió y comparten lo que sintieron al leerla.
- g) Los alumnos hacen comentarios respecto a la actividad con todo el grupo.

This is just to Say

**I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the ice box**

**and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast**

**Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold**

by William Carlos Williams

Ejemplo metodológico 5

"Cat's in the cradle"

Prelectura

Actividad 1: Producción oral

Objetivo: Familiarizar a los alumnos con el tema del poema.

Instrucciones:

1. De manera individual los alumnos leen la caricatura de "Family Circus" (hoja de trabajo 1).
2. En equipos de tres o cuatro personas, los alumnos discuten sobre algunos factores que afectan negativamente la relación entre los padres y los hijos. Completan la tabla.

What negative affects the relationship	Consequences in the relationship

3. Reportan al grupo el contenido de la tabla.

Lectura

Actividad 2: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. De manera individual o en parejas, los alumnos reciben una copia del poema "Cat's in the cradle" de Harry y Sandy Chapin, del cual sólo aparecen las estrofas II, IV, VI y IX (hoja de trabajo 2 A). Aparte reciben otra copia que contiene las estrofas I, III, V, VII Y VIII en desorden (hoja de trabajo 2 B).
2. Los alumnos recortan las estrofas nones y las acomodan (las pegan) en la copia del poema de acuerdo con la lectura que realicen.
3. Se revisa el poema que resulta y se hacen comentarios sobre los elementos que consideraron para ordenar el poema.

Actividad 3: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura y explorar la reacción de los alumnos ante el poema.

Instrucciones:

1. En parejas los alumnos reciben el formato de tira cómica (hoja de trabajo 3).

2. Los alumnos con base en una segunda lectura, describen a manera de una tira cómica el contenido del poema. Cada cuadro representa una estrofa y en cada uno se debe incluir el diálogo entre los dos personajes.
3. Los alumnos pegan su tira alrededor del salón y hacen comentarios respecto a ella y la de otros compañeros.

Actividad 4: Aspectos lingüísticos

Objetivo: Apreciar las diferentes formas de expresar una idea a través de la paráfrasis.

Instrucciones:

1. Los alumnos y el profesor hacen comentarios respecto a las diferentes formas de decir un mensaje. El profesor pone un ejemplo.
2. Los alumnos reciben un ejercicio en donde aparecen algunas líneas extraídas del poema. Ellos parafrasean las ideas (hoja de trabajo 4).
3. Se revisan sus propuestas con el grupo.

Actividad 5: Comprensión de lectura

Objetivo. Promover el desarrollo de las estrategias de lectura.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos de tres personas, los alumnos discuten y contestan las siguientes preguntas de interpretación del texto.
 - a) What did the son want most from his father? What was the father's response?

- b) When the son grew up, what did the father want most from him? What was the son's response?
- c) How would you describe the feelings the father and son have for each other?
- d) Some stanzas have some lines that are repeated. What effect is created with them?
- e) What effect do the lines "I'm gonna be like you" and "I'm gonna be like him" have in the poem?

2. Los alumnos comparten sus respuestas con el grupo.

Actividad 6: Lectura en voz alta

Objetivo: Promover el desarrollo de la pronunciación y acentuación en la LE y explorar la reacción de los alumnos ante el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. Se divide al grupo en nueve equipos.
2. Cada equipo trabaja en la lectura de una estrofa (ellos la escogen o el profesor las asigna). Revisan la pronunciación, entonación y el ritmo de la estrofa.
3. Los alumnos leen su estrofa en voz alta de acuerdo al orden en el que aparecen en el poema.
4. Se hacen comentarios respecto a su experiencia en esta actividad: tanto de la apreciación de un poema leído en voz alta como el de realizarlo en la LE.

Actividad 7: Comprensión auditiva y producción oral

Objetivo: Profundizar en la apreciación del poema a través de la comparación de su contenido con otra canción cuyo tema también sea la relación entre padres e hijos y explorar la reacción de los alumnos ante el contenido de ambos.

Instrucciones:

1. Los alumnos reciben la copia de una canción que narra la relación entre un padre y su hijo (hoja de trabajo 5 A). Si el profesor lo considera conveniente se ha anexado información sobre el cantante que podría servir como apoyo para introducir la canción (hoja de trabajo 5 B). Se han eliminado algunas palabras de la canción, las cuales los alumnos agregan cuando la escuchan.
2. Los alumnos escuchan la canción una o dos veces.
3. Junto con otro compañero, los alumnos revisan sus respuestas.
4. Se revisan las respuestas con el grupo (hoja de trabajo 5 C).

Answers:

- a) take it easy
- b) you have to know
- c) to be calm
- d) you've got
- e) same old story
- f) I have to go away
- g) Take it slowly
- h) To go through
- i) I cried
- j) To ignore it
- k) I have to go away

5. En equipos comparan la relación que el poema describe con la de la canción.

Exercise

Instructions: Compare both relationships in the poem and in the son and draw some conclusions about how this relationship can be strengthened in everyday life. Think of the feelings the father and the son have for each other, why they have those feelings, what they expect from each other, the kind of communication they have, etc.

The relationship between the father and the son in the poem	The relationship between the father and the son in the song

Conclusions:

6. Los alumnos comparten sus conclusiones con el grupo.

Actividad 8: La respuesta del lector

Objetivo: Explorar y compartir con otros lectores su experiencia con el texto.

Instrucciones:

1. En equipos los alumnos diseñan un póster con el poema para mostrarlo en algún lugar público.

a) Tanto el profesor como los alumnos mencionan las características de un póster. Se puede mostrar el siguiente como ejemplo.

IN TIME OF 'THE BREAKING OF NATIONS'

Thomas Hardy
1840-1928

'Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war:
for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and
with thee will I destroy kingdoms' (Jeremiah 51.20)

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

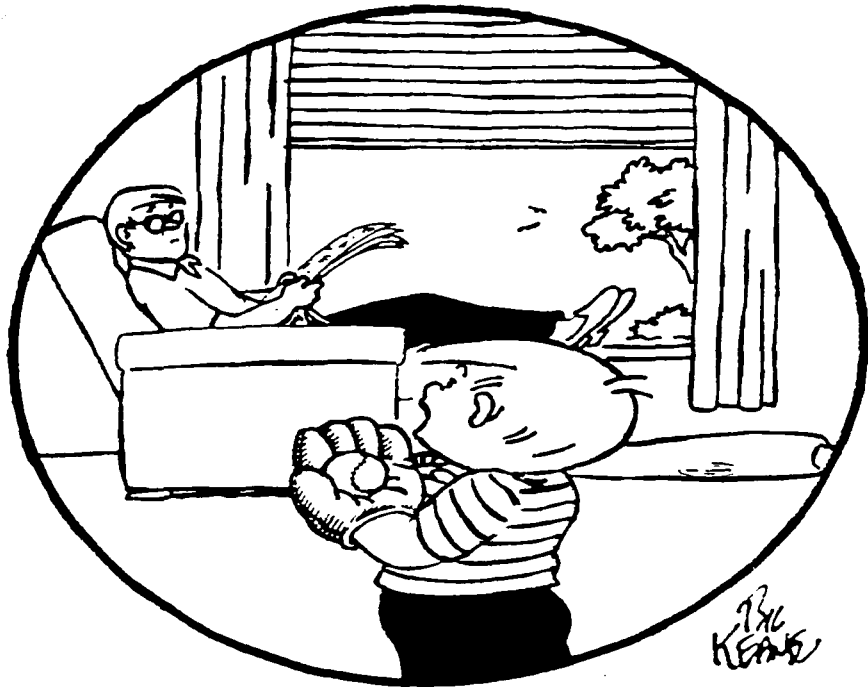
Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

 **Poems on the Underground**

From: The British Library's E-reading Programme: The British Council, Queen Mary College
Designed by PPD, LCP, revised by APF, Ph. An. de F. printed by Paris, République (Ph-731118)

- b) Los alumnos organizan el diseño del póster.
 - c) Los alumnos hacen el póster.
2. Los alumnos lo pegan en algún lugar público, quizá dentro de la misma escuela o en alguna cafetería por ejemplo.
 3. Los alumnos hacen comentarios sobre su experiencia en esta actividad y sobre las opiniones que han escuchado de su póster.

ON PARENTS & CHILDREN



"Anytime you're ready, Daddy, I'll be sitting outside growing older."

Circus Cartoons. Reprinted with special permission of King Features Syndicate.

Hoja de trabajo 2 A

CAT'S IN THE CRADLE

by Harry and Sandy Chapin

VI

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
 Little Boy Blue and the man in the moon.
 "When you comin' home, Son?"
 "I don't know when, but we'll get together then.
 You know we'll have a good time then."

VII

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
 Little Boy Blue and the man in the moon.
 "When you comin' home, Dad?"
 "I don't know when, but we'll get together then.
 You know we'll have a good time then."

VIII**IX**

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
 Little Boy Blue and the man in the moon.
 "When you comin' home, Dad?"
 "I don't know when, but we'll get together then.
 You know we'll have a good time then."

IX

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
 Little Boy Blue and the man in the moon.
 "When you comin' home, Son?"
 "I don't know when, but we'll get together then, Dad.
 We're gonna have a good time then."

X

Hoja de trabajo 2 B

And as I hung up the phone it occurred to me---
 He'd grown up just like me.
 My boy was just like me.

My son turned ten just the other day.
 He said, "Thanks for the ball, Dad, come on let's play.
 Can you teach me to throw?" I said, "Not today.
 I got a lot to do." He said, "That's O.K."
 And he walked away. But his smile never dimmed.
 It said, "I'm gonna be like him, yeah.
 You know I'm gonna be like him."

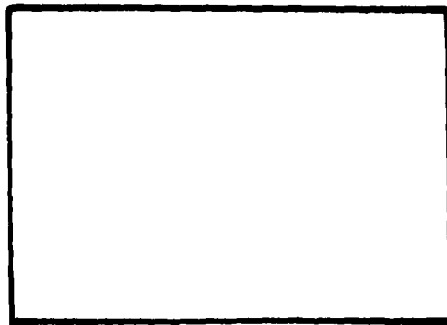
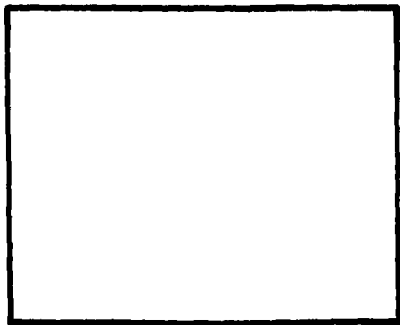
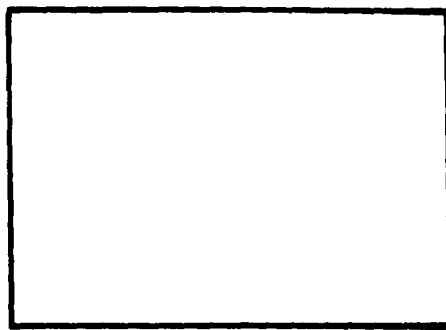
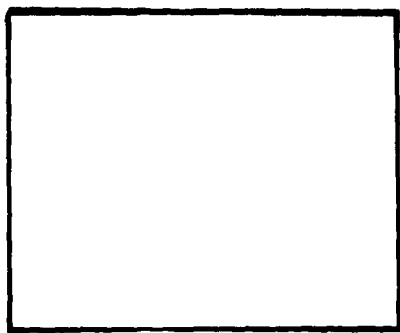
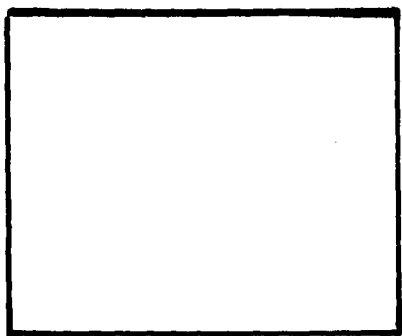
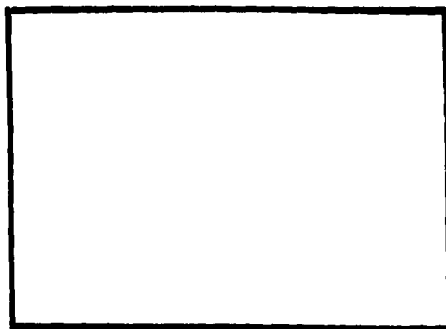
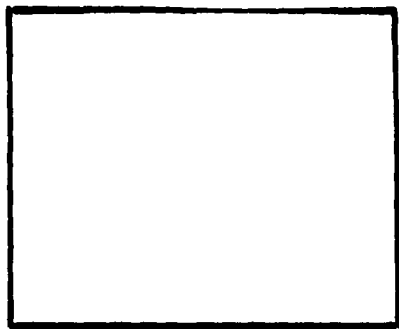
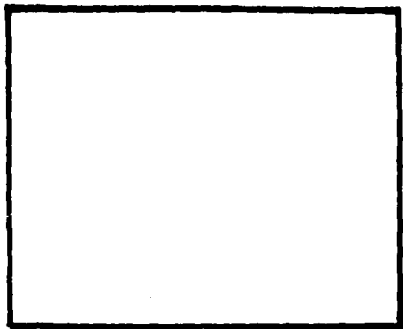
I've long since retired. My son's moved away.
 I called him up just the other day.
 I said, "I'd like to see you, if you don't mind."
 He said, "I'd love to, Dad, if I can find the time.
 You see my new job's a hassle and the kids have the flu.
 But it's sure nice talkin' to you, Dad.
 It's been sure nice talkin' to you."

My child arrived just the other day.
 He came to the world in the usual way.
 But there were planes to catch and bills to pay.
 He learned to walk while I was away.
 And he was talkin' 'fore I knew it, and as he grew
 He'd say, "I'm gonna be like you, Dad.
 You know I'm gonna be like you."

Well, he came from college just the other day.
 So much like a man I just had to say,
 "Son, I'm proud of you. Can you sit for awhile?"
 He shook his head and he said with a smile,
 "What I'd really like, Dad, is to borrow the car keys.
 See you later. Can I have them, please?"

by Harry and Sandy Chapin

2 de febrero 5



Hoja de trabajo 4

Exercise

Instructions: How would you say the same idea in a different way? The following quotations were taken from the poem you are reading. Express in your own words the same idea they convey.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. "My child arrived just the other day"2. "He came to the world in the usual way"3. "But there were planes to catch and bills to pay"4. "He came from college just the other day"5. "I've long since retired" | |
|--|--|

Hoja de trabajo 5 A

"Father and son"

by Cat Stevens

(Father)

It's not time to make a change,
 Just relax, (1) _____.
 You're still young, that's your fault,
 There's so much (2) _____.
 Find a girl, settle down,
 If you want you can marry.
 Look at me, I am old, but I'm happy.

I was once like you are now, and I know that it's not easy,
 (3) _____ when you've found something going on.
 But take your time, think a lot,
 Why, think of everything (4) _____.
 For you will still be here tomorrow, but your dreams may not.

(Son)

How can I try to explain, when I do he turns away again.
 It's always been the same, (5) _____.
 From the moment I could talk I was ordered to listen.
 Now there's a way and I know that (6) _____.
 I know I have to go.

(Father)

It's not time to make a change,
 Just sit down, (7) _____.
 You're still young, that's your fault,
 There's so much you have (8) _____.
 Find a girl, settle down,
 if you want you can marry.
 Look at me, I am old, but I'm happy.

(Son)

All the times that (9) _____, keeping all the things I knew inside,
 It's hard, but it's harder to ignore it.
 If they were right, I'd agree, but it's them you know not me.
 Now there's a way and I know that (11) _____.
 I know I have to go.

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Father And Son

Primary Performer: [Cat Stevens](#)
 Written By: [Cat Stevens](#)

[Richie Havens](#) Cover Version
[Johnny Cash](#) Cover Version
[Boyzone](#) Cover Version
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[Fan Cover Versions Of Father And Son](#)

No comments available for this song.



[Promotional video for the classic "Father And Son."](#)

[Tea for the Tillerman](#)

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[Live In Cleveland Ohio](#)

[The Hoaxers Midnight Daydream](#)

[Tour Of The Cat](#)

[Footsteps in the Dark](#)

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[Tea For The Tillerman Live](#)

[Catnip](#)

[Massey Hall - Toronto Canada](#)

[Chapter IV Live](#)

[Live At Curtis Hixon Hall - Tampa Flori](#)

[Father & Son](#)

[Saturnight](#)

[Greatest Hits](#)

[Classics Vol. 24](#)

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[A Tribute To Cat Stevens](#)



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Remember Cat Stevens - The Ultimate
Cat People: A Tribute To Cat Stevens

Father

It's not time to make a change,
 Just relax, take it easy.
 You're still young, that's your fault,
 There's so much you have to know.
 Find a girl, settle down,
 If you want you can marry.
 Look at me, I am old, but I'm happy.

I was once like you are now, and I know that it's not easy,
 To be calm when you've found something going on.
 But take your time, think a lot,
 Why, think of everything you've got.
 For you will still be here tomorrow, but your dreams may not.

Son

How can I try to explain, when I do he turns away again.
 It's always been the same, same old story.
 From the moment I could talk I was ordered to listen.
 Now there's a way and I know that I have to go away.
 I know I have to go.

Father

It's not time to make a change,
 Just sit down, take it slowly.
 You're still young, that's your fault,
 There's so much you have to go through.
 Find a girl, settle down,
 if you want you can marry.
 Look at me, I am old, but I'm happy.

Son

All the times that I cried, keeping all the things I knew inside,
 It's hard, but it's harder to ignore it.
 If they were right, I'd agree, but it's them you know not me.
 Now there's a way and I know that I have to go away.
 I know I have to go.

Guitar Chords/Tab for Father And Son

Cat's in the Cradle

By Harry and Sandy Chapin

My child arrived just the other day.
He came to the world in the usual way.
But there were planes to catch and bills to pay.
He learned to walk while I was away.
And he was talkin' 'fore I knew it, and as he grew
He'd say, "I'm gonna be like you, Dad.
You know I'm gonna be like you."

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little boy blue and the man in the moon.
"When you comin' home, Dad?"
"I don't know when, but we'll get together then.
You know we'll have a good time then."

My son turned ten just the other day.
He said, "Thanks for the ball, Dad, come on let's play.
Can you teach me to throw?" I said, "Not today.
I got a lot to do." He said, "That's O.K."
And he walked away. But his smile never dimmed.
It said, "I'm gonna be like him, yeah.
You know I'm gonna be like him."

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little Boy Blue and the man in the moon.
"When you comin' home, Dad?"
"I don't know when, but we'll get together then.
You know we'll have a good time then."

Well, he came from college just the other day,
So much like a man I just had to say,
"Son, I'm proud of you. Can you sit for awhile?"
he shook his head and he said with a smile,
"What I'd really like, Dad, is to borrow the car keys.
See you later. Can I have them, please?"

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little Boy Blue and the man in the moon.
"When you comin' home, Son?"
"I don't know when, but we'll get together then.
You know we'll have a good time then."

I've long since retired. My son's moved away.
I called him up just the other day.
I said, "I'd like to see you, if you don't mind."
He said, "I'd love to, Dad, if I can find the time.
You see my new job's hassle and the kids have the flu,
But it's sure nice talkin' to you, Dad.
It's been sure nice talkin' to you."

And as I hung up the phone it occurred to me-
He'd grown up just like me.
My boy was just like me.

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little Boy Blue and the man in the moon.
"When you comin' home, Son?"
"I don't know when, but we'll get together then, Dad,
we're gonna have a good time then."

Conclusión

Uno de los principales objetivos de los profesores de lengua es que al terminar cada sesión y curso, los alumnos se vayan con esa sensación de haber enriquecido su formación en la lengua extranjera. El texto literario es un material excelente para lograrlo. Algunos de los beneficios para el alumno son el desarrollo de estrategias y habilidades en LE, contacto con los diferentes usos y formas del inglés, mayor conocimiento de los aspectos culturales extranjeros y propios, desarrollo de una actitud crítica, motivación e inspiración para leer y escribir tanto en la lengua extranjera como en la materna y una mejor comprensión del ser humano y, por lo tanto, de sí mismo. Mientras que al profesor le ofrece una gran variedad de materiales con los que puede generar una serie de actividades interesantes y agradables para mejorar la competencia comunicativa de sus alumnos. La influencia que tengamos en los alumnos para que el gusto por esta disciplina se incremente depende, por un lado, de las actividades que se desarrollen en clase y de la actitud que pongamos en ello; y, por otro lado, de la actitud con la que los alumnos lectores se acerquen al texto, muchas veces empobrecida por una experiencia literaria poco significativa adquirida en otros momentos de su vida académica. Por ello, es muy importante que en cada encuentro del alumno con el texto literario se recupere y explore la experiencia intelectual y emocional vivida para darle, de esta manera, forma a una experiencia nueva no sólo con el texto, sino que también con la literatura en general y con la lengua extranjera. La utilización de textos literarios resulta, por lo tanto, ser un desafío y una promesa al mismo tiempo en el salón de clases.

Además del uso ocasional de textos literarios en cursos de inglés como LE, recomiendo el diseño de cursos de literatura como una opción para que los alumnos estudien la producción literaria de algunos autores y, al mismo tiempo, continúen desarrollando su competencia comunicativa en el idioma extranjero.

En mi opinión, no hay mejor manera de acercarse al pensamiento ajeno que a través de la poesía, cuento corto, novela, etc. La fascinación que provoca en el lector fue lo que despertó mi interés en este trabajo y espero que sea éste el que despierte en otros el interés por usar el texto literario en clases de inglés como lengua extranjera.

Las inquietudes y dudas que le dieron origen han quedado resueltas. Sin embargo, durante su elaboración surgieron otras, nuevas y estimulantes, que podrían darle continuación en un futuro. De la misma manera que el lector no puede dar por terminada la recreación de una obra literaria, tampoco el escritor, sea de textos literarios o sobre ellos, puede dar por terminada su elaboración. Siempre quedan ideas por decir y por enriquecer.

APÉNDICES

Apéndice 1

Algunas recomendaciones de poemas y cuentos cortos para clases de inglés como lengua extranjera

La siguiente selección de material literario se hizo tomando en cuenta la extensión de la obra, su contenido y estructura –el cual debía sugerir al profesor el diseño de diversas actividades y ser accesible para el estudiante de inglés como lengua extranjera-, así como los aspectos culturales presentes en ella para ampliar el conocimiento del lector sobre su propia cultura y la extranjera.

Debido a la competencia comunicativa que el lector necesita para leer cada texto y realizar las posibles actividades que con este se lleven a cabo, se sugiere el uso de las obras en un determinado nivel: básico, intermedio o avanzado. Sin embargo, esta gradación puede variar según el programa del curso, objetivos de la lectura, contexto de los alumnos, etc.

Poemas

Nivel Básico

Clark, Leonard, "The beach"

Jackson, Alan, "Goldfish"

Lee, Brian, "Cold feet"

Merriam, Eve, "How to eat a poem"

Silverstein, Shel, "Jimmy Jet and his TV set"

T. S. Eliot, "The naming of cats"

Nivel Intermedio

Atwood, Margaret, "Variation on the word *Sleep*"

Bishop, Elizabeth, "One art"

Carter, Martin, "You are involved"

Joyce, James, "All day I hear the noise of waters"

Paslan, Linda, "Marks"

Thomas, Dylan, "Do not go gentle into that good night"

Waddington, Miriam, "Ten years and more"

Nivel Avanzado

Davey, Frank, "She'd say"

McNeill, Anthony, "The children"

Nichol, bp, "Gorg, a detective story"

Cuentos cortos

Nivel Básico

Allsop, Jake, "Mangiarotti"

Poe, Edgar A., "The masque of the Red Death"

Thurber, James, "The last flower"

Nivel Intermedio

Achebe, Chinua, "The sacrificial egg"

Bombeck, Erma, "Teenage diseases"

Bradbury, Ray, "The flying machine"

Naipaul, V. S., "Bogart"

Rhys, Jean, "I used to live here once"

Nivel Avanzado

Andersen, Hans C., "The emperor's new clothes"

Atwood, Margaret, "The sin eater"

Dahl, Roald, "Lamb to the slaughter"

Garner, Hugh, "One-two-three little indians"

Ihimaera, Witi, "Game of cards"

Rushdie, Salman, "Good advice is rarer than rubies"

Silko, Leslie M., "Lullaby"

The Beach

Early morning, the sun but two hours old,
I walk, barefooted and alone, the blank sea-horse:
There are no leaping waves, no rough winds in the air.
The waveless waters lap the silent land.
The day's first tide moves in, bubbles and froth,
Soundlessly on my ear.
I keep to the broken edge
All the long way, leaving no footprints there.
Picking up pebbles, shining, cold
Flinging them high and strong over the ribbed sand,
Hearing them plop in hidden pools among the rocks
In whose small depths the green crabs swim at peace.
Anemones sway, and black-eyed fish,
Like silver needles flash from side to side,
And now a squabbling gull is screaming overhead,
A yapping dog comes racing from the town;
I turn about and slowly make for home.

by Leonard Clark

Goldfish

**the scene of the crime
was a goldfish bowl
goldfish were kept
in the bowl at the time:**

**that was the scene
and that was the crime.**

by Alan Jackson

Cold Feet

They have all gone across
They are all turning to see
They are all shouting 'come on'
They are all waiting for me.

I look through the gaps in the footway
And my heart shrivels with fear
For far below the river is flowing
So quick and so cold and so clear.

And all that there is between it
And me falling down there is this:
A few wooden planks—not very thick—
And between each a little abyss.

The holes get right under my sandals.
I can see straight through the rocks.
And if I don't look, I can feel it,
Just there, through my shoes and my socks.

Suppose my feet and my legs withered up
And slipped through the slats like a rug?
Suppose I suddenly went very thin
Like a baby that slid down the plug?

I know that it cannot happen
But suppose that it did, what then?
Would they be able to find me
And take me back home again?

They have all gone across
They are all waiting to see
They are all shouting 'come on'
But they'll have to carry me.

by Brian Lee

How to Eat a Poem

Don't be polite.

Bite in.

pick it up with your fingers and lick the juice
that may run down your chin.

It is ready and ripe now, whenever you are.

You do not need a knife or fork or spoon
or plate or napkin or tablecloth.

For there is no core

or stem

or rind

or pit

or seed

or skin

to throw away.

by Eve Merriam

Jimmy Jet and his TV Set

I'll tell you the story of Jimmy Jet ---
And you know what I tell you is true.
He loved to watch his TV set
Almost as much as you.

He watched all day and he watched all night
Till he grew pale and lean,
From early morn to late late show,
And all shows in between.

He watched till his eyes were frozen wide,
And his bottom grew into his chair,
And his chin turned into a tuning dial,
And antennae grew out of his hair.

And his brains turned into TV tubes,
And his face to a TV screen.
And two knobs saying VERT and HORIZ
Grew where his ears had been.

And he grew a plug that looked like a tail,
So we plugged in little Jim.
And now instead of him watching TV,
We all sit around and watch him.

by Shel Silverstein

THE NAMING OF CATS

The Naming of Cats is a difficult matter,
It isn't just one of your holiday games;
You may think at first I'm as mad as a batter
When I tell you, a cat must have THREE
DIFFERENT NAMES.

First of all, there's the name that the family
use daily,

Such as Peter, Augustus, Alonzo, or
James,

Such as Victor or Jonathan, George or Bill
Bailey-

All of them sensible everyday names.

There are fancier names if you think they
sound sweeter,

Some for the gentlemen, some for the
dames:

Such as Plato, Admentus, Electra, Dem-
eter-

But all of them sensible everyday names.

But I tell you a cat needs a name that's par-
ticular,

A name that's peculiar and more digni-
fied,

Else how can he keep up his tail perpen-
dicular,

Or spread out his whiskers or cherish his
pride?

Of names of this kind I can give you a
quorum,

Such as Munkustrap, Quaxo, or Corico-
pat,

Such as Bombalurina, or else Jellylorum –
Names that never belong to more than
one cat.

But above and beyond there's still one name
left over,

And that is the name that you never will
guess;

The name that no human research can dis-
cover –

But the CAT HIMSELF KNOWS, and will
never confess.

When you notice a cat in profound medita-
tion,

The reason, I tell you, is always the same:

His mind is engaged in a rapt contemplation
Of the thought, of the thought, of the
thought of his name:

His ineffable effable

Effanineffable

Deep and inscrutable singular Name.

by T. S. Eliot

VARIATION ON THE WORD SLEEP

I would like to watch you sleeping,
which may not happen.
I would like to watch you,
sleeping. I would like to sleep
with you, to enter
your sleep as its smooth dark wave
slides over my head

and walk with you through that lucent
wavering forest of bluegreen leaves
with its watery sun & three moons
towards the cave where you must descend,
towards your worst fear

I would like to give you the silver
branch, the small white flower, the one
word that will protect you
from the grief at the center
of your dream, from the grief
at the center. I would like to follow
you up the long stairway
again & become
the boat that would row you back
carefully, a flame
in two cupped hands
to where your body lies
beside me, and you enter
it as easily as breathing in

I would like to be the air
that inhabits you for a moment
only, I would like to be that unnoticed
& that necessary.

by Margaret Atwood

ONE ART

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
the art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! My last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

-Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster.

By Elizabeth Bishop

YOU ARE INVOLVED

**This I have learnt:
today a speck
tomorrow a hero
hero or monster
you are consumed!**

**Like a jig
shakes the loom.
Like a web
is spun the pattern
all are involved!
all are consumed!**

by Martin Carter

All Day I Hear the Noise of Waters

All day I hear the noise of waters
 Making moan,
Sad as the sea-bird is, when going
 Forth alone,
He hears the winds cry to the waters'
 Monotone.

The grey winds, the cold winds are blowing
Where I go.
I hear the noise of many waters
 Far below.
All day, all night, I hear them flowing
 To and from.

by James Joyce

MARKS

My husband gives me an A
for last night's supper,
an incomplete for my ironing,
a B plus in bed.

My son says I am average,
an average mother, but if
I put my mind to it
I could improve.

My daughter believes
in Pass/Fail and tells me
I pass. Wait 'till they learn
I'm dropping out.

by Linda Pastan

Do not Go Gentle into That Good Night

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green way,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be grey,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

by Dylan Thomas

TEN YEARS AND MORE

When my husband
lay dying a mountain
a lake three
cities ten years
and more
lay between us:

There were out
sons my wounds
and theirs,
despair loneliness,
handfuls of un-
hammered nails
pictures never
hung all

The uneaten
meals and unslept
sleep; there was
retirement, and
worst of all
a green umbrella
he can never
take back.

I wrote him a
letter but all
I could think of
to say was: do you
remember Severn
River, the red canoe
with the sail
and lee-boards?

I was really saying
for the sake of our
youth and our love
I forgave him for
Everything
and I was asking him
to forgive me too.

by Miriam Waddington

SHE'D SAY

"I'll never reach 40," my mother would say.
"I have a short life-line," she'd say,
holding out her palm solemnly
& pointing. "I went to a fortune-teller
before the war," she'd say, "at the Exhibition,
& she took one look at my hand & she gasped
& said "Oh my dear, I'm so sorry,
you shouldn't have come in here," & I said
"What is it, can't you tell me." & she said
"No, I can't bear to tell you,
oh you poor dear," she said,
& she threw her arms around me
& she hugged me just like that," she'd say,
"& it was only later," she'd say,
"that Genevieve told me about my life-line."
"It was the same thing," she'd say,
"with Dr. McCready, he'd be listening to my heart
& a sad look would come over his face,
& he'd put his arms around me & hold me tight
just for a minute, & afterward
he'd smile as if nothing had happened
& say I was okay, but I always knew
what he'd been thinking," she'd say.
"I always knew," she'd say.

"What will you do when I'm gone," she'd say
when I brought a sock to be darned
or a book to be mended. Or to my dad
as she bustled around the kitchen,
"You're going to have to learn to cook
when I'm gone," she'd say,
& when he growled "Don't talk rubbish, honey,"
she'd say cheerily "I know what you're thinking,
you're going to get yourself
a cute young floozie after I'm gone."

"I nearly died when I had you," she said.
"Dr. McCready didn't think I'd make it," she said.
"He never said so but I could tell
by the way he looked at me," she said.
"Look at my pot belly," she said.
"That's what you did to me but it was worth it,"

she said. "You were wanted," she said.
"When I told Dr. McCready I was expecting
he put his arms around me & said
"On no, Jeannie, you're not,"
& he looked sadly out the window & then said

"Well, we'll do the best we can,
but you're not to have another, you hear,
you be a good girl now, & don't have another,"
& my father would sit silently
when she talked like this,
but sometimes she'd keep going & ask
why he had not yet bought their burial plot.
"You can put me wherever you want," she'd say.
"You'll have someone else to go in your double plot,"
she'd say. "She won't want me," she'd say.
"She'll sure make you toe the line," she'd say.

& when they argued, or when she & I argued,
"You can count on one thing," she'd say,
"You won't have me around much longer," she'd say.
"You'll be able to have your own way soon," she'd say.
She'd hold out her palm & say "It's right here,
You can look at it," she'd say. "The fortune teller
was really upset," she'd say.
"She took me in her arms & said "You poor thin,"
& sobbed on my shoulder." "I'll never make 50,"
she'd say.

by Frank Davey

THE CHILDREN

One swing up-
ward toward the sky,
ascending cool stairs of rope
which end, like magic,
in clouds.

Another does
cartwheels, hurdling grass
into grace.

A third peels cane with the teeth.
The rest, imagination programmed by t.v.,

play cowboy.
Tonight, circled by snow
in a foreign country,
I praise one of the children
who stood alone,

hearing old drums
under the bam-bam bangarang,
who passed into man-
hood through the eye of the sun,
and smelted

lonely calypsoes & soul
against the long morning of English rule.

By Anthony McNeill

Gorg, a detective story

For a.a.fair, psthumously

a man walks into a room. there is a corpse on the floor. the man has been shot through the temple the bullet entering at a 45 angle above the eyes & exiting almost thru the top of the skull. the man does not walk out of the room. the corpse stands up & introduces himself. later there will be a party. you will not be invited & feeling hurt go off into a corner to sulk. there is a gun on the window sill. you rig up a pulley which enables you to pull the trigger while pointing the gun between your eyes & holding it with your feet. a man walks in on you. you are lying on the floor dead. you have been shot thru the temple the bullet exiting almost thru the top of your skull. you stand up & introduce yourself. the man lies on the floor & you shoot him between the eyes the bullet piercing his temple & exiting thru his skull into the floor. you rejoin the party. the man asks you to leave since you weren't invited. you notice a stranger in the doorway who pulling out a gun shoots you between the eyes. you introduce each other & lie down. your host is polite but firm & asks you both to leave. at this point a man walks in & introduces himself. you are lying on the floor & cannot see him. your host appears not to know him & the man leaves. the party ends & the room is empty. the man picks up the corpse & exits.

Mangiarotti

Date-line: Paris, July, 1960, as the TV reporters say. I was twenty years old, and I was starving to death. I hadn't eaten anything for two days, except for half a cheese sandwich that I found in the lining of my coat: I remember eating the first half in late May of the same year. It had taken me a week to hitch-hike to Paris from Italy, and my money had run out. Before I left Milan, my friend Silvano had told me that he knew a man in Paris who might be able to give me a job. The man's name was Mangiarotti – he didn't seem to have a first name – and he was a painter. Mangiarotti worked somewhere in the 14th *arrondissement*, the Porte de Vanves area of Paris. Now, to say that you are a painter in Paris sounds quite romantic, so perhaps I should add that he was not an artist but a house-painter. According to Silvano, Mangiarotti specialised in painting shop fronts.

Anyway, as soon as I arrived in Paris I spent my last few centimes on a Metro ride to Plaisance, which seemed to be right in the middle of the 14th *arrondissement*, and started to wander through the streets searching for anyone who looked like an Italian house-painter. I searched high and low, tramping along main streets, peering down side streets, asking passers-by, poking my head into every baker's and greengrocer's and fishmonger's as I went; but in vain. No sign of Mangiarotti.

By the end of the first day, I was so desperate that I sold my watch to a second-hand dealer – funny how my expensive Timex

was suddenly worth little more than the price of an omelette and chips. That night, I slept on a hard bench in the local park. I woke next morning stiff and cold and as hungry as ever. I'd better get up and start looking for Mangiarotti, I thought.

30 Mangiarotti? I didn't even know what he looked like, for goodness' sake! I imagined a short, dark-haired, sun-tanned man – in other words, the typical Englishman's idea of the typical Italian. But what if he were tall, red-haired and fair-skinned? I had seen Italians from the Alto Adige who looked like that.

35 Talk about looking for a needle in a haystack! All the same, there was nothing for it but to continue the search.

Finally, towards the end of the afternoon, when my feet ached and my shoulder hurt from the weight of my bag and my empty stomach groaned with hunger, my luck changed. I happened to

40 look down a side street and saw, to my delight, a man up a ladder, paintbrush in hand. As I approached, I saw that he was short, dark-haired and sun-tanned: the typical Englishman's idea of the typical Italian! Moreover, he was painting the front of a shop. I called up to him.

45 'Scusi, signore. Excuse me,' I said in my best Italian. 'Are you Mr Mangiarotti?'

He came down the ladder and eyed me silently while he wiped the paint from his brush with an old rag. His stare made me feel uncomfortable, for it seemed to go straight through me. He

50 continued to look me up and down without speaking. I felt stupid, so I went on:

'I am a friend of Silvano Agosto, and he told me that . . .'
My words trailed off into silence as he turned away from me to put his paintbrush down. Then he turned to face me again. I

55 repeated my original question: 'Are you Mr Mangiarotti?' He shrugged his shoulders as if to say that it didn't matter whether he was or not.

Suddenly he addressed me in French: '*Allons boire un coup.* Let's go and have something to drink.'

60 I followed him into a nearby café, where he ordered a glass

of a colourless liquid which turned milky when he added water to it. I asked if I could have a white coffee, thinking to myself that the milk in it might do something to satisfy my hunger.

'Allora, sei un amico di Silvano. So, you're a friend of Silvano,'

65 he said, switching to Italian without warning.

I nodded.

'Alors, qu'est-ce que tu fais ici? So, what are you doing here?' he asked, switching back to French. Why on earth did he keep changing from one language to the other? Was he showing off? Was he making fun of me? Was he just testing me? I felt very

70 confused and uncertain, the way I used to feel in front of a particularly difficult teacher when I was at school. I started to mumble a reply in French, a language that I was not very good at. I explained, as best as I could, that I had been working in Milan, but had decided to spend the summer in Paris,

75 providing, that is, that I could find work.

'Why are you speaking to me in French?' he asked, interrupting me. Then, before I could reply, he roared with laughter. He found the joke – whatever it was – very funny. Suspecting

80 that he was laughing at me, I began to feel more and more irritated. His laughter ceased as suddenly as it had begun. 'Well now, my young friend,' he said, addressing me this time in fluent English, 'you are a friend of Silvano Agosto, you are looking for a Mr Mangiarotti, and you want a job, hmm?' Seeing the look of astonishment on my face at being addressed in

85 English, he added: 'You do speak English, don't you?'

'Of course I do.' I replied angrily. 'I am English.'

'I would never have guessed!' he said, and once again burst out laughing. There was an unmistakable tone of irony in his

90 voice.

'How did you know I was English?' I asked, my face still showing anger.

'Oh, come on, my young English friend. Don't look so upset. I was only pulling your leg. It is not so difficult to guess your nationality.'

95

'How?' I asked. At the tender age of twenty, I liked to think of myself as a citizen of the world, not a typical product of my native country.

100 'Well, first of all, you are tall and fair-haired. How many Italians are tall and fair? Next, you have a pale complexion, even though you have been living in Italy, the land of sunshine. And your hair-style – forgive me, I do not mean to be rude – could only be English.'

105 My hair was wavy, long, falling across my forehead, and I had a parting on the left. Was this so typically English? Perhaps he was right.

110 'As for your shoes . . . !' He did not finish the sentence. I looked down at my feet. Nothing wrong with them, I thought. But, on the other hand, perhaps they were rather traditional in design.

115 'Finally, my young friend, there is the matter of your Italian. You speak it fluently and quite accurately, it is true. But your accent . . . ! Only an Englishman could pronounce my name the way you do. "Manjer-rottee". Ugh! You make it sound like the name of a fat old horse.'

120 Despite the rather uncomplimentary things he had said about my appearance and my Italian accent, I couldn't help admiring the way he had worked out my nationality from the various clues. Just like the famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, who could tell from the slightest clue – a cigarette-end perhaps – that the man who had been smoking it was a short, left-handed Turkish watchmaker with a bad cold.

125 Anyway, the upshot was that Mangiarotti gave me a job, and I settled down in Paris. About two weeks after I had started working for him, I used a few francs to telephone Silvano. After all, it was thanks to Silvano that I had a job in Paris, and I wanted him to know that everything had turned out well.

'Hello, Silvano! It's me! Joe. I'm phoning from Paris. I . . .'

Before I could say another word, Silvano interrupted in his usual enthusiastic manner and took over the conversation. 130

'Hi, Joe! How are you? Everything OK? So you got to Paris, after all, eh? Good for you! Oh, that reminds me, Joe. You remember I told you about an Italian that I knew in Paris, a guy called Mangiarotti. Well, I phoned him the day you left Milan. 135 I described you to him in detail, in case you tried to get in touch with him. So, he's sort of half-expecting you, Joe. Why don't you see if you can find him? Or perhaps you have already found him.'

Oh yes, I had found him all right, Mr Clever Sherlock 140 Holmes Mangiarotti.

The Masque Of the Red Death

The Red Death had been in the country for many, many years. No disease had ever been so deadly. People called it the Red Death because it left blood, red horrible blood, on the body and face of each person it visited. And no one, if visited, was ever left alive. Once a person was touched by the Red Death, he immediately felt pains, and soon afterwards started to bleed from every part of his body. In thirty minutes he was dead. After that no one, not even his family, went near the blood-covered body.

Everybody was afraid of the Red Death – everybody except the fearless Prince Prospero. He refused to be troubled by it. Although half the people of his country had already died from this terrible disease, he continued to enjoy life to the full. One day he decided to invite a thousand of his strong and brave friends to stay with him in one of his castles, far out in the countryside. There the Red Death would not be able to touch them.

It was a huge and extraordinary castle, built to Prince Prospero's own plan. It had strong high walls and great gates of heavy metal. Now when the Prince and his friends arrived at the castle gates they went inside, locked the gates carefully and threw away the keys. In



that way no one would be able to enter or escape. They were all there together, far away from the Red Death. Now they could forget the world outside and think only of

themselves. They had everything they needed to amuse themselves, because the Prince had forgotten nothing. He had brought in food and wine, actors, musicians, and dancers. All of this, and life itself, was inside the castle. Outside lay the Red Death.

Towards the end of the fifth or sixth month, while the Red Death was at its most deadly outside, the Prince gave a wonderful masked ball for his friends. It was a wild and wonderful ball, but first let me tell you about the rooms in which he gave the ball. There were seven rooms in all. In most castles, of course, the rooms for great parties or dances join each other end to end. In this way, when the doors at the end of each room are opened, the seven rooms become one huge room, and you can see from the first room right through to the last one. In Prospero's castle, it was different. Each room turned suddenly round a corner into the next, so if you were standing in one room it was impossible to see into the other rooms.

In the middle of each wall, on the right and left, there was a tall, narrow window opening onto the closed passage which ran along beside all seven rooms. Each window was made of different coloured glass, and the colour of the glass was the same as the colour of the room that it opened onto. The first room, for example, was blue, and so its windows were also a deep blue. The second room was purple, and so the windows, too, were purple. The third was green, with green windows, the fourth orange, the fifth white, and the sixth violet. The seventh room was black. Its walls were black, its thick, heavy carpet was also black. But its windows were red – a deep blood-red.

There were no candles in any of the rooms. The only light came from fires, in hanging metal baskets, which were in the passages outside the rooms. Each fire was opposite a window, and so the light from the fire shone through the coloured glass and filled each room with strange and fantastic shadows. But in the black room the firelight that shone through the blood-red window changed the room into something too horrible to describe. In that strange light, faces became wild and frightening, and few people were brave enough to enter the room at all.

In this room, against the farthest wall, stood a huge black clock. Every hour it chimed loud and deep and clear, filling the castle with its long, gloomy sound. And while the clock chimed, the musicians stopped playing and even the wildest dancers stood still, in silence and fear, listening to the passing of another hour...But when the chiming stopped, people looked at each other and laughed, trying hard to pretend that they had not been frightened. Happiness came into the castle again, until the clock chimed the passing of the next hour, and the same fear returned.

Prince Prospero's ball, although given in these strange rooms, was wild and happy. The Prince had planned everything – the colours, the paintings on the walls, even the cloaks and masks worn by each one of his friends. He had chosen all the clothes with the greatest of care, putting together the beautiful and the ugly, the strange and the fantastic, the surprising and the frightening.

Each man and woman was dressed like a terrible dream. And in and out of the rooms these dreams

walked and danced, their clothes changing colour each time they entered a different room. But no one was brave enough now to enter the black room. As the night passed and the fires burned brighter, the colours and shapes in this room became more horrible than ever. The black carpet and walls seemed full of gloom, and the deep chimes of the black clock sounded even more frightening.

But the other six rooms were full of life and pleasure. People were dancing and singing, talking and laughing, and the wild noise of a thousand happy men and women rang through the castle. Then came the hour of midnight, and once again dancers and musicians became still and silent, as the clock slowly rang the twelve long chimes of midnight. And because the twelve chimes took a long time to ring, each person had more time to think, and feel uncomfortable. They also had time, before the last chime had sounded, to notice a masked figure who had not been there before. The first person who saw the stranger told the next person, who told another, and in a few minutes a cry of fear and horror rose up from the crowd.

Now you will remember that everyone at the ball was wearing strange cloaks and masks, which belonged more to the world of dreams and wild imagination than to everyday life. So why, you may ask, this horror, and this fear? But even in the cruellest heart there are some fears too terrible to laugh at. The tall thin figure of the stranger was dressed from head to foot in the white clothes of the dead. And the mask over the face was frighteningly real – it was the face of a dead man. Worse still, the face and the body were covered with red, horrible blood! Here, in



the middle of all that dancing and happiness was a living picture of the Red Death!

When Prince Prospero saw the masked stranger, his face became white with fear. Then his fear turned to

anger and he shouted out, "Who is that? Who is mad enough to play games with us, and with death, in this way" Take hold of him, and pull off his mask. I want to see the face of the man who, tomorrow, will hang from the castle roof."

The Prince was in the blue room as he said these words. They rang loudly and clearly through the seven rooms. Many of the Prince's friends started to run towards the masked figure, but they were all too frightened to touch him. With slow and silent steps, the stranger walked slowly towards the Prince, passing very near to him. Then he continued walking, and went from the blue room into the purple one, from the purple into the green, and then into the orange room, the white room and then the violet room. No one tried to stop him.

Then Prince Prospero, mad with anger, hurried through the six rooms, with a sword in his hand. As the masked figure entered the black room, the Prince was close behind him, holding his sword up high. At that moment the stranger turned suddenly to look at the Prince. There was a loud cry –and the sword fell upon the black carpet, followed by the dead body of the fearless Prince Prospero.

At once a crowd of people ran into the black room and took hold of the masked stranger. He was standing very still, in the shadow of the black clock. Angrily, they pulled away the clothes and the mask, but then they backed away in horror, because inside the clothes and mask they found –nothing.

And now each person in the castle understood that the Red Death was there, among them. It had come like a thief in the night. And one by one they fell down dead.



And the black clock stopped ringing with the death of the last person. And the fires also died away. And the only things left in the castle were Darkness and the Red Death.

The Last Flowe

A parable in pictures by James Thurber

FOR ROSEMARY

IN THE WISTFUL HOPE THAT HER WORLD
WILL BE BETTER THAN MINE



James Thurber 1894 • 1961

The 1930s and '40s had no more popular humorist than James Thurber, whose stories, essays, and cartoons for *The New Yorker* created a style of humor that will never be duplicated.

Born in Columbus, Ohio, Thurber experienced a childhood that had its share of strange incidents, which he

later chronicled in *My Life and Hard Times*.

After graduating from Ohio State University and working as a journalist, Thurber became a regular contributor to *The New Yorker*, where his stories and pencil-line cartoons helped establish the style of that magazine. In 1940 he branched out into the theater by collaborating with Elliott Nugent on *The*

Male Animal, which was a great success on Broadway.

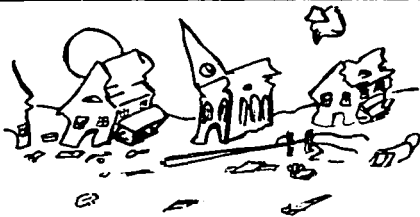
A moody, absent-minded man, Thurber wrote with a casual style that disguised the amount of work that went into all his writing. Indeed, it was not unusual for him to revise a piece ten times. *A Thurber Carnival* remains the most representative compendium of his work.



1. WORLD WAR XII, AS EVERYBODY KNOWS.



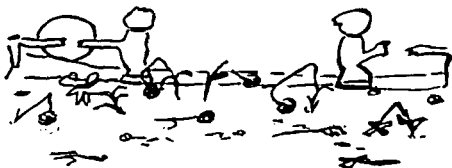
2. BROUGHT ABOUT THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILIZATION



3. TOWNS, CITIES AND VILLAGES DISAPPEARED FROM THE EARTH



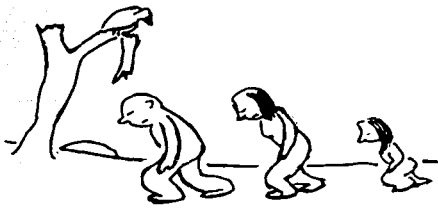
4. ALL THE GROVES AND FORESTS WERE DESTROYED



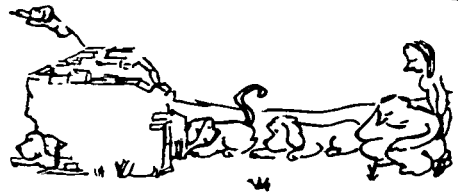
5. AND ALL THE GARDENS



6. AND ALL THE WORKS OF ART



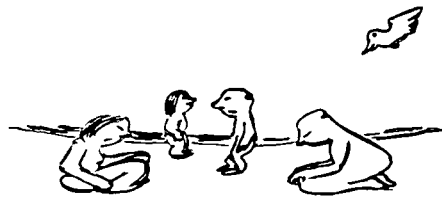
7.
MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN BECAME LOWER
THAN THE LOWER ANIMALS



8.
DISCOURAGED AND DISILLUSIONED, DOGS DESERTED
THEIR FALLEN MASTERS



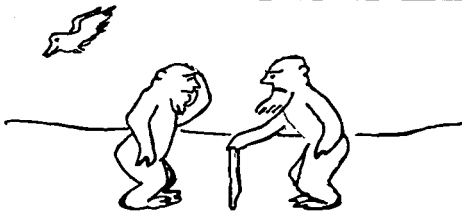
9.
EMBOLDENED BY THE PITIFUL CONDITION
OF THE FORMER LORDS OF THE EARTH,
RABBITS DESCENDED UPON THEM



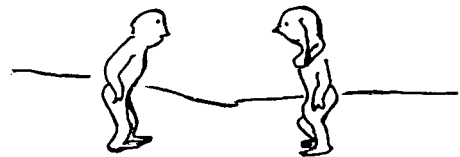
10.
BOOKS, PAINTINGS, AND MUSIC DISAPPEARED
FROM THE EARTH, AND HUMAN BEINGS
JUST SAT AROUND, DOING NOTHING



11.
YEARS AND YEARS WENT BY



12.
EVEN THE FEW GENERALS WHO WERE LEFT
FORGOT WHAT THE LAST WAR HAD DECIDED



13.
BOYS AND GIRLS GREW UP TO STARE AT EACH OTHER
BLANKLY, FOR LOVE HAD PASSED FROM THE EARTH



14. ONE DAY A YOUNG GIRL WHO HAD NEVER SEEN A FLOWER CHANCED TO COME UPON THE LAST ONE IN THE WORLD



15. SHE TOLD THE OTHER HUMAN BEINGS THAT THE LAST FLOWER WAS DYING



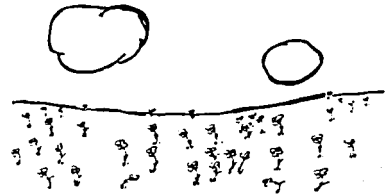
16. THE ONLY ONE WHO PAID ANY ATTENTION TO HER WAS A YOUNG MAN SHE FOUND WANDERING ABOUT



17. TOGETHER THE YOUNG MAN AND THE GIRL NURTURED THE FLOWER AND IT BEGAN TO LIVE AGAIN



18. ONE DAY A BEE VISITED THE FLOWER, AND A HUMMINGBIRD



19. BEFORE LONG THERE WERE TWO FLOWERS, AND THEN FOUR, AND THEN A GREAT MANY

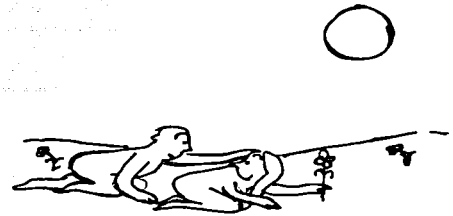


20. GROVES AND FORESTS FLOURISHED AGAIN



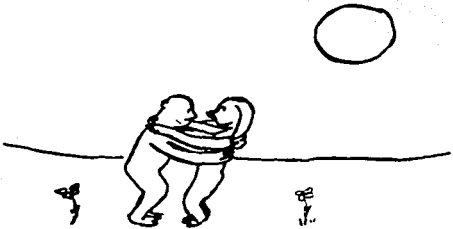
THE YOUNG GIRL BEGAN TO TAKE
AN INTEREST IN HOW SHE LOOKED

21.



THE YOUNG MAN DISCOVERED THAT
TOUCHING THE GIRL WAS PLEASURABLE

22.



LOVE WAS REBORN INTO THE WORLD

23.



THEIR CHILDREN GREW UP STRONG AND HEALTHY
AND LEARNED TO RUN AND LAUGH

24.



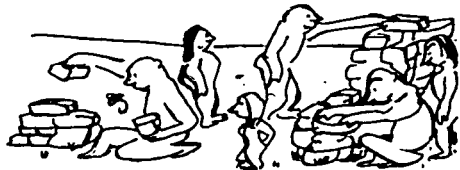
DOGS CAME OUT OF THEIR EXILE

25.



THE YOUNG MAN DISCOVERED, BY PUTTING ONE
STONE UPON ANOTHER, HOW TO BUILD A SHELTER

26.



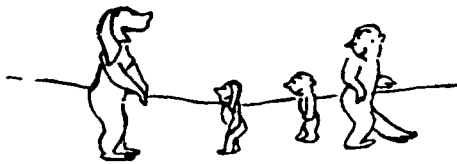
PRETTY SOON EVERYBODY WAS BUILDING SHELTERS

27.

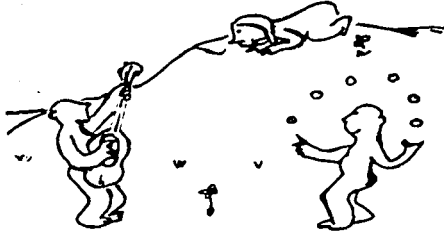


TOWNS, CITIES, AND VILLAGES SPRANG UP

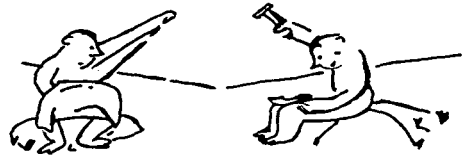
28.



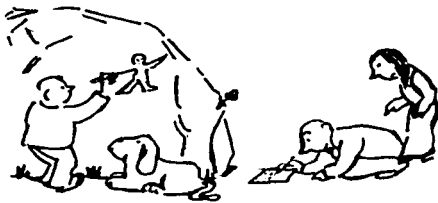
29. SONG CAME BACK INTO THE WORLD



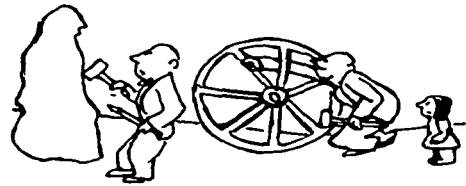
30. AND TROUBADOURS AND JUGGLERS



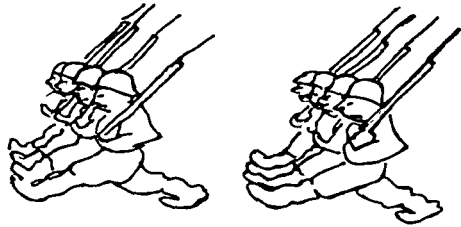
31. AND TAILORS AND COBBLERS



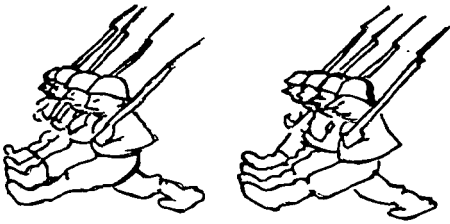
32. AND PAINTERS AND POETS



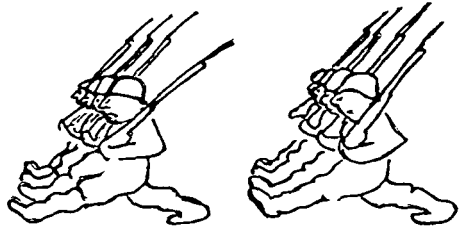
33. AND SCULPTORS AND WHEELWRIGHTS



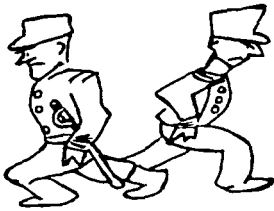
34. AND SOLDIERS



35.



36.



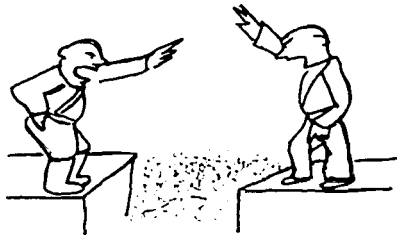
37. AND LIEUTENANTS AND CAPTAINS

37.



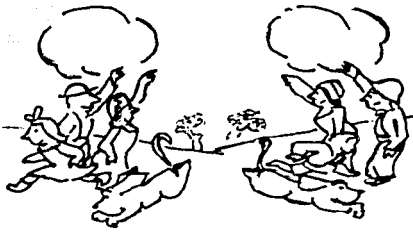
38. AND GENERALS AND MAJOR-GENERALS

38.



39. AND LIBERATORS

39.



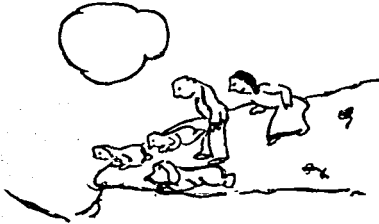
SOME PEOPLE WENT ONE PLACE TO LIVE,
AND SOME ANOTHER.

40.



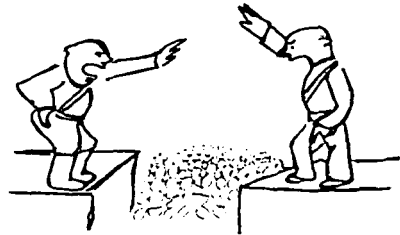
BEFORE LONG, THOSE WHO WENT TO LIVE IN THE VALLEYS
WISHED THEY HAD GONE TO LIVE IN THE HILLS

41.



AND THOSE WHO HAD GONE TO LIVE IN THE HILLS
WISHED THEY HAD GONE TO LIVE IN THE VALLEYS

42.



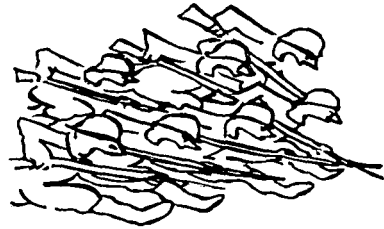
THE LIBERATORS, UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF GOD,
SET FIRE TO THE DISCONTENT

43.

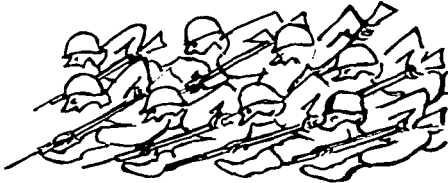


SO PRESENTLY THE WORLD WAS AT WAR AGAIN

44.



45.

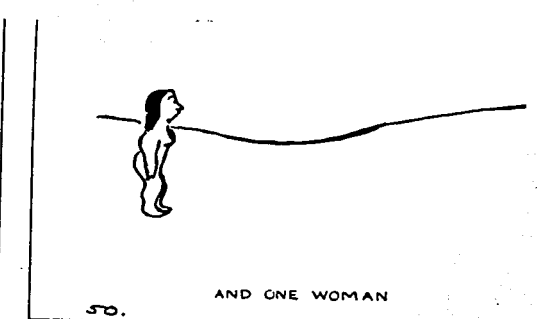
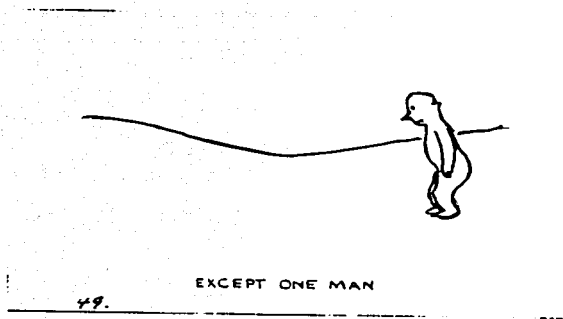
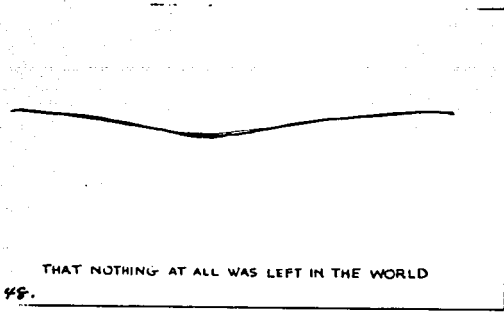


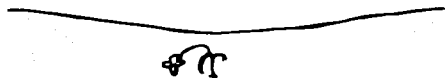
46.



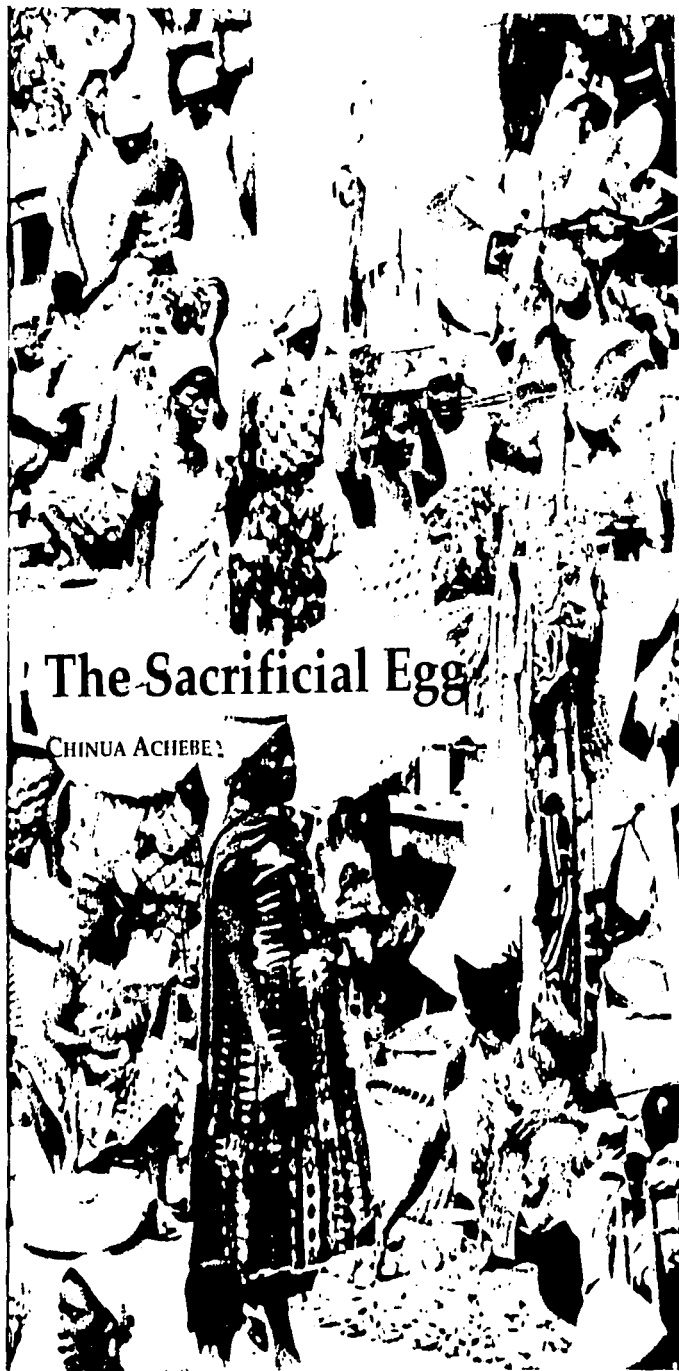
THIS TIME THE DESTRUCTION WAS SO COMPLETE...

47.





AND ONE FLOWER



Chinua Achebe 1930-

Educated in his native Nigeria at a primary school run by missionaries (his father was a catechist for the Church Mission Society), at the prestigious Government College in Umuahia and at University College, Ibadan (a constituent college of the University of London), Achebe originally wanted to become a doctor, but ultimately chose to study English Literature, graduating in 1953. For many years he worked for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, but during the Nigerian Civil War (1967-70) he went on missions to other countries in support of Biafra. After the war he became a university teacher in Nigeria, Canada and the USA. His novels cover one hundred years of Nigerian history and clearly show his understanding of the tensions in African society between the traditional and the modern, the individual and the community. He is one of the best-known African writers, whose work has been translated into many languages. Despite his largely 'English' education, he has never forgotten his African heritage and has tried to use his literary gifts in the service of his society.

JULIUS OBI SAT GAZING AT HIS TYPEWRITER. The fat chief clerk, his boss, was snoring at his table. Outside, the gatekeeper in his green uniform was sleeping at his post. No customer had passed through the gate for nearly a week. There was an empty basket on the giant weighing machine. A few palm kernels lay in the dust around the machine.

Julius went to the window that overlooked the great market on the banks of the Niger. This market, like all Ibo¹ markets, had been held on one of the four days of the week. But with the coming of the white man and the growth of Umuru into a big palm-oil port, it had become a daily market. In spite of that, however, it was still busiest on its original Nkwo day, because the deity that presided over it cast her spell only on that day. It was said that she appeared in the form of an old woman in the centre of the market just before cockcrow² and waved her magic fan in the four directions of the earth – in front of her, behind her, to the right, and to the left – to draw to the market men and women from distant clans. And they came, these men and women, bringing the produce of their lands: palm-oil and kernels, kola nuts, cassava,³ mats, baskets, and earthenware pots. And they took home many-coloured cloths, smoked fish, iron pots and plates.

1. *Ibo* ['i:bau]: a Nigerian tribe.
2. *cockcrow*: sunrise (the time when cocks begin to crow).
3. *cassava*: plant with thick roots, grown for food.

Others came by the great river bringing yams¹ and fish in their canoes. Sometimes it was a big canoe with a dozen or more people in it; sometimes it was just a fisherman and his wife in a small vessel from the swift-flowing Anambara. They moored their canoe on the bank and sold their fish, after much haggling. The woman then walked up the steep banks of the river to the heart of the market to buy salt and oil and, if the sales had been good, a length of cloth. And for her children at home she bought bean cakes or *akara* and *maimai*, which the Igara women cooked. As evening approached, they took up their paddles and paddled away, the water shimmering in the sunset and their canoe becoming smaller and smaller in the distance until it was just a dark crescent on the water's face and two dark bodies swaying forwards and backwards in it.

Julius Obi was not a native of Umuru. He came from a bush² village twenty or so miles away. But having passed his Standard Six³ in a mission school⁴ in 1920 he came to Umuru to work as a clerk in the offices of the Niger Company, which dealt in palm-oil and kernels. The offices were situated beside the famous Umuru market, so that in his first two or three weeks Julius had to learn to work against the background of its noise. Sometimes when the chief clerk was away or asleep he walked to the window and looked down on the vast anthill⁵ activity. Most of these people were not there yesterday, he thought, and yet the market was as full. There must be many, many people in the world. Of course they say that not everyone who came to the great market was a real person. Janet's mother had said so.

1. *yams*: root vegetables, rather like potatoes.
2. *bush*: (Africa) remote country area covered with natural bushes and trees.
3. *Standard Six*: the top level of compulsory education.
4. *mission school*: school for native children run by European missionaries.
5. *anthill*: mound of earth made by ants; used here because the people in the market seem to be as numerous and busy as ants.

'Some of the beautiful young women you see squeezing through the crowds are not real people but *mammy-wota* from the river,' she said.

'How does one know them?' asked Julius, whose education placed him above such superstitious stuff. But he took care not to sound unbelieving. He had long learned that it was bad policy to argue with Ma on such points.

'You can always tell,' she explained, 'because they are beautiful with a beauty that is not of this world. You catch a glimpse of them with the tail of your eye, then they disappear in the crowd.'

Julius thought about these things as he now stood at the window looking down at the empty market. Who would have believed that the great market could ever be so empty? But such was the power of *Kitikpa*, or smallpox.

When Umuru had been a little village, it had been swept and kept clean by its handful of inhabitants. But now it had grown into a busy, sprawling,¹ crowded, and dirty river port. And *Kitikpa* came. No other disease is feared by the Ibo people as much as they fear *Kitikpa*. It is personified as an evil deity. Its victims are not mourned lest it be offended. It put an end to the coming and going between neighbours and between villages. They said, '*Kitikpa* is in that village,' and immediately it was cut off by its neighbours.

Julius was worried because it was almost a week since he had seen Janet, the girl he was going to marry. Ma had explained to him very gently that he should no longer come to see them 'until this thing is over by the power of Jehovah'. Ma was a very devout Christian, and one reason why she approved of Julius for her only daughter was that he sang in the church choir.

'You must keep to your rooms,' she had said. 'You never know whom you might meet on the streets. That family has got it.' She pointed at the house across the road. 'That is what the yellow palm frond at the doorway means. The family were all moved away today in the big government lorry.'

1. *sprawling*: covering a large area (often used of towns which have grown rapidly).

Janet walked a short way with him, and they said good night. And they shook hands, which was very odd.

Julius did not go straight home. He went to the bank of the river and just walked up and down it. He must have been there a long time, because he was still there when the *ekwe*, or wooden gong, of the night spirit sounded. He immediately set out for home, half walking and half running. He had about half an hour to get home before the spirit ran its race through the town.

As Julius hurried home he stepped on something that broke with a slight liquid explosion. He stopped and peeped down at the footpath. The moon was not yet up, but there was some faint light which showed that it would not be long delayed. In this light Julius saw that he had stepped on a sacrificial egg. There were young palm fronds around it. Someone oppressed by misfortune had brought the offering to the crossroads in the dusk. And he had stepped on it, and taken the sufferer's ill luck to himself. 'Nonsense,' he said and hurried away. But it was too late; the night spirit was already abroad. Its voice rose high and clear in the still, black air. It was a long way away, but Julius knew that distance did not apply to these beings. So he made straight for the cocoyam¹ farm beside the road and threw himself on his belly. He had hardly done this when he heard the rattling staff² of the spirit and a thundering stream of esoteric speech. He shook all over. The sounds came bearing down on him. And then he could hear the footsteps. It was as if twenty men were running together. In no time at all the sounds had passed and disappeared in the distance on the other side of the road.

As Julius stood at the window looking out on the empty market he lived through that night again. It was only a week ago, but already it seemed to be separated from the present by a vast emptiness. This emptiness deepened with the passage of time. On this side stood Julius, and on the other Ma and Janet, who were carried away by the smallpox.

1. *cocoyam*: West African plant grown for food.

2. *staff*: strong wooden stick.

Erma Bombeck

Teenage Diseases

Virgin Feet

The other day my son's guidance counselor asked, "What do you want your boy to be when he grows up?"

"A pedestrian," I said.

I know I'm a fool for hoping. My son has suffered from virgin feet since he was nine months old. Just after he took his first step, he slumped to the floor in a heap and mumbled, "No, na, knee, noo" (Meaning: Is that all there is to feet?).

Since then he has been wheeled about in buggies, strollers, and wagons, supported in papoose back-packs, bicycle baskets, grocery carts and car seats, slung over hips and shoulders and transported on sleds, escalators, gocarts and automobiles.

In all that time he has never had his shoes half-soled. Never grown a corn. Never worn a hole in his socks. Never gotten wet feet and had his socks fade. Never tripped over a shoelace.

The other night he stood in front of me impatiently.

"What's the matter," I asked. "Is the Garbage Can Car Pool running late?"

"I am waiting for you to run me over to the school," he said.

"What for?"

"Practice."

"Practice for what?"

"Track. I am running the mile."

"How far is it to school?"

"About a mile."

"How long does it take you to run a mile?"

"About five minutes, forty seconds," he said proudly.

"Then run it. It would take me long to find my car keys."

"RUN IT! You've got to be kidding. I can't run a mile to school, then run another mile cross-country."

"Why not?"

"It's dumb. It's like going on a Boy Scout hike and not riding in a truck."

"Look," I said, "we've got to have a talk about your virgin feet."

"What about them? They look great."

"They should," I snapped. "They're brand-new. They've been propped up on sofas and chairs and tables and covered with twenty-dollar shoes for the last seventeen years. Now I want you to start using them again."

"For what?"

"For walking. Think of it, boy. This could open up a whole new world if kids started to walk again. Imagine, walk-in movies, walk-in hamburger emporiums, walk-in banks, walk-in sit-ins."

"I can't do it," he whined.

"Of course you can. You simply stand up straight for balance, put your weight alternately on one foot and then the other and extend one foot at a time in front of you."

He stood up slowly and tried it. "It feel awful," he said. "Couldn't I get a motorcycle or a golf cart until I get the hang of it?"

"You'll never get well if you don't try," I said. "Today I want you to walk all the way to school and back."

Later that afternoon, he came limping back from track practice.

"What happened?" I asked.

"I tried walking," he said falling into a chair. "About halfway I got a piece of gravel in my shoe and I leaned down to take it out. A bicycle plowed into me, cut my knee and bruised my leg. I lost my shoe in a ditch and got a sprained ankle when I fell trying to find it. A car stopped to help and got sideswiped. I was lucky to get out alive. No wonder there aren't any old pedestrians. If you ask me, feet will never catch on."

"Have I ever lied to you?" I said, putting my hand on his shoulder.

"Yes. The time you told me the tooth fairy liked to be paid yearly by check to keep her income-tax records straight."

"What about the time before that?" I persisted.

Convenient Hearing

The first time I observed my son with a case of Convenient Hearing, I thought he had been smoking old gym shoes.



I had called him six times to come to dinner. There was no response. Finally, I went directly to his room. He was sitting on the register in a fetal position. The record player was going full blast (Mr. Wonderful and the Electric Pimple). The television set was up to its aerial in decibels. He had a transistor cord in one ear and a telephone receiver in the other. He was teasing a yapping dog with a sock between his toes.

I pulled all the plugs, hung up the phone, silenced the dog and demanded, "Why didn't you answer me when I called?"

He looked up slowly, made a peace sign with his fingers and said, "You know I can't hear you with a war on."

What I had suspected was true. My son heard what he wanted to hear with maddening inconsistency or regard to an individual's sanity. He tuned on or tuned out when he felt like hearing.

There were many incongruities.

He could not hear the phone ring when he was leaning on it and you were in the shower.

If it was a girl calling for him, he heard it before it even rang.

He could not hear the dog scratch when he wanted in or out.

He could hear his buddies "lay a patch" twenty minutes away from the house.

He could not hear you ask him to take out the trash when your lips touched his ear.

He overheard your discussion of his report card when you talked in a whisper in the northeast corner of the garage.

He could not hear his alarm clock in the morning.

He could hear football plays whispered in a windstorm by a quarterback with a lisp and all of his teeth missing.

My neighbor Maxine was puzzled by our case of Convenient Hearing.

"How do you communicate?" she asked one day over coffee.

"We don't," I said. "My son has only spoken four words to me all year."

"What were they?"

"It was last April. I was separating some eggs for a cake. As I dumped the yolk from one shell to another, I miscalculated and the egg slid down the counter top, along the cupboard and onto my new kitchen carpet. My son was standing there watching. He looked at me and said, 'Way to go, Mom.'"

"That was it?"

"I was thrilled," I said. "I didn't think he even knew my name."

"I don't see how you can raise him when you don't talk," she sighed.

"There are ways," I said. "There's the old bumper-sticker-with-the-message trick. I hang homemade posters and stickers around his room reading 'HELP THE ECONOMY - TAKE A LEFTOVER TO LUNCH!' or 'STAMP OUT POLLUTION IN YOUR AREA - SEND YOUR GYM SHOES OUT OF STATE.' Of course, there's the ever-popular, 'DON'T LET YOUR MOLAR BE DROPOUTS: SEE YOUR DENTIST AT 1:30 THURSDAY.'"

"Oh good grief," she said, "does it work?"

"Most of the time. Of course, we have to get drastic on occasions and buy time on local rock stations to get through to him. This is how he found out we moved last April."

"I don't see how you have the patience to talk all the time to a boy who only listens at his own convenience."

"The beautiful thing about Convenient Hearing," I said, grinning, "is that it can be contagious. I can catch it too, you know. Like the other day, I was vacuuming the kitchen. The dryer buzzer was going off, the washer was pulsating, my favorite soap opera was on television and the disposer was grinding up chicken bones. My son came out and yelled, 'Hey Mom, you got two dollars?'"

"I didn't move a muscle."

"'Mom, did you hear me?' he shouted. 'I need two dollars. Where's your purse?'"

"Finally, he unplugged all my appliances and put his face in mine. 'Are you deaf?'"

"I made the sign of the Women's Liberation fist and cross and said, 'You know I can't hear you while I'm being liberated.'"

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For centuries before the flight of the Wright brothers, man had dreamed of being able to fly. What meaning for twentieth-century man may be found in this story of a flying machine in ancient China?

The Flying Machine

Ray Bradbury

IN THE YEAR A.D. 400, the Emperor Yuan held his throne by the Great Wall of China, and the land was green with rain, readying itself toward the harvest, at peace, the people in his dominion neither too happy nor too sad.

Early on the morning of the first day of the first week of the second month of the new year, the Emperor Yuan was sipping tea and fanning himself against a warm breeze when a servant ran across the scarlet and blue garden tiles, calling, "Oh, Emperor, Emperor, a miracle!"

"Yes," said the Emperor, "the air is sweet this morning."

"No, no, a miracle!" said the servant, bowing quickly.

"And this tea is good in my mouth, surely that is a miracle."

"No, no, Your Excellency."

"Let me guess then—the sun has risen and a new day is upon us. Or the

sea is blue. That now is the finest of all miracles."

"Excellency, a man is flying!"

"What?" The Emperor stopped his fan.

"I saw him in the air, a man flying with wings. I heard a voice call out of the sky, and when I looked up, there he was, a dragon in the heavens with a man in its mouth, a dragon of paper and bamboo, colored like the sun and the grass."

"It is early," said the Emperor, "and you have just wakened from a dream."

"It is early, but I have seen what I have seen! Come, and you will see it, too."

"Sit down with me here," said the Emperor. "Drink some tea. It must be a strange thing, if it is true, to see a

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man fly. You must have time to think of it, even as I must have time to prepare myself for the sight."

They drank tea.

"Please," said the servant at last, "or he will be gone."

The Emperor rose thoughtfully. "Now you may show me what you have seen."

They walked into a garden, across a meadow of grass, over a small bridge, through a grove of trees, and up a tiny hill.

"There!" said the servant.

The Emperor looked into the sky.

And in the sky, laughing so high that you could hardly hear him laugh, was a man; and the man was clothed in bright papers and reeds to make wings and a beautiful yellow tail, and he was soaring all about like the largest bird in a universe of birds, like a new dragon in a land of ancient dragons.

The man called down to them from high in the cool winds of morning, "I fly, I fly!"

The servant waved to him. "Yes, yes!"

The Emperor Yuan did not move. Instead he looked at the Great Wall of China now taking shape out of the farthest mist in the green hills, that splendid snake of stones which withered with majesty across the entire land. That wonderful wall which had protected them for a timeless time from enemy hordes and preserved peace for years without number. He saw the town, nestled to itself by a river and a road and a hill, beginning to waken.

"Tell me," he said to his servant, "has anyone else seen this flying man?"

"I am the only one, Excellency," said the servant, smiling at the sky, waving.

The Emperor watched the heav-

ens another minute and then said, "Call him down to me."

"Ho, come down, come down! The Emperor wishes to see you!" called the servant, hands cupped to his shouting mouth.

The Emperor glanced in all directions while the flying man soared down the morning wind. He saw a farmer, early in his fields, watching the sky, and he noted where the farmer stood.

The flying man alit with a rustle of paper and a creak of bamboo reeds. He came proudly to the Emperor, clumsy in his rig, at last bowing before the old man.

"What have you done?" demanded the Emperor.

"I have flown in the sky, Your Excellency," replied the man.

"What have you done?" said the Emperor again.

"I have just told you!" cried the flier.

"You have told me nothing at all." The Emperor reached out a thin hand to touch the pretty paper and the birdlike keel of the apparatus. It smelled cool, of the wind.

"Is it not beautiful, Excellency?"

"Yes, too beautiful."

"It is the only one in the world!" smiled the man. "And I am the inventor."

"The only one in the world?"

"I swear it!"

"Who else knows of this?"

"No one. Not even my wife, who would think me mad with the sun. She thought I was making a kite. I rose in the night and walked to the cliffs far away. And when the morning breezes blew and the sun rose, I gathered my courage, Excellency, and leaped from the cliff. I flew! But my wife does not know of it."

"Well for her, then," said the Emperor. "Come along."

They walked back to the great house. The sun was full in the sky now, and the smell of the grass was refreshing. The Emperor, the servant, and the flier paused within the huge garden.

The Emperor clapped his hands. "Ho, guards!"

The guards came running.

"Hold this man."

The guards seized the flier.

"Call the executioner," said the Emperor.

"What's this!" cried the flier, bewildered. "What have I done?" He began to weep, so that the beautiful paper apparatus rustled.

"Here is the man who has made a certain machine," said the Emperor, "and yet asks us what he has created. He does not know himself. It is only necessary that he create, without knowing why he has done so, or what this thing will do."

The executioner came running with a sharp silver ax. He stood with his naked, large-muscled arms ready, his face covered with a serene white mask.

"One moment," said the Emperor. He turned to a nearby table upon which sat a machine that he himself had created. The Emperor took a tiny golden key from his own neck. He fitted this key to the tiny, delicate machine and wound it up. Then he set the machine going.

The machine was a garden of metal and jewels. Set in motion, birds sang in tiny metal trees, wolves walked through miniature forests, and tiny people ran in and out of sun and shadow, fanning themselves with miniature fans, listening to the tiny emerald birds, and standing by impossibly small but tinkling fountains.

"Is it not beautiful?" said the Emperor. "If you asked me what I have done here, I could answer

you well. I have made birds sing. I have made forests murmur. I have set people to walking in the woodland, enjoying the leaves and shadows and songs. That is what I have done."

"But, oh, Emperor!" pleaded the flier, on his knees, the tears pouring down his face. "I have done a similar thing! I have found beauty. I have flown on the morning wind. I have looked down on all the sleeping houses and gardens. I have smelled the sea and even seen it, beyond the hills, from my high place. And I have soared like a bird; oh, I cannot say how beautiful it is up there, in the sky, with the wind about me, the wind blowing me here like a feather, there like a fan, the way the sky smells in the morning! And how free one feels! That is beautiful, Emperor, that is beautiful, too!"

"Yes," said the Emperor sadly, "I know it must be true. For I felt my heart move with you in the air and I wondered: What is it like? How does it feel? How do the distant pools look from so high? And how my houses and servants? Like ants? And how the distant towns not yet awake?"

"Then spare me!"

"But there are times," said the Emperor, more sadly still, "when one must lose a little beauty if one is to keep what little beauty one already has. I do not fear you, yourself, but I fear another man."

"What man?"

"Some other man who, seeing you, will build a thing of bright papers and bamboo like this. But the other man will have an evil face and an evil heart, and the beauty will be gone. It is this man I fear."

"Why? Why?"

"Who is to say that someday just such a man, in just such an apparatus of paper and reed, might not fly in the

sky and drop huge stones upon the Great Wall of China?" said the Emperor.

No one moved or said a word. "Off with his head," said the Emperor.

The executioner whirled his silver ax.

"Burn the kite and the inventor's body and bury their ashes together," said the Emperor.

The servants retreated to obey. The Emperor turned to his hand-servant, who had seen the man flying. "Hold your tongue. It was all a dream, a most sorrowful and beautiful dream. And that farmer in the distant field who saw, tell him it would pay him to consider it only a vision. If ever the word passes around, you and the farmer die within the hour."

"You are merciful, Emperor."

"No, not merciful," said the old man. Beyond the garden wall he saw the guards burning the beautiful machine of paper and reeds that

smelled of the morning wind. He saw the dark smoke climb into the sky. "No, only very much bewildered and afraid." He saw the guards digging a tiny pit wherein to bury the ashes. "What is the life of one man against those of a million others? I must take solace from that thought."

He took the key from its chain about his neck and once more wound up the beautiful miniature garden. He stood looking out across the land at the Great Wall, the peaceful town, the green fields, the rivers and streams. He sighed. The tiny garden whirred its hidden and delicate machinery and set itself in motion; tiny people walked in forests, tiny foxes loped through sun-speckled glades in beautiful shining pelts, and among the tiny trees flew little bits of high song and bright blue and yellow color flying, flying, flying in that small sky.

"Oh," said the Emperor, closing his eyes, "look at the birds, look at the birds!" *



Bogart

V.S. NAIPAL



V. S. Naipaul (Vididhar Surajprasad Naipaul) 1932-

Educated in Trinidad and at the University of Oxford, Naipaul has lived in England since 1950, although he often spends long periods abroad. This has inevitably led to his being a somewhat ambivalent figure: 'English' to his fellow West Indians, 'foreign' to the English among whom he lives. He has set many of his novels and stories in Trinidad, such as *A House for Mr Biswas*, his first major novel, published in 1961: Mr Biswas, based on the author's father, is a Trinidadian of Indian origins, and many of his other protagonists are West Indians. In addition to his novels and short stories, he has written a number of political books which are deeply pessimistic. *Bogart* is typical of his earlier style, in which he used comedy to sweeten his criticism of West Indian society.

E

VERY MORNING WHEN HE GOT UP Hat would sit on the banister of his back verandah and shout across, 'What happening there, Bogart?'

Bogart would turn in his bed and mumble softly, so that no one heard, 'What happening there, Hat?'

It was something of a mystery why he was called Bogart; but I suspect that it was Hat who gave him the name. I don't know if you remember the year the film *Casablanca* was made. That was the year when Bogart's fame spread like fire through Port of Spain and hundreds of young men began adopting the hard-boiled¹ Bogartian attitude.

Before they called him Bogart they called him Patience,² because he played that game from morn till night. Yet he never liked cards.

Whenever you went over to Bogart's little room you found him sitting on his bed with the cards in seven lines on a small table in front of him.

'What happening there, man?' he would ask quietly, and then he would say nothing for ten or fifteen minutes. And somehow you felt you couldn't really talk to Bogart, he looked so bored and superior. His eyes were small and sleepy. His face

1. *hard-boiled*: unemotional, not showing feelings.

2. *Patience*: a card game for one player, sometimes called 'Solitaire'.

was fat and his hair was gleaming black. His arms were plump. Yet he was not a funny man. He did everything with a captivating languor. Even when he licked his thumb to deal out the cards there was grace in it.

He was the most bored man I ever knew.

He made a pretence of making a living by tailoring, and he had even paid me some money to write a sign for him:

TAILOR AND CUTTER¹

Suits made to Order

Popular and Competitive Prices

He bought a sewing-machine and some blue and white and brown chalks. But I never could imagine him competing with anyone; and I cannot remember him making a suit. He was a little bit like Popo, the carpenter next door, who never made a stick of furniture, and was always planing and chiselling and making what I think he called mortises.² Whenever I asked him, 'Mr Popo, what you making?' he would reply, 'Ha, boy! That's the question. I making the thing without a name.' Bogart was never even making anything like this.

Being a child, I never wondered how Bogart came by any money. I assumed that grown-ups had money as a matter of course. Popo had a wife who worked at a variety of jobs; and ended up by becoming the friend of many men. I could never think of Bogart as having mother or father; and he never brought a woman to his little room. This little room of his was called the servant-room but no servant to the people in the main house ever lived there. It was just an architectural convention.

It is still something of a miracle to me that Bogart managed to make friends. Yet he did make many friends; he was at one

1. *cutler*: a person whose job is cutting cloth to make clothes.
2. *mortise* ['mɔ:tsɪs]: a hole cut in a piece of wood to take another piece, called the tenon, thus forming a joint.

time quite the most popular man in the street. I used to see him squatting on the pavement with all the big men of the street. And while Hat or Edward or Eddoes was talking, Bogart would just look down and draw rings with his fingers on the pavement. He never laughed audibly. He never told a story. Yet whenever there was a fête¹ or something like that, everybody would say, 'We must have Bogart. He smart like hell,² that man.' In a way he gave them great solace and comfort, I suppose.

And so every morning, as I told you, Hat would shout, very loudly, 'What happening there, Bogart?'

And he would wait for the indeterminate grumble which was Bogart saying, 'What happening there, Hat?'

But one morning, when Hat shouted, there was no reply. Something which had appeared unalterable was missing.

Bogart had vanished; had left us without a word.

The men in the street were silent and sorrowful for two whole days. They assembled in Bogart's little room. Hat lifted up the deck of cards that lay on Bogart's table and dropped two or three cards at a time reflectively.

Hat said, 'You think he gone Venezuela?'

But no one knew. Bogart told them so little.

And the next morning Hat got up and lit a cigarette and went to his back verandah and was on the point of shouting, when he remembered. He milked the cows earlier than usual that morning, and the cows didn't like it.

A month passed; then another month. Bogart didn't return.

Hat and his friends began using Bogart's room as their clubhouse. They played *wappie* and drank rum and smoked, and sometimes brought the odd stray woman³ to the room. Hat was

1. *fête* [fɛt]: (French) a day of public entertainment, usually held outdoors, often to collect money for charitable causes.
2. *smart like hell*: (informal) very clever.
3. *odd stray woman*: occasional woman they had met by chance.

presently involved with the police for gambling and sponsoring cock-fighting; and he had to spend a lot of money to bribe his way out of trouble.

It was as if Bogart had never come to Miguel Street. And after all Bogart had been living in the street only for four years or so. He had come one day with a single suitcase, looking for a room, and he had spoken to Hat who was squatting outside his gate, smoking a cigarette and reading the cricket scores in the evening paper. Even then he hadn't said much. All he said – that was Hat's story – was, 'You know any rooms?' and Hat had led him to the next yard where there was this furnished servant-room going for eight dollars a month. He had installed himself there immediately, brought out a pack of cards, and begun playing patience.

This impressed Hat.

For the rest he had always remained a man of mystery. He became patience.

When Hat and everybody else had forgotten or nearly forgotten Bogart, he returned. He turned up one morning just about seven and found Eddoes had a woman on his bed. The woman jumped up and screamed. Eddoes jumped up, not so much afraid as embarrassed.

Bogart said, 'Move over. I tired and I want to sleep.'

He slept until five that afternoon, and when he woke up he found his room full of the old gang. Eddoes was being very loud and noisy to cover up his embarrassment. Hat had brought a bottle of rum.

Hat said, 'What happening there, Bogart?'

And he rejoiced when he found his cue taken up.¹ 'What happening there, Hat?'

Hat opened the bottle of rum, and shouted to Boyee to go buy a bottle of soda water.

1. *his cue taken up* : his signal for Bogart to speak followed in the expected way. In the theatre, a cue is the signal for an actor to do or say something specific.

Bogart asked, 'How the cows, Hat?'

'They all right.'

'And Boyee?'

'He all right too. Ain't you just hear me call him?'

'And Errol?'

'He all right too. But what happening, Bogart? You all right?'

Bogart nodded, and drank a long Madrassi¹ shot² of rum. Then another, and another; and they had presently finished the bottle.

'Don't worry,' Bogart said. 'I go buy another.'

They had never seen Bogart drink so much; they had never heard him talk so much; and they were alarmed. No one dared to ask Bogart where he had been.

Bogart said, 'You boys been keeping my room hot all the time.'

'It wasn't the same without you,' Hat replied.

But they were all worried. Bogart was hardly opening his lips when he spoke. His mouth was twisted a little, and his accent was getting slightly American.

'Sure, sure,' Bogart said, and he had got it right. He was just like an actor.

Hat wasn't sure that Bogart was drunk.

In appearance, you must know, Hat recalled Rex Harrison,³ and he had done his best to strengthen the resemblance. He combed his hair backwards) screwed up⁴ his eyes, and he spoke very nearly like Harrison.

'Damn it, Bogart,' Hat said, and he became very like Rex Harrison. 'You may as well tell us everything right away.'

1. *Madrassi* : imported from Madras in India.

2. *shot* : alcoholic drink, usually small.

3. *Rex Harrison* : British actor (1908-90), known for his elegant appearance and refined accent.

4. *screwed up* : made narrower.

Bogart showed his teeth and laughed in a twisted, cynical way.

'Sure I'll tell,' he said, and got up and stuck his thumbs inside his waistband. 'Sure, I'll tell everything.'

He lit a cigarette, leaned back in such a way that the smoke got into his eyes; and, squinting, he drawled out¹ his story.

He had got a job on a ship and had gone to British Guiana. There he had deserted, and gone into the interior. He became a cowboy on the Rupununi,² smuggled things (he didn't say what) into Brazil, and had gathered some girls from Brazil and taken them to Georgetown. He was running the best brothel in the town when the police treacherously took his bribes and arrested him.

'It was a high-class place,' he said, 'no bums.³ Judges and doctors and big shot⁴ civil servants.'

'What happen?' Eldoes asked. 'Jail?'

'How you so stupid?' Hat said. 'Jail, when the man here with we. But why you people so stupid? Why you don't let the man talk?'

But Bogart was offended, and refused to speak another word.

From then on the relationship between these men changed. Bogart became the Bogart of the films. Hat became Harrison. And the morning exchange became this:

'Bogart!'

'Shaddup,⁵ Hat!'

1. *drawled out*: told slowly, with exaggeratedly long vowels.

2. *Rupununi*: a river in British Guiana, South America.

3. *bums*: worthless people.

4. *big shot*: (here used as an adjective) important.

5. *shaddup*: approximately phonetic spelling to show Bogart's pronunciation of 'Shut up'.

Bogart now became the most feared man in the street. Even Big Foot was said to be afraid of him. Bogart drank and swore and gambled with the best. He shouted rude remarks at girls walking by themselves in the street. He bought a hat, and pulled down the brim over his eyes. He became a regular sight, standing against the high concrete fence of his yard, hands in his pockets, one foot jammed against the wall, and an eternal cigarette in his mouth.

Then he disappeared again. He was playing cards with the gang in his room, and he got up and said, 'I'm going to the latrine.'

They didn't see him for four months.

When he returned, he had grown a little fatter but he had become a little more aggressive. His accent was now pure American. To complete the imitation, he began being expansive towards children. He called out to them in the streets, and gave them money to buy gum and chocolate. He loved stroking their heads, and giving them good advice.

The third time he went away and came back he gave a great party in his room for all the children or kids, as he called them. He bought cases of Solo¹ and Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola and about a bushel² of cakes.

Then Sergeant Charles, the policeman who lived up Miguel Street at number forty-five, came and arrested Bogart.

'Don't act tough,³ Bogart,' Sergeant Charles said.

But Bogart failed to take the cue.

'What happening, man? I ain't do anything.'

Sergeant Charles told him.

There was a little stir⁴ in the papers. The charge was bigamy; but it was up to Hat to find out all the inside details that the newspapers never mention.

1. *Solo*: a non-alcoholic drink.

2. *bushel* ['bʊʃəl]: a measure of capacity.

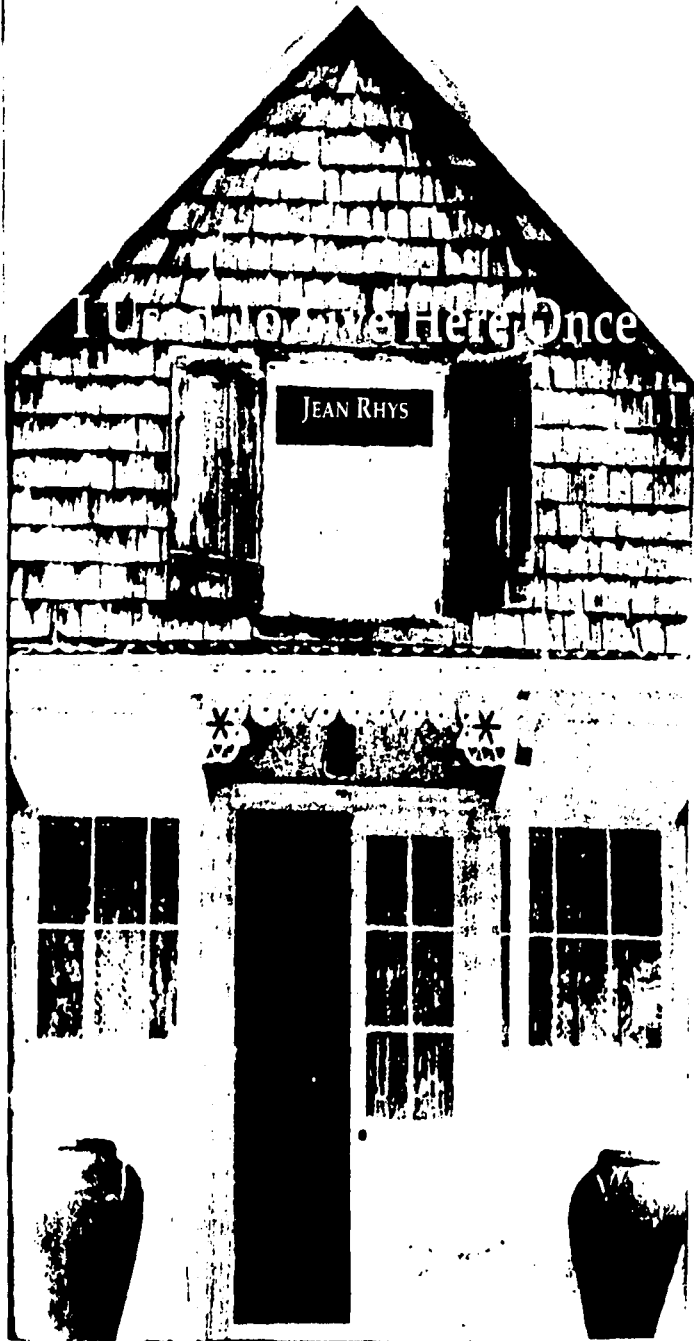
3. *act tough* [tʌf]: behave as if you were very strong.

4. *stir*: excitement.

'You see,' Hat said on the pavement that evening, 'the man leave his first wife in Tunapuna and come to Port of Spain. They couldn't have children. He remain here feeling sad and small. He go away, find a girl in Caroni and he give she a baby. In Caroni they don't make joke about that sort of thing and Bogart had to get married to the girl.'

'But why he leave she?' Eddoes asked.

'To be a man, among we men.'



Jean Rhys 1894-1979

Ella Gwendolen Rees Williams came to England from the West Indian island of Dominica in her teens and worked for some years as a chorus girl; in 1919 she went to Paris, where she wrote her early novels, all to some degree autobiographical. She was thought to have died, but was rediscovered living in South-West England in 1958 and made an astonishing return to the literary world with her most famous novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), which tells the story of the first wife of Mr Rochester, the male protagonist of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. She then published two volumes of short stories which confirmed her already high reputation. In the last twenty years of her life she won many honours and awards. Rhys's stories often deal with madness, which she herself had experienced.

SHE WAS STANDING BY the river looking at the stepping stones and remembering each one. There was the round unsteady stone, the pointed one, the flat one in the middle – the safe stone where you could stand and look round. The next wasn't so safe for when the river was full the water flowed over it and even when it showed dry it was slippery. But after that it was easy and soon she was standing on the other side.

The road was much wider than it used to be but the work had been done carelessly. The felled¹ trees had not been cleared away and the bushes looked trampled. Yet it was the same road and she walked along feeling extraordinarily happy.

It was a fine day, a blue day. The only thing was that the sky had a glassy look that she didn't remember. That was the only word she could think of. Glassy. She turned the corner, saw that what had been the old pavé² had been taken up, and there too the road was much wider, but it had the same unfinished look.

She came to the worn stone steps that led up to the house and her heart began to beat. The screw pine³ was gone, so was

the mock¹ summer house called the ajoupa, but the clove tree² was still there and at the top of the steps the rough lawn stretched away, just as she remembered it. She stopped and looked towards the house that had been added to and painted white. It was strange to see a car standing in front of it.

There were two children under the big mango tree, a boy and a little girl, and she waved to them and called 'Hello' but they didn't answer her or turn their heads. Very fair children, as Europeans born in the West Indies so often are: as if the white blood is asserting itself against all odds.

The grass was yellow in the hot sunlight as she walked towards them. When she was quite close she called again, shyly: 'Hello.' Then, 'I used to live here once,' she said.

Still they didn't answer. When she said for the third time 'Hello' she was quite near them. Her arms went out instinctively with the longing to touch them.

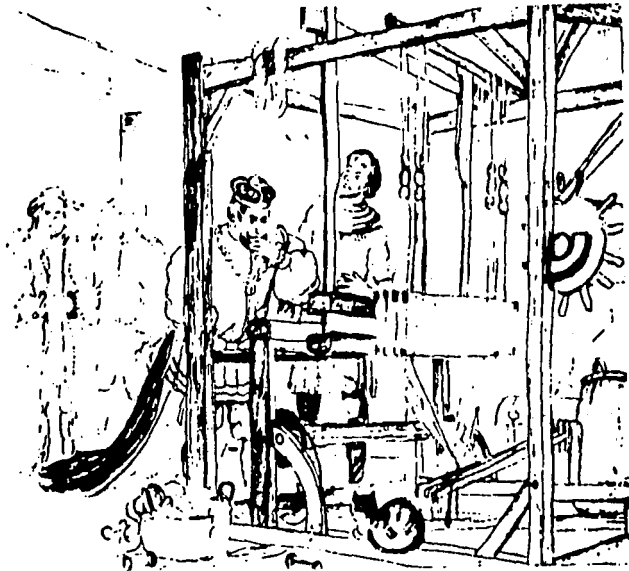
It was the boy who turned. His grey eyes looked straight into hers. His expression didn't change. He said: 'Hasn't it gone cold all of a sudden. D'you notice? Let's go in.' 'Yes let's,' said the girl.

Her arms fell to her sides as she watched them running across the grass to the house. That was the first time she knew.

1. *felled* : cut down (of trees).
2. *pavé* : (French) paved road or path.
3. *screw-pine* : a kind of tree found in the West Indies and in other tropical countries.

1. *mock* : (here) imitation.
2. *clove tree* : a kind of tree found in the West Indies; the dried flowers of this tree are used as a spice.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES



Many years ago there was an emperor who was so excessively fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on them. He cared nothing about his soldiers nor for the theater, nor for driving in the woods except for the sake of showing off his new clothes. He had a costume for every hour in the day, and instead of saying as one does about any other king or emperor, "He is in his council chamber," here one always said, "The emperor is in his dressing room."

Life was very gay in the great town where he lived; hosts of strangers came to visit it every day, and among them one day two swindlers. They gave themselves out as weavers, and said that they knew how to weave the most beautiful stuffs imaginable. Not only were the colors and patterns unusually fine, but the clothes that were made of the stuffs had the peculiar quality of becoming invisible to every person who was not fit for the office he held, or if he was impossibly dull.

“Those must be splendid clothes,” thought the emperor. “By wearing them I should be able to discover which men in my kingdom are unfitted for their posts. I shall distinguish the wise men from the fools. Yes, I certainly must order some of that stuff to be woven for me.”

He paid the two swindlers a lot of money in advance so that they might begin their work at once.

They did put up two looms and pretended to weave, but they had nothing whatever upon their shuttles. At the outset they asked for a quantity of the finest silk and the purest gold thread, all of which they put into their own bags while they worked away at the empty looms far into the night.

“I should like to know how those weavers are getting on with the stuff,” thought the emperor, but he felt a little queer when he reflected that anyone who was stupid or unfit for his post would not be able to see it. He certainly thought that he need have no fears for himself, but still he thought he would send somebody else first to see how it was getting on. Everybody in the town knew what wonderful power the stuff possessed, and everyone was anxious to see how stupid his neighbor was.

“I will send my faithful old minister to the weavers,” thought the emperor. “He will be best able to see how the stuff looks, for he is a clever man and no one fulfils his duties better than he does!”

So the good old minister went into the room where the two swindlers sat working at the empty loom.

“Heaven preserve us!” thought the old minister, opening his eyes very wide. “Why, I can’t see a thing!” But he took care not to say so.

Both the swindlers begged him to be good enough to step a little nearer, and asked if he did not think it a good

pattern and beautiful coloring. They pointed to the empty loom, and the poor old minister stared as hard as he could but he could not see anything, for of course there was nothing to see.

“Good heavens!” thought he, “is it possible that I am a fool? I have never thought so and nobody must know it. Am I not fit for my post? It will never do to say that I cannot see the stuffs.”

“Well, sir, you don’t say anything about the stuff,” said the one who was pretending to weave.

“Oh, it is beautiful! Quite charming!” said the old minister looking through his spectacles; “this pattern and these colors! I will certainly tell the emperor that the stuff pleases me very much.”

“We are delighted to hear you say so,” said the swindlers, and then they named all the colors and described the peculiar pattern. The old minister paid great attention to what they said, so as to be able to repeat it when he got home to the emperor.

Then the swindlers went on to demand more money, more silk, and more gold, to be able to proceed with the weaving; but they put it all into their own pockets—not a single strand was ever put into the loom, but they went on as before weaving at the empty loom.

The emperor soon sent another faithful official to see how the stuff was getting on, and if it would soon be ready. The same thing happened to him as to the minister; he looked and looked, but as there was only the empty loom, he could see nothing at all.

“Is not this a beautiful piece of stuff?” said both the swindlers, showing and explaining the beautiful pattern and colors which were not there to be seen.

"I know I am not a fool!" thought the man, "so it must be that I am unfit for my good post! It is very strange though! However, one must not let it appear!" So he praised the stuff he did not see, and assured them of his delight in the beautiful colors and the originality of the design. "It is absolutely charming!" he said to the emperor. Everybody in the town was talking about this splendid stuff.

Now the emperor thought he would like to see it while it was still on the loom. So, accompanied by a number of selected courtiers, among whom were the two faithful officials who had already seen the imaginary stuff, he went to visit the crafty impostors, who were working away as hard as ever they could at the empty loom.

"It is magnificent!" said both the honest officials. "Only see, Your Majesty, what a design! What colors!" And they pointed to the empty loom, for they thought no doubt the others could see the stuff.

"What!" thought the emperor; "I see nothing at all! This is terrible! Am I a fool? Am I not fit to be emperor? Why, nothing worse could happen to me!"

"Oh, it is beautiful!" said the emperor. "It has my highest approval!" and he nodded his satisfaction as he gazed at the empty loom. Nothing would induce him to say that he could not see anything.

The whole suit gazed and gazed, but saw nothing more than all the others. However, they all exclaimed with His Majesty, "It is very beautiful!" and they advised him to wear a suit made of this wonderful cloth on the occasion of a great procession which was just about to take place. "It is magnificent! Gorgeous! Excellent!" went from mouth to mouth; they were all equally delighted with it. The emperor

gave each of the rogues an order of knighthood to be worn in their buttonholes and the title of "Gentlemen Weavers."

The swindlers sat up the whole night, before the day on which the procession was to take place, burning sixteen candles, so that people might see how anxious they were to get the emperor's new clothes ready. They pretended to take the stuff off the loom. They cut it out in the air with a huge pair of scissors, and they stitched away with needles without any thread in them. At last they said, "Now the emperor's new clothes are ready!"

The emperor, with his grandest courtiers, went to them himself, and both the swindlers raised one arm in the air, as if they were holding something, and said, "See, these are the trousers, this is the coat, here is the mantle!" and so on.

"It is as light as a spider's web. One might think one had nothing on, but that is the very beauty of it!"

"Yes!" said all the courtiers, but they could not see anything, for there was nothing to see.

"Will Your Imperial Majesty be graciously pleased to take off your clothes," said the impostors, "so that we may put on the new ones, along here before the great mirror."

The emperor took off all his clothes, and the impostors pretended to give him one article of dress after the other. Of the new ones which they had pretended to make. They pretended to fasten something round his waist and to tie on something; this was the train, and the emperor turned round and round in front of the mirror.

"How well His Majesty looks in the new clothes! How becoming they are!" cried all the people round. "What a design, and what colors! They are most gorgeous robes!"

"The canopy is waiting outside which is to be carried over Your Majesty in the procession," said the master of the ceremonies.

"Well, I am quite ready," said the emperor. "Don't the clothes fit well?" and then he turned round again in front of the mirror, so that he should seem to be looking at his grand things.

The chamberlains who were to carry the train stooped and pretended to lift it from the ground with both hands, and they walked along with their hands in the air. They dared not let it appear that they could not see anything.

Then the emperor walked along in the procession under the gorgeous canopy, and everybody in the streets and at the windows exclaimed, "How beautiful the emperor's new clothes are! What a splendid train! And they fit to perfection!" Nobody would let it appear that he could see nothing, for then he would not be fit for his post, or else he was a fool.

None of the emperor's clothes had been so successful before.

"But he has got nothing on," said a little child.

"Oh, listen to the innocent," said its father, and one person whispered to the other what the child had said. "He has nothing on; a child says he has nothing on!"

"But he has nothing on!" at last cried all the people.

The emperor writhed, for he knew it was true, but he thought "the procession must go on now," so he held himself stiffer than ever, and the chamberlains held up the invisible train.



The Sin Eater

This is Joseph, in maroon leather bedroom slippers, flattened at the heels, scuffed at the toes, wearing also a seedy cardigan of muddy off-yellow that reeks of bargain basements, sucking at his pipe, his hair greying and stringy, his articulation as beautiful and precise and English as ever:

'In Wales,' he says, 'mostly in the rural areas, there was a personage known as the Sin Eater. When someone was dying the Sin Eater would be sent for. The people of the house would prepare a meal and place it on the coffin. They would have the coffin all ready, of course: once they'd decided you were going off, you had scarcely any choice in the matter. According to other versions, the meal would be placed on the dead person's body, which must have made for some sloppy eating, one would have thought. In any case the Sin Eater would devour this meal and would also be given a sum of money. It was believed that all the sins the dying person had accumulated during his lifetime would be removed from him and transmitted to the Sin Eater. The Sin Eater thus became absolutely bloated with other people's sins. She'd accumulate such a heavy load of them that nobody wanted to have anything to do with her; a kind of syphilitic of the soul, you might say. They'd even avoid speaking to her, except of course when it was time to summon her to another meal.'

'Her?' I say.

Joseph smiles, that lopsided grin that shows the teeth in one side of his mouth, the side not engaged with the stem of his pipe. An ironic grin, volkish, picking up on what? What have I given away this time?

'I think of them as old women,' he says, 'though there's no reason why they shouldn't have been men, I suppose. They could be anything as long as they were willing to eat the sins. Destitute old creatures who had no other way of keeping body and soul together, wouldn't you think? A sort of geriatric spiritual whoring.'

He gazes at me, grinning away, and I remember certain stories I've heard about him, him and women. He's had three wives, to begin with. Nothing with me though, ever, though he does try to help me on with my coat a bit too lingeringly. Why should I worry? It's not as though I'm susceptible. Besides which he's at least sixty, and the cardigan is truly gross, as my sons would say.

'It was bad luck to kill one of them, though,' he says, 'and there must have been other perks. In point of fact I think Sin Eating has a lot to be said for it.'

Joseph's not one of the kind who ~~was~~ is sensitive, indulgent silence when you've frozen on him or run out of things to say. If you won't talk to him, he'll bloody well talk to you, about the most boring things he can think of, usually. I've heard all about his flower beds and his three wives and how to raise calla lilies in your cellar; I've heard all about the cellar, too, I could give guided tours. He says he thinks it's healthy for his patients—he won't call them 'clients', no pussyfooting around, with Joseph—to know he's a human being too, and God do we know it. He'll drone on and on until you figure out that you aren't paying him so you can listen to him talk about his house plants, you're paying him so he can listen to you talk about yours.

Sometimes, though, he's really telling you something. I pick up my coffee cup, wondering whether this is one of those occasions.

'Okay,' I say, 'I'll bite. Why?'

'It's obvious,' he says, lighting his pipe again, spewing out fumes. 'First, the patients have to wait until they're dying. A true life crisis, no fakery and invention. They aren't permitted to bother you until then, until they can demonstrate that they're serious, you might say. Second, somebody gets a good square meal out of it.' He laughs ruefully. We both know that half his patients don't bother to pay him, not even the money the government pays them. Joseph has a habit of taking on people nobody else will touch with a barge pole, not because they're too sick but because they're too poor. Mothers on welfare and so on; bad credit risks, like Joseph himself. He once got fired from a loony bin for trying to institute worker control.

'And think of the time saving,' he goes on. 'A couple of hours per patient, sum total, as opposed to twice a week for years and years, with the same result in the end.'

'That's pretty cynical,' I say disapprovingly. I'm supposed to be the cynical one, but maybe he's outflanking me, to force me to give up this corner. Cynicism is a defence, according to Joseph.

'You wouldn't even have to listen to them,' he says. 'Not a blessed word. The sins are transmitted in the food.'

Suddenly he looks sad and tired.

'You're telling me I'm wasting your time?' I say.

'Not mine, my dear,' he says. 'I've got all the time in the world.'

I interpret this as condescension, the one thing above all that I can't stand. I don't throw my coffee cup at him, however. I'm not as angry as I would have been once.

We've spent a lot of time on it, this anger of mine. It was only because I found reality so unsatisfactory; that was my story. So unfinished, so sloppy, so pointless, so endless. I wanted things to make sense.

I thought Joseph would try to convince me that reality was actually fine and dandy and then try to adjust me to it, but he didn't do that. Instead he agreed with me, cheerfully and at once. Life in most ways was a big pile of shit, he said. That was axiomatic. 'Think of it as a desert island,' he said. 'You're stuck on it, now you have to decide how best to cope.'

'Until rescued?' I said.

'Forget about the rescue,' he said.

'I can't,' I said.

This conversation is taking place in Joseph's office, which is just as tatty as he is and smells of unemptied ash-trays, feet, misery, and twice-breathed air. But it's also taking place in my bedroom, on the day of the funeral. Joseph's, who didn't have all the time in the world.

'He fell out of a tree,' said Karen, notifying me. She'd come to do this in person, rather than using the phone. Joseph didn't trust phones. Most of the message in any act of communication, he said, was non-verbal.

Karen stood in my doorway, oozing tears. She was one of his too, one of us; it was through her I'd got him. By now there's a network of us, it's like recommending a hairdresser, we've passed him from hand to hand like the proverbial eye or tooth. Smart women with detachable husbands or genius-afflicted children with nervous tics, smart women with deranged lives, overjoyed to find someone who wouldn't tell us we were too smart for our own good and should all have frontal lobotomies. Smartness was an asset, Joseph maintained. We should only see what happened to the dumb ones.

'Out of a tree?' I said, almost screaming.

'Sixty feet, onto his head,' said Karen. She began weeping again. I wanted to shake her.

'What the bloody hell was he doing up at the top of a sixty-foot tree?' I said.

'Pruning it,' said Karen. 'It was in his garden. It was cutting off the light to his flower beds.'

'The old fart,' I said. I was furious with him. It was an act of desertion. What made him think he had the right to go climbing up to the top of a sixty-foot tree, risking all our lives? Did his flower beds mean more to him than we did?

'What are we going to do?' said Karen.

What am I going to do? is one question. It can always be replaced by *What am I going to wear?* For some people it's the same thing. I go through the cupboard, looking for the blackest things I can find. What I wear will be the non-verbal part of the communication. Joseph will notice. I have a horrible feeling I'll turn up at the funeral home and find they've laid him out in his awful yellow cardigan and those tacky maroon leather bedroom slippers.

I needn't have bothered with the black. It's no longer demanded. The three wives are in pastels, the first in blue, the second in mauve, the third, the current one, in beige. I know a lot about the three wives, from those off-days of mine when I didn't feel like talking.

Karen is here too, in an Indian-print dress, snivelling softly to herself. I envy her. I want to feel grief, but I can't quite believe Joseph is dead. It seems like some joke he's playing, some anecdote that's supposed to make us learn something. Fakeness and invention. *All right, Joseph, I want to call, we have the answer, you can come out now.* But nothing happens, the closed coffin remains closed, no wisps of smoke issue from it to show there's life.

The closed coffin is the third wife's idea. She thinks it's more dignified, says the grapevine, and it probably is. The coffin is of dark wood, in good taste, no showy trim. No one has made a meal and placed it on this coffin, no one has eaten from it. No destitute old creature, gobbling down the turnips and mash and the heavy secrecies of Joseph's life along with them. I have no idea what Joseph might have had on his conscience. Nevertheless I feel this as an omission: what then have become of Joseph's sins? They hover around us, in the air, over the bowed heads, while a male relative of Joseph's, unknown to me, tells us all what a fine man he was.

After the funeral we go back to Joseph's house, to the third wife's house, for what used to be called the wake. Not any more: now it's coffee and refreshments.

The flower beds are tidy, gladioli at this time of year, already fading and a little ragged. The tree branch, the one that broke, is still on the lawn.

'I kept having the feeling he wasn't really there,' says Karen as we go up the walk.

'Really where?' I say.

'There,' says Karen. 'In the coffin.'

'For Christ's sake,' I say, 'don't start that.' I can tolerate that kind of sentimental fiction in myself, just barely, as long as I don't do it out loud. 'Dead is dead, that's what he'd say. Deal with here and now, remember?'

Karen, who'd once tried suicide, nodded and started to cry again. Joseph is an expert on people who try suicide. He's never lost one yet.

'How does he do it?' I asked Karen once. Suicide wasn't one of my addictions, so I didn't know.

'He makes it sound so boring,' she said.

'That can't be all,' I said.

'He makes you imagine,' she said, 'what it's like to be dead.'

There are people moving around quietly, in the living-room and in the dining-room, where the table stands, arranged by the third wife with a silver tea urn and a vase of chrysanthemums, pink and yellow. Nothing too funereal, you can hear her thinking. On the white tablecloth there are cups, plates, cookies, coffee, cakes. I don't know why funerals are supposed to make people hungry, but they do. If you can still chew you know you're alive.

Karen is beside me, stuffing down a piece of chocolate cake. On the other side is the first wife.

'I hope you aren't one of the loonies,' she says to me abruptly. I've never really met her before, she's just been pointed out to me, by Karen, at the funeral. She's wiping her fingers on a paper napkin. On her powder-blue lapel is a gold brooch in the shape of a bird's nest, complete with the eggs. It reminds me of high school: felt skirts with appliques of cats and telephones, a world of replicas.

I ponder my reply. Does she mean *client*, or is she asking whether I am by chance genuinely out of my mind?

'No,' I say.

'Didn't think so,' says the first wife. 'You don't look like it. A lot of them were, the place was crawling with them. I was afraid there might be an incident. When I lived with Joseph there were always these incidents, phone calls at two in the morning, always killing themselves, throwing themselves all over him, you couldn't believe what went on. Some of them were devoted to him. If he'd told them to shoot the Pope or something, they'd have done it just like that.'

'He was very highly thought of,' I say carefully.

'You're telling me,' says the first wife. 'Had the idea he was God himself, some of them. Not that he minded all that much.'

The paper napkin isn't adequate, she's licking her fingers. 'Too rich,' she says. 'Hers.' She jerks her head in the direction of the second wife, who is wispier than the first wife and is walking past us, somewhat aimlessly, in the direction of the living-room. 'You can have it, I told him finally. I just want some peace and quiet before I have to start pushing up the daisies.' Despite the richness, she helps herself to another piece of chocolate cake. 'She had this motu idea that we should have some of them stand up and give little ceremonies about him, right at the ceremony. Are you totally out of your nuce? I told her. It's your funeral, but if I was you I'd try to keep it in mind that some of the people there are going to be a whole lot saner than others. Luckily she listened to me.'

'Yes,' I say. There's chocolate icing on her cheek: I wonder if I should tell her.

'I did what I could,' she says, 'which wasn't that much, but still. I was fond of him in a way. You can't just wipe out ten years of your life. I brought the cookies,' she adds, rather smugly. 'Least I could do.'

I look down at the cookies. They're white, cut into the shapes of stars and moons and decorated with coloured sugar and little silver balls. They remind me of Christmas, of festivals and celebrations. They're the kind of cookies you make to please someone; to please a child.

I've been here long enough. I look around for the third wife, the one in charge, to say goodbye. I finally locate her, standing in an open doorway. She's crying, something she didn't do at the funeral. The first wife is beside her, holding her hand.

'I'm keeping it just like this,' says the third wife, to no one in particular. Past her shoulder I can see into the room, Joseph's study evidently. It would take a lot of strength to leave that rummage sale untouched, untidied. Not to mention the begonias withering on the sill. But for her it will take no strength at all, because Joseph is in this room, unfinished, a huge boxful of loose ends. He refuses to be packed up and put away.

'Who do you hate the most?' says Joseph. This, in the middle of a lecture he's been giving me about the proper kind of birdbath for one's garden. He knows of course that I don't have a garden.

'I have absolutely no idea,' I say.

'Then you should find out,' says Joseph. 'I myself cherish an abiding hatred for the boy who lived next door to me when I was eight.'

'Why is that?' I ask, pleased to be let off the hook.

'He picked my sunflower,' he says. 'I grew up in a slum, you know. We had an area of sorts at the front, but it was solid cinders. However I did manage to grow this one stunted little sunflower, God knows how. I used to get up early every morning just to look at it. And the little bugger picked it. Pure bloody malice. I've forgiven a lot of later transgressions but if I ran into the little sod tomorrow I'd stick a knife into him.'

I'm shocked, as Joseph intends me to be. 'He was only a child,' I say. 'So was I,' he says. 'The early ones are the hardest to forgive. Children have no charity; it has to be learned.'

Is this Joseph proving yet once more that he's a human being, or am I intended to understand something about myself? Maybe, maybe not. Sometimes Joseph's stories are parables, but sometimes they're just running off at the mouth.

In the front hall the second wife, she of the mauve wisps, ambushes me. 'He didn't fall,' she whispers.

'Pardon?' I say.

The three wives have a family resemblance—they're all blondish and vague around the edges—but there's something else about this one, a glittering of the eyes. Maybe it's grief; or maybe Joseph didn't always draw a totally firm line between his personal and his professional lives. The second wife has a faint aroma of client.

'He wasn't happy,' she says. 'I could tell. We were still very close, you know.'

What she wants me to infer is that he jumped. 'He seemed all right to me,' I say.

'He was good at keeping up a front,' she says. She takes a breath, she's about to confide in me, but whatever these revelations are I don't want to hear them. I want Joseph to remain as he appeared: solid, capable, wise, and sane. I do not need his darkness.

I go back to the apartment. My sons are away for the weekend. I wonder whether I should bother making dinner just for myself. It's hardly worth it. I wander around the too-small living-room, picking things up. No longer my husband's: as befits the half-divorced, he lives elsewhere.

One of my sons has just reached the shower-and-shave phase, the other hasn't, but both of them leave a deposit every time they pass through a room. A sort of bathtub ring of objects—socks, paperback books left face-down and open in the middle, sandwiches with bites taken out of them, and, lately, cigarette butts.

Under a dirty T-shirt I discover the Hare Krishna magazine my youn-

ger son brought home a week ago. I was worried that it was a spate of adolescent religious mania, but no, he'd given them a quarter because he felt sorry for them. He was a dead-robin-burier as a child. I take the magazine into the kitchen to put it in the trash. On the front there's a picture of Krishna playing the flute, surrounded by adoring maidens. His face is bright blue, which makes me think of corpses: some things are not cross-cultural. If I read on I could find out why meat and sex are bad for you. Not such a poor idea when you think about it: no more terrified cows, no more divorces. A life of abstinence and prayer. I think of myself, standing on a street corner, ringing a bell, swathed in flowing garments. Selfless and removed, free from sin. Sin is this world, says Krishna. This world is all we have, says Joseph. It's all you have to work with. It is not too much for you. You will not be rescued.

I could walk to the corner for a hamburger or I could phone out for pizza. I decide on the pizza.

'Do you like me?' Joseph says from his armchair.

'What do you mean, do I *like* you?' I say. It's early on; I haven't given any thought to whether or not I like Joseph.

'Well, do you?' he says.

'Look,' I say. I'm speaking calmly but in fact I'm outraged. This is a demand, and Joseph is not supposed to make demands of me. There are too many demands being made of me already. That's why I'm here, isn't it? Because the demands exceed the supply. 'You're like my dentist,' I say. 'I don't think about whether or not I like my dentist. I don't *have* to like him. I'm paying him to fix my teeth. You and my dentist are the only people in the whole world that I don't *have* to like.'

'But if you met me under other circumstances,' Joseph persists, 'would you like me?'

'I have no idea,' I say. 'I can't imagine any other circumstances.'

This is a room at night, a night empty except for me. I'm looking at the ceiling, across which the light from a car passing outside is slowly moving. My apartment is on the first floor: I don't like heights. Before this I always lived in a house.

I've been having a dream about Joseph. Joseph was never much interested in dreams. At the beginning I used to save them up for him and tell them to him, the ones I thought were of interest, but he would always refuse to say what they meant. He'd make me tell him, instead. Being awake, according to Joseph, was more important than being asleep. He wanted me to prefer it.

Nevertheless, there was Joseph in my dream. It's the first time he's made an appearance. I think that it will please him to have made it, finally, after all those other dreams about preparations for dinner parties, always one plate short. But then I remember that he's no longer around to be told. Here it is, finally, the shape of my bereavement: Joseph is no longer around to be told. There is no one left in my life who is there only to be told.

I'm in an airport terminal. The plane's been delayed, all the planes have been delayed, perhaps there's a strike, and people are crammed in and milling around. Some of them are upset, there are children crying, some of the women are crying too, they've lost people, they push through the crowd calling out names, but elsewhere there are clumps of men and women laughing and singing, they've had the foresight to bring cases of beer with them to the airport and they're passing the bottles around. I try to get some information but there's no one at any of the ticket counters. Then I realize I've forgotten my passport. I decide to take a taxi home to get it, and by the time I make it back maybe they'll have everything straightened out.

I push towards the exit doors, but someone is waving to me across the heads of the crowd. It's Joseph. I'm not at all surprised to see him, though I do wonder about the winter overcoat he's wearing, since it's still summer. He also has a yellow muffler wound around his neck, and a hat. I've never seen him in any of these clothes before. Of course, I think, he's cold, but now he's pushed through the people, he's beside me. He's wearing a pair of heavy leather gloves and he takes the right one off to shake my hand. His own hand is bright blue, a flat tempera-paint blue, a picture-book blue. I hesitate, then I shake the hand, but he doesn't let go, he holds my hand, confidently, like a child, smiling at me as if we haven't met for a long time.

'I'm glad you got the invitation,' he says.

Now he's leading me towards a doorway. There are fewer people now. To one side there's a stand selling orange juice. Joseph's three wives are behind the counter, all in identical costumes, white hats and frilly aprons, like waitresses of the forties. We go through the doorway; inside, people are sitting at small round tables, though there's nothing on the tables in front of them, they appear to be waiting.

I sit down at one of the tables and Joseph sits opposite me. He doesn't take off his hat or his coat, but his hands are on the table, no gloves, they're the normal colour again. There's a man standing beside us, trying to attract our attention. He's holding out a small white card

covered with symbols, hands and fingers. A deaf-mute, I decide, and sure enough when I look his mouth is sewn shut. Now he's tugging at Joseph's arm, he's holding out something else, it's a large yellow flower. Joseph doesn't see him.

'Look,' I say to Joseph, but the man is already gone and one of the waitresses has come instead. I resent the interruption, I have so much to tell Joseph and there's so little time, the plane will go in a minute, in the other room I can already hear the crackle of announcements, but the woman pushes in between us, smiling officiously. It's the first wife; behind her, the other two wives stand in attendance. She sets a large plate in front of us on the table.

'Will that be all?' she says, before she retreats.

The plate is filled with cookies, children's-party cookies, white ones, cut into the shapes of moons and stars, decorated with silver balls and coloured sugar. They look too rich.

'My sins,' Joseph says. His voice sounds wistful but when I glance up he's smiling at me. Is he making a joke?

I look down at the plate again. I have a moment of panic: this is not what I ordered, it's too much for me, I might get sick. Maybe I could send it back; but I know this isn't possible.

I remember now that Joseph is dead. The plate floats up towards me, there is no table, around us is dark space. There are thousands of stars, thousands of moons, and as I reach out for one they begin to shine.

Lamb to the Slaughter

Roald Dahl Great Britain

"It's the old story. Get the weapon, and you've got the man."

The room was warm and clean, the curtains drawn, the two table lamps alight—hers and the one by the empty chair opposite. On the sideboard behind her, two tall glasses, soda water, whiskey. Fresh ice cubes in the Thermos bucket.

Mary Maloney was waiting for her husband to come home from work.

Now and again she would glance up at the clock, but without anxiety, merely to please herself with the thought that each minute gone by made it nearer the time when he would come. There was a slow smiling air about her, and about everything she did. The drop of the head as she bent over her sewing was curiously tranquil. Her skin—for this was her sixth month with child—had acquired a wonderful translucent quality, the mouth was soft, and the eyes, with their new placid look, seemed larger, darker than before.

When the clock said ten minutes to five, she began to listen, and a few moments later, punctually as always, she heard the tires on the gravel outside, and the car door slamming, the footsteps passing the window, the key turning in the lock. She laid aside her sewing, stood up, and went forward to kiss him as he came in.

"Hullo, darling," she said.

"Hullo," he answered.

She took his coat and hung it in the closet. Then she walked over and made the drinks, a strongish one for him, a weak one for herself; and soon she was back again in her chair with the sewing, and he in the other, opposite, holding the tall glass with both his hands, rocking it so the ice cubes tinkled against the side.

For her, this was always a blissful time of day. She knew he didn't want to speak much until the first drink was finished, and she, on her side, was content to sit quietly, enjoying his company after the long hours alone in the house. She loved to luxuriate in the presence of this man, and to feel—almost as a sunbather feels the sun—that warm male glow that came out of him to her when they were alone together. She loved him for the way he sat loosely in a chair, for the way he came in a door, or moved slowly across the room with long strides. She loved the intent, far look in his eyes when they rested on her, the funny shape of the mouth, and especially the way he remained silent about his tiredness, sitting still with himself until the whiskey had taken some of it away.

"Tired, darling?"

"Yes," he said. "I'm tired." And as he spoke, he did an unusual thing. He lifted his glass and drained it in one swallow although there was still half of it, at least half of it left. She wasn't really watching him, but she knew what he had done because she heard the ice cubes falling back against the bottom of the empty glass when he lowered his arm. He paused a moment, leaning forward in the chair, then he got up and went slowly over to fetch himself another.

"I'll get it!" she cried, jumping up.

"Sit down," he said.

When he came back, she noticed that the new drink was dark amber with the quantity of whiskey in it.

"Darling, shall I get your slippers?"

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"No."

She watched him as he began to sip the dark yellow drink, and she could see little oily swirls in the liquid because it was so strong.

"I think it's a shame," she said, "that when a policeman gets to be as senior as you, they keep him walking about on his feet all day long."

He didn't answer, so she bent her head again and went on with her sewing; but each time he lifted the drink to his lips, she heard the ice cubes clinking against the side of the glass.

"Darling," she said. "Would you like me to get you some cheese? I haven't made any supper because it's Thursday."

"No," he said.

"If you're too tired to eat out," she went on, "it's still not too late. There's plenty of meat and stuff in the freezer, and you can have it right here and not even move out of the chair."

Her eyes waited on him for an answer, a smile, a little nod, but he made no sign.

"Anyway," she went on, "I'll get you some cheese and crackers first."

"I don't want it," he said.

She moved uneasily in her chair, the large eyes still watching his face. "But you *must* have supper. I can easily do it here. I'd like to do it. We can have lamb chops. Or pork. Anything you want. Everything's in the freezer."

"Forget it," he said.

"But darling, you *must* eat! I'll fix it anyway, and then you can have it or not, as you like."

She stood up and placed her sewing on the table by the lamp.

"Sit down," he said. "Just for a minute, sit down."

It wasn't till then that she began to get frightened.

"Go on," he said. "Sit down."

She lowered herself back slowly into the chair, watching him all the time with those large, bewildered eyes. He had finished the second drink and was staring down into the glass, frowning.

"Listen," he said. "I've got something to tell you."

"What is it, darling? What's the matter?"

He had now become absolutely motionless, and he kept his head down so that the light from the lamp beside him fell across the upper part of his face, leaving the chin and mouth in shadow. She noticed there was a little muscle moving near the corner of his left eye.

"This is going to be a bit of a shock to you, I'm afraid," he said. "But I've thought about it a good deal and I've decided the only thing to do is tell you right away. I hope you won't blame me too much."

And he told her. It didn't take long, four or five minutes at most, and she sat very still through it all, watching him with a kind of dazed horror as he went further and further away from her with each word.

"So there it is," he added. "And I know it's kind of a bad time to be telling you, but there simply wasn't any other way. Of course I'll give you money and see you're looked after. But there needn't really be any fuss. I hope not anyway. It wouldn't be very good for my job."

Her first instinct was not to believe any of it, to reject it all. It occurred to her that perhaps he hadn't even spoken, that she herself had imagined the whole thing. Maybe, if she went about her business and acted as though she hadn't been listening, then later, when she sort of woke up again, she might find none of it had ever happened.

"I'll get the supper," she managed to whisper, and this time he didn't stop her.

When she walked across the room she couldn't feel her feet touching the floor. She couldn't feel anything at all—except a slight nausea and a desire to vomit. Everything was automatic now—down the steps to the cellar, the light switch, the deep freeze, the hand inside the cabinet taking hold of the first object it met. She lifted it out, and looked at it. It was wrapped in paper, so she took off the paper and looked at it again.

A leg of lamb.

All right then, they would have lamb for supper. She carried it upstairs, holding the thin bone-

end of it with both her hands, and as she went through the living room, she saw him standing over by the window with his back to her, and she stopped.

"For heaven's sake," he said, hearing her, but not turning round. "Don't make supper for me. I'm going out."

At that point, Mary Maloney simply walked up behind him and without any pause she swung the big frozen leg of lamb high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could on the back of his head.

She might just as well have hit him with a steel club.

She stepped back a pace, waiting, and the funny thing was that he remained standing there for at least four or five seconds, gently swaying. Then he crashed to the carpet.

The violence of the crash, the noise, the small table overturning, helped bring her out of the shock. She came out slowly, feeling cold and surprised, and she stood for a while blinking at the body, still holding the ridiculous piece of meat tight with both hands.

All right, she told herself. So I've killed him.

It was extraordinary, now, how clear her mind became all of a sudden. She began thinking very fast. As the wife of a detective, she knew quite well what the penalty would be. That was fine. It made no difference to her. In fact, it would be a relief. On the other hand, what about the child? What were the laws about murderers with unborn children? Did they kill them both—mother and child? Or did they wait until the tenth month? What did they do?

Mary Maloney didn't know. And she certainly wasn't prepared to take a chance.

She carried the meat into the kitchen, placed it in a pan, turned the oven on high, and shoved it inside. Then she washed her hands and ran upstairs to the bedroom. She sat down before the mirror, tidied her hair, touched up her lips and face. She tried a smile. It came out rather peculiar. She tried again.

"Hullo, Sam," she said brightly, aloud.

The voice sounded peculiar too.

"I want some potatoes please, Sam. Yes, and I think a can of peas."

That was better. Both the smile and the voice were coming out better now. She rehearsed it several times more. Then she ran downstairs, took her coat, went out the back door, down the garden, into the street.

It wasn't six o'clock yet and the lights were still on in the grocery shop.

"Hullo, Sam," she said brightly, smiling at the man behind the counter.

"Why, good evening, Mrs. Maloney. How're you?"

"I want some potatoes please, Sam. Yes, and I think a can of peas."

The man turned and reached up behind him on the shelf for the peas.

"Patrick's decided he's tired and doesn't want to eat out tonight," she told him. "We usually go out Thursdays, you know, and now he's caught me without any vegetables in the house."

"Then how about meat, Mrs. Maloney?"

"No, I've got meat, thanks. I got a nice leg of lamb from the freezer."

"Oh."

"I don't much like cooking it frozen, Sam, but I'm taking a chance on it this time. You think it'll be all right?"

"Personally," the grocer said. "I don't believe it makes any difference. You want these Idaho potatoes?"

"Oh, yes, that'll be fine. Two of those."

"Anything else?" The grocer cocked his head on one side, looking at her pleasantly. "How about afterwards? What you going to give him for afterwards?"

"Well—what would you suggest, Sam?"

The man glanced around his shop. "How about a nice big slice of cheesecake? I know he likes that."

"Perfect," she said. "He loves it."

And when it was all wrapped and she had paid, she put on her brightest smile and said, "Thank you, Sam. Goodnight."

"Goodnight, Mrs. Maloney. And thank you."

And now, she told herself as she hurried back, all she was doing now, she was returning home to her husband and he was waiting for his supper; and she must cook it good, and make it as tasty as possible because the poor man was tired, and if, when she entered the house, she happened to find anything unusual, or tragic, or terrible, then naturally it would be a shock and she'd become frantic with grief and horror. Mind you, she wasn't *expecting* to find anything. She was just going home with the vegetables. Mrs. Patrick Maloney going with the vegetables on Thursday evening to cook supper for her husband.

That's the way, she told herself. Do everything right and natural. Keep things absolutely natural and there'll be no need for any acting at all.

Therefore, when she entered the kitchen by the back door, she was humming a little tune to herself and smiling.

"Patrick!" she called. "How are you, darling?"

She put the parcel down on the table and went through into the living room; and when she saw him lying there on the floor with his legs doubled up and one arm twisted back underneath his body, it really was rather a shock. All the old love and longing for him welled up inside her, and she ran over to him, knelt down beside him, and began to cry her heart out. It was easy. No acting was necessary.

A few minutes later she got up and went to the phone. She knew the number of the police station, and when the man at the other end answered, she cried to him, "Quick! Come quick! Patrick's dead!"

"Who's speaking?"

"Mrs. Maloney. Mrs. Patrick Maloney."

"You mean Patrick Maloney's dead?"

"I think so," she sobbed. "He's lying on the floor and I think he's dead."

"Be right over," the man said.

The car came very quickly, and when she opened the front door, two policemen walked in. She knew them both—she knew nearly all the

men at that precinct—and she fell right into Jack Noonan's arms, weeping hysterically. He put her gently into a chair, then went over to join the other one, who was called O'Malley, kneeling by the body.

"Is he dead?" she cried.

"I'm afraid he is. What happened?"

Briefly, she told her story about going out to the grocer and coming back to find him on the floor. While she was talking, crying and talking, Noonan discovered a small patch of congealed blood on the dead man's head. He showed it to O'Malley, who got up at once and hurried to the phone.

Soon, other men began to come into the house. First a doctor, then two detectives, one of whom she knew by name. Later, a police photographer arrived and took pictures, and a man who knew about fingerprints. There was a great deal of whispering and muttering beside the corpse, and the detectives kept asking her a lot of questions. But they always treated her kindly. She told her story again, this time right from the beginning, when Patrick had come in, and she was sewing, and he was tired, so tired he hadn't wanted to go out for supper. She told how she'd put the meat in the oven—"it's there now, cooking"—and how she'd slipped out to the grocer for vegetables, and come back to find him lying on the floor.

"Which grocer?" one of the detectives asked.

She told him, and he turned and whispered something to the other detective, who immediately went outside into the street.

In fifteen minutes he was back with a page of notes, and there was more whispering, and through her sobbing she heard a few of the whispered phrases—"... acted quite normal ... very cheerful ... wanted to give him a good supper ... peas ... cheesecake ... impossible that she ..."

After a while, the photographer and the doctor departed and two other men came in and took the corpse away on a stretcher. Then the fingerprint man went away. The two detectives re-



mained, and so did the two policemen. They were exceptionally nice to her, and Jack Noonan asked if she wouldn't rather go somewhere else, to her sister's house perhaps, or to his own wife, who would take care of her and put her up for the night.

No, she said. She didn't feel she could move even a yard at the moment. Would they mind awfully if she stayed just where she was until she felt better. She didn't feel too good at the moment, she really didn't.

Then hadn't she better lie down on the bed? Jack Noonan asked.

No, she said. She'd like to stay right where she was, in this chair. A little later perhaps, when she felt better, she would move.

So they left her there while they went about their business, searching the house. Occasionally one of the detectives asked her another question. Sometimes Jack Noonan spoke to her gently as

he passed by. Her husband, he told her, had been killed by a blow on the back of the head administered with a heavy blunt instrument, almost certainly a large piece of metal. They were looking for the weapon. The murderer may have taken it with him, but on the other hand he may've thrown it away or hidden it somewhere on the premises.

"It's the old story," he said. "Get the weapon, and you've got the man."

Later, one of the detectives came up and sat beside her. Did she know, he asked, of anything in the house that could've been used as the weapon? Would she mind having a look around to see if anything was missing—a very big spanner,¹ for example, or a heavy metal vase.

They didn't have any heavy metal vases, she said.

1. *spanner, wrench.* [British]

"Or a big spanner?"

She didn't think they had a big spanner. But there might be some things like that in the garage.

The search went on. She knew that there were other policemen in the garden all around the house. She could hear their footsteps on the gravel outside, and sometimes she saw the flash of a torch through a chink in the curtains. It began to get late, nearly nine she noticed by the clock on the mantel. The four men searching the rooms seemed to be growing weary, a trifle exasperated.

"Jack," she said, the next time Sergeant Noonan went by. "Would you mind giving me a drink?"

"Sure I'll give you a drink. You mean this whiskey?"

"Yes, please. But just a small one. It might make me feel better."

He handed her the glass.

"Why don't you have one yourself," she said. "You must be awfully tired. Please do. You've been very good to me."

"Well," he answered. "It's not strictly allowed, but I might take just a drop to keep me going."

One by one the others came in and were persuaded to take a little nip of whiskey. They stood around rather awkwardly with the drinks in their hands, uncomfortable in her presence, trying to say consoling things to her. Sergeant Noonan wandered into the kitchen, came out quickly and said, "Look, Mrs. Maloney. You know that oven of yours is still on, and the meat still inside."

"Oh, dear me!" she cried. "So it is!"

"I better turn it off for you, hadn't I?"

"Will you do that, Jack. Thank you so much."

When the sergeant returned the second time, she looked at him with her large, dark, tearful eyes. "Jack Noonan," she said.

"Yes?"

"Would you do me a small favor—you and these others?"

"We can try, Mrs. Maloney."

"Well," she said. "Here you all are, and good friends of dear Patrick's too, and helping to catch the man who killed him. You must be terrible hungry by now because it's long past your suppertime, and I know Patrick would never forgive me, God bless his soul, if I allowed you to remain in his house without offering you decent hospitality. Why don't you eat up that lamb that's in the oven. It'll be cooked just right by now."

"Wouldn't dream of it," Sergeant Noonan said.

"Please," she begged. "Please eat it. Personally I couldn't touch a thing, certainly not what's been in the house when he was here. But it's all right for you. It'd be a favor to me if you'd eat it up. Then you can go on with your work again afterwards."

There was a good deal of hesitating among the four policemen, but they were clearly hungry, and in the end they were persuaded to go into the kitchen and help themselves. The woman stayed where she was, listening to them through the open door, and she could hear them speaking among themselves, their voices thick and sloppy because their mouths were full of meat.

"Have some more, Charlie?"

"No. Better not finish it."

"She wants us to finish it. She said so. Be doing her a favor."

"Okay then. Give me some more."

"That's a big club the guy must've used to hit poor Patrick," one of them was saying. "The doc says his skull was smashed all to pieces just like from a sledgehammer."

"That's why it ought to be easy to find."

"Exactly what I say."

"Whoever done it, they're not going to be carrying a thing like that around with them longer than they need."

One of them belched.

"Personally, I think it's right here on the premises."

"Probably right under our very noses. What you think, Jack?"

And in the other room Mary Maloney began to giggle.

HUGH GARNER

1913-1979

One-Two-Three Little Indians

After they had eaten, Big Tom pushed the cracked and dirty supper things to the back of the table and took the baby from its high chair carefully, so as not to spill the flotsam of bread crumbs and boiled potatoes from the chair to the floor.

He undressed the youngster, talking to it in the old dialect, trying to awaken its interest. All evening it had been listless and fretful by turns, but now it seemed to be soothed by the story of Po-chee-ah, and the Lynx, although it was too young to understand him as his voice slid awkwardly through the ageless folk-tale of his people.

For long minutes after the baby was asleep he talked on, letting the victorious words fill the small cabin so that they shut out the sounds of the Northern Ontario night: the buzz of mosquitoes, the far-off bark of a dog, the noise of the cars and transport trucks passing on the gravelled road.

The melodious hum of his voice was like a strong soporific, lulling him with the return of half-forgotten memories, strengthening him with the knowledge that once his people had been strong and brave, men with a nation of their own, encompassing a million miles of teeming forest, lake and tamarack swamp.

When he halted his monologue to place the baby in the big brass bed in the corner the sudden silence was loud in his ears, and he cringed a bit as the present suddenly caught up with the past.

He covered the baby with a corner of the church-donated patchwork quilt, and lit the kerosene lamp that stood on the mirrorless dressing table beside the stove. Taking a broom from a corner he swept the mealtime debris across the doorsill.

This done, he stood and watched the headlights of the cars run along the trees bordering the road, like a small boy's stick along a picket fence. From the direction of the trailer camp a hundred yards away came the sound of a car engine being gunned, and the halting note-tumbles of a

clarinet from a tourist's radio. The soft summer smell of spruce needles and wood smoke blended with the evening dampness of the earth, and felt good in his nostrils, so that he filled his worn lungs until he began to cough. He spat the resinous phlegm into the weed-filled yard.

It had been this summer smell, and the feeling of freedom it gave, which had brought him back to the woods after three years in the mines during the war. But only part of him had come back, for the mining towns and the big money had done more than etch his lungs with silica: they had also brought him pain and distrust, and a wife who had learned to live in gaudy imitation of the boomtown life.

When his coughing attack subsided he peered along the path, hoping to catch a glimpse of his wife Mary returning from her work at the trailer camp. He was becoming worried about the baby, and her presence, while it might not make the baby well, would mean that there was someone else to share his fears. He could see nothing but the still blackness of the trees, their shadows interwoven in a sombre pattern across the mottled ground.

He re-entered the cabin and began washing the dishes, stopping once or twice to cover the moving form of the sleeping baby. He wondered if he could have transmitted his own wasting sickness to the lungs of his son. He stood for long minutes at the side of the bed, staring, trying to diagnose the child's restlessness into something other than what he feared.

His wife came in and placed some things on the table. He picked up a can of pork-and-beans she had bought and weighed it in the palm of his hand. 'The baby seems pretty sick,' he said.

She crossed the room, and looked at the sleeping child. 'I guess it's his teeth.'

He placed the pork-and-beans on the table again and walked over to his chair beside the empty stove. As he sat down he noticed for the first time that his wife was beginning to show her pregnancy. Her squat form had sunk lower, and almost filled the shapeless dress she wore. Her brown ankles were puffed above the broken-down heels of the dirty silver dancing pumps she was wearing.

'Is the trailer camp full?' he asked.

'Nearly. Two more Americans came about half an hour ago.'

'Was Billy Woodhen around?'

'I didn't see him, only Elsie,' she answered. 'A woman promised me a dress tomorrow if I scrub out her trailer.'

'Yeh.' He saw the happiness rise over her like a colour as she mentioned this. She was much younger than he was — twenty-two years against his thirty-nine — and her dark face had a fullness that is common

to many Indian women. She was no longer pretty, and as he watched her he thought that wherever they went the squalor of their existence seemed to follow them.

'It's a silk dress,' Mary said, as though the repeated mention of it brought it nearer.

'A silk dress is no damn good around here. You should get some overalls,' he said, angered by her lack of shame in accepting the cast-off garments of the trailer women.

She seemed not to notice his anger. 'It'll do for the dances next winter.'

'A lot of dancing you'll do,' he said pointing to her swollen body. 'You'd better learn to stay around here and take care of the kid.'

She busied herself over the stove, lighting it with newspapers and kindling. 'I'm going to have some fun. You should have married a grandmother.'

He filled the kettle with water from an open pail near the door. The baby began to cough, and the mother turned it on its side in the bed. 'As soon as I draw my money from Cooper I'm going to get him some cough syrup from the store,' she said.

'It won't do any good. We should take him to the doctor in town tomorrow.'

'I can't. I've got to stay here and work.'

He knew the folly of trying to reason with her. She had her heart set on earning the silk dress the woman had promised.

After they had drunk their tea he blew out the light, and they took off some of their clothes and climbed over the baby into the bed. Long after his wife had fallen asleep he lay in the darkness listening to a ground moth beating its futile wings against the glass of the window.

They were awakened in the morning by the twittering of a small colony of tree sparrows who were feasting on the kitchen sweepings of the night before. Mary got up and went outside, returning a few minutes later carrying a handful of birch and poplar stovewood.

He waited until the beans were in the pan before rising and pulling on his pants. He stood in the doorway scratching his head and absorbing the sunlight through his bare feet upon the step.

The baby awoke while they were eating their breakfast.

'He don't look good,' Big Tom said as he dipped some brown sauce from his plate with a hunk of bread.

'He'll be all right later,' his wife insisted. She poured some crusted tinned milk from a tin into a cup and mixed it with water from the kettle.

Big Tom splashed his hands and face with cold water, and dried

himself on a soiled shirt that lay over the back of a chair. 'When you going to the camp, this morning?'

'This afternoon,' Mary answered.

'I'll be back by then.'

He took up a small pile of woven baskets from a corner and hung the handles over his arm. From the warming shelf of the stove he pulled a bedraggled band of cloth, into which a large goose feather had been sewn. Carrying this in his hand he went outside and strode down the path toward the highway.

He ignored the chattering sauciness of a squirrel that hurtled up the green ladder of a tree beside him. Above the small noises of the woods could be heard the roar of a transport truck braking its way down the hill from the burnt-out sapling covered ridge to the north. The truck passed him as he reached the road, and he waved a desultory greeting to the driver, who answered with a short blare of the horn.

Placing the baskets in a pile on the shoulder of the road he adjusted the corduroy band on his head so that the feather stuck up at the rear. He knew that by so doing he became a part of the local colour, 'a real Indian with a feather'n everything,' and also that he sold more baskets while wearing it. In the time he had been living along the highway he had learned to give them what they expected.

The trailer residents were not yet awake, so he sat down on the wooden walk leading to the shower room, his baskets resting on the ground in a half circle behind him.

After a few minutes a small boy descended from the door of a trailer and stood staring at him. Then he leaned back inside the doorway and pointed in Big Tom's direction. In a moment a man's hand parted the heavy curtains on the window and a bed-mussed unshaven face stared out. The small boy climbed back inside.

A little later two women approached on the duckboard walk, one attired in a pair of buttock-pinching brown slacks, and the other wearing a blue chenille dressing gown. They circled him warily and entered the shower room. From inside came the buzz of whispered conversation and the louder noises of running water.

During the rest of the morning several people approached and stared at Big Tom and the baskets. He sold two small ones to an elderly woman. She seemed surprised when she asked him what tribe he belonged to, and instead of answering in a monosyllable he said, 'I belong to the Algonquins, Ma'am.' He also got rid of one of his big forty-five cent baskets to the mother of the small boy who had been the first one up earlier in the day.

A man took a series of photographs of him with an expensive-looking

camera, pacing off the distance and being very careful in setting his lens openings and shutter speeds.

'I wish he'd look into the camera,' the man said loudly to a couple standing nearby, as if he were talking about an animal in a cage.

'You can't get any good picshus around here. Harold tried to get one of the five Dionney kids, but they wouldn't let him. The way they keep them quints hid you'd think they was made of china or somep'n,' a woman standing by said.

She glanced at her companion for confirmation.

'They want you to buy their picshus,' the man said. 'We was disappointed in 'em. They used to look cute before, when they was small, but now they're just five plain-looking kids.'

'Yeah. My Gawd, you'd never believe how homely they got, would you, Harold? An' everything's pure robbery in Callander. You know, Old Man Dionney's minting money up there. Runs his own soovenir stand.'

'That's durin' the day, when he's got time,' her husband said.

The man with the camera, and the woman, laughed.

After lunch Big Tom watched Cooper prepare for his trip to North Bay. 'Is there anybody going fishing, Mr Cooper?' he asked.

The man took the radiator cap off the old truck he was inspecting, and peered inside.

'Mr Cooper!'

'Hey?' Cooper turned and looked at the Indian standing behind him, hands in pockets, his manner shy and deferential. He showed a vague irritation as though he sensed the overtone of servility in the Indian's attitude.

'Anybody going fishing?' Big Tom asked again.

'Seems to me Mr Staynor said he'd like to go,' Cooper answered. His voice was kind, with the amused kindness of a man talking to a child.

The big Indian remained standing where he was, saying nothing. His old second-hand army trousers drooped around his lean loins, and his plaid shirt was open at the throat, showing a grey high-water mark of dirt where his face washing began and ended.

'What's the matter?' Cooper asked. 'You seem pretty anxious to go today.'

'My kid's sick. I want to make enough to take him to the doctor.'

Cooper walked around the truck and opened one of the doors, rattling the handle in his hand as if it was stuck. 'You should stay home with it. Make it some pine-sap syrup. No need to worry, it's as healthy as a bear cub.'

Mrs Cooper came out of the house and eased her bulk into the truck cab. 'Where's Mary?' she asked.

'Up at the shack,' answered Big Tom.

'Tell her to scrub the washrooms before she does anything else. Mrs Anderson, in that trailer over there, wants her to do her floors.' She pointed across the lot to a large blue and white trailer parked behind a Buick.

'I'll tell her,' he answered.

The Coopers drove between the whitewashed stones marking the entrance to the camp, and swung up the highway, leaving behind them a small cloud of dust from the pulverized gravel of the road.

Big Tom fetched Mary and the baby from the shack. He gave his wife Mrs Cooper's instructions, and she transferred the baby from her arms to his. The child was feverish, its breath noisy and fast.

'Keep him warm,' she said. 'He's been worse since we got up. I think he's got a touch of the flu.'

Big Tom placed his hand inside the old blanket and felt the baby's cheek. It was dry and burning to his palm. He adjusted the baby's small weight in his arm and walked across the camp and down the narrow path to the shore of the lake where the boats were moored.

A man sitting in the sternsheets of a new-painted skiff looked up and smiled at his approach. 'You coming out with me, Tom?' he asked.

The Indian nodded.

'Are you bringing the papoose along?'

Big Tom winced at the word 'papoose', but he answered, 'He won't bother us. The wife is working this afternoon.'

'O.K. I thought maybe we'd go over to the other side of the lake today and try to get some of them big fellows at the creek mouth. Like to try?'

'Sure,' the Indian answered, placing the baby along the wide seat in the stern, and unshipping the oars.

He rowed silently for the best part of an hour, the sun beating through his shirt causing the sweat to trickle coldly down his back. At times his efforts at the oars caused a constriction in his chest, and he coughed and spat into the water.

When they reached the mouth of the creek across the lake, he let the oars drag and leaned over to look at the baby. It was sleeping restlessly, its lips slightly blue and its breath laboured and harsh. Mr Staynor was busy with his lines and tackle in the bow of the boat.

Tom picked the child up and felt its little body for sweat.

The baby's skin was bone dry. He picked up the bailing can from the boat bottom and dipped it over the side. With the tips of his fingers he

brushed some of the cold water across the baby's forehead. The child woke up, looked at the strange surroundings, and smiled up at him. He gave it a drink of water from the can. Feeling reassured now he placed the baby on the seat and went forward to help the man with his gear.

Mr Staynor fished for a half hour or so, catching some small fish and a large black bass, which writhed in the bottom of the boat. Big Tom watched its gills gasping its death throes, and noted the similarity between the struggles of the fish and those of the baby lying on the seat in the blanket.

He became frightened again after a time, and he turned to the man in the bow and said, 'We'll have to go pretty soon. I'm afraid my kid's pretty sick.'

'Eh! We've hardly started,' the man answered. 'Don't worry, there's not much wrong with the papoose.'

Big Tom lifted the child from the seat and cradled it in his arms. He opened the blanket, and shading the baby's face, allowed the warm sun to shine on its chest. He thought, if I could only get him to sweat; everything would be all right then.

He waited again as long as he dared, noting the blueness creeping over the baby's lips, before he placed the child again on the seat and addressed the man in the bow. 'I'm going back now. You'd better pull in your line.'

The man turned and felt his way along the boat. He stood over the Indian and parted the folds of the blanket, looking at the baby. 'My God, he is sick, Tom! You'd better get him to a doctor right away!' He stepped across the writhing fish to the bow and began pulling in the line. Then he busied himself with his tackle, stealing glances now and again at the Indian and the baby.

Big Tom turned the boat around, and with long straight pulls on the oars headed back across the lake. The man took the child in his arms and blew cooling drafts of air against its fevered face.

As soon as they reached the jetty below the tourist camp, Tom tied the boat's painter to a stump and took the child from the other man's arms.

Mr Staynor handed him the fee for a full afternoon's work. 'I'm sorry the youngster is sick, Tom,' he said. 'Don't play around. Get him up to the doctor in town right away. We'll try her again tomorrow afternoon.'

Big Tom thanked him. Then, carrying the baby and unmindful of the grasping hands of the undergrowth, he climbed the path through the trees. On reaching the parked cars and trailers he headed in the direction of the large blue and white one where his wife would be working.

When he knocked, the door opened and a woman said, 'Yes?' He recog-

nized her as the one who had been standing nearby in the morning while his picture was being taken.

'Is my wife here?' he asked.

'Your wife. Oh, I know who you mean. No, she's gone. She went down the road in a car a few minutes ago.'

The camp was almost empty, most of the tourists having gone to the small bathing beach farther down the lake. A car full of bathers was pulling away to go down to the beach. Big Tom hurried over and held up his hand until it stopped. 'Could you drive me to the doctor in town?' he asked. 'My baby seems pretty sick.'

There was a turning of heads within the car. A woman in the back seat began talking about the weather. The driver said, 'I'll see what I can do, Chief, after I take the girls to the beach.'

Big Tom sat down at the side of the driveway to wait. After a precious half hour had gone by and they did not return, he got to his feet and started up the highway in the direction of town.

His long legs pounded on the loose gravel of the road, his anger and terror giving strength to his stride. He noticed that the passengers in the few cars he met were pointing at him and laughing, and suddenly he realized that he was still wearing the feather in the band around his head. He reached up, pulled it off, and threw it in the ditch.

When a car or truck came up from behind him he would step off the road and raise his hand to beg a ride. After several passed without pausing he stopped this useless time-wasting gesture and strode ahead, impervious to the noise of their horns as they approached him.

Now and again he placed his hand on the baby's face as he plodded along, reassuring himself that it was still alive. It had been hours since it had cried or shown any other signs of consciousness.

Once, he stepped off the road at a small bridge over a stream, and making a crude cup with his hands, tried to get the baby to drink. He succeeded only in making it cough, harshly, so that its tiny face became livid with its efforts to breathe.

It was impossible that the baby should die. Babies did not die like this, in their father's arms, on a highway that ran fifteen miles north through a small town, where there was a doctor and all the life-saving devices to prevent their deaths.

The sun fell low behind the trees and the swarms of black flies and mosquitoes began their nightly forage. He waved his hand above the fevered face of the baby, keeping them off, while at the same time trying to waft a little air into the child's tortured lungs.

But suddenly, with feelings as black as hell itself, he knew that the baby was dying. He had seen too much of it not to know now, that the child was in an advanced stage of pneumonia. He stumbled along as fast as he could, his eyes devouring the darkening face of his son, while the hot tears ran from the corners of his eyes.

With nightfall he knew that it was too late. He looked up at the sky where the first stars were being drawn in silver on a burnished copper plate, and he cursed them, and cursed what made them possible.

To the north-west the clouds were piling up in preparation for a summer storm. Reluctantly he turned and headed back down the road in the direction he had come.

It was almost midnight before he felt his way along the path through the trees to his shack. It was hard to see anything in the teeming rain, and he let the water run from his shoulders in an unheeded stream, soaking the sodden bundle he still carried in his arms.

When he reached the shanty he opened the door and fell inside. He placed the body of his son on the bed in the corner. Then, groping around the newspaper-lined walls, he found some matches in a pocket of his mackinaw and lit the lamp. With a glance around the room he knew that his wife had not yet returned, so he placed the lamp on the table under the window and headed out again into the rain.

At the trailer camp he sat down on the rail fence near the entrance to wait. Some lights shone from the small windows of the trailers and from Cooper's house across the road. The illuminated sign said: COOPER'S TRAILER CAMP—Hot And Cold Running Water, Rest Rooms. FISHING AND BOATING — INDIAN GUIDES.

One by one, as he waited, the lights went out, until only the sign lit up a small area at the gate. He saw the car's headlights first, about a hundred yards down the road. When it pulled to a stop he heard some giggling, and Mary and another Indian girl, Elsie Woodhen, staggered out into the rain.

A man's voice shouted through the door, 'See you again, sweetheart. Don't forget next Saturday night.' The voice belonged to one of the French-Canadians who worked at a creosote camp across the lake.

Another male voice shouted, 'Wahoo!'

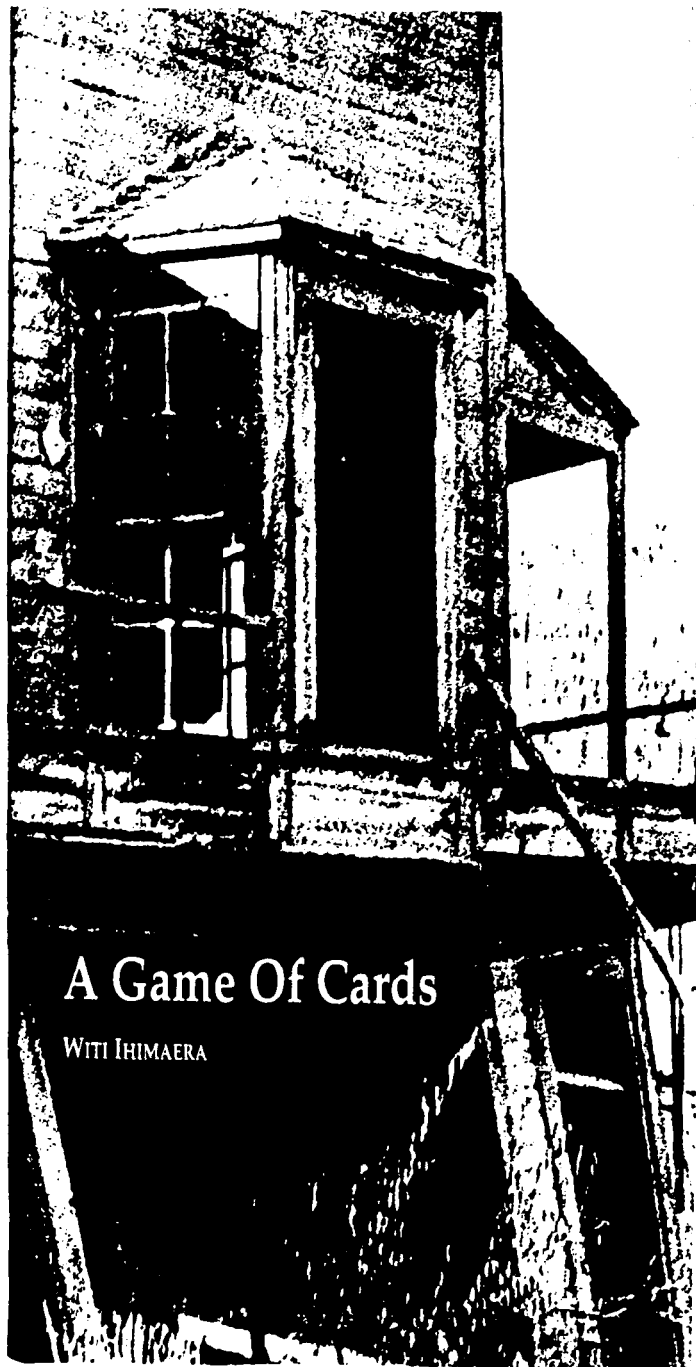
The girls clung to each other, laughing drunkenly, as the car pulled away.

They were not aware of Big Tom's approach until he grasped his wife by the hair and pulled her backwards to the ground. Elsie Woodhen screamed, and ran away in the direction of the Cooper house. Big Tom

bent down as if he was going to strike at Mary's face with his fist. Then he changed his mind and let her go.

She stared into his eyes and saw what was there. Crawling to her feet and sobbing hysterically she left one of her silver shoes in the mud and limped along towards the shack.

Big Tom followed behind, all the anguish and frustration drained from him, so that there was nothing left to carry him into another day. Heedless now of the coughing that tore his chest apart, he pushed along in the rain, hurrying to join his wife in the vigil over their dead.



A Game Of Cards

WITI IHIMAERA

Witi Ihimaera 1944-

As his name suggests, Ihimaera is of Maori descent: he was the first Maori to publish a volume of short stories and the first to publish a novel. A graduate of the Universities of Auckland and Victoria, he has worked for the New Zealand Ministry of foreign affairs, has been New Zealand Consul in New York and counsellor at the New Zealand Embassy in Washington, the American capital. This distinguished career makes him a very untypical Maori, but he has shown his loyalty to his native culture in his writings, where he contrasts the values of the Maori community with those of the Pakeha (white) community and gives prominence to the role of the whanau, the extended family characteristic of Maori society. This is clear in the story chosen for this volume, where the whole whanau participates, physically and emotionally, in the death of an old woman.

THE TRAIN PULLED INTO THE STATION. For a moment there was confusion: a voice blaring over the loudspeaker system, people getting off the train, the bustling and shoving¹ of the crowd on the platform.

And there was Dad, waiting for me. We hugged each other. We hadn't seen each other for a long time. Then we kissed. But I could tell something was wrong.

'Your Nanny Miro,' he said. 'She's very sick.'

Nanny Miro . . . among all my nannies,² she was the one I loved most. Everybody used to say I was her favourite mokopuna, and that she loved me more than her own children who'd grown up and had kids of their own.

She lived down the road from us, right next to the meeting house in the big old homestead which everybody in the village called 'The Museum' because it housed the prized possessions of the whanau, the village family. Because she was rich and had a lot of land, we all used to wonder why Nanny Miro didn't buy a newer, more modern house. But Nanny didn't want to move. She liked her own house just as it was.

'Anyway,' she used to say, 'what with all my haddit³ kids

and their haddit kids and all this haddit whanau being broke all the time and coming to ask me for some money, how can I afford to buy a new house?'

Nanny didn't really care about money though. 'Who needs it?' she used to say. 'What you think I had all these kids for, ay? To look after me, I'm not dumb!'⁴

Then she would cackle² to herself. But it wasn't true really, because her family would send all their kids to her place when they were broke and she looked after them! She liked her mokopunas, but not for too long. She'd ring up their parents and say:

'Hey! When you coming to pick up your hoha kids! They're wrecking the place!'

Yet, always, when they left, she would have a little weep, and give them some money . . .

I used to like going to Nanny's place. For me it was a big treasure house, glistening with sports trophies and photographs, pieces of carvings and greenstone,³ and feather cloaks hanging from the walls.

Most times, a lot of women would be there playing cards with Nanny. Nanny loved all card games – five hundred, poker, canasta, pontoon, whist, euchre⁴ – you name it, she could play it.

The sitting room would be crowded with the kuias,⁵ all puffing clouds of smoke, dressed in their old clothes, laughing and cackling and gossiping about who was pregnant – and relishing all the juicy⁶ bits too!

1. *bustling and shoving* : quick, busy movement and pushing.
2. *nannies* : literally, grandmothers. The whanau, as the story explains, is an extended family, in which a child may have many 'grandmothers'.
3. *haddit* : (informal, Maori) damned.

1. *dumb* : (informal) stupid.
2. *cackle* : laugh loudly and unmusically.
3. *greenstone* : a type of stone from volcanic material, typical of New Zealand.
4. *five hundred, poker, canasta, pontoon, whist, euchre* : card games for two or more players.
5. *kuias* : (Maori) women.
6. *juicy* : (here) interesting because rather shocking.

I liked sitting and watching them. Mrs Heta would always be there, and when it came to cards she was both Nanny's best friend and worst enemy. And the two of them were the biggest cheats I ever saw.

Mrs Heta would cough and reach for a hanky while slyly slipping a card from beneath her dress. And she was always renege¹ in five hundred! But her greatest asset² was her eyes, which were big and googly.³ One eye would look straight ahead, while the other swivelled⁴ around, having a look at the cards in the hands of the women sitting next to her.

'Eeee! You cheat!' Nanny would say. 'You just keep your eyes to yourself, Maka tiko bum!'

Mrs Heta would look at Nanny as if she were offended. Then she would sniff and say:

'You the cheat yourself, Miro Mananui. I saw you sneaking that ace from the bottom of the pack.'

'How do you know I got all ace Maka?' Nanny would say. 'I know you! You dealt this hand, and you stuck that ace down there for yourself, you cheat! Well, ana! I got it now! So take that!'

And she would slap down her hand.

'Sweet, ay?' she would laugh. 'Good? Kapai lalale?'⁵ And she would sometimes wiggle her hips, making her victory sweeter.

'Eeee! Miro!' Mrs Heta would say. 'Well, I got a good hand too!'

And she would slap her hand down and bellow with laughter.

'Take that!'

1. *renege*: breaking the rules of a card game by playing a card of the wrong suit when you have a card of the right suit in your hand.

2. *asset*: (here) attractive feature.

3. *googly*: large, round and staring.

4. *swivelled*: turned in the opposite direction.

5. *Kapai lalale*: (Maori) very good.

And always, they would squabble. I often wondered how they ever remained friends. The names they called each other!

Sometimes, I would go and see Nanny and she would be all alone, playing patience.¹ If there was nobody to play with her, she'd always play patience. And still she cheated! I'd see her hands fumbling across the cards, turning up a jack or queen she needed, and then she'd laugh and say:

'I'm too good for this game!'

She used to try to teach me some of the games, but I wasn't very interested, and I didn't yell and shout at her like the women did. She liked the bickering.

'Aue . . .' she would sigh. Then she'd look at me and begin dealing out the cards in the only game I ever knew how to play.

And we would yell snap!² all the afternoon . . .

Now, Nanny was sick.

I went to see her that afternoon after I'd dropped my suitcases at home. Nanny Tama, her husband, opened the door. We embraced and he began to weep on my shoulder.

'Your Nanny Miro,' he whispered. 'She's . . . she's . . .'

He couldn't say the words. He motioned me to her bedroom.

Nanny Miro was lying in bed. And she was so old looking. Her face was very grey, and she looked like a tiny wrinkled doll in that big bed. She was so thin now, and seemed all bones.

I walked into the room. She was asleep. I sat down on the bed beside her, and looked at her lovingly.

Even when I was a child, she must have been old. But I'd never realised it. She must have been over seventy now. Why do people you love grow old so suddenly?

The room had a strange, antiseptic smell. Underneath the bed was a big chamber pot,³ yellow with urine . . . And the

1. *patience*: card game for one player.

2. *snap!*: said during the game of 'snap' when a player notices that two cards of the same value have been put down.

3. *chamber pot*: round container used as a toilet by someone who is ill in bed.

pillow was flecked with small spots of blood where she had been coughing.

I shook her gently.

'Nanny . . . Nanny, wake up.'

She moaned. A long, hoarse sigh grew on her lips. Her eyelids fluttered, and she looked at me with blank eyes . . . and then tears began to roll down her cheeks.

'Don't cry, Nanny,' I said. 'Don't cry. I'm here.'

But she wouldn't stop.

So I sat beside her on the bed and she lifted her hands to me.

'Haere mai, mokopuna. Haere mai. Mmm. Mmm.'

And I bent within her arms and we pressed noses.

After a while, she calmed down. She seemed to be her own self.

'What a haddit mokopuna you are,' she wept. 'It's only when I'm just about in my grave that you come to see me.'

'I couldn't see you last time I was home,' I explained. 'I was too busy.'

'Yes, I know you fullas,¹ she grumbled. 'It's only when I'm almost dead that you come for some money.'

'I don't want your money, Nanny.'

'What's wrong with my money!' she said. 'Nothing's wrong with it! Don't you want any?'

'Of course I do,' I laughed. 'But I know you! I bet you lost it all on poker!'

She giggled. Then she was my Nanny again. The Nanny I knew.

We talked for a long time. I told her about what I was doing in Wellington and all the neat² girls who were after me.

'You teka!' she giggled. 'Who'd want to have you!'

And she showed me all her injection needles and pills and

1. *fullas*: the spelling represents Nanny Miro's pronunciation of 'fellows', men.

2. *neat*: (informal, esp. US, Australia) attractive.

told me how she'd wanted to come from the hospital, so they'd let her.

'You know why I wanted to come home?' she asked. 'I didn't like all those strange nurses looking at my bum when they gave me those injections. I was so sick, mokopuna, I couldn't even go to the lav,¹ and I'd rather wet my own bed not their neat bed. That's why I come home.'

Afterwards, I played the piano for Nanny. She used to like *Me He Manurere* so I played it for her, and I could hear her quavering voice singing in her room.

Me he manurere aue . . .

When I finally left Nanny I told her I would come back in the morning.

But that night, Nanny Tama rang up.

'Your Nanny Miro, she's dying.'

We all rushed to Nanny's house. It was already crowded. All the old women were there. Nanny was lying very still. Then she looked up and whispered to Mrs Heta:

'Maka . . . Maka tiko bum . . . I want a game of cards . . .'

A pack of cards was found. The old ladies sat around the bed, playing. Everybody else decided to play cards too, to keep Nanny company. The men played poker in the kitchen and sitting room. The kids played snap in the other bedrooms. The house overflowed with card players, even onto the lawn outside Nanny's window, where she could see . . .

The women laid the cards out on the bed. They dealt the first hand. They cackled and joked with Nanny, trying not to cry. And Mrs Heta kept saying to Nanny:

'Eee! You cheat Miro. You cheat! And she made her googly eye reach far over to see Nanny's cards.

'You think you can see, ay, Maka tiko bum?' Nanny

1. *lav*: (informal) abbreviation of lavatory.

coughed. You think you're going to win this hand, ay? Well, take that!

She slammed down a full house.

The other women goggled at the cards. Mrs Heta looked at her own cards. Then she smiled through her tears and yelled:

'Eee! You cheat Miro! I got two aces in my hand already! Only four in the pack. So how come you got three aces in your hand?'

Everybody laughed. Nanny and Mrs Heta started squabbling as they always did, pointing at each other and saying: You the cheat, not me! And Nanny Miro said: 'I saw you, Maka tiko bum, I saw you sneaking that card from under the blanket.'

She began to laugh. Quietly. Her eyes streaming with tears.

And while she was laughing, she died.

Everybody was silent. Then Mrs Heta took the cards from Nanny's hands and kissed her.

'You the cheat, Miro, she whispered. You the cheat yourself ...'

We buried Nanny on the hill with the rest of her family. During her tangi,¹ Mrs Heta played patience with Nanny, spreading the cards across the casket.²

Later in the year, Mrs Heta, she died too. She was buried right next to Nanny, so that they could keep on playing cards ...

And I bet you they're still squabbling up there ...

'Eee! You cheat Miro ...'

'You the cheat, Maka tiko bum. You, you the cheat ...'

1. *tangi* : (Maori) funeral.

2. *casket* : coffin.

Good Advice Is Rarer Than Rubies

SALMAN RUSHDIE





Salman Rushdie 1947-

Born in Bombay in a Muslim family, Rushdie attended secondary school in England before going to Cambridge University, where he graduated in history; he has lived in England since 1961. His novels and short stories are characterised by recurrent themes such as the difficulties of immigrant life in Great Britain, and the conflict between good and evil. He often uses satire and broad, robust humour to make his point: this was the cause of a violent reaction in the Muslim world against his 1988 novel *The Satanic Verses*, in which, albeit indirectly, he satirises Islamic fundamentalism. As a result, he was sentenced to death by the fundamentalist leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini, and has ever since been forced to live in hiding. This has highlighted the enormous difference between Rushdie's native and adopted cultures.



ON THE LAST TUESDAY OF the month, the dawn bus, its headlamps still shining, brought Miss Rehana to the gates of the British Consulate. It arrived pushing a cloud of dust, veiling her beauty from the eyes of strangers until she descended. The bus was brightly painted in multicoloured arabesques,¹ and on the front it said 'MOVE OVER DARLING' in green and gold letters; on the back it added 'TATA-BATA'² and also 'O.K. GOOD-LIFE'. Miss Rehana told the driver it was a beautiful bus, and he jumped down and held the door open for her, bowing theatrically as she descended.

Miss Rehana's eyes were large and black and bright enough not to need the help of antimony,³ and when the advice expert Muhammad Ali saw them he felt himself becoming young again. He watched her approaching the Consulate gates as the light strengthened, and asking the bearded lala who guarded them in a goldbuttoned khaki uniform with a cockaded⁴ turban when they would open. The lala, usually so rude to the

1. *arabesques* [æ'rə'besks] : flowing patterns.
2. *tata-bata* : meaningless graffiti.
3. *antimony* ['æntiməni] : a powder used by Indian women to colour their eyelids.
4. *cockaded* : decorated with a knot of material.

Consulate's Tuesday women, answered Miss Rehana with something like courtesy.

'Half an hour,' he said gruffly. 'Maybe two hours. Who knows? The sahibs¹ are eating their breakfast.'

The dusty compound² between the bus stop and the Consulate was already full of Tuesday women, some veiled, a few barefaced like Miss Rehana. They all looked frightened, and leaned heavily on the arms of uncles or brothers, who were trying to look confident. But Miss Rehana had come on her own, and did not seem at all alarmed.

Muhammad Ali, who specialised in advising the most vulnerable-looking of these weekly supplicants, found his feet leading him towards the strange, big-eyed, independent girl.

'Miss,' he began. 'You have come for permit to London, I think so?'

She was standing at a hot-snack stall in the little shanty-town³ by the edge of the compound, munching chilli-pakor⁴as contentedly. She turned to look at him, and at close range those eyes did bad things to his digestive tract.

'Yes, I have.'

'Then, please, you allow me to give some advice? Small cost only.'

Miss Rehana smiled. 'Good advice is rarer than rubies,' she said. 'But alas, I cannot pay. I am an orphan, not one of your wealthy ladies.'

'Trust my grey hairs,' Muhammad Ali urged her. 'My advice is well tempered by experience. You will certainly find it good.'

1. *sahibs* [sɑ:zbz]: title of respect for Europeans.
2. *compound*: enclosed area containing a group of buildings.
3. *shanty-town*: group of very poor houses made of tin or cardboard.
4. *chilli-pakor⁴as*: spicy pancakes.

She shook her head. 'I tell you I am a poor potato. There are women here with male family members, all earning good wages. Go to them. Good advice should find good money.'

I am going crazy, Muhammad Ali thought, because he heard his voice telling her of its own volition, 'Miss, I have been drawn to you by Fate. What to do? Our meeting was written.¹ I also am a poor man only, but for you my advice comes free.'

She smiled again. 'Then I must surely listen. When Fate sends a gift, one receives good fortune.'

He led her to the low wooden desk in his own special corner of the shanty-town. She followed, continuing to eat pakoras from a little newspaper packet. She did not offer him any.

Muhammad Ali put a cushion on the dusty ground. 'Please to sit.' She did as he asked. He sat cross-legged across the desk from her, conscious that two or three dozen pairs of male eyes were watching him enviously, that all the other shanty-town men were ogling² the latest young lovely to be charmed by the old grey-hair fraud. He took a deep breath to settle himself.

'Name, please.'

'Miss Rehana,' she told him. 'Fiancée of Mustafa Dar of Bradford, London.'

'Bradford, England,' he corrected her gently. 'London is a town only, like Multan or Bahawalpur.³ England is a great nation full of the coldest fish in the world.'

'I see. Thank you,' she responded gravely, so that he was unsure if she was making fun of him.

'You have filled application form? Then let me see, please.'

She passed him a neatly folded document in a brown envelope.

'Is it OK?' For the first time there was a note of anxiety in her voice.

1. *Our meeting was written*: it was destined to happen.
2. *ogling*: looking with sexual interest.
3. *Multan or Bahawalpur*: towns in East Pakistan.

He patted the desk quite near the place where her hand rested. 'I am certain,' he said. 'Wait on and I will check.'

She finished the pakoras while he scanned her papers.

'Tip-top,'¹ he pronounced at length. 'All in order.'

'Thank you for your advice,' she said, making as if to rise. 'I'll go now and wait by the gate.'

'What are you thinking?' he cried loudly, smiting² his forehead. 'You consider this is easy business? Just give the form and poof, with a big smile they hand over the permit? Miss Rehana, I tell you, you are entering a worse place than any police station.'

'Is it so, truly?' His oratory had done the trick. She was a captive audience now, and he would be able to look at her for a few moments longer.

Drawing another calming breath, he launched into his set speech.³ He told her that the sahibs thought that all the women who came on Tuesdays, claiming to be dependents of bus drivers in Luton⁴ or chartered accountants in Manchester, were crooks⁵ and liars and cheats.

She protested, 'But then I will simply tell them that I, for one, am no such thing!'

Her innocence made him shiver with fear for her. She was a sparrow, he told her, and they were men with hooded⁶ eyes, like hawks. He explained that they would ask her questions, personal questions, questions such as a lady's own brother would be too shy to ask. They would ask if she was virgin, and,

1. *tip-top* : perfect. This is a very old-fashioned slang expression.
2. *smiting* : hitting.
3. *set speech* : speech which has been prepared and often repeated.
4. *Luton* : town in the south of England.
5. *crooks* : criminals.
6. *hooded* : (here) with the lids lowered.

if not, what her fiancé's love-making habits were, and what secret nicknames they had invented for one another.

Muhammad Ali spoke brutally, on purpose, to lessen the shock she would feel when it, or something like it, actually happened. Her eyes remained steady, but her hands began to flutter at the edges of the desk.

He went on:

'They will ask you how many rooms are in your family home, and what colour are the walls, and what days do you empty the rubbish. They will ask your man's mother's third cousin's aunt's step-daughter's¹ middle name. And all these things they have already asked your Mustafa Dar in his Bradford. And if you make one mistake, you are finished.'

'Yes,' she said, and he could hear her disciplining her voice. 'And what is your advice, old man?'

It was at this point that Muhammad Ali usually began to whisper urgently, to mention that he knew a man, a very good type, who worked in the Consulate, and through him, for a fee, the necessary papers could be delivered, with all the proper authenticating seals. Business was good, because the women would often pay him five hundred rupees or give him a gold bracelet for his pains, and go away happy.

They came from hundreds of miles away – he normally made sure of this before beginning to trick them – so even when they discovered they had been swindled² they were unlikely to return. They went away to Sargodha or Lalukhet and began to pack, and who knows at what point they found out they had been gulled,³ but it was at a too-late point, anyway.

1. *step-daughter* : daughter of the aunt's husband's previous marriage.
2. *swindled* : treated dishonestly.
3. *gulled* [gold] : deceived.

Life is hard, and an old man must live by his wits.¹ It was not up to Muhammad Ali to have compassion for these Tuesday women.

But once again his voice betrayed him, and instead of starting his customary speech it began to reveal to her his greatest secret.

'Miss Rehana,' his voice said, and he listened to it in amazement, 'you are a rare person, a jewel, and for you I will do what I would not do for my own daughter, perhaps. One document has come into my possession that can solve all your worries at one stroke.'

'And what is this sorcerer's paper?' she asked, her eyes unquestionably laughing at him now.

His voice fell low-as-low.

'Miss Rehana, it is a British passport. Completely genuine and pukka goods. I have a good friend who will put your name and photo, and then, hey-presto,² England there you come!'

He had said it!

Anything was possible now, on this day of his insanity. Probably he would give her the thing free-gratis, and then kick himself for a year afterwards.

Old fool, he berated³ himself. *The oldest fools are bewitched by the youngest girls.*

'Let me understand you,' she was saying. 'You are proposing I should commit a crime...'

'Not crime,' he interposed. 'Facilitation.'

'... and go to Bradford, London, illegally, and therefore

1. *live by his wits* : survive by using his intelligence, without a regular job.
2. *hey-presto* : (used by magicians) here is the result of the trick!
3. *berated* : spoke angrily to.

justify the low opinion the Consulate sahibs have of us all. Old babuji,¹ this is not good advice.'

'Bradford, England,' he corrected her mournfully. 'You should not take my gift in such a spirit.'

'Then how?'

'Bibi,² I am a poor fellow, and I have offered this prize because you are so beautiful. Do not spit on my generosity. Take the thing. Or else don't take, go home, forget England, only do not go into that building and lose your dignity.'

But she was on her feet, turning away from him, walking towards the gates, where the women had begun to cluster and the lala was swearing at them to be patient or none of them would be admitted at all.

'So be a fool,' Muhammad Ali shouted after her. 'What goes of my father's if you are?' (Meaning, what was it to him.)³

She did not turn.

'It is the curse of our people,' he yelled. 'We are poor, we are ignorant, and we completely refuse to learn.'

'Hey, Muhammad Ali,' the woman at the betel-nut stall called across to him. 'Too bad, she likes them young.'

That day Muhammad Ali did nothing but stand around near the Consulate gates. Many times he scolded himself, *Go from here, old goof, lady does not desire to speak with you any further.* But when she came out, she found him waiting.

'Salaam, advice wallah,⁴ she greeted him.

She seemed calm, and at peace with him again, and he thought, *My God, ya Allah, she has pulled it off. The British sahibs also have been drowning in her eyes and she has got her passage to England.*

1. *babuji* : (Hindustani) form of address to a gentleman.
2. *bibi* : (Hindustani) lady.
3. *what was it to him* : what did it matter to him.
4. *wallah* : man with a specific job.

He smiled at her hopefully. She smiled back with no trouble at all.

'Miss Rehana Begum,' he said, 'felicitations, daughter, on what is obviously your hour of triumph.'

Impulsively, she took his forearm in her hand.

'Come,' she said. 'Let me buy you a pakora to thank you for your advice and to apologise for my rudeness, too.'

They stood in the dust of the afternoon compound near the bus, which was getting ready to leave. Coolies¹ were tying bedding rolls² to the roof. A hawker³ shouted at the passengers, trying to sell them love stories and green medicines, both of which cured unhappiness. Miss Rehana and a happy Muhammad Ali ate their pakoras sitting on the bus's 'front mud-guard', that is, the bumper.⁴ The old advice expert began softly to hum a tune from a movie soundtrack. The day's heat was gone.

'It was an arranged engagement,' Miss Rehana said all at once. 'I was nine years old when my parents fixed it. Mustafa Dar was already thirty at that time, but my father wanted someone who could look after me as he had done himself and Mustafa was a man known to Daddyji as a solid type. Then my parents died and Mustafa Dar went to England and said he would send for me. That was many years ago. I have his photo, but he is like a stranger to me. Even his voice, I do not recognise it on the phone.'

The confession took Muhammad Ali by surprise, but he nodded with what he hoped looked like wisdom.

1. *coolies*: low-paid workers.

2. *bedding rolls*: light mattresses.

3. *hawker*: street vendor.

4. *bumper*: metal bar on the front and back of vehicle to protect it in a collision.

'Still and after all,' he said, 'one's parents act in one's best interests. They found you a good and honest man who has kept his word and sent for you. And now you have a lifetime to get to know him, and to love.'

He was puzzled, now, by the bitterness that had infected her smile.

'But, old man,' she asked him, 'why have you already packed me and posted me off to England?'

He stood up, shocked.

'You looked happy – so I just assumed . . . excuse me, but they turned you down or what?'

'I got all their questions wrong,' she replied. 'Distinguishing marks I put on the wrong checks, bathroom decor I completely redecorated, all absolutely topsy-turvy,¹ you see.'

'But what to do? How will you go?'

'Now I will go back to Lahore and my job. I work in a great house, as ayah² to three good boys. They would have been sad to see me leave.'

'But this is tragedy!' Muhammad Ali lamented. 'Oh, how I pray that you had taken up my offer! Now, but, it is not possible, I regret to inform. Now they have your form on file, cross-check³ can be made, even the passport will not suffice.

'It is spoilt, all spoilt, and it could have been so easy if advice had been accepted in good time.'

'I do not think,' she told him, 'I truly do not think you should be sad.'

Her last smile, which he watched from the compound until the bus concealed it in a dust-cloud, was the happiest thing he had ever seen in his long, hot, hard, unloving life.

1. *topsy-turvy*: in great disorder.

2. *ayah* ['æjə]: (Indian) nurse who looks after children.

3. *cross-check*: very careful check of correctness.

LULLABY

The sun had gone down but the snow in the wind gave off its own light. It came in thick tufts like new wool—washed before the weaver spins it. Ayah reached out for it like her own babies had, and she smiled when she remembered how she had laughed at them. She was an old woman now, and her life had become memories. She sat down with her back against the wide cottonwood tree, feeling the rough bark on her back bones; she faced east and listened to the wind and snow sing a high-pitched Yeibechei song. Out of the wind she felt warmer, and she could watch the wide fluffy snow fill in her tracks, steadily, until the direction she had come from was gone. By the light of the snow she could see the dark outline of the big arroyo a few feet away. She was sitting on the edge of Cebolleta Creek, where in the spring-time the thin cows would graze on grass already chewed flat to the ground. In the wide deep creek bed where only a trickle of water flowed in the

summer, the skinny cows would wander, looking for new grass along winding paths splashed with manure.

Ayah pulled the old Army blanket over her head like a shawl. Jimmie's blanket—the one he had sent to her. That was a long time ago and the green wool was faded, and it was unraveling on the edges. She did not want to think about Jimmie. So she thought about the weaving and the way her mother had done it. On the tall wooden loom set into the sand under a tamarack tree for shade. She could see it clearly. She had been only a little girl when her grandma gave her the wooden combs to pull the twigs and burrs from the raw, freshly washed wool. And while she combed the wool, her grandma sat beside her, spinning a silvery strand of yarn around the smooth cedar spindle. Her mother worked at the loom with yarns dyed bright yellow and red and gold. She watched them dye the yarn in boiling

black pots full of beeweed petals, juniper berries, and sage. The blankets her mother made were soft and woven so tight that rain rolled off them like birds' feathers. Ayah remembered sleeping warm on cold windy nights, wrapped in her mother's blankets on the hogan's sandy floor.

The snow drifted now, with the northwest wind hurling it in gusts. It drifted up around her black overshoes—old ones with little metal buckles. She smiled at the snow which was trying to cover her little by little. She could remember when they had no black rubber overshoes; only the high buckskin leggings that they wrapped over their elkhide moccasins. If the snow was dry or frozen, a person could walk all day and not get wet; and in the evenings the beams of the ceiling would hang with lengths of pale buckskin leggings, drying out slowly.

She felt peaceful remembering. She didn't feel cold any more. Jimmie's blanket seemed warmer than it had ever been. And she could remember the morning he was born. She could remember whispering to her mother, who was sleeping on the other side of the hogan, to tell her it was time now. She did not want to wake the others. The second time she called to her, her mother stood up and pulled on her shoes; she knew. They

walked to the old stone hogan together, Ayah walking a step behind her mother. She waited alone, learning the rhythms of the pains while her mother went to call the old woman to help them. The morning was already warm even before dawn and Ayah smelled the bee flowers blooming and the young willow growing at the springs. She could remember that so clearly, but his birth merged into the births of the other children and to her it became all the same birth. They named him for the summer morning and in English they called him Jimmie.

It wasn't like Jimmie died. He just never came back, and one day a dark blue sedan with white writing on its doors pulled up in front of the box-car shack where the rancher let the Indians live. A man in a khaki uniform trimmed in gold gave them a yellow piece of paper and told them that Jimmie was dead. He said the Army would try to get the body back and then it would be shipped to them; but it wasn't likely because the helicopter had burned after it crashed. All of this was told to Chato because he could understand English. She stood inside the doorway holding the baby while Chato listened. Chato spoke English like a white man and he spoke Spanish too. He was taller than the white man and he stood

straighter too. Chato didn't explain why; he just told the military man they could keep the body if they found it. The white man looked bewildered; he nodded his head and he left. Then Chato looked at her and shook his head, and then he told her, "Jimmie isn't coming home anymore," and when he spoke, he used the words to speak of the dead. She didn't cry then, but she hurt inside with anger. And she mourned him as the years passed, when a horse fell with Chato and broke his leg, and the white rancher told them he wouldn't pay Chato until he could work again. She mourned Jimmie because he would have worked for his father then; he would have saddled the big bay horse and ridden the fence lines each day, with wire cutters and heavy gloves, fixing the breaks in the barbed wire and putting the stray cattle back inside again.

She mourned him after the white doctors came to take Danny and Ella away. She was at the shack alone that day they came. It was back in the days before they hired Navajo women to go with them as interpreters. She recognized one of the doctors. She had seen him at the children's clinic at Cañoncito about a month ago. They were wearing khaki uniforms and they waved papers at her and a black ball-point pen, trying to

make her understand their English words. She was frightened by the way they looked at the children, like the lizard watches the fly. Danny was swinging on the tire swing on the elm tree behind the rancher's house, and Ella was toddling around the front door, dragging the broomstick horse Chato made for her. Ayah could see they wanted her to sign the papers, and Chato had taught her to sign her name. It was something she was proud of. She only wanted them to go, and to take their eyes away from her children.

She took the pen from the man without looking at his face and she signed the papers in three different places he pointed to. She stared at the ground by their feet and waited for them to leave. But they stood there and began to point and gesture at the children. Danny stopped swinging. Ayah could see his fear. She moved suddenly and grabbed Ella into her arms; the child squirmed, trying to get back to her toys. Ayah ran with the baby toward Danny; she screamed for him to run and then she grabbed him around his chest and carried him too. She ran south into the foothills of juniper trees and black lava rock. Behind her she heard the doctors running, but they had been taken by surprise,

and as the hills became steeper and the cholla cactus were thicker, they stopped. When she reached the top of the hill, she stopped to listen in case they were circling around her. But in a few minutes she heard a car engine start and they drove away. The children had been too surprised to cry while she ran with them. Danny was shaking and Ella's little fingers were gripping Ayah's blouse.

She stayed up in the hills for the rest of the day, sitting on a black lava boulder in the sunshine where she could see for miles all around her. The sky was light blue and cloudless, and it was warm for late April. The sun warmth relaxed her and took the fear and anger away. She lay back on the rock and watched the sky. It seemed to her that she could walk into the sky, stepping through clouds endlessly. Danny played with little pebbles and stones, pretending they were birds eggs and then little rabbits. Ella sat at her feet and dropped fistfuls of dirt into the breeze, watching the dust and particles of sand intently. Ayah watched a hawk soar high above them, dark wings gliding; hunting or only watching, she did not know. The hawk was patient and he circled all afternoon before he disappeared around the high volcanic peak the Mexicans called Guadalupe.

Late in the afternoon, Ayah looked down at the gray boxcar shack with the paint all peeled from the wood; the stove pipe on the roof was rusted and crooked. The fire she had built that morning in the oil drum stove had burned out. Ella was asleep in her lap now and Danny sat close to her, complaining that he was hungry; he asked when they would go to the house. "We will stay up here until your father comes," she told him, "because those white men were chasing us." The boy remembered then and he nodded at her silently.

If Jimmie had been there he could have read those papers and explained to her what they said. Ayah would have known then, never to sign them. The doctors came back the next day and they brought a BIA policeman with them. They told Chato they had her signature and that was all they needed. Except for the kids. She listened to Chato sullenly; she hated him when he told her it was the old woman who died in the winter, spitting blood; it was her old grandma who had given the children this disease. "They don't spit blood," she said coldly. "The whites lie." She held Ella and Danny close to her, ready to run to the hills again. "I want a medicine man first," she said to Chato, not looking at him. He shook his head. "It's too late now. The policeman is with

them. You signed the paper." His voice was gentle.

It was worse than if they had died: to lose the children and to know that somewhere, in a place called Colorado, in a place full of sick and dying strangers, her children were without her. There had been babies that died soon after they were born, and one that died before he could walk. She had carried them herself, up to the boulders and great pieces of the cliff that long ago crashed down from Long Mesa; she laid them in the crevices of sandstone and buried them in fine brown sand with round quartz pebbles that washed down the hills in the rain. She had endured it because they had been with her. But she could not bear this pain. She did not sleep for a long time after they took her children. She stayed on the hill where they had fled the first time, and she slept rolled up in the blanket Jimmie had sent her. She carried the pain in her belly and it was fed by everything she saw: the blue sky of their last day together and the dust and pebbles they played with; the swing in the elm tree and broomstick horse choked life from her. The pain filled her stomach and there was no room for food or for her lungs to fill with air. The air and the food would have been theirs.

She hated Chato, not because he let the police-

man and doctors put the screaming children in the government car, but because he had taught her to sign her name. Because it was like the old ones always told her about learning their language or any of their ways: it endangered you. She slept alone on the hill until the middle of November when the first snows came. Then she made a bed for herself where the children had slept. She did not lie down beside Chato again until many years later, when he was sick and shivering and only her body could keep him warm. The illness came after the white rancher told Chato he was too old to work for him anymore, and Chato and his old woman should be out of the shack by the next afternoon because the rancher had hired new people to work there. That had satisfied her. To see how the white man repaid Chato's years of loyalty and work. All of Chato's fine-sounding English talk didn't change things.

It snowed steadily and the luminous light from the snow gradually diminished into the darkness. Somewhere in Cebolleta a dog barked and other village dogs joined with it. Ayah looked in the

direction she had come, from the bar where Chato was buying the wine. Sometimes he told her to go on ahead and wait; and then he never came. And when she finally went back looking for him, she would find him passed out at the bottom of the wooden steps to Azzie's Bar. All the wine would be gone and most of the money too, from the pale blue check that came to them once a month in a government envelope. It was then that she would look at his face and his hands, scarred by ropes and the barbed wire of all those years, and she would think, this man is a stranger; for forty years she had smiled at him and cooked his food, but he remained a stranger. She stood up again, with the snow almost to her knees, and she walked back to find Chato.

It was hard to walk in the deep snow and she felt the air burn in her lungs. She stopped a short distance from the bar to rest and readjust the blanket. But this time he wasn't waiting for her on the bottom step with his old Stetson hat pulled down and his shoulders hunched up in his long wool overcoat.

She was careful not to slip on the wooden steps. When she pushed the door open, warm air and cigarette smoke hit her face. She looked around slowly and deliberately, in every corner, in every dark place that the old man might find

to sleep. The bar owner didn't like Indians in there, especially Navajos, but he let Chato come in because he could talk Spanish like he was one of them. The men at the bar stared at her, and the bartender saw that she left the door open wide. Snowflakes were flying inside like moths and melting into a puddle on the oiled wood floor. He motioned to her to close the door, but she did not see him. She held herself straight and walked across the room slowly, searching the room with every step. The snow in her hair melted and she could feel it on her forehead. At the far corner of the room, she saw red flames at the mica window of the old stove door; she looked behind the stove just to make sure. The bar got quiet except for the Spanish polka music playing on the jukebox. She stood by the stove and shook the snow from her blanket and held it near the stove to dry. The wet wool smell reminded her of new-born goats in early March, brought inside to warm near the fire. She felt calm.

In past years they would have told her to get out. But her hair was white now and her face was wrinkled. They looked at her like she was a spider crawling slowly across the room. They were afraid; she could feel the fear. She looked at their faces steadily. They reminded her of the first

time the white people brought her children back to her that winter. Danny had been shy and hid behind the thin white woman who brought them. And the baby had not known her until Ayah took her into her arms, and then Ella had nuzzled close to her as she had when she was nursing. The blonde woman was nervous and kept looking at a dainty gold watch on her wrist. She sat on the bench near the small window and watched the dark snow clouds gather around the mountains; she was worrying about the unpaved road. She was frightened by what she saw inside too: the strips of venison drying on a rope across the ceiling and the children jabbering excitedly in a language she did not know. So they stayed for only a few hours. Ayah watched the government car disappear down the road and she knew they were already being weaned from these lava hills and from this sky. The last time they came was in early June, and Ella stared at her the way the men in the bar were now staring. Ayah did not try to pick her up; she smiled at her instead and spoke cheerfully to Danny. When he tried to answer her, he could not seem to remember and he spoke English words with the Navajo. But he gave her a scrap of paper that he had found somewhere and carried in his pocket; it was folded in half, and he shyly looked up at her and

said it was a bird. She asked Chato if they were home for good this time. He spoke to the white woman and she shook her head. "How much longer?" he asked, and she said she didn't know; but Chato saw how she stared at the boxcar shack. Ayah turned away then. She did not say good-bye.

She felt satisfied that the men in the bar feared her. Maybe it was her face and the way she held her mouth with teeth clenched tight, like there was nothing anyone could do to her now. She walked north down the road, searching for the old man. She did this because she had the blanket, and there would be no place for him except with her and the blanket in the old adobe barn near the arroyo. They always slept there when they came to Cebolleta. If the money and the wine were gone, she would be relieved because then they could go home again; back to the old hogan with a dirt roof and rock walls where she herself had been born. And the next day the old man could go back to the few sheep they still had, to follow along behind them, guiding them, into dry sandy arroyos where sparse grass grew.

She knew he did not like walking behind old ewes when for so many years he rode big quarter horses and worked with cattle. But she wasn't sorry for him; he should have known all along what would happen.

There had not been enough rain for their garden in five years; and that was when Chato finally hitched a ride into the town and brought back brown boxes of rice and sugar and big tin cans of welfare peaches. After that, at the first of the month they went to Cebolleta to ask the postmaster for the check; and then Chato would go to the bar and cash it. They did this as they planted the garden every May, not because anything would survive the summer dust, but because it was time to do this. The journey passed the days that smelled silent and dry like the caves above the canyon with yellow painted bufaloes on their walls.

He was walking along the pavement when she found him. He did not stop or turn around when he heard her behind him. She walked beside him and she noticed how slowly he moved now. He smelled strong of woodsmoke and urine. Lately

he had been forgetting. Sometimes he called her by his sister's name and she had been gone for a long time. Once she had found him wandering on the road to the white man's ranch, and she asked him why he was going that way; he laughed at her and said, "You know they can't run that ranch without me," and he walked on determined, limping on the leg that had been crushed many years before. Now he looked at her curiously, as if for the first time, but he kept shuffling along, moving slowly along the side of the highway. His gray hair had grown long and spread out on the shoulders of the long overcoat. He wore the old felt hat pulled down over his ears. His boots were worn out at the toes and he had stuffed pieces of an old red shirt in the holes. The rags made his feet look like little animals up to their ears in snow. She laughed at his feet; the snow muffled the sound of her laugh. He stopped and looked at her again. The wind had quit blowing and the snow was falling straight down; the southeast sky was beginning to clear and Ayah could see a star.

"Let's rest awhile," she said to him. They walked away from the road and up the slope to the giant boulders that had tumbled down from the red sandrock mesa throughout the centuries of rainstorms and earth tremors. In a place where

the boulders shut out the wind, they sat down with their backs against the rock. She offered half of the blanket to him and they sat wrapped together.

The storm passed swiftly. The clouds moved east. They were massive and full, crowding together across the sky. She watched them with the feeling of horses—steely blue-gray horses startled across the sky. The powerful haunches pushed into the distances and the tail hairs streamed white mist behind them. The sky cleared. Ayah saw that there was nothing between her and the stars. The light was crystalline. There was no shimmer, no distortion through earth haze. She breathed the clarity of the night sky; she smelled the purity of the half moon and the stars. He was lying on his side with his knees pulled up near his belly for warmth. His eyes were closed now, and in the light from the stars and the moon, he looked young again.

angelic

She could see it descend out of the night sky: an icy stillness from the edge of the thin moon. She recognized the freezing. It came gradually, sinking snowflake by snowflake until the crust was heavy and deep. It had the strength of the stars in Orion, and its journey was endless. Ayah knew that with the wine he would sleep. He would not feel it. She tucked the blanket around

him, remembering how it was when Ella had been with her; and she felt the rush so big inside her heart for the babies. And she sang the only song she knew to sing for babies. She could not remember if she had ever sung it to her children, but she knew that her grandmother had sung it and her mother had sung it:

*The earth is your mother,
she holds you.
The sky is your father,
he protects you.
Sleep,
sleep.
Rainbow is your sister,
she loves you.
The winds are your brothers,
they sing to you.
Sleep,
sleep.
We are together always
We are together always
There never was a time
when this
was not so.*



Apéndice 2

Glosario de Términos Literarios

A continuación presento un glosario de términos literarios de uso frecuente que pretende servir como apoyo para el profesor al usar un texto literario en clases de inglés como LE o como material de consulta.

A

Allusion. A figure of speech making casual reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event.

Allegory. Prose or verse in which the objects, events or people are presented symbolically, so that the story conveys a meaning other than and deeper than the actual incident or characters described. Often, the form is used to teach a moral lesson. Fables and parables are common forms of allegory.

Autobiography. An account of a person's life written by that person. As a division of literature, autobiography is usually so loosely defined as to include memoirs, diaries and even letters, as well as more formal narrative chronicles. (See

Biography.)

B

Biography. The history of the life of a particular person written by someone else.

Blank verse. Unrhymed verse, usually with lines of ten syllables each, the second, fourth, sixth, eighth and tenth syllables bearing the accents. The form is used in English drama and poetry. More recently, the term has been extended to include almost any metrical unrhymed form.

C

Climax. The highest point of tension in the work of literature. (See also **Plot.**)

Comedy. A form of drama that is intended to amuse and that ends happily. Wit and humor are utilized.

Conflict. The struggle that grows out of the interplay of the two opposing forces in a plot. Conflict provides the elements of interest and suspense in all forms of fiction. The conflict may be internal (a character's struggle within himself or herself) or external (a character's struggle against nature, another person, or society).

Context. The general sense of words that helps readers to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in a piece of writing.

D

Description. It is used to portray a scene or setting. Descriptive writing is most effective when the details are carefully selected according to some purpose and to a definite point of view, when the images are concrete and clear, and when discreet use is made of words referring to color, sound and motion.

Diary. A day-by-day chronicle of events; a journal; usually, a personal and more or less intimate record of events and thoughts kept by an individual. More recently, the diary has become a conscious literary form, used particularly by travellers, statesmen, politicians, etc., to detail the important daily events in which they have been involved.

Drama. In general, a work, written to be performed by actors on a stage. Most dramatic works can be classified as tragedy or comedy. Modern drama includes melodrama, satire, theater of the absurd, and pantomime. (See also **comedy, play and tragedy.**)

E

Epic. A long narrative poem presenting heroic characters who take part in a series of adventures, usually over an extended period of time.

Epilogue. A concluding statement; an appendix to a composition. Sometimes as peroration to a speech is called an epilogue, but more generally the term is applied to the final remarks of an actor addressed to the audience at the close of a play.

Episode. An incident presented as one continuous action. Usually, the episode is accompanied by other episodes, woven together by the writer in order to create a story, drama or novel. More narrowly, the term is sometimes used to characterize an incident in a piece of fiction that simply illuminates character or creates background. In this case, the episode bears no definite relationship to the plot and does not advance the action.

Essay. A discussion in prose of a certain topic.

Excerpt. A passage from a larger work that has been taken out of its context to be used for a special purpose.

F

Fable. A brief tale, in either prose or verse, with a moral. Usually, but not always, the characters are animals. The subject matter is concerned with supernatural and unusual incidents, often drawn from folklore. Fable is also used to characterize any story that at one time was believed, but is now recognized as untrue.

Fiction. Narrative writing drawn from the imagination or fancy of the author. The term is most frequently associated with novels and short stories, though drama and narrative poetry also include numerous examples of fiction.

Figurative language. Language used to express ideas through figures of speech: descriptions that aren't meant to be taken literally. Types of figurative language include simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and personification.

Figure of speech. A type of figurative language, not meant to be taken literally, that expresses something in such a way that it brings the thing of life in the reader's or listener's imagination. (See also **figurative language**.)

Flashback. In a novel, play or motion picture, the interruption of the story's continuity to portray an episode or incident that occurred earlier.

Free verse. Poetry that has no formal rhyme scheme or metrical pattern. In free verse, the unit is the stanza or strophe.

G

Genre. A type or category into which literary works can be grouped according to form, technique or purpose. Comedy, epic, lyric, novel and tragedy are literary genres.

H

Hyperbole. A figure of speech based on exaggeration. Hyperbole can be an effective device for securing attention, giving emphasis or creating a poetic effect.

I

Illusion. A false impression or belief; a false perception; an apparition or phantom.

Image. An image is a literal and concrete representation of a sensory experience or of an object that can be known by one or more of the senses.

Imagery. The use of figurative language to enrich poetry or prose. Imagery conveys word pictures. Imagery evokes an imaginative, emotional response, as well as providing a vivid, specific description.

Irony. A form of speech in which the actual intent is expressed in words that carry the opposite meaning. Characteristically, irony uses words of praise to imply blame, and words of blame to imply praise.

L

Lyric. A type of poetry marked by emotion, melody, imagination and a unified effect. In informal English usage, lyrics are the words of a song.

M

Melodrama. A play based on a romantic plot and developed sensationally, with little regard for convincing motivation, and with a constant appeal to the emotions of the audience. Poetic justice is superficially secured, with the characters being rewarded or punished according to their deeds. Although typically a melodrama has a happy ending, tragedies that use the same technique are sometimes referred to as melodramatic. Similarly, stories are sometimes referred to as melodramatic.

Metaphor. A figure of speech based on a comparison that is implied rather than directly expressed.

Meter. In verse, a rhythm established by a pattern of similar stressed and unstressed syllables.

N

Narration. In prose or poetry, the type of composition used to recount an event or series of events.

Narrative verse. A poem that tells a story.

Narrator. The person, or voice, that tells a story.

Novel. A long work of prose fiction containing characters and action portrayed in the form of a plot. The novel aims to present a picture of real life in the historical period and society in which it is set.

O

Oral tradition. Stories, poems, and songs that have been kept alive by being told, recited, and sung by people over many generations. Since the works were not originally written, they often have many different versions.

P

Parable. An allegorical story, usually containing a moral or lesson. Typically, the characters are human beings, rather than animals (as in a fable).

Paraphrase. A restatement of an idea in such a way as to retain the meaning while changing the words and, frequently, the form. A paraphrase is usually an amplification of the original idea for the purpose of clarity, although the term is also used for any general restatement of an expression or passage.

Persona. In literary criticism, the term applied to the narrator or speaker in a novel, short story or poem.

Personification. A figure of speech that endows animals, ideas, abstractions and inanimate objects with human form, character or feelings.

Play. A dramatized story designed to be performed on a stage by actors.

Plot. The sequence of actions and events in fiction or drama. A traditional plot has at least three parts: the "rising action", leading up to a turning point that affects the main character(s), the "climax", the turning point or moment of greatest intensity or interest; and the "falling action", leading away from the conflict, or solving it.

Poem. A composition in metrical form, characterized by qualities of imagination, emotion, significant meaning and appropriate language. A poem may be written in rhyme, blank verse or a combination of the two, but the expression is usually rhythmical and designed to give aesthetic or emotional pleasure. Poem may also apply to a written composition which, though not in verse, is characterized by imagination and poetic beauty in either the thought or the language. (See also

Poetry.)

Poetry. A composition that evokes emotion and imagination by the use of vivid, intense language, usually arranged in a pattern of words or lines with a regularly repeated accent or stress. In content, poetry expresses thoughts that are significant and sincere. It is marked by the presence of power, beauty and dignity. In form, the first characteristic of poetry is the presence of rhythm. Whatever the pattern of the lines, there is a regularity of rise and fall in accent that is more uniform than that of prose. Repeated rhymes and rhyme schemes frequently add

to the musical effect of the verses. A vital element in poetry is the use of concrete words and specific, evocative language. Because poetry is an intense form of expression, words are chosen for their connotations and associations. Poetic expression is rich in figures of speech and imagery. It appeals to the reader's imagination, re-creating and communicating the deep feelings the poet has experienced.

Point of view. The position and outlook of the narrator in relation to the scene being described or the story being told. The term is used in a special sense when applied to fiction writing. The writer may choose to tell the story from the point of view of someone who is involved in the action. Alternatively, he may write from the point of view of a witness to the story, as one before whom the events are unfolding. Or he may write with an omniscient point of view, as one who knows what is going on in the minds of the characters and who sees the motives for the action.

Prose. Spoken or written language that is not metrically versified, as distinguished from poetry or verse. While prose may be rhythmical, it is without the sustained metrical regularity of verse. Variety of expression is achieved through diction and sentence structure. Novels, essays, short stories and most modern drama are written in prose.

Protagonist. The main character of a literary work.

R

Refrain. A group of words forming a phrase or sentence, and repeated at regular intervals in a poem, usually at the end of a stanza.

Repetition. Reiteration of a word, phrase, sound or idea to secure emphasis or to achieve another desired effect.

Resolution. The falling action in fiction or drama, including all of the developments that follow the climax and show that the story's conflict is over. (See also **Plot**.)

Rhyme. Similarity or identity of sound in the accented syllables of two or more words. The similarity is based on the vowels of the accented syllables, which must, for a perfect rhyme, be preceded by different consonants.

Rhyme scheme. The pattern, or sequence, in which the rhyme sounds occur in a stanza or poem.

Rhythm. A movement having a regular repetition of a beat, accent stress, rise and fall, etc. In poetry, the rhythmic forms succeed each other so regularly that the rhythm can be measured, and the poetry can be divided into metrical feet. In prose, the rise and fall of emphasis and accent are less regular.

S

Scene. The time, place, and circumstances of a play or a story. In a play, a scene is a section of an act. (See also **Play**.)

Science fiction. A story based on real or imagined elements of scientific technology.

Setting. The background against which the action of a story or play takes place. The elements that make up a setting are: (1) the geographical location in which the action occurs; the scenery (even the location of the windows and doors in a room); (2) the occupations and daily way of life of the characters; (3) the time or period in which the action takes place (the year, the season, etc.); (4) the general environment of the characters (the religious, moral, social and emotional conditions).

Short story. A brief piece of prose fiction, usually narrative in form, and made up of a series of incidents related to a central situation.

Simile. A figure of speech in which a similarity between two subjects is directly expressed. Most similes are introduced by "as" or "like".

Soliloquy. A speech of a character in a play or other composition delivered while the speaker is alone. The purpose of a soliloquy is to make the audience or reader aware of the character's thoughts or to give information concerning other participants in the action.

Song. A lyric poem either set to music or intended for singing. Song lyrics are usually short, simple, sensuous and emotional. Classification is impossible because so many types have been written on so many subjects. There are working songs, dance songs, love songs, war songs, play songs, drinking songs, songs for festivals, church gatherings, political meetings, and songs written for a host of other circumstances.

Sonnet. A lyric poem of fourteen lines.

Stanza. A division of a poem, usually made according to a pattern. However, a poem is sometimes divided into stanzas according to thought, as well as form, in which case the stanza is a unit similar to a paragraph in prose. Strophe is another term used for stanza.

Style. The distinctive way in which an author composes a work of literature in written or spoken language.

Subplot. In fiction and drama, a subordinate or minor story. Usually, the secondary plot is directly related to the main plot, and contributes interest and complication to the total work.

Symbol. A symbol is something that exists in its own right and yet stands for or suggests something else.

T

Theme. The central or dominating idea, thesis or meaning of a work of literature.

Tone. A term used to denote the mood of a piece of writing. This mood is established by the quality of the speech sounds used. The total effect of word sounds and their associations sets the tone of the writing.

Tragedy. A serious play or narrative in which the hero becomes engaged in a conflict, experiences great suffering and is finally defeated and dies.

V

Verse. (1) A line of poetry. (2) A general term for metrical composition.

Voice. The narrator or the person who relates the action of a piece of literature.

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