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**УЧЕБНО-МЕТОДИЧЕСКОЕ ПОСОБИЕ ПО ЧТЕНИЮ
ОРИГИНАЛЬНОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ**

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Abbreviations used in this

book: **M**—memorise

WR—complete in
writing **O**—complete

orally **sb**—somebody

sth—something

Story 1 H. G. Wells The Door in the Wall

One confidential evening, not three months ago, Lionel Wallace told me this story of the Door in the Wall. And at the time I thought that so far as he was concerned it was a true story.

He told it me with such a direct simplicity of conviction that I could not do otherwise than believe in him. But in the morning, in my own flat, I woke to a different atmosphere, and as I lay in bed and recalled the things he had told me, stripped of the glamour of his earnest slow voice, denuded of the focused shaded table light, the shadowy atmosphere that wrapped about him and the pleasant bright things, the dessert and glasses and napery of the dinner we had shared, making them for the time a bright little world quite cut off from every-day realities, I saw it all as frankly incredible. "He was mystifying!" I said, and then: "How well he did it! It isn't quite the thing I should have expected him, of all people, to do well."

Afterwards, as I sat up in bed and sipped my morning tea, I found myself trying to account for the flavour of reality that perplexed me in his impossible reminiscences, by supposing they did in some way suggest, present, convey--I hardly know which word to use--experiences it was otherwise impossible to tell.

Well, I don't resort to that explanation now. I have got over my intervening doubts. I believe now, as I believed at the moment of telling, that Wallace did to the very best of his ability strip the truth of his secret for me. But whether he himself saw, or only thought he saw, whether he himself was the possessor of an inestimable privilege, or the victim of a fantastic dream, I cannot pretend to guess. Even the facts of his death, which ended my doubts forever, throw no light on that. That much the reader must judge for himself.

I forget now what chance comment or criticism of mine moved so reticent a man to confide in me. He was, I think, defending himself against an imputation of slackness and unreliability I had made in relation to a great public movement in which he had disappointed me. But he plunged suddenly. "I have" he said, "a preoccupation--"

"I know," he went on, after a pause that he devoted to the study of his cigar ash, "I have been negligent. The fact is--it isn't a case of ghosts or apparitions--but--it's an odd thing to tell of, Redmond--I am haunted. I am haunted by something--that rather takes the light out of things, that fills me with longings"

He paused, checked by that English shyness that so often overcomes us when we would speak of moving or grave or beautiful things. "You were at Saint Athelstan's all through," he said, and for a moment that seemed to me quite irrelevant. "Well"--and he paused. Then very haltingly at first, but afterwards more easily, he began to tell of the thing that was hidden in his life, the haunting memory of a beauty and a happiness that filled his heart with insatiable longings that made all the interests and spectacle of worldly life seem dull and tedious and vain to him.

Now that I have the clue to it, the thing seems written visibly in his face. I have a photograph in which that look of detachment has been caught and intensified. It reminds me of what a woman once said of him--a woman who had loved him greatly. "Suddenly," she said, "the interest goes out of him. He forgets you. He doesn't care a rap for you--under his very nose"

Yet the interest was not always out of him, and when he was holding his attention to a thing Wallace could contrive to be an extremely successful man. His career, indeed, is set with successes. He left me behind him long ago; he soared up over my head, and cut a figure in the world that I couldn't cut--anyhow. He was still a year short of forty, and they say now that he would have been in office and very probably in the new Cabinet if he had lived. At school he always beat me without effort--as it were by nature. We were at school together at Saint Athelstan's College in West Kensington for almost all our school time. He came into the school as my co-equal, but he left far above me, in a blaze of scholarships and brilliant performance. Yet I think I made a fair average running. And it was at school I heard first of the Door in the Wall--that I was to hear of a second time only a month before his death.

To him at least the Door in the Wall was a real door leading through a real wall to immortal realities. Of that I am now quite assured.

And it came into his life early, when he was a little fellow between five and six. I remember how, as he sat making his confession to me with a slow gravity, he reasoned and reckoned the date of it. "There was," he said, "a crimson Virginia creeper in it--all one bright uniform crimson in a clear amber sunshine against a white wall. That came into the impression somehow, though I don't clearly remember how, and there were horse-chestnut leaves upon the clean pavement outside the green door. They were blotched yellow and green, you know, not brown nor dirty, so that they must have been new fallen. I take it that means October. I look out for horse-chestnut leaves every year, and I ought to know.

"If I'm right in that, I was about five years and four months old."

He was, he said, rather a precocious little boy--he learned to talk at an abnormally early age, and he was so sane and "old-fashioned," as people say, that he was permitted an amount of initiative that most children scarcely attain by seven or eight. His mother died when he was born, and he was under the less vigilant and authoritative care of a nursery governess. His father was a stern, preoccupied lawyer, who gave him little attention, and expected great things of him. For all his brightness he found life a little grey and dull I think. And one day he wandered.

He could not recall the particular neglect that enabled him to get away, nor the course he took among the West Kensington roads. All that had faded among the incurable blurs of memory. But the white wall and the green door stood out quite distinctly.

As his memory of that remote childish experience ran, he did at the very first sight of that door experience a peculiar emotion, an attraction, a desire to get to the door and open it and walk in.

And at the same time he had the clearest conviction that either it was unwise or it was wrong of him--he could not tell which--to yield to this attraction. He insisted upon it as a curious thing that he knew from the very beginning--unless memory has played him the queerest trick--that the door was unfastened, and that he could go in as he chose.

I seem to see the figure of that little boy, drawn and repelled. And it was very clear in his mind, too, though why it should be so was never explained, that his father would be very angry if he went through that door.

Wallace described all these moments of hesitation to me with the utmost particularity. He went right past the door, and then, with his hands in his pockets, and making an infantile attempt to whistle, strolled right along beyond the end of the wall. There he recalls a number of mean, dirty shops, and particularly that of a plumber and decorator, with a dusty disorder of earthenware pipes, sheet lead ball taps, pattern books of wall paper, and tins of enamel. He stood pretending to examine these things, and coveting, passionately desiring the green door.

Then, he said, he had a gust of emotion. He made a run for it, lest hesitation should grip him again, he went plump with outstretched hand through the green door and let it slam behind him. And so, in a trice, he came into the garden that has haunted all his life.

It was very difficult for Wallace to give me his full sense of that garden into which he came.

There was something in the very air of it that exhilarated, that gave one a sense of lightness and good happening and well being; there was something in the sight of it that made all its colour clean and perfect and subtly luminous. In the instant of coming into it one was exquisitely glad--as only in rare moments and when one is young and joyful one can be glad in this world. And everything was beautiful there.

Wallace mused before he went on telling me. "You see," he said, with the doubtful inflection of a man who pauses at incredible things, "there were two great panthers there . . . Yes, spotted panthers. And I was not afraid. There was a long wide path with marble-edged flower borders on either side, and these two huge velvety beasts were playing there with a ball. One looked up and came towards me, a little curious as it seemed. It came right up to me, rubbed its soft round ear very gently against the small hand I held out and purred. It was, I tell you, an enchanted garden. I know. And the size? Oh! It stretched far and wide, this way and that. I believe there were hills far away. Heaven knows where West Kensington had suddenly got to. And somehow it was just like coming home.

"You know, in the very moment the door swung to behind me, I forgot the road with its fallen chestnut leaves, its cabs and tradesmen's carts, I forgot the sort of gravitational pull back to the discipline and obedience of home, I forgot all hesitations and fear, forgot discretion, forgot all the intimate realities of this life. I became in a moment a very glad and wonder-happy little boy--in another world. It was a world with a different quality, a warmer, more penetrating and mellower light, with a faint clear gladness in its air, and wisps of sun-touched cloud in the blueness of its sky. And before me ran this long wide path, invitingly, with weedless beds on either side, rich with untended flowers, and these two great panthers. I put my little hands fearlessly on their soft fur, and caressed their round ears and the sensitive corners under their ears, and played with them, and it was as though they welcomed me home. There was a keen sense of home-coming in my mind, and when presently a tall, fair girl appeared in the pathway and came to meet me, smiling, and said 'Well?' to me, and lifted me, and kissed me, and put me down, and led me by the hand, there was no amazement, but only an impression of delightful rightness, of being reminded of happy things that had in some strange way been overlooked. There were broad

steps, I remember, that came into view between spikes of delphinium, and up these we went to a great avenue between very old and shady dark trees. All down this avenue, you know, between the red chapped stems, were marble seats of honour and statuary, and very tame and friendly white doves

"And along this avenue my girl-friend led me, looking down--I recall the pleasant lines, the finely-modelled chin of her sweet kind face--asking me questions in a soft, agreeable voice, and telling me things, pleasant things I know, though what they were I was never able to recall . . . And presently a little Capuchin monkey, very clean, with a fur of ruddy brown and kindly hazel eyes, came down a tree to us and ran beside me, looking up at me and grinning, and presently leapt to my shoulder. So we went on our way in great happiness" He paused.

"Go on," I said.

"I remember little things. We passed an old man musing among laurels, I remember, and a place gay with paroquets, and came through a broad shaded colonnade to a spacious cool palace, full of pleasant fountains, full of beautiful things, full of the quality and promise of heart's desire. And there were many things and many people, some that still seem to stand out clearly and some that are a little vague, but all these people were beautiful and kind. In some way--I don't know how--it was conveyed to me that they all were kind to me, glad to have me there, and filling me with gladness by their gestures, by the touch of their hands, by the welcome and love in their eyes. Yes--"

He mused for awhile. "Playmates I found there. That was very much to me, because I was a lonely little boy. They played delightful games in a grass-covered court where there was a sun-dial set about with flowers. And as one played one loved

"But--it's odd--there's a gap in my memory. I don't remember the games we played. I never remembered. Afterwards, as a child, I spent long hours trying, even with tears, to recall the form of that happiness. I wanted to play it all over again--in my nursery --by myself. No! All I remember is the happiness and two dear playfellows who were most with me Then presently came a sombre dark woman, with a grave, pale face and dreamy eyes, a sombre woman wearing a soft long robe of pale purple, who carried a book and beckoned and took me aside with her into a gallery above a hall--though my playmates were loth to have me go, and ceased their game and stood watching as I was carried away. 'Come back to us!' they cried. 'Come back to us soon!' I looked up at her face, but she heeded them not at all. Her face was very gentle and grave. She took me to a seat in the gallery, and I stood beside her, ready to look at her book as she opened it upon her knee. The pages fell open. She pointed, and I looked, marvelling, for in the living pages of that book I saw myself; it was a story about myself, and in it were all the things that had happened to me since ever I was born

"It was wonderful to me, because the pages of that book were not pictures, you understand, but realities."

Wallace paused gravely--looked at me doubtfully. "Go on," I said. "I understand."

"They were realities--yes, they must have been; people moved and things came and went in them; my dear mother, whom I had near forgotten; then my father, stern and upright, the servants, the nursery, all the familiar things of home. Then the front door and the busy streets, with traffic to and fro: I looked and marvelled, and looked half doubtfully again into the woman's face and turned the pages over, skipping this and that, to see more of this book, and more, and so at last I came to myself hovering and hesitating outside the green door in the long white wall, and felt again the conflict and the fear.

"And next?" I cried, and would have turned on, but the cool hand of the grave woman delayed me.

"Next?" I insisted, and struggled gently with her hand, pulling up her fingers with all my childish strength, and as she yielded and the page came over she bent down upon me like a shadow and kissed my brow.

"But the page did not show the enchanted garden, nor the panthers, nor the girl who had led me by the hand, nor the playfellows who had been so loth to let me go. It showed a long grey street in West Kensington, on that chill hour of afternoon before the lamps are lit, and I was there, a wretched little figure, weeping aloud, for all that I could do to restrain myself, and I was weeping because I could not return to my dear play-fellows who had called after me, 'Come back to us! Come back to us soon!' I was there. This was no page in a book, but harsh reality; that enchanted place and the restraining hand of the grave mother at whose knee I stood had gone--whither have they gone?"

He halted again, and remained for a time, staring into the fire.

"Oh! the wretchedness of that return!" he murmured. "Well?"

I said after a minute or so.

"Poor little wretch I was--brought back to this grey world again! As I realised the fulness of what had happened to me, I gave way to quite ungovernable grief. And the shame and humiliation of that public weeping and my disgraceful homecoming remain with me still. I see again the benevolent-looking old gentleman in gold spectacles who stopped and spoke to me--prodding me first with his umbrella. 'Poor little chap,' said he; 'and are you lost then?'--and me a London boy of five and more! And he must needs bring in a kindly young policeman and make a crowd of me, and so march me home. Sobbing, conspicuous and frightened, I came from the enchanted garden to the steps of my father's house.

"That is as well as I can remember my vision of that garden--the garden that haunts me still. Of course, I can convey nothing of that indescribable quality of translucent unreality, that difference from the common things of experience that hung about it all; but that--that is what happened. If it was a dream, I am sure it was a day-time and altogether extraordinary dream. H'm!--naturally there followed a terrible questioning, by my aunt, my father, the nurse, the governess--everyone

"I tried to tell them, and my father gave me my first thrashing for telling lies. When afterwards I tried to tell my aunt, she punished me again for my wicked persistence. Then, as I said, everyone was forbidden to listen to me, to hear a word about it. Even my fairy tale books were taken away from me for a time--because I was 'too

imaginative.' Eh? Yes, they did that! My father belonged to the old school. And my story was driven back upon myself. I whispered it to my pillow--my pillow that was often damp and salt to my whispering lips with childish tears. And I added always to my official and less fervent prayers this one heartfelt request: 'Please God I may dream of the garden. Oh! take me back to my garden! Take me back to my garden!' "I dreamt often of the garden. I may have added to it, I may have changed it; I do not know. All this you understand is an attempt to reconstruct from fragmentary memories a very early experience. Between that and the other consecutive memories of my boyhood there is a gulf. A time came when it seemed impossible I should ever speak of that wonder glimpse again."

I asked an obvious question.

"No," he said. "I don't remember that I ever attempted to find my way back to the garden in those early years. This seems odd to me now, but I think that very probably a closer watch was kept on my movements after this misadventure to prevent my going astray. No, it wasn't until you knew me that I tried for the garden again. And I believe there was a period --incredible as it seems now--when I forgot the garden altogether--when I was about eight or nine it may have been. Do you remember me as a kid at Saint Athelstan's?"

"Rather!"

"I didn't show any signs did I in those days of having a secret dream?" He looked up with a sudden smile.

"Did you ever play North-West Passage with me? No, of course you didn't come my way!"

"It was the sort of game," he went on, "that every imaginative child plays all day. The idea was the discovery of a North-West Passage to school. The way to school was plain enough; the game consisted in finding some way that wasn't plain, starting off ten minutes early in some almost hopeless direction, and working one's way round through unaccustomed streets to my goal. And one day I got entangled among some rather low-class streets on the other side of Campden Hill, and I began to think that for once the game would be against me and that I should get to school late. I tried rather desperately a street that seemed a cul de sac, and found a passage at the end. I hurried through that with renewed hope. 'I shall do it yet,' I said, and passed a row of frowsy little shops that were inexplicably familiar to me, and behold! there was my long white wall and the green door that led to the enchanted garden!"

"The thing whacked upon me suddenly. Then, after all, that garden, that wonderful garden, wasn't a dream!" He paused.

"I suppose my second experience with the green door marks the world of difference there is between the busy life of a schoolboy and the infinite leisure of a child. Anyhow, this second time I didn't for a moment think of going in straight away. You see. For one thing my mind was full of the idea of getting to school in time--set on not breaking my record for punctuality. I must surely have felt SOME little desire at least to try the door--yes, I must have felt that. But I seem to remember the attraction of the door mainly as another obstacle to my overmastering determination to get to school. I was immediately interested by this discovery I had made, of course--I went

on with my mind full of it--but I went on. It didn't check me. I ran past tugging out my watch, found I had ten minutes still to spare, and then I was going downhill into familiar surroundings. I got to school, breathless, it is true, and wet with perspiration, but in time. I can remember hanging up my coat and hat. Went right by it and left it behind me. Odd, eh?"

He looked at me thoughtfully. "Of course, I didn't know then that it wouldn't always be there. School boys have limited imaginations. I suppose I thought it was an awfully jolly thing to have it there, to know my way back to it, but there was the school tugging at me. I expect I was a good deal distraught and inattentive that morning, recalling what I could of the beautiful strange people I should presently see again. Oddly enough I had no doubt in my mind that they would be glad to see me. Yes, I must have thought of the garden that morning just as a jolly sort of place to which one might resort in the interludes of a strenuous scholastic career.

"I didn't go that day at all. The next day was a half holiday, and that may have weighed with me. Perhaps, too, my state of inattention brought down impositions upon me and docked the margin of time necessary for the detour. I don't know. What I do know is that in the meantime the enchanted garden was so much upon my mind that I could not keep it to myself.

"I told--What was his name?--a ferrety-looking youngster we used to call Squiff."

"Young Hopkins," said I.

"Hopkins it was. I did not like telling him, I had a feeling that in some way it was against the rules to tell him, but I did. He was walking part of the way home with me; he was talkative, and if we had not talked about the enchanted garden we should have talked of something else, and it was intolerable to me to think about any other subject. So I blabbed.

"Well, he told my secret. The next day in the play interval I found myself surrounded by half a dozen bigger boys, half teasing and wholly curious to hear more of the enchanted garden. There was that big Fawcett--you remember him?--and Carnaby and Morley Reynolds. You weren't there by any chance? No, I think I should have remembered if you were

"A boy is a creature of odd feelings. I was, I really believe, in spite of my secret self-disgust, a little flattered to have the attention of these big fellows. I remember particularly a moment of pleasure caused by the praise of Crawshaw--you remember Crawshaw major, the son of Crawshaw the composer?--who said it was the best lie he had ever heard. But at the same time there was a really painful undertow of shame at telling what I felt was indeed a sacred secret. That beast Fawcett made a joke about the girl in green--."

Wallace's voice sank with the keen memory of that shame. "I pretended not to hear," he said. "Well, then Carnaby suddenly called me a young liar and disputed with me when I said the thing was true. I said I knew where to find the green door, could lead them all there in ten minutes. Carnaby became outrageously virtuous, and said I'd have to--and bear out my words or suffer. Did you ever have Carnaby twist your arm? Then perhaps you'll understand how it went with me. I swore my story was true. There was nobody in the school then to save a chap from Carnaby though Crawshaw

put in a word or so. Carnaby had got his game. I grew excited and red-eared, and a little frightened, I behaved altogether like a silly little chap, and the outcome of it all was that instead of starting alone for my enchanted garden, I led the way presently--cheeks flushed, ears hot, eyes smarting, and my soul one burning misery and shame--for a party of six mocking, curious and threatening school-fellows.

"We never found the white wall and the green door . .

." "You mean?--"

"I mean I couldn't find it. I would have found it if I could.

"And afterwards when I could go alone I couldn't find it. I never found it. I seem now to have been always looking for it through my school-boy days, but I've never come upon it again."

"Did the fellows--make it disagreeable?"

"Beastly Carnaby held a council over me for wanton lying. I remember how I sneaked home and upstairs to hide the marks of my blubbing. But when I cried myself to sleep at last it wasn't for Carnaby, but for the garden, for the beautiful afternoon I had hoped for, for the sweet friendly women and the waiting playfellows and the game I had hoped to learn again, that beautiful forgotten game.

"I believed firmly that if I had not told--. I had bad times after that--crying at night and woolgathering by day. For two terms I slackened and had bad reports. Do you remember? Of course you would! It was *you*--your beating me in mathematics that brought me back to the grind again."

For a time my friend stared silently into the red heart of the fire. Then he said: "I never saw it again until I was seventeen.

"It leapt upon me for the third time--as I was driving to Paddington on my way to Oxford and a scholarship. I had just one momentary glimpse. I was leaning over the apron of my hansom smoking a cigarette, and no doubt thinking myself no end of a man of the world, and suddenly there was the door, the wall, the dear sense of unforgettable and still attainable things.

"We clattered by--I too taken by surprise to stop my cab until we were well past and round a corner. Then I had a queer moment, a double and divergent movement of my will: I tapped the little door in the roof of the cab, and brought my arm down to pull out my watch. 'Yes, sir!' said the cabman, smartly. 'Er-- well--it's nothing,' I cried. 'Mymistake! We haven't much time! Go on!' and he went on.

"I got my scholarship. And the night after I was told of that I sat over my fire in my little upper room, my study, in my father's house, with his praise--his rare praise--and his sound counsels ringing in my ears, and I smoked my favourite pipe--the formidable bulldog of adolescence--and thought of that door in the long white wall. 'If I had stopped,' I thought, 'I should have missed my scholarship, I should have missed Oxford--muddled all the fine career before me! I begin to see things better!' I fell musing deeply, but I did not doubt then this career of mine was a thing that merited sacrifice.

"Those dear friends and that clear atmosphere seemed very sweet to me, very fine, but remote. My grip was fixing now upon the world. I saw another door opening--the door of my career."

He stared again into the fire. Its red lights picked out a stubborn strength in his face for just one flickering moment, and then it vanished again.

"Well", he said and sighed, "I have served that career. I have done--much work, much hard work. But I have dreamt of the enchanted garden a thousand dreams, and seen its door, or at least glimpsed its door, four times since then. Yes--four times. For a while this world was so bright and interesting, seemed so full of meaning and opportunity that the half-effaced charm of the garden was by comparison gentle and remote. Who wants to pat panthers on the way to dinner with pretty women and distinguished men? I came down to London from Oxford, a man of bold promise that I have done something to redeem. Something--and yet there have been disappointments.

"Twice I have been in love--I will not dwell on that--but once, as I went to someone who, I know, doubted whether I dared to come, I took a short cut at a venture through an unfrequented road near Earl's Court, and so happened on a white wall and a familiar green door. 'Odd!' said I to myself, 'but I thought this place was on Campden Hill. It's the place I never could find somehow--like counting Stonehenge--the place of that queer day dream of mine.' And I went by it intent upon my purpose. It had no appeal to me that afternoon.

"I had just a moment's impulse to try the door, three steps aside were needed at the most--though I was sure enough in my heart that it would open to me--and then I thought that doing so might delay me on the way to that appointment in which I thought my honour was involved. Afterwards I was sorry for my punctuality--I might at least have peeped in I thought, and waved a hand to those panthers, but I knew enough by this time not to seek again belatedly that which is not found by seeking. Yes, that time made me very sorry.

"Years of hard work after that and never a sight of the door. It's only recently it has come back to me. With it there has come a sense as though some thin tarnish had spread itself over my world. I began to think of it as a sorrowful and bitter thing that I should never see that door again. Perhaps I was suffering a little from overwork--perhaps it was what I've heard spoken of as the feeling of forty. I don't know. But certainly the keen brightness that makes effort easy has gone out of things recently, and that just at a time with all these new political developments --when I ought to be working. Odd, isn't it? But I do begin to find life toilsome, its rewards, as I come near them, cheap. I began a little while ago to want the garden quite badly. Yes--and I've seen it three times."

"The garden?"

"No--the door! And I haven't gone in!"

He leaned over the table to me, with an enormous sorrow in his voice as he spoke. "Thrice I have had my chance--*thrice*! If ever that door offers itself to me again, I swore, I will go in out of this dust and heat, out of this dry glitter of vanity, out of these toilsome futilities. I will go and never return. This time I will stay. I swore it and when the time came-- *I didn't go*.

"Three times in one year have I passed that door and failed to enter. Three times in the last year.

"The first time was on the night of the snatch division on the Tenants' Redemption Bill, on which the Government was saved by a majority of three. You remember? No one on our side--perhaps very few on the opposite side--expected the end that night. Then the debate collapsed like eggshells. I and Hotchkiss were dining with his cousin at Brentford, we were both unpaired, and we were called up by telephone, and set off at once in his cousin's motor. We got in barely in time, and on the way we passed my wall and door--livid in the moonlight, blotched with hot yellow as the glare of our lamps lit it, but unmistakable. 'My God!' cried I. 'What?' said Hotchkiss. 'Nothing!' I answered, and the moment passed.

"'I've made a great sacrifice,' I told the whip as I got in. 'They all have,' he said, and hurried by.

"I do not see how I could have done otherwise then. And the next occasion was as I rushed to my father's bedside to bid that stern old man farewell. Then, too, the claims of life were imperative. But the third time was different; it happened a week ago. It fills me with hot remorse to recall it. I was with Gurker and Ralphs--it's no secret now you know that I've had my talk with Gurker. We had been dining at Frobisher's, and the talk had become intimate between us. The question of my place in the reconstructed ministry lay always just over the boundary of the discussion. Yes --yes. That's all settled. It needn't be talked about yet, but there's no reason to keep a secret from you. Yes--thanks! thanks! But let me tell you my story.

"Then, on that night things were very much in the air. My position was a very delicate one. I was keenly anxious to get some definite word from Gurker, but was hampered by Ralphs' presence. I was using the best power of my brain to keep that light and careless talk not too obviously directed to the point that concerns me. I had to. Ralphs' behaviour since has more than justified my caution. Ralphs, I knew, would leave us beyond the Kensington High Street, and then I could surprise Gurker by a sudden frankness. One has sometimes to resort to these little devices. And then it was that in the margin of my field of vision I became aware once more of the white wall, the green door before us down the road.

"We passed it talking. I passed it. I can still see the shadow of Gurker's marked profile, his opera hat tilted forward over his prominent nose, the many folds of his neck wrap going before my shadow and Ralphs' as we sauntered past.

"I passed within twenty inches of the door. 'If I say good-night to them, and go in,' I asked myself, 'what will happen?' And I was all a-tingle for that word with Gurker.

"I could not answer that question in the tangle of my other problems. 'They will think me mad,' I thought. 'And suppose I vanish now!--Amazing disappearance of a prominent politician!' That weighed with me. A thousand inconceivably petty worldlinesses weighed with me in that crisis."

Then he turned on me with a sorrowful smile, and, speaking slowly; "Here I am!" he said.

"Here I am!" he repeated, "and my chance has gone from me. Three times in one year the door has been offered me--the door that goes into peace, into delight, into a beauty beyond dreaming, a kindness no man on earth can know. And I have rejected it, Redmond, and it has gone--"

"How do you know?"

"I know. I know. I am left now to work it out, to stick to the tasks that held me so strongly when my moments came. You say, I have success--this vulgar, tawdry, irksome, envied thing. I have it." He had a walnut in his big hand. "If that was my success," he said, and crushed it, and held it out for me to see.

"Let me tell you something, Redmond. This loss is destroying me. For two months, for ten weeks nearly now, I have done no work at all, except the most necessary and urgent duties. My soul is full of inappeasable regrets. At nights--when it is less likely I shall be recognised--I go out. I wander. Yes. I wonder what people would think of that if they knew. A Cabinet Minister, the responsible head of that most vital of all departments, wandering alone--grieving--sometimes near audibly lamenting--for a door, for a garden!"

I can see now his rather pallid face, and the unfamiliar sombre fire that had come into his eyes. I see him very vividly to-night. I sit recalling his words, his tones, and last evening's Westminster Gazette still lies on my sofa, containing the notice of his death. At lunch to-day the club was busy with him and the strange riddle of his fate.

They found his body very early yesterday morning in a deep excavation near East Kensington Station. It is one of two shafts that have been made in connection with an extension of the railway southward. It is protected from the intrusion of the public by a hoarding upon the high road, in which a small doorway has been cut for the convenience of some of the workmen who live in that direction. The doorway was left unfastened through a misunderstanding between two gangers, and through it he made his way.

My mind is darkened with questions and riddles.

It would seem he walked all the way from the House that night--he has frequently walked home during the past Session--and so it is I figure his dark form coming along the late and empty streets, wrapped up, intent. And then did the pale electric lights near the station cheat the rough planking into a semblance of white? Did that fatal unfastened door awaken some memory?

Was there, after all, ever any green door in the wall at all?

I do not know. I have told his story as he told it to me. There are times when I believe that Wallace was no more than the victim of the coincidence between a rare but not unprecedented type of hallucination and a careless trap, but that indeed is not my profoundest belief. You may think me superstitious if you will, and foolish; but, indeed, I am more than half convinced that he had in truth, an abnormal gift, and a sense, something--I know not what--that in the guise of wall and door offered him an outlet, a secret and peculiar passage of escape into another and altogether more beautiful world. At any rate, you will say, it betrayed him in the end. But did it betray him? There you touch the inmost mystery of these dreamers, these men of vision and the imagination.

We see our world fair and common, the hoarding and the pit. By our daylight standard he walked out of security into darkness, danger and death. But did he see like that?

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. Make up sentences of your own using these phrases. (M, WR)

-to mystify -incurable blurs of memory -an inestimable privilege -an enchanted garden -a preoccupation -to give way to ungovernable grief -to have the clue to sth -to blab -an insatiable longing -to be wool-gathering -a precocious little boy -to get out of toilsome futilities

2. Give extended answers to the following questions: (O)

1. Who told the story of the Door in the Wall?
2. Why was it difficult for the narrator to retell the story?
3. What particular feature did Wallace have?
4. Was Wallace a prosperous man?
5. What was Wallace's childhood like?
6. What was the enchanted garden like?
7. Why didn't Wallace try to find the way to the enchanted garden when he was a boy?
8. Why did Wallace's career merit a sacrifice?
9. How many times did Wallace see the green door?
10. What are the colours the author uses to depict the world behind the green door?

3. Give the Russian for the following: (WR)

1. He paused, checked by that English shyness that so often overcomes us when we would speak of moving or grave or beautiful things.
2. He came into the school as my co-equal, but he left far above me, in a blaze of scholarships and brilliant performance.
3. He knew from the very beginning—unless memory has played him the queerest trick—that the door was unfastened, and that he could go in as he chose.
4. It came right up to me, rubbed its soft round ear very gently against the small hand I held out, and purred.
5. The game consisted in finding some way to school that wasn't plain, starting off ten minutes early in some almost hopeless direction, and working the way around through unaccustomed streets to the goal.
6. I was using the best power of my brain to keep that light and careless talk not too obviously directed to the point that concerned me.

4. Translate the following passages. (WR)

1. "He told it me..."—"...people, to do well."
2. "And it came into his life..."—"...I ought to know."
3. "Years of hard work..."—"...and I've seen it three times."

5. Find in the story a word or a word-combination close in meaning to the word(s) given in italics. (WR)

1. I found myself trying to understand his *memories*.
2. I have been *careless*.
3. I have a photograph in which that look of *disinterestedness* has been caught and intensified.

4. He had a *burst* of emotion.
5. Wallace *thought about something* before he went on telling me.
6. She asked me questions in a soft, *pleasant* voice.
7. I see again the *friendly-looking* old gentleman in gold spectacles.
8. It was a day-time and altogether *amazing* dream.
9. I felt it was indeed a *holy* secret.
10. The *result of* it was that I led the way for a party of six schoolfellows.

6. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary) (WR)

-beauty -happiness -freedom -real -doubt

7. Fill each gap with a preposition. (M, WR)

-a bright little world quite cut... .. everyday realities -to yield...this attraction -to account...the flavour of reality -to be reminded...sth -resort...that explanation -to belong...sb -to throw light...sth -to weigh...sb -to confide...sb -...chance -to be haunted...sth -to dwell...sth -...nature -to stick...sth -to have (no) appeal...sb -...an abnormally early age -to be aware...sth

8. What nouns/adjectives are used with the following words? Find examples in the story. (WR)

-atmosphere -longings -blurs of memory -garden -light -game(s) -woman -interested -to be inexplicably...to sb -career -secret -things -life/futilities

9. Translate the sentences into Russian paying special attention to the usage of the word “door”: (O, M)

1. We were very distressed to hear that our aunt **was at death’s door**.
2. Our journey took two hours **door to door**.
3. When I got my job in London, it was my teacher who **opened the door** for me.
4. The workers asked for only a small increase in pay, but the boss just **slammed the door in their face(s)**.
5. When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window.

10. Arrange the following adjectives into 2 groups: 1. synonyms of the word “happy” (WR, try to M) 2.

synonyms of the word “beautiful”:

appealing, charming, blissful, content(ed), joyful, glamorous, gorgeous, jubilant, on cloud nine, thrilled, graceful, radiant, stunning, over the moon, drop-dead

11. Search the story for the antonyms of the following words (change only the prefix): (WR, M)

possible, credible, normal, curable, agreeable, unimaginative, explicably, attentive, tolerable, forgettable, mistakable, appearance, conceivable, familiar, understanding, fastened.

12. Translate the sentences into English using the vocabulary of the story: (WR)

1. У меня появилась догадка, почему его охватила такая буря эмоций.
2. Заколдованный сад был отрезан от действительности.
3. Он был не по годам развитым мальчиком, который научился читать в необычно раннем возрасте.
4. Должно быть, он проболтался своим одноклассникам о заветной тайне.

5. Он был очень *рассеянным* и страдал от *невосполнимых пробелов в памяти*.
6. *Доброжелательный* пожилой мужчина показался мне *необъяснимо знакомым*.
7. Его карьера *имела для него значение*, но, с другой стороны, она была для него *невыносимой*.
8. *Результатом* этой *загадки* стало *взаимное непонимание* двух враждующих сторон.
9. У мальчиков было очень *ограниченное воображение* и *невнимательное* отношение к учебе.
10. Мой отец был человеком *старой закалки*.

13. Speak your mind on the following points: (O)

1. The main character of the story. Is he a loser or a winner? Or neither of them? 2. The enchanted garden—insanity or a symbol of freedom and happiness?
3. Do you have your own “enchanted garden”, a place where you feel happy?
4. What is your attitude towards the end of the story? Is it negative or positive? 5. “Was there ever any green door in the wall at all?”

14. Retell the story as if you were: (O)

-the narrator

- Mr Lionel Wallace

Story 2 John Galsworthy The Broken Boot

The actor, Gilbert Caister, who had been "out" for six months, emerged from his east-coast seaside lodging about noon in the day, after the opening of "Shooting the Rapids", on tour, in which he was playing Dr Dominick in the last act. A salary of four pounds a week would not, he was conscious, remake his fortunes, but a certain jauntiness had returned to the gait and manner of one employed again at last.

Fixing his monocle, he stopped before a fishmonger's and, with a faint smile on his face, regarded a lobster. Ages since he had eaten a lobster! One could long for a lobster without paying, but the pleasure was not solid enough to detain him. He moved upstreet and stopped again, before a tailor's window. Together with the actual tweeds, in which he could so easily fancy himself refitted, he could see a reflection of himself, in the faded brown suit wangled out of the production of "Marmaduke Mandeville" the year before the war. The sunlight in this damned town was very strong, very hard on seams and buttonholes, on knees and elbows! Yet he received the ghost of aesthetic pleasure from the reflected elegance of a man long fed only twice a day, of an eyeglass well rimmed out from a soft brown eye, of a velour hat salvaged from the production of "Educating Simon" in 1912; and in front of the window he removed that hat, for under it was his new phenomenon, not yet quite evaluated, his *mèche blanche*. Was it an asset, or the beginning of the end? It reclined backwards on the right side, conspicuous in his dark hair, above that shadowy face always interesting to Gilbert Caister. They said it came from atrophy of the — something nerve, an effect of the war, undernourished tissue. Rather distinguished, perhaps, but—!

He walked on, and became conscious that he had passed a face he knew. Turning, he saw it also turn on a short and dapper figure — a face rosy, bright, round, with an air of cherubic knowledge, as of a getter-up of amateur theatricals.

Bryce-Green, by George!

"Caister? It is! Haven't seen you since you left the old camp. Remember what sport we had over 'Gotta-Grampus'? By Jove! I am glad to see you. Doing anything with yourself? Come and have lunch with me."

Bryce-Green, the wealthy patron, the moving spirit of entertainment in that south-coast convalescent camp. And drawling slightly, Caister answered:

"I shall be delighted." But within him something did not drawl: "By God, you're going to have a feed, my boy!"

And — elegantly threadbare, roundabout and dapper — the two walked side by side. "Know this place? Let's go in here! Phyllis, cocktails for my friend Mr Caister and myself, and caviare on biscuits. Mr Caister is playing here; you must go and see him."

The girl who served the cocktails and the caviare looked up at Caister with interested blue eyes. Precious! — he had been "out" for six months!

"Nothing of a part," he drawled, "took it to fill a gap." And below his waistcoat the gap echoed: "Yes, and it'll take some filling."

"Bring your cocktail along, Caister, we'll go into the little further room, there'll be nobody there. What shall we have—a lobstah?"

And Caister murmured: "I love lobstahs."

"Very fine and large here. And how are you, Caister? So awfully glad to see you — only real actor we had."

"Thanks," said Caister, "I'm all right." And he thought: "He's a damned amateur, but a nice little man."

"Sit here. Waiter, bring us a good big lobstah and a salad; and then—er—a small fillet of beef with potatoes fried crisp, and a bottle of my special hock! Ah! and a rum omelette—plenty of rum and sugar. Twig?"

And Caister thought: "Thank God, I do."

They had sat down opposite each other at one of two small tables in the little recessed room.

"Luck!" said Bryce-Green.

"Luck!" replied Caister; and the cocktail trickling down him echoed: "Luck!"

"And what do you think of the state of the drama?" Oh! ho! A question after his own heart. Balancing his monocle by a sweetish smile on the opposite side of his mouth, Caister drawled his answer: "Quite too bally awful!"

"H'm! Yes," said Bryce-Green; "nobody with any genius, is there?" And Caister thought: "Nobody with any money."

"Have you been playing anything great? You were so awfully good in 'Gotta-Grampus'!"

"Nothing particular, I've been—er—rather slack." And with their feel around his waist his trousers seemed to echo: "Slack!"

"Ah!" said Bryce-Green. "Here we are! Do you like claws?"

"Tha-a-nks. Anything!" To eat—until warned by the pressure of his waist against his trousers! What a feast! And what a flow of his own tongue suddenly released— on drama, music, art; mellow and critical, stimulated by the round eyes and interjections of his little provincial host.

"By Jove, Caister! You've got a meche blanche. Never noticed. I'm awfully interested in meches blanches. Don't think me too frightfully rude — but did it come suddenly?" "No, gradually."

"And how do you account for it?"

Try starvation,' trembled on Caister's lips. "I don't," he said.

"I think it's ripping. Have some more omelette? I often wish I'd gone on the regular stage myself. Must be a topping life, if one has talent, like you."

Topping?

"Have a cigar. Waiter! Coffee, and cigars. I shall come and see you tonight. Suppose you'll be here a week?"

Topping! The laughter and applause — "Mr. Caister's rendering left nothing to be desired; its—and its— are in the true spirit of—!"

Silence recalled him from his rings of smoke. Bryce-Green was sitting, with cigar held out and mouth a little open, and bright eyes round as pebbles, fixed— fixed on some object near the floor, past the corner of the tablecloth. Had he burnt his mouth? The eyelids fluttered; he looked at Caister, licked his lips like a dog, nervously and said:

"I say, old chap, don't think me a beast, but are you at all—er—er—rocky? I mean— if I can be of any service, don't hesitate! Old acquaintance, don't you know, and all that—"

His eyes rolled out again towards the object, and Caister followed them. Out there above the carpet he saw it—his own boot. It dangled slightly, six inches off the ground—split-right across, twice, between lace and toecap. Quite! He knew it. A boot left him from the role of Bertie Carstairs, in "The Dupe," just before the war. Good boots. His only pair, except the boots of Dr. Dominick, which he was nursing. And from the boot he looked back at Bryce-Green, sleek and concerned. A drop, black when it left his heart, suffused his eye behind the monocle; his smile curled bitterly; he said:

"Not at all, thanks! Why?"

"Oh, n-n-nothing. It just occurred to me." His eyes— but Caister had withdrawn the boot. Bryce-Green paid the bill and rose.

"Old chap, if you'll excuse me; engagement at half past two. So awfully glad to have seen you. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" said Caister. "Thanks." He was alone. And, chin on hand, he stared through his monocle into an empty coffee cup. Alone with his heart, his boot, his life to come... "And what have you been in lately, Mr Caister?" "Nothing very much lately. Of course I've played almost everything." "Quite so. Perhaps you'll leave your address; can't say anything definite, I'm afraid." "I—I should—er—be willing to rehearse on approval; or—if I could the part?" "Thank you, afraid we haven't got as

far as that." "No? Quite! Well, I shall hear from you, perhaps." And Caister could see his own eyes looking at the manager. God! What a look!... A topping life! Cadging—cadging—cadging for work! A life of draughty waiting, of concealed beggary, of terrible depressions, of want of food!

The waiter came skating round as if he desired to clear. Must go! Two young women had come in and were sitting at the other table between him and the door. He saw them look at him, and his sharpened senses caught the whisper;

"Sure—int he last act. Don't you see his meche blanche?"

"Oh! yes—of course! Isn't it—wasn't he—!"

Caister straightened his back; his smile crept out, he fixed his monocle. They had spotted his Dr. Dominick!

"If you've quite finished, sir, may I clear?"

"Certainly. I'm going." He gathered himself and rose. The young women were gazing up, Elegant, with a faint smile, he passed them close, so that they could not see, managing—his broken boot.

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. Make up sentences of your own using them. (WR, M)

-to long for -to be willing to do sth -to receive the ghost of aesthetic pleasure
-to fix one's eyes on sth -after one's own heart -starvation -to recall sb from sth
-to suffuse one's eye -one's smile curls bitterly -engagement -one's sharpened senses catch -to nurse sb

2. Give the English for the Russian word in brackets (expressions from ex. 1): (WR)

1. He (жаждать) becoming a great actor.
2. She was dying of (голод), but didn't ask for help.
3. The best friend of his (остановить взгляд на) the broken boot and gave way to his tears.
4. This question (быть ему по душе) and he was glad to answer it.
5. She frowned and her (горько усмехнулся), but she didn't utter a word.
6. His parents (очень хотеть) lend him a helping hand.
7. His (обостренные чувства уловили) a trace of irritation in her voice.

3. Give extended answers to the following questions: (O)

1. What does "mèche blanche" stand for? Why does the author pay special attention to this feature of Mr Caister?
2. What made Caister receive a ghost of aesthetic pleasure?
3. Who was Bryce-Green?
4. What did the protagonists order in the restaurant?
5. Was Caister living a topping life?
6. Why did Bryce-Green leave his guest? Was it really a previous engagement?
7. Was Caister a good actor?
8. What impression does Caister make on you?
9. Why is the story titled "The Broken Boot"? What does this boot symbolize?

10. How did Caister behave having noticed the two women's appearance?

4. Give the Russian for the following: (WR)

1. A salary of four pounds a week would not, he was conscious, remake his fortunes, but a certain jauntiness had returned to the gait and manner of one employed again at last.

2. They said it came from atrophy of the—something nerve, an effect of the war, or of undernourished tissue.

3. And what a flow of his own tongue suddenly released—on drama, music, art; mellow and critical, stimulated by the round eyes and interjections of his little provincial host.

4. Bryce-Green was sitting, with cigar held out and mouth a little open, and bright eyes round as pebbles, fixed—fixed on some object near the floor, past the corner of the table-cloth.

5. Caister straightened his back; his smile crept out, he fixed his monocle.

6. A life of drougthy waiting, of concealed beggary, of terrible depressions, of want of food.

5. Translate the following passages: (WR)

1. "Fixing his monocle..."—"Rather distinguished..."

2. "He was alone."—"of want of food!"

6. Put into reported speech the following passage: (WR)

"Know this place?"—"Twig?"

7. Find in the story a word or a word-combination close in meaning to the word(s) given in italics. (WR)

1. A certain *self-confidence* had returned to his gait and manner.

2. That *mèche blanche* was quite *noticeable* in his dark hair.

3. He's a damned *layman*, but a nice little man.

4. He *was looking after* this precious pair of shoes

5. I couldn't stay longer since I have a previous *meeting*.

8. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary): (WR)

-conscious -acquaintance -frightfully -pleasure

9. Fill each gap with a preposition. (WR, M)

-to be...tour -to long...sth -to wangle sth.....sth -sth...sb's own heart

-to be interested...sth -to fix one's eyes...sth -to recall sb...sth -to cadge...sth -a want...food

10. Translate the following sentences into Russian paying special attention to the word "boot": (WR, M)

1. Soon after I went to work for another company, my old boss came to me begging for a job. Now I am his boss, and **the boot is on the other foot**.

2. He **was given the boot** because he was found blind drunk in his work place.

3. It was a long film and an uninteresting one **to boot**.

4. I'm 65 now and I think it's time **to hang up my boots** and turn my attention to my garden.

5. I would like our employer to think my work is good, but I am too proud **to lick his boots**.

11. How do the following words differ from each other: (O, try to M)

A to walk; to creep; to limp; to pace; to pad; to plod; to shuffle; to stagger; to stomp, to stroll; to tiptoe; to trudge.

B to look; to gaze; to stare; to glare; to peer; to squint; to glance; to eye; to scan; to examine; to study; to inspect; to spot; to glimpse

12. Arrange the following phrases into 2 groups: 1. description of Gilbert Caister (WR) 2. description of Bryce-Green a short and dapper figure; rosy, bright, round face; he straightened his back; faint smile on his face; bright eyes round as pebbles; a sweetish smile on the opposite side of his mouth; his eyelids fluttered; he licked his lips like a dog; *mèche blanche* conspicuous in his hair; elegantly threadbare; his eyes rolled out; his smile crept out; shadowy face; his smile curled bitterly.

13. Having done the previous exercise, add some more information about the two protagonists and give their full description, paying attention to: (WR, O) -appearance -clothes -manner of behaviour -manner of speaking

14. Speak your mind on the following points: (O)

1. “Was it an asset, or the beginning of the end?” Speculate upon the future life of Gilbert Caister.

2. Although he was a talented actor, Gilbert Caister was living on the verge of poverty. Why?

3. Why didn't Caister accept Bryce-Green's help? Would you do it if you were in his shoes?

15. Retell the story as if you were: (O)

-Gilbert Caister

-Bryce-Green

Story 3 Graham Greene Proof Positive

The tired voice went on. It seemed to surmount enormous obstacles to speech. The man's sick, Colonel Crashaw thought, with pity and irritation. When a young man he had climbed in the Himalayas, and he remembered how at great heights several breaths had to be taken for every step advanced. The five-foot-high platform in the Music Rooms of The Spa seemed to entail for the speaker some of the same effort, he should never have come out on such a raw afternoon, thought Colonel Crashaw, pouring out a glass of water and pushing it across the lecturer's table. The rooms were badly heated, and yellow fingers of winter fog fell for cracks in the many windows. There was little doubt that the speaker had lost all touch with his audience. It was scattered in patches about the hall – elderly ladies who made no attempt to hide their cruel boredom, and a few men, with the appearance of retired officers, who put a show of attention.

Colonel Crashaw, as president of the local Psychical Society, had received a note from the speaker a little more than a week before. Written by a hand which trembled with sickness, age or drunkenness, it asked urgently for a special meeting of the society. An extraordinary, a really impressive, experience was to be described while still fresh in the mind, thought what the experience had been was left vague. Colonel

Crashaw would have hesitated to comply if the note had not been signed by a Major Philip Weaver, Indian Army, retired. One had to do what one could for a brother officer; the trembling of the hand must be either age or sickness.

It proved principally to be the latter when the two men met for the first time on the platform. Major Weaver was not more than sixty, tall, thin, and dark, with an ugly obstinate nose and, satire in his eye, the most unlikely person to experience anything unexplainable. What antagonised Crashaw most was that Weaver used scent; a white handkerchief which drooped from his breast pocket exhaled as rich and sweet an odour as a whole altar of lilies. Several ladies prinked their noses, and General Leadbitter asked loudly whether lie might smoke.

It was quite obvious that Weaver understood. He smiled provocatively and asked very slowly, "Would you mind not smoking? My throat has been bad for some time."

Crashaw murmured that it was terrible weather; influenza throats were common. The satirical eye came round to him and considered him thoughtfully, while Weaver said in a voice which carried halfway across the hall, "It's cancer in my case."

In the shocked vexed silence that followed the unnecessary intimacy he began to speak without waiting for any introduction from Crashaw. He seemed at first to be in a hurry. It was only later that the terrible impediments were placed in the way of his speech. He had a high voice, which sometimes broke into a squeal, and must have been peculiarly disagreeable on the parade ground. He paid a few compliments to the local society; his remarks were just sufficiently exaggerated to be irritating. He was glad, lie said, to give them the chance of hearing him; what he had to say might alter their whole view of the relative values of matter and spirit.

Mystic stuff, thought Crashaw.

Weaver's high voice began to shoot out hurried platitudes. The spirit, he said, was stronger than anyone realised; the physiological action of heart and brain and nerves were subordinate to the spirit. The spirit was everything. He said again, his voice squeaking up like bats into the ceiling, "The spirit is so much stronger than you think." He put his hand across his throat and squinted sideways at the window-panes and the nuzzling fog, and upwards at the bare electric globe sizzling with heat and poor light in the dim afternoon. "It's immortal," he told them very seriously, and they shifted, restless, uncomfortable, and weary, in their chairs.

It was then that his voice grew tired and his speech impeded. The knowledge that he had entirely lost touch with his audience may have been the cause. An elderly lady at the back had taken her knitting from a bag, and her needles flashed along the walls when the light caught them, like a bright ironic spirit. Satire for a moment deserted Weaver's eyes, and Crashaw saw the vacancy it left, as though the ball had turned to glass.

"This is important," the lecturer cried to them. "I can tell you a story-" His audience's attention was momentarily caught by this promise of something definite, but the stillness of the lady's needles did not soothe him. He sneered at them all: "Signs and wonders," he said.

Then he lost the thread of his speech altogether.

His hand passed to and fro across his throat and he quoted Shakespeare, and then St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. His speech, as it grew slower, seemed to lose all logical order, though now and then Crashaw was surprised by the shrewdness in the juxtaposition of two irrelevant ideas. It was like the conversation of an old man which flits from subject to subject, the thread a subconscious one. "When I was a Simla," he said, bending his brows as though to avoid the sunflash on the barrack square, but perhaps the frost, the fog, the tarnished room broke his memories. He began to assure the wearied faces all over again that the spirit did not die when the body died, but that the body only moved at the spirit's will. One had to be obstinate, to grapple... Pathetic, Crashaw thought, the sick man's clinging to his belief. It was as if life were an only son who was dying and with whom he wished to preserve some form of communication...

A note was passed to Crashaw from the audience. It came from a Dr. Brown, a small alert man in the third row; the society cherished him as a kind of pet sceptic. The note read: "Can't you make him stop? The man's obviously very ill. And what good is his talk, anyway?"

Crashaw turned his eyes sideways and upwards and felt his pity vanish at sight of the roving satirical eyes that gave the lie to the tongue, and at the smell, over-poweringly sweet, of the scent in which Weaver had steeped his handkerchief. The man was an "outsider"; he would look up his record in the old Army Lists when he got home. "Proof positive," Weaver was saying, sighing a shrill breath of exhaustion between the words. Crashaw laid his watch upon the table, but Weaver paid him no attention. He was supporting himself on the rim of the table with one hand. "I'll give you," he said, speaking with increasing difficulty, "proof pos..." His voice scraped into stillness, like a needle at a record's end, but the quiet did not last. From an expressionless face, a sound which was more like a high mew than anything else, jerked the audience into attention. He followed it up, still without a trace of any emotion or understanding, with a succession of incomprehensible sounds, a low labial whispering, an odd jangling note, while his fingers lapped on the table. The sounds brought to mind innumerable seances, the bound medium, the tambourine shaken in mid-air, the whispered trivialities of loved ghosts in the darkness, the dinginess, the airless rooms.

Weaver sat down slowly in his chair and let his head fall backwards. An old lady began to cry nervously, and Dr. Brown scrambled on to the platform and bent over him. Colonel Crashaw saw the doctor's hand tremble as he picked the handkerchief from the pocket and flung it away from him. Crashaw, aware of another and more unpleasant smell, heard Dr. Brown whisper: "Send them all away. He's dead."

He spoke with a distress unusual in a doctor accustomed to every kind of death. Crashaw, before he complied, glanced over Dr. Brown's shoulder at the dead man. Major Weaver's appearance disquieted him. In a long life he had seen many forms of death, men shot by their own hand, and men killed in the field, but never such a suggestion of mortality. The body might have been one fished from the sea a long while after death; the flesh of the face seemed as ready to fall as an over ripe fruit. So

it was with no great shock of surprise that he heard Dr. Brown's whispered statement: "The man must have been dead a week."

What The Colonel thought of most was Weaver's claim – "Proof positive" – proof, he had probably meant, that the spirit outlived the body, that it lasted eternity. But all he had certainly revealed was how, without the body's aid, the spirit in seven days decayed into whispered nonsense.

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. Make sentences of your own using them. (WR, M)

-to surmount enormous obstacles -to lose the thread of one's speech -to lose all touch with the audience -to be an outsider -to make no attempt to do sth
-such a suggestion of mortality -vexed silence -to decay into sth -to ask urgently for sth -to outlive -to consider sb thoughtfully -to be subordinate to sth

2. Translate the following sentences into English using expressions from ex. 1: (WR)

1. Его долгая монотонная речь привела к тому, что он *потерял всякую связь с аудиторией*.
2. Он *не предпринял ни единой попытки*, чтобы познакомиться с ней.
3. Он *пережил* свою жену на три года.
4. Она успешно *справилась со всеми невероятными препятствиями*, которые приготовила ей судьба.
5. В комнате царило *напряженное молчание*.
6. В арабских странах женщины *подчиняются* мужчинам.
7. Сколько бы усилий он не прилагал, он оставался *посторонним* в этом маленьком городке.
8. Он *настоятельно просил*, чтобы его выслушали.

3. Give extended answers to the following questions: (O)

1. What kind of voice did Major Philip Weaver have? Is it really important for a speaker to have a pleasant voice?
2. What was the attitude of Mr Crashow towards Mr Weaver?
3. "And what good is his talk, anyway?"—do you agree with this statement?
4. What did the audience consist of?
5. What disease did Mr Weaver suffer from?
6. What does "proof positive" stand for? Why does the author use this phrase?
7. What was Mr Weaver's theory about? Do you believe in his theory?
8. Why was it so important for Weaver to be listened to?
9. What message did Weaver try to communicate to his audience?
10. Why did Mr Weaver's appearance disquiet Colonel Crashow?

4. Give the Russian for the following: (WR)

1. The rooms were badly heated, and yellow fingers of winter fog felt for cracks in the many windows.
2. Written by a hand which trembled with sickness, age or drunkenness, it asked urgently for a special meeting of the society.

3. What antagonised Crashow most was that Weaver used scent; a white handkerchief which drooped from his breast pocket exhaled as rich and sweet an odour as a whole altar of lilies.

4. It was only later that the terrible impediments were placed in the way of his speech.

5. His speech, as it grew slower, seemed to lose all logical order, though now and then Crashow was surprised by the shrewdness in the juxtaposition of two irrelevant ideas.

6. From an expressionless face, a sound which was more like a high mew than anything else, jerked the audience into attention.

5. Translate the following passages. (WR)

1. "It proved principally..."—"...whether he might smoke"

2. "In the shocked vexed silence..."—"...of matter and spirit"

3. "Proof positive."—"...the airless room."

6. Search the story for the antonyms of the following words (change only the prefix): (WR)

-likely -explainable -necessary -agreeable -mortal -comfortable -relevant
-comprehensible -numerable -pleasant -usual -to quiet

7. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (WR)

-spirit -hesitate -conscious -mortal

8. Find in the story a word or a word-combination close in meaning to the word(s) given in italics. (WR)

1. What *annoyed* him most was her perfume.

2. The satirical eye came round to him and *examined* him thoughtfully.

3. Finally, he *changed* his plans.

4. His high voice began to shoot out hurried *trivialities*.

5. The physiological action of heart and brain and nerves *are inferior to* the spirit.

6. Even the stillness of the lady's needles did not *calm him down*.

9. Match two columns to make a collocation: (WR, O)

-to surmount	an attempt
-take	a compliment
-make	attention
-to be in	obstacles
-to give	fro
-to pay	a breath
-to bring to	brows
-to pay	the chance
-to bend one's	a hurry
-to and	mind

10. How do the following words differ from each other: (WR, O)

-whisper; murmur; mumble; mutter; shout; scream; shriek; drawl; hiss; roar; stammer; boast; threaten; groan; beg; grumble.

11. Translate the following sentences into Russian paying special attention to the words "spirit" and "matter": (O, M)

1. **The moving spirits** of the government's new plan for industry include some of the most experienced businessmen in the country.
2. The spirit is willing but the flash is weak.
3. I'm afraid that we will be abroad on the day of your marriage, but we'll **be with you in spirit**.
4. The children were full of **animal spirits**.
5. Here is a problem for you to use your **grey matter**.

12. Discourse on the following points: (O)

1. The spirit is everything. It is so much stronger than you think.
2. Do you believe in the supernatural?
3. What impression does the "proof positive" of the story make on you?
4. Describe the image of nature in the story. What role does it play?

13. Retell the story as if you were: (O)

-Colonel Crashaw

-Mr Weaver

Story 4 Agatha Christie The Adventure of the Egyptian Tomb

I have always considered that one of the most thrilling and dramatic of the many adventures I have shared with Poirot was that of our investigation into the strange series of deaths which followed up on the discovery and opening of the Tomb of King Men-her-Ra.

Hard upon the discovery of the Tomb of Tutankh-Amen by Lord Carnarvon, Sir John Willard and Mr. Bleibner of New York, pursuing their excavations not far from Cairo, in the vicinity of the Pyramids of Gizeh, came unexpectedly on a series of funeral chambers. The greatest interest was aroused by their discovery. The Tomb appeared to be that of King Men-her-Ra one of those shadowy kings of the Eighth Dynasty, when the Old Kingdom was falling to decay. Little was known about this period, and the discoveries were fully reported in the newspapers. An event soon occurred which took a profound hold on the public mind. Sir John Willard died quite suddenly of heart failure.

The more sensational newspapers immediately took the opportunity of reviving all the old superstitious stories connected with the ill luck of certain Egyptian treasures. The unlucky Mummy at the British Museum, that hoary old chestnut, was dragged out with fresh zest, was quietly denied by the Museum, but nevertheless enjoyed all its usual vogue. A fortnight later Mr. Bleibner died of acute blood poisoning, and a few days afterwards a nephew of his shot himself in New York. The "Curse of Men-her- Ra" was the talk of the day, and the magic power of dead-and-gone Egypt was exalted to a fetish point.

It was then that Poirot received a brief note from Lady Willard, widow of the dead archeologist, asking him to go and see her at her house in Kensington Square. I accompanied him.

Lady Willard was a tall, thin woman, dressed in deep mourning. Her haggard face bore eloquent testimony to her recent grief.

"It is kind of you to have come so promptly, Monsieur Poirot. " "I am at your service, Lady Willard. You wished to consult me? "

"You are, I am aware, a detective, but it is not only as a detective that I wish to consult you. You are a man of original views, I know, you have imagination, experience of the world; tell me, Monsieur Poirot, what are your views on the supernatural? "

Poirot hesitated for a moment before he replied. He seemed to be considering. Finally he said: "Let us not misunderstand each Other, Lady Willard. It is not a general question that you are asking met here. It has a personal application, has it not? You are referring obliquely to the death of your late husband? "

"That is so," she admitted.

"You want me to investigate the circumstances of his death? "

"I want you to ascertain for me exactly how much is newspaper chatter, and how much may be said to be founded on fact. Three deaths, Monsieur Poirot - each one explicable taken by itself, but taken together surely an almost unbelievable coincidence, and all within a month of the opening of the tomb! It may be mere superstition, it may be some potent curse from the past that operates in way sundreamed of by modern science. The fact remains – three deaths! And I am afraid, Monsieur Poirot, horribly afraid. It may not yet be the end. "

"For whom do you fear? "

"For my son. When the news of my husband's death came I was ill. My son, who has just come down from Oxford," went out there. He brought the – the body home, but now he has gone out again, in spite of my prayers and entreaties.

He is so fascinated by the work that he intends to take his father's place and carry on the system of excavations. You may think me a foolish, credulous woman, but, Monsieur Poirot, I am afraid. Supposing that the spirit of the dead King is not yet appeased? Perhaps to you I seem to be talking nonsense -"

"No, indeed, Lady Willard," said Poirot quickly. "I, too, believe in the force of superstition, one of the greatest forces the world has ever known."

I looked at him in surprise. I should never have credited Poirot with being superstitious. But the little man was obviously in earnest.

"What you really demand is that I shall protect your son? I will do my utmost to keep him from harm."

"Yes, in the ordinary way, but against an occult influence?"

"In volumes of the Middle Ages, Lady Willard, you will find many ways of counteracting black magic. Perhaps they knew more than we moderns with all our boasted science. Now let us come to facts, that I may have guidance. Your husband had always been a devoted Egyptologist, hadn't he?"

"Yes, from his youth upwards. He was one of the greatest living authorities upon the subject."

"But Mr. Bleibner, I understand, was more or less of an amateur?"

"Oh, quite. He was a very wealthy man who dabbled freely in any subject that happened to take his fancy. My husband managed to interest him in Egyptology, and it was his money that was so useful in financing the expedition."

"And the nephew? What do you know of his tastes? Was he with the party at all?"

"I do not think so. In fact I never knew of his existence till I read of his death in the paper. I do not think he and Mr. Bleibner can have been at all intimate. He never spoke of having any relations."

"Who are the other members of the party?"

"Well, there's Dr. Tosswill, a minor official connected with the British Museum; Mr. Schneider of the Metropolitan Museum in New York, a young American secretary; Dr. Ames, who accompanies the expedition in his professional capacity; and Hassan, my husband's devoted native servant."

"Do you remember the name of the American secretary?"

"Harper, I think, but I cannot be sure. He had not been with Mr. Bleibner very long, I know. He was a very pleasant young fellow."

"Thank you, Lady Willard."

"If there is anything else - "

"For the moment, nothing. Leave it now in my hands, and be assured that I will do all that is humanly possible to protect your son."

They were not exactly reassuring words, and I observed Lady Willard wince as he uttered them. Yet, at the same time, the fact that he had not pooh-poohed her fears seemed in itself to be a relief to her.

For my part I had never before suspected that Poirot had so deep a vein of superstition in his nature. I tackled him on the subject as we went homewards. His manner was grave and earnest.

"But yes, Hastings. I believe in these things. You must not underrate the force of superstition."

"What are we going to do about it?"

"Toujours pratique, the good Hastings! Eh bien, to begin with we are going to cable to New York for fuller details of young Mr. Bleibner's death."

He duly sent off his cable. The reply was full and precise. Young Rupert Bleibner had been in low water for several years. He had been a beachcomber and a remittance man in several South Sea islands, but had returned to New York two years ago, where he had rapidly sunk lower and lower.

The most significant thing, to my mind, was that he had recently managed to borrow enough money to take him to Egypt. "I've a good friend there I can borrow from," he had declared. Here, however, his plans had gone awry. He had returned to New York cursing his skinflint of an uncle who cared more for the bones of dead and gone kings than his own flesh and blood. It was during his sojourn in Egypt that the death of Sir John Willard occurred. Rupert had plunged once more into his life of dissipation in New York, and then, without warning, he had committed suicide, leaving behind him* letter which contained some curious phrases. It seemed written in a sudden fit of remorse. He referred to himself as a leper and an outcast, and the letter ended by declaring that such as he were better dead.

A shadowy theory leapt into my brain. I had never really believed in the vengeance of a long dead Egyptian king. I saw here a more modern crime. Supposing this young man had decided to do away with his uncle -preferably by poison. By mistake, Sir John Willard receives the fatal dose. The young man returns to New York, haunted

by his crime. The news of his uncle's death reaches him. He realises how unnecessary his crime has been, and stricken with remorse takes his own life.

I outlined my solution to Poirot. He was interested.

"It is ingenious what you have thought of there -decidedly it is ingenious. It may even be true. But you leave out of count the fatal influence of the Tomb"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"You still think that has something to do with it?"

"So much so, mon ami, that we start for Egypt tomorrow." "What?" I cried, astonished.

"I have said it." An expression of conscious heroism spread over Poirot's face. Then he groaned. "But, oh," he lamented, "the sea. The hateful sea!"

It was a week later. Beneath our feet was the golden sand of the desert. The hot sun poured down over head. Poirot, the picture of misery, wilted by my side. The little man was not a good traveller. Our four days' voyage from Marseilles had been one long agony to him. He had landed at Alexandria the wraith of his former self, even his usual neatness had deserted him. We had arrived in Cairo and had driven out at once to the Mena House Hotel, right in the shadow of the Pyramids.

The charm of Egypt had laid hold of me. Not so Poirot. Dressed precisely the same as in London, he carried a small clothes-brush in his pocket and waged an unceasing war on the dust which accumulated on his dark apparel.

"And my boots," he wailed. "Regard them, Hastings. My boots, of the neat patent leather, usually so smart and shining. See, the sand is inside them, which is painful, and outside them, which outrages the eyesight. Also the heat, it causes my moustaches to become limp - but limp!"

"Look at the Sphinx," I urged. "Even I can feel the mystery and the charm it exhales." Poirot looked at it discontentedly.

"It has not the air happy," he declared.

"How could it, half-buried in sand in that untidy fashion. Ah, this cursed sand!"

"Come, now, there's a lot of sand in Belgium," I reminded him, mindful of a holiday spent at Knocke-sur-mer" in the midst of "lesdunes impeccables" as the guide-book had phrased it.

"Not in Brussels," declared Poirot. He gazed at the Pyramids thoughtfully. "It is true that they, at least, are of a shape solid and geometrical, but their surface is of an unevenness most unpleasing. And the palm-trees I like them not. Not even do they plant them in rows!"

I cut short his lamentations, by suggesting that we should start for the camp. We were to ride there on camels, and the beasts were patiently kneeling, waiting for us to mount, in charge of several picturesque boys headed by a voluble dragoman.

I pass over the spectacle of Poirot on a camel. He started by groans and lamentations and ended by shrieks, gesticulations and invocations to the Virgin Mary and every Saint in the calendar. In the end, he descended ignominiously and finished the journey on a diminutive donkey. I must admit that a trotting camel is no joke for the amateur. I was stiff for several days.

At last we neared the scene of the excavations. A sunburnt man with a grey beard, in white clothes and wearing a helmet, came to meet us.

"Monsieur Poirot and Captain Hastings? We received your cable. I'm sorry that there was no one to meet you in Cairo. An unforeseen event occurred which completely disorganised our plans."

Poirot paled. His hand, which had stolen to his clothes-brush, stayed its course. "Not another death?" he breathed. "Yes."

"Sir Guy Willard? " I cried.

"No, Captain Hastings. My American colleague, Mr. Schneider." "And the cause?" demanded Poirot. "Tetanus."

I blanched. AH around me I seemed to feel an atmosphere of evil, subtle and menacing. A horrible thought flashed across me. Supposing I were the next?

"Mon Dieu," said Poirot, in a very low voice, "I do not understand this. It is horrible. Tell me, monsieur, there is no doubt that it was tetanus?"

"I believe not. But Dr. Ames will tell you more than I can do."

"Ah, of course, you are not the doctor."

"My name is Tosswill."

This, then, was the British expert described by Lady Willard as being a minor official at the British Museum. There was something at once grave and steadfast about him that took my fancy.

"If you will come with me," continued Dr. Tosswill, "I will take you to Sir Guy Willard. He was most anxious to be informed as soon as you should arrive."

We were taken across the camp to a large tent. Dr. Tosswill lifted up the flap and we entered. Three men were sitting inside.

"Monsieur Poirot and Captain Hastings have arrived, Sir Guy," said Tosswill.

The youngest of the three men jumped up and came forward to greet us. There was a certain impulsiveness in his manner which reminded me of his mother. He was not nearly so sunburnt as the others, and that fact, coupled with a certain haggardness round the eyes, made him look older than his twenty-two years. He was clearly endeavouring to bear up under a severe mental strain.

He introduced his two companions, Dr. Ames, a capable-looking man of thirty-odd, with a touch of greying hair at the temples, and Mr. Harper, the secretary, a pleasant lean young man wearing the national insignia of horn-rimmed spectacles.

After a few minutes' desultory conversation the latter went out, and Dr. Tosswill followed him. We were left alone with Sir Guy and Dr. Ames.

"Please ask any questions you want to ask, Monsieur Poirot," said Willard." We are utterly dumbfounded at this strange series of disasters, but it isn't - it can't be - anything but coincidence."

There was a nervousness about his manner which rather belied the words. I saw that Poirot was studying him keenly.

"Your heart is really in this works, Sir Guy?"

"Rather. No matter what happens, or what comes of it, the work is going on. Make up your mind to that."

Poirot wheeled round on the other.

"What have you to say to that, monsieur le docteur"

"Well," drawled the doctor, "I'm not for quitting myself."

Poirot made one of those expressive grimaces of his.

"Then, videmment, we must find out just how we stand. When did Mr. Schneider's death take place? "

"Three days ago."

"You are sure it was tetanus?"

"Dead sure."

"It couldn't have been a case of strychnine poisoning, for instance?"

"No, Monsieur Poirot. I see what you're getting at. But it was a clear case of tetanus." "Did you not inject anti-serum?"

"Certainly we did," said the doctor dryly. "Every conceivable thing that could be done was tried."

"Had you the anti-serum with you?"

" No. We procured it from Cairo."

"Have there been any other cases of tetanus in the camp?"

"No, not one."

"Are you certain that the death of Mr. Bleibner was not due to tetanus?"

"Absolutely plumb certain. He had a scratch upon his thumb which became poisoned, and septicemia set in. It sounds pretty much the same to a layman, I dare say, but the two things are entirely different."

"Then we have four deaths - all totally dissimilar, one heart failure, one blood poisoning, one suicide and one tetanus."

"Exactly, Monsieur Poirot."

"Are you certain that there is nothing which might link the four together?"

"I don't quite understand you?"

"I will put it plainly. Was any act committed by those four men which might seem to denote disrespect to the spirit of Men-her-Ra?"

The doctor gazed at Poirot in astonishment.

"You're talking through your hat, Monsieur Poirot. Surely you've not been gayed into believing all that fool talk?"

"Absolute nonsense," muttered Willard angrily.

Poirot remained placidly immovable, blinking a little out of his green cat's eyes. "So you do not believe it, monsieur le docteur"

"No, sir, I do not," declared the doctor emphatically. "I am a scientific man, and I believe only what science teaches."

"Was there no science then in Ancient Egypt?" asked Poirot softly. He did not wait for a reply, and indeed Dr. Ames seemed rather at a loss for the moment. "No, no, do not answer me, but tell me this. What do the native workmen think?"

"I guess," said Dr. Ames, "that, where white folk lose their heads, natives aren't going to be far behind. I'll admit that they're getting what you might call scared - but they've no cause to be."

"I wonder," said Poirot non-committally. Sir Guy leant forward.

"Surely," he cried incredulously, "you cannot believe in - oh, but the thing's absurd! You can know nothing of Ancient Egypt if you think that."

For answer Poirot produced a little book from his pocket - an ancient tattered volume. As he held it out I saw its title, *The Magic of the Egyptians and Chaldeans*. Then, wheeling round, he strode out of the tent. The doctor stared at me.

"What is his little idea?"

The phrase, so familiar on Poirot's lips, made me smile as it came from another.

"I don't know exactly," I confessed. "He's got some plan of exorcising the evil spirits, I believe."

I went in search of Poirot, and found him talking to the lean-faced young man who had been the late Mr. Bleibner's secretary.

"No," Mr. Harper was saying, "I've only been six months with the expeditions. Yes, I knew Mr. Bleibner's affairs pretty well."

"Can you recount to me anything concerning his nephew?"

"He turned up here one day, not a bad-looking fellow. I'd never met him before, but some of the others had - Ames, I think, and Schneider. The old man wasn't at all pleased to see him. They were at it in no time, hammer and tongs. 'Not a cent,' the old man shouted. 'Not one cent now or when I'm dead. I intend to leave my money to the furtherance of my life's work. I've been talking it over with Mr. Schneider today.' And a bit more of the same. Young Bleibner lit out for Cairo right away."

"Was he in perfectly good health at the time?" "The old man?"

"No, the young one."

"I believe he did mention there was something wrong with him. But it couldn't have been anything serious, or I should have remembered."

"One thing more, has Mr. Bleibner left a will?" "So far as we know, he has not."

"Are you remaining with the expedition, Mr. Harper?"

"No, sir, I am not. I'm for New York as soon as I can square up things here. You may laugh if you like, but I'm not going to be this blasted old Men-her-Ra's next victim. He'll get me if I stop here."

The young man wiped the perspiration from his brow. Poirot turned away. Over his shoulder he said with a peculiar smile:

"Remember, he got one of his victims in New York."

"Oh, hell!" said Mr. Harper forcibly.

"That young man is nervous," said Poirot thoughtfully. "He is on the edge, but absolutely on the edge,"

I glanced at Poirot curiously, but his enigmatical smile told me nothing. In company with Sir Guy Willard and Dr. Tosswill we were taken round the excavations. The principal finds had been removed to Cairo, but some of the tomb furniture was extremely interesting. The enthusiasm of the young baronet was, obvious, but I fancied that I detected a shade of nervousness in his manner as though he could not quite escape from the feeling of menace in the air. As we entered the tent which had been assigned to us, for a wash before joining the evening meal, a tall dark figure in

white robes stood aside to let us pass with a graceful gesture and a murmured greeting in Arabic. Poirot stopped.

"You are Hassan, the late Sir John Willard's servant?"

"I served my Lord Sir John, now I serve his son." He took a step nearer to us and lowered his voice. "You are a wise one, they say, learned in dealing with evil spirits. Let the young master depart from here. There is evil in the air around us." And with an abrupt gesture, not waiting for a reply, he strode away.

"Evil in the air," muttered Poirot. "Yes, I feel it." Our meal was hardly a cheerful one. The floor was left to Dr. Tosswill, who discoursed at length upon Egyptian antiquities. Just as we were preparing to retire to rest, Sir Guy caught Poirot by the arm and pointed. A shadowy figure was moving amidst the tents. It was no human one: I recognised distinctly the dog-headed figure I had seen carved on the walls of the tomb. My blood froze at the sight.

"Mon Dieu!" murmured Poirot, crossing himself vigorously. "Anubis, the jackal-headed, the god of departing souls."

"Someone is hoaxing us," cried Dr. Tosswill, rising indignantly to his feet. "It went into your tent, Harper," muttered Sir Guy, his face dreadfully pale.

"No," said Poirot, shaking his head, "into that of Dr. Ames." The doctor stared at him incredulously; then, repeating Dr. Tosswill's words, he cried:

"Someone is hoaxing us. Come, we'll soon catch the fellow." He dashed energetically in pursuit of the shadowy apparition. I followed him, but, search as we would, we could find no trace of any living soul having passed that way. We returned, somewhat disturbed in mind, to find Poirot taking energetic measures, in his own way, to ensure his personal safety. He was busily surrounding our tent with various diagrams and inscriptions which he was drawing in the sand. I recognised the five-pointed star or Pentagon many times repeated. As was his wont, Poirot was at the same time delivering an impromptu lecture on witchcraft and magic in general, White Magic as opposed to.

Black, with various references to the Ka and the Book of the Dead thrown in. It appeared to excite the liveliest contempt in Dr. Tosswill, who drew me aside literally snorting with rage.

"Balderdash, sir," he exclaimed angrily. "Pure balderdash. The man's an impostor. He doesn't know the difference between the superstitions of the Middle Ages and the beliefs of Ancient Egypt. Never have I heard such a hotch-potch of ignorance and credulity."

I calmed the excited expert, and joined Poirot in the tent. My little friend was beaming cheerfully.

"We can now sleep in peace," he declared happily. "And I can do with some sleep. My head, it aches abominably. Ah, for a good tisanel"

As though in answer to prayer, the flap of the tent was lifted and Hassan appeared, bearing a steaming cup which he offered to Poirot. It proved to be camomile tea, a beverage of which he is inordinately fond. Having thanked Hassan and refused his offer of another cup for myself, we were left alone once more. I stood at the door of the tent some time after undressing, looking out over the desert.

"A wonderful place," I said aloud, "and a wonderful work. I can feel the fascination. This desert life, this probing into the heart of a vanished civilisation. Surely, Poirot, you, too, must feel the charm?"

I got no answer, and I turned, a little annoyed. My annoyance was quickly changed to concern. Poirot was lying back across the rude couch, his face horribly convulsed. Beside him was the empty cup. I rushed to his side, then dashed out and across the camp to Dr. Ames's tent.

"Dr. Ames!" I cried. "Come at once."

"What's the matter?" said the doctor, appearing in pyjamas.

"My friend. He's ill. Dying. The camomile tea. Don't let Has-san leave the camp." Like a flash the doctor ran to our tent. Poirot was lying as I left him.

"Extraordinary," cried Ames. "Looks like a seizure - or - what did you say about something he drank?" He picked up the empty cup.

"Only I did not drink it!" said a placid voice.

We turned in amazement. Poirot was sitting up on the bed. He was smiling.

"No," he said gently. "I did not drink it. While my good friend Hastings was apostrophising the night, I took the opportunity of pouring it, not down my throat, but into a little bottle. That little bottle will go to the analytical chemist. No" - as the doctor made a sudden movement - "as a sensible man, you will understand that violence will be of no avail. During Hastings' brief absence to fetch you, I have had time to put the bottle in safe keeping. Ah, quick, Hastings, hold him!"

I misunderstood Poirot's anxiety. Eager to save my friend, I flung myself in front of him. But the doctor's swift movement had another meaning. His hand went to his mouth, a smell of bitter almonds filled the air, and he swayed forward and fell.

"Another victim," said Poirot gravely. "But the last. Perhaps it is the best way. He has three deaths on his head."

"Dr. Ames?" I cried, stupefied. "But I thought you believed in some occult influence?"

"You misunderstood me, Hastings.

What I meant was that I believe in the terrific force of superstition. Once get it firmly established that a series of deaths are supernatural, and you might almost stab a man in broad daylight, and it would still be put down to the curse, so strongly is the instinct of the supernatural implanted in the human race. I suspected from the first that a man was taking advantage of that instinct. The idea came to him, I imagine, with the death of Sir John Willard. A fury of superstition arose at once. As far as I could see, nobody could derive any particular profit from Sir John's death. Mr. Bleibner was a different case. He was a man of great wealth. The information I received from New York contained several suggestive points. To begin with, your Bleibner was reported to have said he had a good friend in Egypt from whom he could borrow. It was tacitly understood that he meant his uncle, but it seemed to me that in that case he would have said so outright. The words suggest some boon companion of his own. Another thing, he scraped up enough money to take him to Egypt, his uncle refused outright to advance him a penny, yet he was able to pay the return passage to New York. Someone must have lent him the money."

"All that was very thin," I objected.

"But there was more. Hastings, there occur often enough words spoken metaphorically which are taken literally. The opposite can happen too. In this case, words which were meant literally were taken metaphorically. Young Bleibner wrote plainly enough: 'I am a leper,' but nobody realised that he shot himself because he believed that he had contracted the dread disease of leprosy."

"What?" I ejaculated.

"It was the clever invention of a diabolical mind. Young Bleibner was suffering from some minor skin trouble; he had lived in the South Sea Islands, where the disease is common enough. Ames was a former friend of his, and a well-known medical man, he would never dream of doubting his word. When I arrived here, my suspicions were divided between Harper and Dr. Ames, but I soon realised that only the doctor could have perpetrated and concealed the crimes, and I learnt from Harper that he was previously acquainted with young Bleibner. Doubtless the latter at some time or another had made a will or had insured his life in favour of the doctor. The latter saw his chance of acquiring wealth. It was easy for him to inoculate Mr. Bleibner with the deadly germs. Then the nephew, overcome with despair at the dread news his friend had conveyed to him, shot himself. Mr. Bleibner, whatever his intentions, had made no will. His fortune would pass to his nephew and from him to the doctor."

"And Mr. Schneider?"

"We cannot be sure. He knew young Bleibner too, remember, and may have suspected something, or, again, the doctor may have thought that a further death, motiveless and purposeless, would strengthen the coils of superstition. Furthermore, I will tell you an interesting, psychological fact, Hastings. A murderer has always a strong desire to repeat his successful crime, the performance of it grows up on him. Hence my fears for young Willard. The figure of Anubis you saw tonight was Hassan, dressed up by my orders. I wanted to see if I could frighten the doctor. But it would take more than the supernatural to frighten him. I could see that he was not entirely taken in by my pretences of belief in the occult. The little comedy I played for him did not deceive him. I suspected that he would endeavor to make me the next victim. Ah, but in spite of *la mer maudite*, the heat abominable, and the annoyances of the sand, the little grey cells still functioned!"

Poirot proved to be perfectly right in his premises. Young Bleibner, some years ago, in a fit of drunken merriment, had made a jocular will, leaving "my cigarette-case you admire so much and everything else of which I die possessed which will be principally debts to my good friend Robert Ames who once saved my life from drowning."

The case was hushed up as far as possible and, to this day, people talk of the remarkable series of deaths in connection with the Tomb of Men-her-Ra as a triumphal proof of the vengeance of a bygone king upon the desecrators of his tomb - a belief which, as Poirot pointed out to me, is contrary to all Egyptian belief and thought.

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. (WR, M)

-to be in the vicinity of sth -in one's professional capacity -the greatest interest is aroused by sth -to tackle sb on the subject -to take a profound hold on the public mind -to be in low water -her face bore eloquent testimony to her recent grief -to underrate the force of superstition -to credit sb with -his own flesh and blood -to do one's utmost to do sth -to do away with sb -to dabble freely in any subject -to talk through one's hat

2. Give the English for the Russian word in brackets. (WR)

1. There was a tourist resort (по близости) the Pyramids of Gizeh.
2. I (считал его) with more sense.
- 3 Poirot (сделал все возможное) to find the criminal.
4. Dr. Ames consulted Poirot (в качестве врача; по своей специальности).
5. On the verge of despair she went to him and (возбудила вопрос) of marriage.
6. He made up his mind to (покончить) his uncle because he was sick and tired of being in (на мели).
7. It was beyond his understanding that his own (плоть и кровь) could do such terrible things.
8. It was evident that the lecturer was (нес ахинею).

3. Give extended answers to the following questions. (O)

1. From Hastings' point of view, what was one of the most thrilling and dramatic adventures he had shared with Poirot?
2. Why was the "Curse of Men-her-Ra" the talk of the day?
3. What were Poirot's views on the supernatural?
4. Who was Mr Bleibner?
5. Was Poirot a good traveller? Prove it.
6. What idea concerning Mr Bleibner's death did Hastings put forward?
7. How many victims of the murderer there were? Name them.
8. What measures did Poirot take to ensure his personal safety?
9. What did Dr Ames take advantage of?
10. What does "a clever invention of a diabolical mind" stand for? What was it?

4. Give the Russian for the following. (WR)

1. The more sensational newspapers immediately took the opportunity of reviving all the old superstitious stories connected with the ill luck of certain Egyptian treasures.
2. It may be mere superstition, it may be some potent curse from the past that operates in ways undreamed of by modern science.
3. For my part I had never before suspected that Poirot had so deep a vein of superstition in his nature.
4. He had returned to New York cursing his skinflint of an uncle who cared more for the bones of dead and gone kings than his own flesh and blood.
5. Dressed precisely the same as in London, he carried a small clothes-brush in his pocket and waged an unceasing war on the dust which accumulated on his dark apparel.

6. We were to ride there on camels, and the beasts were patiently kneeling, waiting for us to mount, in charge of some picturesque boys headed by a voluble dragoman.

5. Translate the following passages. (WR)

1. "A shadowy theory leapt into my brain."—"...takes his own life."
2. "It was a week later."—"...of the Pyramids."
3. "I gazed at Poirot curiously..."—"Poirot stopped."
4. "He dashed energetically..."—"...the Book of the dead thrown in."

6. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary) (WR)

-pursue, superstition, magic

7. Find in the story a word or a word-combination close in meaning to the word(s) given in italics. (WR)

1. The story was listened to with fresh *interest*.
2. I don't believe in the *paranormal*.
3. Each death was *understandable*.
4. You must not *underestimate* the force of superstition.
5. He wrote his will in a sudden fit of *regret*.
6. Hastings had never really believed in the *revenge* of a long dead Egyptian king.
7. An *amateur* will never make head or tail of what is written here.
8. Kids are fond of *bamboozling* adults.
9. It was clear that the man was just a *charlatan*.
10. My head aches *horribly*!

8. Find in the story attributes to the following words. Pick out a few sentences where they occur. (WR, M)

-adventures -war -mind -testimony -strain -companion -coincidence
-smile -magic -woman -force of superstition

9. Fill each gap with a preposition. (WR, M)

-...the vicinity... -...a severe mental strain -to fall...decay -...a loss
-to take a profound hold...the public mind -...search of sth -to die...
-...pursuit of sth -to be contrary...sth -...broad daylight -...mistake -...favour of

10. What is the difference between the following words: (O)

-literate -literal -literary -the literati

11. Translate the following sentences into Russian paying special attention to the word "magic": (WR, try to M)

1. He suddenly appeared **as if by magic**.
2. Like all truly charismatic people he **can work his magic on** both men and women.
3. She **has a magic touch** with the children and they do everything they ask.
4. I wish I could **wave a magic wand** and make everything all right again.
5. The cause of his hallucinations was **the magic mushrooms** he had eaten.
6. If you have difficulty in sleeping well, try drinking a glass of hot milk before you go to bed—it **works like magic**.

12. Match A to B (WR, M)

A

B

the late husband	the person who is bound to become husband
the husband in question	the person who was husband before the current one
the husband to-be	the person who is supposed to be the husband
the former husband	the husband who has died
the so-called husband	the person who would like to be husband
the present husband	the person who is husband temporarily
the would-be husband	the husband we're talking about
the stop-gap husband	the person who is currently husband

13. Retell the story as if you were: (O)

-Poirot -Hastings -Dr Ames

14. Discourse on the following points. Say if you agree or disagree with them.

1. You must not underrate the force of superstition.
2. A perfect crime—is it a dream or reality?

Story 5 Agatha Christie Strange Jest

'And this,' said Jane Helier, completing her introduction, 'is Miss Marple!'

Being an actress, she was able to make her point. It was clearly the climax, the triumphant finale! Her tone was equally compounded of reverent awe and triumph. The odd part of it was that the object thus proudly proclaimed was merely a gentle elderly spinster. In the eyes of the two young people who had just, by Jane's good offices, made her acquaintance, there showed incredulity and a tinge of dismay. They were nice-looking people - the girl, Charmian Stround, slim and dark; the man, Edward Rossiter, a fair-haired, amiable young giant.

Charmian said, a little breathlessly, 'Oh, we're awfully pleased to meet you.' But there was doubt in her eyes. She flung a quick, questioning glance at Jane Helier. 'Darling,' said Jane, answering the glance, 'she's absolutely marvellous. Leave it to her. I told you'd get her here and I have.' She added to Miss Marple: 'You'll fix it for them. I know. It will be easy for you.'

Miss Marple turned her placid, china-blue eyes toward Mr. Rossiter. 'Won't you tell me,' she said, 'what all this is about?'

'Jane's a friend of ours,' Charmian broke in impatiently. 'Edward and I are in rather a fix. Jane said if we would come to her party, she'd introduce us to someone who was - who would - who could -'

Edward came to the rescue. 'Jane tells us you're the last word in sleuths, Miss Marple!'

The old lady's eyes twinkled, but she protested modestly: 'Oh, no, no! Nothing of the kind. It's just that living in a village as I do, one gets to know so much about human nature. But really you have made me quite curious. Do tell me your problem.'

'I'm afraid it's terribly hackneyed - just buried treasure,' said Edward.

'Indeed? But that sounds most exciting!'

'I know. Like Treasure Island. But our problem lacks the usual romantic touches. No point on a chart indicated by a skull and crossbones, no directions like 'four paces to the left, west by north.' It's horribly prosaic - just where we ought to dig.'

'Have you tried at all?'

'I should say we' d dug about two solid acres! The whole place is ready to be turned into a market garden. We're just discussing whether - to grow vegetable marrows or potatoes.'

Charmian said, rather abruptly, 'May we really tell you all about it?' 'But, of course, my dear.'

'Then let's find a peaceful spot. Come on, Edward.' She led the way out of the overcrowded and smoke-laden room, and they went up the stairs, to a small sitting-room on the second floor.

When they were seated, Charmian began abruptly: 'Well, here goes! The story starts with Uncle Mathew, uncle - or rather, great-great-uncle - to both of us. He was incredibly ancient. Edward and I were his only relations. He was fond of us and always declared that when he died he would leave his money between us. Well, he died last March and left everything he had to be divided equally between Edward and myself. What I've just said sounds rather callous - I don't mean that it was right that he died - actually we were very fond of him. But he'd been ill for some time.

'The point is that the 'everything' he left turned out to be practically nothing at all. And that, frankly, was a bit of a blow to us both, wasn't it, Edward?'

The amiable Edward agreed. 'You see, 'he said, 'we'd counted on it a bit. I mean, when you know a good bit of money is coming to you, you don't - well - buckle down and try to make it yourself. I'm in the Army - not got anything to speak of outside my pay - and Charmian herself hasn't got a bean. She works as a stage manager in a repertory theatre - quite interesting and she enjoys it - but no money in it. We'd counted on getting married but weren't worried about the money side of it because we both knew we'd be jolly well off some day.'

'And now, you see, we're not!' said Charmian. 'What's more. Ansteys - that's the family place, and Edward and I both love it - will probably have to be sold. And Edward and I feel we just can't bear that! But if we don't find Uncle Mathew's money, we shall have to sell.'

Edward said, 'You know, Charmian, we still haven't come to the vital point.'

'Well, you talk then.'

Edward turned to Miss Marple. 'It's like this, you see. As Uncle Mathew grew older, he got more and more suspicious. He didn't trust anybody.'

'Very wise of him,' said Miss Marple; 'The depravity of human nature is unbelievable.'

'Well, you may be right. Anyway, Uncle Mathew thought so. He had a friend who lost his money in a bank and another friend who was ruined by an absconding solicitor, and he lost some money himself in a fraudulent company. He got so that he used to hold forth at great length that the only safe and sane thing to do was to convert your money into solid bullion and bury it.'

'Ah,' said Miss Marple. 'I begin to see.'

'Yes. Friends argued with him, pointed out that he'd get no interest that way, but he held that that didn't really matter. The bulk of your money, he said, should be 'kept in a box under the bed or buried in the garden.' Those were his words.'

Charmian went on: 'And when he died, he left hardly anything at all in securities, though he was very rich. So we think that that's what he must have done.'

Edward explained: 'We found that he had sold securities and drawn out large sums of money from time to time, and nobody knows what he did with them. But it seems probable that he lived up to his principles and that he did buy gold and bury it.'

'He didn't say anything before he died? Leave any paper? No letter?'

'That's the maddening part of it. He didn't. He'd been unconscious for some days, but he rallied before he died. He looked at us both and chuckled - a faint, weak little chuckle. He said, 'You'll be all right, my pretty pair of doves.' And then he tapped his eye - his right eye - and winked at us. And then-he died... Poor old Uncle Mathew.'

'He tapped his eye,' said Miss Marple thoughtfully.

Edward said eagerly, 'Does that convey anything to you? It made me think of an Arsene Lupin story where there was something hidden in a man's glass eye. But Uncle Mathew didn't have a glass eye.'

Miss Marple shook her head. 'No - I can't think of anything at the moment.'

Charmian said, disappointedly, 'Jane told us you'd say at once where to dig!'

Miss Marple smiled. 'I'm not quite a conjurer, you know. I didn't know your uncle, or what sort of man he was, and I don't know the house or the grounds.'

Charmian said, 'If you did know them?'

'Well, it must be quite simple really, mustn't it?' said Miss Marple. 'Simple!'

said Charmian. 'You come down to Ansteys and see if it's simple!'

It is possible that she did not mean the invitation to be taken seriously, but Miss Marple said briskly, 'Well, really, my dear, that's very kind of you. I've always wanted to have the chance of looking for buried treasure. And,' she added, looking at them with a beaming, late-Victorian smile, 'with a love interest too!'

'You see!' said Charmian, gesturing dramatically.

They had just completed a grand tour of Ansteys. They had been round the kitchen garden - heavily trenched. They had been through the little woods, where every important tree had been dug round, and had gazed sadly on the pitted surface of the once smooth lawn. They had been up to the attic, where old trunks and chests had been rifled of their contents. They had been down to the cellars, where flagstones had been heaved unwillingly from their sockets. They had measured and tapped walls, and Miss Marple had been shown every antique piece of furniture that contained or could be suspected of containing a secret drawer.

On a table in the morning room there was a heap of papers - all the papers that the late Mathew Stroud had left. Not one had been destroyed, and Charmian and Edward were wont to return to them again and again, earnestly perusing bills, invitations, and business correspondence in the hope of spotting a hitherto unnoticed clue.

'Can you think of anywhere we haven't looked?' demanded Charmian hopefully.

Miss Marple shook her head. 'You seem to have been very thorough, my dear.'

Perhaps, it I may say so, just a little too thorough. I always think, you know, that one should have a plan. It's like my friend, Mrs. Eldritch; she had such a nice little maid, polished linoleum beautifully, but she was so thorough that she polished the bathroom floors too much, and as

Mrs. Eldritch was stepping out of the bath the cork mat slipped from under her and she had a very nasty fall and actually broke her leg! Most awkward, because the bathroom door was locked, of course, and the gardener had to get a ladder and come in through the window - terribly distressing to Mrs. Eldritch, who had always been a very modest woman.'

Edward moved restlessly.

Miss Marple said quickly, 'Please forgive me. So apt, I know, to fly off at a tangent. But one thing does remind one of another. And sometimes that is helpful. All I was trying to say was that perhaps if we tried to sharpen our wits and think of a likely place -'

Edward said crossly, 'You think of one, Miss Marple. Charmian's brains and mine are now only beautiful blanks!'

'Dear, dear. Of course - most tiring for you. If you don't mind I'll just look through all this.' She indicated the papers on the table. 'That is, if there's nothing private - I don't want to appear to pry.'

'Oh, that's all right. But I'm afraid you won't find anything.'

She sat down by the table and methodically worked through the sheaf of documents. As she replaced each one, she sorted them automatically into tidy little heaps. When she had finished she sat staring in front of her for some minutes.

Edward asked, not without a touch of malice, 'Well, Miss Marple?' She came to herself with a little start. 'I beg your pardon. Most helpful.'

'You've found something relevant?'

'Oh, no, nothing like that, but I do believe I know what sort of man your Uncle Mathew was. Rather like my own Uncle

Henry, I think. Fond of rather obvious jokes. A bachelor, evidently - I wonder why - perhaps an early disappointment? Methodical up to a point, but not very fond of being tied up - so few bachelors are!'

Behind Miss Marple's back Charmian made a sign to Edward. It said, 'She's ga-ga.' Miss Marple was continuing happily to talk of her deceased Uncle Henry. 'Very fond of puns, he was. And to some people puns are most annoying. A mere play upon words may be very irritating. He was a suspicious man too. Always was convinced the servants were robbing him. And sometimes, of course, they were, but not always. It grew upon him, poor man. Toward the end he suspected them of tampering with his food and finally refused to eat anything but boiled eggs! Said nobody could tamper with the inside of a boiled egg. Dear Uncle Henry, he used to be such a merry soul at one time - very fond of his coffee after dinner. He always used to say, 'This coffee is very Moorish,' meaning, you know, that he'd like a little more.'

Edward felt that if he heard any more about Uncle Henry he'd go mad.

'Fond of young people, too,' went on Miss Marple, 'but inclined to tease them a little, if you know what I mean. Used to put bags of sweets where a child just couldn't reach them.'

Casting politeness aside, Charmian said, 'I think he sounds horrible!'

'Oh, no, dear, just an old bachelor, you know, and not used to children. And he wasn't at all stupid, really. He used to keep a good deal of money in the house, and he had a

safe put in. Made a great fuss about it - and how very secure it was. As a result of his talking so much, burglars broke in one night and actually cut a hole in the safe with a chemical device.'

'Served him right,' said Edward.

'Oh, but there was nothing in the safe,' said Miss Marple. 'You see, he really kept the money somewhere else - behind some volumes of sermons in the library, as a matter of fact. He said people never took a book of that kind out of the shelf!'

Edward interrupted excitedly, 'I say, that's an idea. What about the library? '

But Charmian shook a scornful head. 'Do you think I hadn't thought of that? I went through all the books Tuesday of last week, when you went off to Portsmouth. Took them all out, shook them. Nothing there.'

Edward sighed. Then, rousing himself, he endeavoured to rid himself tactfully of their disappointing guest. 'It's been awfully good of you to come down as you have and try to help us. Sorry it's been all a washout. Feel we trespassed a lot on your time. However - I'll get the car out and you'll be able to catch the three-thirty -'

'Oh,' said Miss Marple, 'but we've got to find the money, haven't we? You mustn't give up, Mr. Rossiter. 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again.' '

'You mean you're going to go - on trying? '

'Strictly speaking,' said Miss Marple, 'I haven't begun yet. 'First catch your hare,' as Mrs. Beeton says in her cookery book - a wonderful book but terribly expensive; most of the recipes begin, 'Take a quart of cream and a dozen eggs.' Let me see, where was I? Oh, yes. Well, we have, so to speak, caught our hare - the hare being, of course, your Uncle Mathew, and we've only got to decide now where he would have hidden the money. It ought to be quite simple.'

'Simple?' demanded Charmian.

'Oh yes, dear. I'm sure he would have done the obvious thing. A secret drawer - that's my solution.'

Edward said dryly, 'You couldn't put bars of gold in a secret drawer.'

'No, no, of course not. But there's no reason to believe the money is in gold.' 'He always used to say -'

'So did my Uncle Henry about his safe! So I should strongly suspect that that was just a simple blind. Diamonds, now they could be in a secret drawer quite easily.'

'But we've looked in all the secret drawers. We had a cabinet-maker over to examine the furniture.'

'Did you, dear? That was clever of you. I should suggest your uncle's own desk would be the most likely. Was it the tall escritoire against the wall there? '

'Yes. And I'll show you.' Charmian went over to it. She took down the flap. Inside were pigeon-holes and little drawers. She opened a small door in the centre and touched a spring inside the left-hand drawer. The bottom of the centre recess clicked and skid forward. Charmian drew it out, revealing a shallow well beneath. It was empty.

'Now isn't that a coincidence,' exclaimed Miss Marple. 'Uncle Henry had a desk just like this, only his was burr walnut and this is mahogany.'

'At any rate,' said Charmian, 'there's nothing there, as you can see.'

'I expect,' said Miss Marple, 'your cabinetmaker was a young man. He didn't know everything. People were very artful when they made hiding places in those days. There's such a thing as a secret inside a secret.'

She extracted a hairpin from her neat bun of grey hair. Straightening it out, she stuck the point into what appeared to be a tiny wormhole in one side of the secret recess. With a little difficulty she pulled out a small drawer. In it was a bundle of faded letters and a folded paper.

Edward and Charmian pounced on the find together. With trembling fingers Edward unfolded the paper. He dropped it with an exclamation of disgust.

'A cookery recipe. Baked ham!'

Charmian was untying a ribbon that held the letters together. She drew one out and glanced at it. 'Love letters!'

Miss Marple reacted with Victorian gusto. 'How interesting! Perhaps the reason your uncle never married.'

Charmian read aloud:

'My ever dear Mathew, I must confess that the time seems long indeed since I received your last letter. I try to occupy myself with the various tasks allotted to me, and often say to myself that I am indeed fortunate to see so much of the globe, though little did I think when I went to America that I should voyage off to these far islands!'

Charmian broke off. 'Where is it from? Oh, Hawaii!' She went on:

'Alas, these natives are still far from seeing the light. They are in an unclothed and savage state and spend most of their time swimming and dancing, adorning themselves with garlands of flowers. Mr. Gray has made some converts but it is uphill work and he and Mrs. Gray get sadly discouraged. I try to do all I can to cheer and encourage him, but I, too, am often sad for a reason you can guess, dear Mathew. Alas, absence is a severe trial to a loving heart. Your renewed vows and protestations of affection cheered me greatly. Now and always you have my faithful and devoted heart, dear Mathew, and I remain - Your true love, Betty Martin.'

'P.S. - I address my letter under cover to our mutual friend, Matilda Graves, as usual. I hope Heaven will pardon this little subterfuge.'

Edward whistled. 'A female missionary! So that was Uncle Mathew's romance. I wonder why they never married?'

'She seems to have gone all over the world,' said Charmian, looking through the letters. 'Mauritius - all sorts of places. Probably died of yellow fever or something.' A gentle chuckle made them start. Miss Marple was apparently much amused. 'Well, well,' she said. 'Fancy that, now.'

She was reading the recipe for baked ham. Seeing their inquiring glances, she read out. 'Baked Ham with Spinach. Take a nice piece of gammon, stuff with cloves and cover with brown sugar. Bake in a slow oven. Serve with a border of pureed spinach.'

'What do you think of that now?'

'I think it sounds filthy,' said Edward.

'No, no, actually it would be very good - but what do you think of the whole thing?'

A sudden ray of light illuminated Edward's face. 'Do you think it's a code - cryptogram of some kind?' He seized it.

'Look here, Charmian, it might be, you know! No reason to put a cooking recipe in a secret drawer otherwise.'

'Exactly,' said Miss Marple. 'Very, very significant.'

Charmian said, 'I know what it might be - invisible ink! Let's heat it. Turn on the electric fire.'

Edward did so. But no signs of writing appeared under the treatment.

Miss Marple coughed. 'I really think, you know, that you're making it rather too difficult. The recipe is only an indication, so to speak. It is, I think, the letters that are significant.'

'The letters?'

'Especially,' said Miss Marple, 'the signature.'

But Edward hardly heard her. He called excitedly, 'Charmian! Come here! She's right. See - the envelopes are old right enough, but the letters themselves were written much later.'

'Exactly,' said Miss Marple.

'There're only fake old. I bet anything old Uncle Mat faked them himself -

'Precisely,' said Miss Marple.

'The whole thing's a sell. There never was a female missionary. It must be a code.'

'My dear, dear children - there's really no need to make it all so difficult. Your uncle was really a very simple man. He had to have his little joke, that was all.'

For the first time they gave her their full attention. 'Just exactly what do you mean, Miss Marple?' asked Charmian.

'I mean, dear, that you're actually holding the money in your hand this minute.' Charmian stared down.

'The signature, dear. That gives the whole thing away. The recipe is just an indication. Shorn of all the cloves and brown sugar and the rest of it, what is it actually? Why, gammon and spinach to be sure! Gammon and spinach! Meaning - nonsense! So it's clear that it's the letters that are important. And then, if you take into consideration what your uncle did just before he died. He tapped his eye, you said. Well, there you are - that gives you the clue, you see.'

Charmian said, 'Are we mad, or are you?'

'Surely, my dear, you must have heard the expression meaning that something is not a true picture, or has it quite died out nowadays: 'All my eye and Betty Martin.''

Edward gasped, his eyes falling to the letter in his hand. 'Betty Martin -'

'Of course, Mr. Rossiter. As you have just said, there isn't - there wasn't any such person. The letters were written by your uncle, and I dare say he got a lot of fun out of writing them! As you say, the writing on the envelopes is much older - in fact, the envelopes couldn't belong to the letters anyway, because the postmark of the one you are holding is eighteen fifty-one.'

She paused. She made it very emphatic: 'Eighteen fifty-one. And that explains everything, doesn't it?'

'Not to me,' said Edward.

'Well, of course,' said Miss Marple, 'I dare say it wouldn't to me if it weren't for my great-nephew Lionel. Such a dear little boy and a passionate stamp collector. Knows all about stamps. It was he who told me about rare and expensive stamps and that a wonderful new find had come up for auction. And I actually remember his mentioning one stamp - an 1851 blue 2 cent. It realised something like \$25,000, I believe. Fancy! I should imagine that the other stamps are something also rare and expensive. No doubt your uncle bought through dealers and was careful to 'cover his tracks,' as they say in detective stories.'

Edward groaned. He sat down and buried his face in his hands. 'What's the matter?' demanded Charmian.

'Nothing. It's only the awful thought that, but for Miss Marple, we might have burned these letters in a decent, gentlemanly way!'

'Ah,' said Miss Marple, 'that's just what these old gentlemen who are fond of their joke never realise. My Uncle Henry, I remember, sent a favourite niece a five-pound note for a Christmas present. He put it inside a Christmas card, gummed the card together, and wrote on it: 'Love and best wishes. Afraid this is all I can manage this year.'

'She, poor girl, was annoyed at what she thought was his meanness and threw it all straight into the fire. So then, of course, he had to give her another.'

Edward's feelings toward Uncle Henry had suffered an abrupt and complete change. 'Miss Marple,' he said, 'I'm going to get a bottle of champagne. We'll all drink the health of your Uncle Henry.'

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. (WR, M)

-to make one's point -a fraudulent company -a tinge of dismay
-to be wont to do sth -to be in a fix -to fly off at a tangent
-to lack the usual romantic touches -to cast politeness aside
-to sound rather callous -to make a fuss about sth -not to have got a bean -
to suffer an abrupt and complete change

2. Give the English for the Russian word in brackets. (WR)

1. There was a (нотка разочарования) in his voice.
2. They were (в затруднительном положении) and couldn't find any possible way-out.
3. He was a homeless person who (не иметь ни гроша за душой).
4. Some women tend to (скандалить) trifle things.
5. His attitude towards his wife (резко и полностью измениться) after he had realised what a heart of gold she had.
6. The subject of the conversation was not that pleasant for him that's why he (отклониться от темы).

3. Give extended answers to the following questions. (O)

1. Why were the two young people disappointed?
2. Who was called "the last word in sleuths"?
3. Why couldn't the two young people find their treasure?

4. What was Charmian's occupation?
5. What were the two young people's guesses about their uncle's money?
6. What was Ansteys like?
7. What happened to Mrs Eldritch?
8. Who reminded Miss Marple of her Uncle Henry?
9. What was the code to the treasures?
10. What does the expression "All my eye and Betty Martin" mean?

4. Give the Russian for the following. (WR)

1. They had been through the little woods, where every important tree had been dug round, and had gazed sadly on the pitted surface of the once smooth lawn. (p. 72)
2. Toward the end he suspected them of tampering with his food and finally refused to eat anything but boiled eggs! (p. 75)
3. Straightening it out, she stuck the point into what appeared to be a tiny wormhole in one side of the secret recess. (p. 78)
4. Edward's feelings toward Uncle Henry had suffered an abrupt and complete change. (p. 83)

5. Who/What was it said about: (O)

- 1) She was able to make her point.
- 2) They were nice-looking people.
- 3) She had placid, china-blue eyes.
- 4) It's horribly prosaic.
- 5) Everything he left turned out to be practically nothing.
- 6) She works as a stage manager.
- 7) He looked at us both and chuckled.
- 8) I'm not quite a conjurer.
- 9) As she replaced each one, she sorted them automatically into tidy little heaps.
- 10) She is gaga.

6. Translate the following passages. (WR)

1. "The odd part of it was..."—"...young giant." (p.67)
2. "When they were seated..."—"...ill for some time." (p. 69)
3. "On a table in the morning room..."—"...unnoticed clue." (pp. 72-73)
4. "Well, of course,"—"...detective stories." (p. 82)

7. Find in the story a word or a word-combination close in meaning to the word(s) given in italics. (WR)

1. Miss Marple was a famous *private eye*. (p. 68)
2. The story was boring and *run-of-the-mill*. (p. 68)
3. Our uncle's death was a great *shock* to us. (p. 69)
4. He died after being *blacked out* for some time. (p. 71)
5. No matter how hard they tried, the whole affair was just a *failure*. (p. 76)
6. She hoped her parents would pardon her little *ploy*. (p. 79)
7. A sudden glimmer of hope *brightened* her face. (p. 80)

8. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary). (WR)

-awe -breath -peace -conscious

9. Fill each gap with a preposition. (WR, M)

-to be...a fix -...any rate -...the hope... -...an unclothed and savage state
-to fly off...a tangent -a play...words

10. Match A to B. (WR, M)

A

-cover
-take into
-illuminate
-shake one's
-cookery
-make
-give one's

B

full attention
head
one's tracks
one's face
a fuss
consideration
book

11. Translate the following sentences into Russian paying special attention to the word... (WR)

12. Arrange the following adjectives into 2 groups: 1. synonyms of the word

"jest" (WR) 2. synonyms of the word **"well off"** loaded, moneyed, hoax, opulent, rolling, prank, well-heeled, affluent, joke, prosperous, josh, well-to-do, gag, well-stocked, witticism, filthy rich.

13. Find in the story attributes to the following words. Pick out a few sentences where they occur. (WR, M)

-spinster -company
-giant -woman
-room -state
-point -change

14. Speak your mind on the following points. (O)

1. Miss Marple as a private eye. Describe her method.
2. The depravity of human nature is unbelievable. Give examples.
3. If you were to find some buried treasures, what would you do?

15. Retell the story as if you were: (O)

-Miss Marple -the two young people

Story 6 Agatha Christie The Four Suspects

The conversation hovered round undiscovered and unpunished crimes. Everyone in turn vouchsafed an opinion: Colonel Bantry, his plump amiable wife, Jane Helier, Dr. Lloyd, and even old Miss Marple. The one person who did not speak was the one best fitted in most people's opinion to do so. Sir Henry dithering, ex-Commissioner of Scotland Yard, sat silent, twisting his moustache - or rather stroking it - and half smiling, as though at some inward thought that amused him.

'Sir Henry,' said Mrs. Bantry at last, 'if you don't say something, I shall scream. Are there a lot of crimes that go unpunished, or are there not?'

'You're thinking of newspaper headlines, Mrs. Bantry. SCOTLAND YARD AT FAULT AGAIN. And a list of unsolved mysteries to follow.'

'Which really, I suppose, form a very small percentage of the whole?' said Dr. Lloyd. 'Yes, that is so. The hundreds of crimes that are solved and the perpetrators punished are seldom heralded and sung. But that isn't quite the point at issue, is it? When you

talk of undiscovered crimes and unsolved crimes, you are talking of two different things. In the first category come all the crimes that Scotland Yard never hears about, the crimes that no one even knows have been committed.'

'But I suppose there aren't very many of those?' said Mrs.

Bantry. 'Aren't there?'

'Sir Henry! You don't mean there are?'

'I should think,' said Miss Marple thoughtfully, 'that there must be a very large number.'

The charming old lady, with her old-world, unruffled air, made her statement in a tone of the utmost placidity.

'My dear Miss Marple,' said Colonel Bantry.

'Of course,' said Miss Marple, 'a lot of people are stupid. And stupid people get found out, whatever they do. But there are quite a number of people who aren't stupid, and one shudders to think of what they might accomplish unless they had very strongly rooted principles.'

'Yes,' said Sir Henry, 'there are a lot of people who aren't stupid. How often does some crime come to light simply by reason of a bit of unmitigated bungling, and each time one asks oneself the question: If this hadn't been bungled, would anyone ever have known?'

'But that's very serious, Clithering,' said Colonel Bantry. 'Very serious, indeed.' 'Is it?'

'What do you mean, is it? Of course it's serious.'

'You say crime goes unpunished, but does it? Unpunished by the law perhaps, but cause and effect works outside the law. To say that every crime brings its own punishment is by way of being a platitude, and yet in my opinion nothing can be truer.'

'Perhaps, perhaps,' said Colonel Bantry. 'But that doesn't alter the seriousness - the - er - seriousness -' He paused, rather at a loss.

Sir Henry Clithering smiled.

'Ninety-nine people out of a hundred are doubtless of your way of thinking,' he said. 'But you know, it isn't really guilt that is important - it's innocence. That's the thing that nobody will realise.'

'I don't understand,' said Jane Helier.

'I do,' said Miss Marple. 'When Mrs. Trent found half a crown missing from her bag, the person it affected most was the daily woman, Mrs. Arthur. Of course the Trents thought it was her, but being kindly people and knowing she had a large family and a husband who drinks, well - they naturally didn't want to go to extremes. But they felt differently towards her, and they didn't leave her in charge of the house when they went away, which made a great difference to her; and other people began to get a feeling about her too. And then it suddenly came out that it was the governess. Mrs. Trent saw her through a door reflected in a mirror. The purest chance - though I prefer to call it Providence. And that, I think, is what Sir Henry means. Most people would be only interested in who took the money, and it turned out to be the most unlikely person - just like in detective stories! But the real person it was life and

death to was poor Mrs. Arthur, who had done nothing. That's what you mean, isn't it, Sir Henry?'

'Yes, Miss Marple, you've hit off my meaning exactly. Your charwoman person was lucky in the instance you relate. Her innocence was shown. But some people may go through a lifetime crushed by the weight of a suspicion that is really unjustified.'

'Are you thinking of some particular instance, Sir Henry?' asked Mrs. Bantry shrewdly.

'As a matter of fact, Mrs. Bantry, I am. A very curious case. A case where we believe murder to have been committed, but with no possible chance of ever proving it.'

'Poison, I suppose,' breathed Jane. 'Something untraceable.'

Dr. Lloyd moved restlessly and Sir Henry shook his head.

'No, dear lady. Not the secret arrow poison of the South American Indians! I wish it were something of that kind. We have to deal with something much more prosaic - so prosaic, in fact, that there is no hope of bringing the deed home to its perpetrator. An old gentleman who fell downstairs and broke his neck; one of those regrettable accidents which happen every day.'

'But what happened really?'

'Who can say? ' Sir Henry shrugged his shoulders. 'A push from behind? A piece of cotton or string tied across the top of the stairs and carefully removed afterward? That we shall never know.'

'But you do think that it - well, wasn't an accident? Now why? ' asked the doctor.

'That's rather a long story, but - well, yes, we're pretty sure. As I said, there's no chance of being able to bring the deed home to anyone - the evidence would be too flimsy. But there's the other aspect of the case - the one I was speaking about. You see, there were four people who might have done the trick. One's guilty, but the other three are innocent. And unless the truth is found out, those three are going to remain under the terrible shadow of doubt.'

'I think,' said Mrs. Bantry, 'that you'd better tell us your long story.'

'I needn't make it so very long after all,' said Sir Henry. 'I can at any rate condense the beginning. That deals with a German secret society - the Schivartze Hand - something after the lines of the Camorra or what is most people's idea of the Camorra. A scheme of blackmail and terrorisation. The thing started quite suddenly after the war and spread to an amazing extent.

Numberless people were victimised by it. The authorities were not successful in coping with it, for its secrets were jealously guarded, and it was almost impossible to find anyone who could be induced to betray them.

'Nothing much was ever known about it in England, but in Germany it was having a most paralysing effect. It was finally broken up and dispersed through the efforts of one man, a Dr. Rosen, who had at one time been very prominent in Secret Service work. He became a member, penetrated its inmost circle, and was, as I say, instrumental in bringing about its downfall.

'But he was, in consequence, a marked man, and it was deemed wise that he should leave Germany - at any rate for a time. He came to England, and we had letters about him from the police in Berlin. He came and had a personal interview with me. His

point of view was both dispassionate and resigned. He had no doubts of what the future held for him.

'They will get me, Sir Henry,' he said. 'Not a doubt of it.' He was a big man with a fine head and a very deep voice, with only a slight guttural intonation to tell of his nationality. 'That is a foregone conclusion. It does not matter, I am prepared. I faced the risk when I undertook this business. I have done what I set out to do. The organisation can never be gotten together again. But there are many members of it at liberty, and they will take the only revenge they can - my life. It is simply a question of time, but I am anxious that that time should be as long as possible. You see, I am collecting and editing some very interesting material - the result of my life's work. I should like, if possible, to be able to complete my task.'

'He spoke very simply, with a certain grandeur which I could not but admire. I told him we would take all precautions, but he waved my words aside.

'Some day, sooner or later, they will get me,' he repeated. 'When that day comes, do not distress yourself. You will, I have no doubt, have done all that is possible.'

'He then proceeded to outline his plans which were simple enough. He proposed to take a small cottage in the country where he could live quietly and go on with his work. In the end he selected a village in Somerset - King's Gnaton, which was seven miles from a railway station and singularly untouched by civilisation. He bought a very charming cottage, had various improvements and alterations made, and settled down there most contentedly. His household consisted of his niece, Greta; a secretary; an old German servant who had served him faithfully for nearly forty years; and an outside handy man and gardener who was a native of King's Gnaton.'

'The four suspects,' said Dr. Lloyd softly.

'Exactly. The four suspects. There is not much more to tell. Life went on peacefully at King's Gnaton for five months and then the blow fell. Dr. Rosen fell down the stairs one morning and was found dead about half an hour later. At the time the accident must have taken place, Gertrud was in her kitchen with the door closed and heard nothing - so she says. Fraulein Greta was in the garden, planting some bulbs - again, so she says. The gardener, Dobbs, was in the small potting shed having his elevenings - so he says; and the secretary was out for a walk, and once more there is only his own word for it. No one had an alibi - no one can corroborate anyone else's story. But one thing is certain. No one from outside could have done it, for a stranger in the little village of King's Gnaton would be noticed without fail. Both the back and the front doors were locked, each member of the household having his own key. So you see it narrows down to those four. And yet each one seems to be above suspicion. Greta, his own brother's child. Gertrud, with forty years of faithful service. Dobbs, who has never been out of King's Gnaton. And Charles Templeton, the secretary -'

'Yes,' said Colonel Bantry, 'what about him? He seems the suspicious person to my mind. What do you know about him?'

'It is what I knew about him that put him completely out of court - at any rate, at the time,' said Sir Henry gravely. 'You see, Charles Templeton was one of my own men.'

'Oh!' said Colonel Bantry, considerably taken aback.

'Yes. I wanted to have someone on the spot, and at the same time I didn't want to cause talk in the village. Rosen really needed a secretary. I put Templeton on the job. He's a gentleman, he speaks German fluently, and he's altogether a very able fellow.' 'But, then, which do you suspect?' asked Mrs. Bantry in a bewildered tone. 'They all seem so - well, impossible.'

'Yes, so it appears. But you can look at the thing from another angle. Fraulein Greta was his niece and a very lovely girl, but the war has shown us time and again that brother can turn against sister, or father against son, and so on, and the loveliest and gentlest of young girls did some of the most amazing things. The same thing applies to Gertrud, and who knows what other forces might be at work in her case? A quarrel, perhaps, with her master, a growing resentment all the more lasting because of the long faithful years behind her. Elderly women of that class can be amazingly bitter sometimes. And Dobbs? Was he right outside it because he had no connection with the family? Money will do much. In some way Dobbs might have been approached and bought.

'For one thing seems certain: Some message or some order must have come from outside. Otherwise, why five months immunity? No, the agents of the society must have been at work. Not yet sure of Rosen's perfidy, they delayed till the betrayal had been traced to him beyond any possible doubt. And then, all doubts set aside, they must have sent their message to the spy within the gates - the message that said, 'Kill.' '

'How nasty!' said Jane Helier, and shuddered.

'But how did the message come? That was the point I tried to elucidate - the one hope of solving my problem. One of those four people must have been approached or communicated with in some way. There would be no delay - I knew that; as soon as the command came, it would be carried out. That was a peculiarity of the Schivartze Hand.

'I went into the question, went into it in a way that will probably strike you as being ridiculously meticulous. Who had come to the cottage that morning? I eliminated nobody. Here is the list.'

He took an envelope from his pocket and selected a paper from its contents.

'The butcher, bringing some neck of mutton. Investigated and found correct.

'The grocer's assistant, bringing a packet of corn flour, two pounds of sugar, a pound of butter, and a pound of coffee. Also investigated and found correct.

'The postman, bringing two circulars for Fraulein Rosen, a local letter for Gertrud, three letters for Dr. Rosen, one with a foreign stamp, and two letters for Mr. Templeton, one also with a foreign stamp.'

Sir Henry paused and then took a sheaf of documents from the envelope.

'It may interest you to see these for yourself. They were handed me by the various people concerned or collected from the waste-paper basket. I need hardly say they've been tested by experts for invisible ink, et cetera. No excitement of that kind is possible.'

Everyone crowded round to look. The catalogues were respectively from a nurseryman and from a prominent London fur establishment. The two bills addressed

to Dr. Rosen were a local one for seeds for the garden and one from a London stationery firm. The letter addressed to him ran as follows:

My Dear Rosen,

Just back from Dr. Helmuth Spath's. I saw Edgar Jackson the other day. He and Amos Perry have just come back from Tsingtau. In all Honesty I can't say I envy them the trip. Let me have news of you soon. As I said before: Beware of a certain person. You know who I mean, though you don't agree.

Yours,

Georgina.

'Mr. Templeton's mail consisted of this bill which, as you see, is an account rendered from his tailor, and a letter from a friend in Germany,' went on Sir Henry. 'The latter, unfortunately, he tore up while out on his walk. Finally we have the letter received by Gertrud.'

Dear Mrs. Swartz,

We've hoping as how you be able to come the social on friday evening the vicar says has he hopes you will - one and all being welcome. The resipy for the ham was very good, and I thanks you for it. Hoping as this finds you well and that we shall see you friday I remain,

Yours faithfully,

Emma Greene.

Dr. Lloyd smiled a little over this and so did Mrs. Bantry.

'I think the last letter can be put out of court,' said Dr. Lloyd.

'I thought the same,' said Sir Henry, 'but I took the precaution of verifying that there was a Mrs. Greene and a church social. One can't be too careful, you know.'

'That's what our friend Miss Marple always says,' said Dr. Lloyd, smiling. 'You're lost in a daydream, Miss Marple. What are you thinking out?'

Miss Marple gave a start.

'So stupid of me,' she said. 'I was just wondering why the word Honesty in Dr. Rosen's letter was spelled with a capital H.'

Mrs. Bantry picked it up.

'So it is,' she said. 'Oh!'

'Yes, dear,' said Miss Marple. 'I thought you'd notice!'

'There's a definite warning in that letter,' said Colonel Bantry. 'That's the first thing caught my attention. I notice more than you'd think. Yes, a definite warning - against whom?'

'There's rather a curious point about that letter,' said Sir Henry. 'According to Templeton, Dr. Rosen opened the letter at breakfast and tossed it across to him, saying he didn't know who the fellow was from Adam.'

'But it wasn't a fellow,' said Jane Helier. 'It was signed 'Georgina.''

'It's difficult to say which it is,' said Dr. Lloyd. 'It might be Georgey, but it certainly looks more like Georgina. Only it strikes me that the writing is a man's.'

'You know, that's interesting,' said Colonel Bantry. 'His tossing it across the table like that and pretending he knew nothing about it. Wanted to watch somebody's face. Whose face - the girl's? Or the man's?'

'Or even the cook's?' suggested Mrs. Bantry. 'She might have been in the room bringing in the breakfast. But what I don't see is... it's most peculiar -'

She frowned over the letter. Miss Marple drew closer to her. Miss Marple's finger went out and touched the sheet of paper. They murmured together.

'But why did the secretary tear up the other letter?' asked Jane Helier suddenly. 'It seems - oh, I don't know - it seems queer. Why should he have letters from Germany? Although, of course, if he's above suspicion, as you say -'

'But Sir Henry didn't say that,' said Miss Marple quickly, looking up from her murmured conference with Mrs. Bantry. 'He said four suspects. So that shows that he includes Mr. Templeton. I'm right, am I not, Sir Henry?'

'Yes, Miss Marple. I have learned one thing through bitter experience. Never say to yourself that anyone is above suspicion. I gave you reasons just now why three of these people might after all be guilty, unlikely as it seemed. I did not at that time apply the same process to Charles Templeton. But I came to it at last through pursuing the rule I have just mentioned. And I was forced to recognise this: That every army and every navy and every police force has a certain number of traitors within its ranks, much as we hate to admit the idea. And I examined dispassionately the case against Charles Templeton.

'I asked myself very much the same questions as Miss Helier has just asked. Why should he, alone of all the house, not be able to produce the letter he had received - a letter, moreover, with a German stamp on it. Why should he have letters from Germany?

'The last question was an innocent one, and I actually put it to him. His reply came simply enough. His mother's sister was married to a German. The letter had been from a German girl cousin. So I learned something I did not know before - that Charles Templeton had relations with people in Germany. And that put him definitely on the list of suspects - very much so. He is my own man - a lad I have always liked and trusted; but in common justice and fairness I must admit that he heads that list.

'But there it is - I do not know! I do not know... And in all probability I never shall know. It is not a question of punishing a murderer. It is a question that to me seems a hundred times more important. It is the blighting, perhaps, of an honourable man's whole career...because of suspicion - a suspicion that I dare not disregard.'

Miss Marple coughed and said gently:

'Then, Sir Henry, if I understand you rightly, it is this young Mr. Templeton only who is so much on your mind?'

'Yes, in a sense. It should, in theory, be the same for all four, but that is not actually the case. Dobbs, for instance - suspicion may attach to him in my mind, but it will not actually affect his career. Nobody in the village has ever had any idea that old Dr. Rosen's death was anything but an accident. Gertrud is slightly more affected. It must make, for instance, a difference in Fraulein Rosen's attitude toward her. But that, possibly, is not of great importance to her.

'As for Greta Rosen - well, here we come to the crux of the matter. Greta is a very pretty girl and Charles Templeton is a good-looking young man, and for five months they were thrown together with no outer distractions. The inevitable happened.

They fell in love with each other - even if they did not come to the point of admitting the fact in words.

'And then the catastrophe happens. It is three months ago now, and a day or two after I returned, Greta Rosen came to see me. She had sold the cottage and was returning to Germany, having finally settled up her uncle's affairs. She came to me personally, although she knew I had retired, because it was really about a personal matter she wanted to see me. She beat about the bush a little, but at last it all came out. What did I think? That letter with the German stamp - she had worried about it and worried about it - the one Charles had torn up. Was it all right? Surely it must be all right. Of course she believed his story, but - oh, if she only knew! If she knew - for certain.

'You see? The same feeling: the wish to trust - but the horrible lurking suspicion, thrust resolutely to the back of the mind, but persisting nevertheless. I spoke to her with absolute frankness and asked her to do the same. I asked her whether she had been on the point of caring for Charles and he for her.

"I think so," she said. 'Oh yes, I know it was so. We were so happy. Every day passed so contentedly. We knew - we both knew. There was no hurry - there was all the time in the world. Some day he would tell me he loved me, and I should tell him that I, too - Ah! But you can guess! And now it is all changed. A black cloud has come between us - we are constrained, when we meet we do not know what to say. It is, perhaps, the same with him as with me... We are each saying to ourselves, 'If I were sure!' That is why, Sir Henry, I beg of you to say to me, 'You may be sure, whoever killed your uncle, it was not Charles Templeton!' Say it to me! Oh, say it to me! I beg - I beg!'

"I couldn't say it to her. They'll drift farther and farther apart, those two - with suspicion like a ghost between them - a ghost that can't be laid.'

He leaned back in his chair; his face looked tired and grey. He shook his head once or twice despondently.

'And there's nothing more can be done, unless -' He sat up straight again and a tiny whimsical smile crossed his face. - 'unless Miss Marple can help us. Can't you, Miss Marple? I've a feeling that letter might be in your line, you know. The one about the church social. Doesn't it remind you of something or someone that makes everything perfectly plain? Can't you do something to help two helpless young people who want to be happy?'

Behind the whimsicality there was something earnest in his appeal. He had come to think very highly of the mental powers of this frail, old-fashioned maiden lady. He looked across at her with something very like hope in his eyes.

Miss Marple coughed and smoothed her lace.

'It does remind me a little of Annie Poultny,' she admitted. 'Of course the letter is perfectly plain - both to Mrs. Bantry and myself. I don't mean the church-social letter, but the other one. You living so much in London and not being a gardener, Sir Henry, would not have been likely to notice.'

'Eh?' said Sir Henry. 'Notice what?'

Mrs. Bantry reached out a hand and selected a catalogue. She opened it and read aloud with gusto:

"Dr. Helmuth Spath. Pure lilac, a wonderfully fine flower, carried on exceptionally long and stiff stem. Splendid for cutting and garden decoration. A novelty of striking beauty.

'Edgar Jackson. Beautifully shaped chrysanthemum-like flower of a distinct brick-red colour.

"Amos Perry. Brilliant red, highly decorative.

'Tsingtau. Brilliant orange-red, showy garden plant and lasting cut flower.

"Honesty 'With a capital H, you remember,' murmured Miss Marple. 'Honesty. Rose and white shades, enormous perfect-shaped flower.' "

Mrs. Bantry flung down the catalogue and said with immense explosive force: 'Dahlias!'

'And their initial letters spell 'Death,' ' explained Miss Marple.

'But the letter came to Dr. Rosen himself,' objected Sir Henry-

'That was the clever part of it,' said Miss Marple. 'That and the warning in it. What would he do, getting a letter from someone he didn't know, full of names he didn't know. Why, of course, toss it over to his secretary.'

'Then, after all-'

'Oh no!' said Miss Marple. 'Not the secretary. Why, that's what makes it so perfectly clear that it wasn't him. He'd never have let that letter be found if so. And equally he'd never have destroyed a letter to himself with a German stamp on it. Really, his innocence is - if you'll allow me to use the word - just shining.'

'Then who-'

'Well, it seems almost certain - as certain as anything can be in this world. There was another person at the breakfast table, and she would - quite naturally under the circumstances - put out her hand for the letter and read it. And that would be that. You remember that she got a gardening catalogue by the same post -'

'Greta Rosen,' said Sir Henry slowly. 'Then her visit to me-'

'Gentlemen never see through these things,' said Miss Marple. 'And I'm afraid they often think we old women are - well, cats, to see things the way we do. But there it is. One does know a great deal about one's own sex, unfortunately. I've no doubt there was a barrier between them. The young man felt a sudden inexplicable repulsion. He suspected, purely through instinct, and couldn't hide the suspicion. And I really think that the girl's visit to you was just pure spite. She was safe enough really, but she just went out of her way to fix your suspicions definitely on poor Mr. Templeton. You weren't nearly so sure about him until after her visit.'

'I'm sure it was nothing that she said -' began Sir Henry.

'Gentlemen,' said Miss Marple, calmly, 'never see through these things.'

'And that girl -' He stopped. 'She commits a cold-blooded murder and gets off scot-free!'

'Oh, no, Sir Henry,' said Miss Marple. 'Not scot-free. Neither you nor I believe that. Remember what you said not long ago. No. Greta Rosen will not escape punishment.'

To begin with, she must be in with a very queer set of people - blackmailers and terrorists - associates who will do her no good and will probably bring her to a miserable end. As you say, one mustn't waste thoughts on the guilty - it's the innocent who matter. Mr. Templeton, who I dare say will marry that German cousin, his tearing up her letter looks - well, it looks suspicious - using the word in quite a different sense from the one we've been using all the evening. A little as though he were afraid of the other girl noticing or asking to see it? Yes, I think there must have been some little romance there. And then there's Dobbs - though, as you say, I dare say it won't much matter to him. His elevenses are probably all he thinks about. And then there's that poor old Gertrud - the one who reminded me of Annie Poultny. Poor Annie Poultny. Fifty years' faithful service and suspected of making away with Miss Lamb's will, though nothing could be proved. Almost broke the poor creature's faithful heart. And then after she was dead it came to light in the secret drawer of the tea caddy where old Miss Lamb had put it herself for safety. But too late then for poor Annie.

'That's what worries me so about that poor old German woman. When one is old, one becomes embittered very easily. I felt much more sorry for her than for Mr. Templeton, who is young and good-looking and evidently a favourite with the ladies. You will write to her, won't you, Sir Henry, and just tell her that her innocence is established beyond doubt? Her dear old master dead, and she no doubt brooding and feeling herself suspected of... Oh! It won't bear thinking about!'

'I will write, Miss Marple,' said Sir Henry. He looked at her curiously. 'You know, I shall never quite understand you. Your outlook is always a different one from what I expect.'

'My outlook, I'm afraid, is a very petty one,' said Miss Mar-pie humbly. 'I hardly ever go out of St. Mary Mead.'

'And yet you have solved what may be called an international mystery,' said Sir Henry. 'For you have solved it. I am convinced of that.'

Miss Marple blushed, then bridled a little.

'I was, I think, well-educated for the standard of my day. My sister and I had a German governess - a Fraulein. A very sentimental creature. She taught us the language of flowers - a forgotten study nowadays, but most charming. A yellow tulip, for instance, means 'Hopeless Love,' while a China aster means 'I Die of Jealousy at Your Feet.' That letter was signed Georgina, which I seem to remember as dahlia in German, and that of course made the whole thing perfectly clear. I wish I could remember the meaning of dahlia, but alas, that eludes me. My memory is not what it was.'

'At any rate, it didn't mean 'Death'.'

'No, indeed. Horrible, is it not? There are very sad things in the world.'

'There are,' said Mrs. Bantry with a sigh.

'It's lucky one has flowers and one's friends.'

'She puts us last, you observed,' said Dr. Lloyd.

'A man used to send me purple orchids every night to the theatre,' said Jane dreamily. 'I Await Your Favours' - that's what that means,' said Miss Marple brightly.

Sir Henry gave a peculiar sort of cough and turned his head away. Miss Marple gave a sudden exclamation.

'I've remembered. Dahlias mean 'Treachery and Misrepresentation.' '

'Wonderful,' said Sir Henry. 'Absolutely wonderful.' And he sighed.

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. (WR, M)

-to hover around sth -to do the trick -to have very strongly rooted principles -to remain under the terrible shadow of doubt -to come to light -to outline one's plans -to go to extremes -to be above suspicion -the purest chance -to be taken aback -to bring sth home -to commit a cold-blooded murder

2. Give the English for the Russian word in brackets. (WR)

1. He (растеряться) by an impudent young man.

2. No matter how hard you try the truth is sure to (выйти на свет).

3. In case the terrorists keep on taking the hostages, the police will have to (пойти на крайние меры).

4. Many significant discoveries are just a matter of (чистая случайность).

5. He was (быть вне подозрений).

6. Nobody could believe that such a lovely lady could have (совершить хладнокровное убийство).

7. He did his best to (довести до ч.-л. сознания) to him everything that had happened lately.

8. If your students are not interested in the subject, try to employ various approaches—it may (сработать).

3. Give extended answers to the following questions. (O)

1. What did the conversation hover about?

2. Who told the story about the Trents? What was it about?

3. What was "Schwartz Hand"?

4. Who was Dr. Rosen? Why was he destined to be killed?

5. What were the four suspects doing while the crime was being committed?

6. What was the one hope of solving Dr. Rosen's case?

7. What was Georgina's letter about?

8. What fact proved that Templeton wasn't guilty?

9. Why did Templeton tear the letter and burn it?

10. What role did the "language of flowers" play in the story?

4. Give the Russian for the following. (WR)

1. The one person who didn't speak was the one best fitted in most people's opinion to do so.

2. The charming old lady, with her old-world, unruffled air, made her statement in a tone of the utmost placidity.

3. But there are quite a number of people who aren't stupid, and one shudders to think of what they might accomplish unless they had very strongly rooted principles.

4. He had no doubts of what the future held for him.

5. Your outlook is always a different one from what I expect.

6. I was, I think well educated for the standard of my day.

5. Translate the following passages. (WR)

1. "Yes, that is so."—"...have been committed."
2. "He then proceeded..."—"...of King's Gnaton."
3. "And then the catastrophe happens."—"...--for certain."
4. "Gentlemen never see through these things..."—"...after her visit."

6. Find in the story a word or a word-combination close in meaning to the word(s) given in italics.

1. It was a matter of *divine intervention* that they met after twenty years of separation.
2. The evidence was rather *insubstantial* to accuse him of theft.
3. They were *not fortunate in dealing with* the witnesses.
4. It won't do *to pay back evil*.
5. She was *talking for hours without coming to the main point*.
6. The tune *brought to mind* some cherished memories of childhood

7. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary). (WR)

-suspicion -guilt -accusation

8. Find in your E/E Dictionary word-combinations with the following words (pay special attention to the prepositions): (WR)

-to suspect -to accuse -to blame/a blame -to be guilty

9. Fill each gap with a preposition. (WR)

-...turn -...charge of -...liberty -...the list -...the circumstances -...fault -...any rate -...the spot -to be...the point of -to get...scot-free -...a loss
-...consequence -...another angle -to remind sb...-to come...light

10. Explain the following idiomatic expressions. Make up sentences using them. (O, M)

-an inside job -to spill the beans -to point the finger at sb - cover one's tracks - do time - carry the can - catch sb red-handed - get away with murder in broad daylight

11. Fill in the gaps with a prefix. (WR)

-...discovered -...punished -...solved -...ruffled -...mitigated -...likely
-...justified -...traceable -...passionate -...touched -...evitable -
...explicable

12. Write a short summary the story using the following phrases (the more the better), explain what they mean: (WR, M)

-to be convicted of a crime -to get away with sth -to rule out the possibility of sth -to be sentenced to -a watertight alibi -to fit a description -a hardened criminal -a law-abiding citizen -not a shred of evidence

13. Speak your mind on the following points. (O)

1. The four suspects—who are they?
2. "Never say to yourself that anyone is above suspicion."
3. Are there really "unpunished crimes"? Do you believe in Providence?
4. What was the reason for the murderer to commit the crime? Was it justified? Whom do you suspect from the very beginning?

14. Retell the story in short. (O)

Story 7 Agatha Christie Accident

"...And I tell you this - it's the same woman - not a doubt of it!"

Captain Haydock looked into the eager, vehement face of his friend and sighed. He wished Evans would not be so positive and so jubilant. In the course of a career spent at sea, the old sea captain had learned to leave things that did not concern him well alone. His friend, Evans, late CID inspector, had a different philosophy of life.

"Acting on information received - " had been his motto in early days, and he had improved upon it to the extent of finding out his own information. Inspector Evans had been a very smart, wide-awake officer, and had justly earned the promotion which had been his. Even now, when he had retired from the force, and had settled down in the country cottage of his dreams, his professional instinct was still alive.

"Don't often forget a face," he reiterated complacently. "Mrs Anthony - yes, it's Mrs Anthony right enough. When you said Mrs Merrowdene - I knew her at once."

Captain Haydock stirred uneasily. The Merrowdenes were his nearest neighbours, barring Evans himself, and this identifying of Mrs Merrowdene with a former heroine distressed him.

"It's a long time ago," he said rather weakly.

"Nine years," said Evans, accurate as ever. "Nine years and three months. You remember the case?"

"In a vague sort of way."

"Anthony turned out to be an arsenic eater," said Evans, "so they acquitted her." "Well, why shouldn't they?"

"No reason in the world. Only verdict they could give on the evidence. Absolutely correct."

"Then that's all right," said Haydock. "And I don't see what we're bothering about."

"Who's bothering?"

"I thought you were." "Not at all."

"The thing's over and done with," summed up the captain. "If Mrs Merrowdene at one time of her life was unfortunate enough to be tried and acquitted for murder - "

"It's not usually considered unfortunate to be acquitted," put in Evans.

"You know what I mean," said Captain Haydock irritably. "If the poor lady has been through that harrowing experience, it's no business of ours to rake it up, is it?" Evans did not answer.

"Come now, Evans. The lady was innocent - you've just said so." "I didn't say she was innocent. I said she was acquitted."

"It's the same thing."

"Not always."

Captain Haydock, who had commenced to tap his pipe out against the side of his chair, stopped, and sat up with a very alert expression.

"Hallo - allo - allo," he said. "The wind's in that quarter, is it? You think she wasn't innocent?"

"I wouldn't say that. I just - don't know. Anthony was in the habit of taking arsenic. His wife got it for him. One day, by mistake, he takes far too much. Was the mistake his or his wife's?

Nobody could tell, and the jury very properly gave her the benefit of the doubt. That's all quite right and I'm not finding fault with it. All the same - I'd like to know." Captain Haydock transferred his attention to his pipe once more.

"Well," he said comfortably. "It's none of our business." "I'm not so sure..."

"But surely - "

"Listen to me a minute. This man, Merrowdene - in his laboratory this evening, fiddling round with tests - you remember - "

"Yes. He mentioned Marsh's test for arsenic. Said you would know all about it - it was in your line - and chuckled. He wouldn't have said that if he'd thought for one moment - "

Evans interrupted him.

"You mean he wouldn't have said that if he knew. They've been married how long - six years you told me? I bet you anything he has no idea his wife is the once notorious Mrs Anthony."

"And he will certainly not know it from me," said Captain Haydock stiffly.

Evans paid no attention, but went on: "You interrupted me just now. After Marsh's test, Merrowdene heated a substance in a test-tube, the metallic residue he dissolved in water and then precipitated it by adding silver nitrate. That was a test for chlorates. A neat unassuming little test. But I chanced to read these words in a book that stood open on the table: 'H₂SO₄ decomposes chlorates with evolution of Cl₂O₂. If heated, violent explosions occur, the mixture ought therefore to be kept cool and only very small quantities used.'"

Haydock stared at his friend.

"Well, what about it?"

"Just this. In my profession we've got tests too - tests for murder. There's adding up the facts - weighing them, dissecting the residue when you've allowed for prejudice and the general inaccuracy of witnesses. But there's another test of murder - one that is fairly accurate, but rather - dangerous! A murderer is seldom content with one crime. Give him time, and a lack of suspicion, and he'll commit another. You catch a man - has he murdered his wife or hasn't he? -perhaps the case isn't very black against him. Look into his past - if you find that he's had several wives - and that they've all died shall we say - rather curiously? - then you know! I'm not speaking legally, you understand. I'm speaking of moral certainty. Once you know, you can go ahead looking for evidence."

"Well?"

"I'm coming to the point. That's all right if there is a past to look into. But suppose you catch your murderer at his or her first crime? Then that test will be one from which you get no reaction. But suppose the prisoner is acquitted - starting life under another name. Will or will not the murderer repeat the crime?"

"That's a horrible idea!"

"Do you still say it's none of our business?"

"Yes, I do. You've no reason to think that Mrs Merrowdene is anything but a perfectly innocent woman."

The ex-inspector was silent for a moment. Then he said slowly: "I told you that we looked into her past and found nothing. That's not quite true. There was a stepfather. As a girl of eighteen she had a fancy for some young man - and her stepfather exerted his authority to keep them apart. She and her stepfather went for a walk along a rather dangerous part of the cliff. There was an accident - the stepfather went too near the edge - it gave way, and he went over and was killed."

"You don't think - "

"It was an accident. Accident! Anthony's overdose of arsenic was an accident. She'd never have been tried if it hadn't transpired that there was another man - he sheered off, by the way. Looked as though he weren't satisfied even if the jury were. I tell you, Haydock, where that woman is concerned I'm afraid of another - accident!" The old captain shrugged his shoulders.

"It's been nine years since that affair. Why should there be another 'accident', as you call it, now?"

"I didn't say now. I said some day or other. If the necessary motive arose." Captain Haydock shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, I don't know how you're going to guard against that." "Neither do I," said Evans ruefully.

"I should leave well alone," said Captain Haydock. "No good ever came of butting into other people's affairs."

But that advice was not palatable to the ex-inspector. He was a man of patience but determination. Taking leave of his friend, he sauntered down to the village, revolving in his mind the possibilities of some kind of successful action.

Turning into the post office to buy some stamps, he ran into the object of his solicitude, George Merrowdene. The ex-chemistry professor was a small dreamy-looking man, gentle and kindly in manner, and usually completely absent-minded. He recognised the other and greeted him amicably, stooping to recover the letters that the impact had caused him to drop on the ground.

Evans stooped also and, more rapid in his movements than the other, secured them first, handing them back to their owner with an apology.

He glanced down at them in doing so, and the address on the topmost suddenly awakened all his suspicions anew. It bore the name of a well-known insurance firm. Instantly his mind was made up. The guileless George Merrowdene hardly realised how it came about that he and the ex-inspector were strolling down the village together, and still less could

he have said how it came about that the conversation should come round to the subject of life insurance.

Evans had no difficulty in attaining his object. Merrowdene of his own accord volunteered the information that he had just insured his life for his wife's benefit, and asked Evans's opinion of the company in question.

"I made some rather unwise investments," he explained. "As a result my income has diminished.

If anything were to happen to me, my wife would be left very badly off. This insurance will put things right."

"She didn't object to the idea?" inquired Evans casually. "Some ladies do, you know. Feel it's unlucky - that sort of thing."

"Oh, Margaret is very practical," said Merrowdene, smiling. "Not at all superstitious. In fact, I believe it was her idea originally. She didn't like my being so worried." Evans had got the information he wanted. He left the other shortly afterwards, and his lips were set in a grim line. The late Mr Anthony had insured his life in his wife's favour a few weeks before his death.

Accustomed to rely on his instincts, he was perfectly sure in his own mind. But how to act was another matter. He wanted, not to arrest a criminal red-handed, but to prevent a crime being committed, and that was a very different and a very much more difficult thing.

All day he was very thoughtful. There was a Primrose League Fete that afternoon held in the grounds of the local squire, and he went to it, indulging in the penny dip, guessing the weight of a pig, and shying at coconuts all with the same look of abstracted concentration on his face. He even indulged in half a crown's worth of Zara, the Crystal Gazer, smiling a little to himself as he did so, remembering his own activities against fortune-tellers in his official days.

He did not pay very much heed to her singsong droning voice - till the end of a sentence held his attention.

"...And you will very shortly - very shortly indeed - be engaged on a matter of life or death...

Life or death to one person."

"Eh - what's that?" he asked abruptly.

"A decision - you have a decision to make. You must be very careful - very, very careful... If you were to make a mistake - the smallest mistake - "

"Yes?"

The fortune-teller shivered. Inspector Evans knew it was all nonsense, but he was nevertheless impressed.

"I warn you - you must not make a mistake. If you do, I see the result clearly - a death..."

Odd, damned odd. A death. Fancy her lighting upon that! "If I make a mistake a death will result? Is that it?"

"Yes."

"In that case," said Evans, rising to his feet and handing over half a crown, "I mustn't make a mistake, eh?"

He spoke lightly enough, but as he went out of the tent, his jaw set determinedly. Easy to say - not so easy to be sure of doing. He mustn't make a slip. A life, a valuable human life depended on it.

And there was no one to help him. He looked across at the figure of his friend Haydock in the distance. No help there. "Leave things alone," was Haydock's motto. And that wouldn't do here.

Haydock was talking to a woman. She moved away from him and came towards Evans and the inspector recognised her. It was Mrs Merrowdene. On an impulse he put himself deliberately in her path.

Mrs Merrowdene was rather a fine-looking woman. She had a broad serene brow, very beautiful brown eyes, and a placid expression. She had the look of an Italian madonna which she heightened by parting her hair in the middle and looping it over her ears. She had a deep rather sleepy voice.

She smiled up at Evans, a contented welcoming smile.

"I thought it was you, Mrs Anthony - I mean Mrs Merrowdene," he said glibly. He made the slip deliberately, watching her without seeming to do so. He saw her eyes widen, heard the quick intake of her breath. But her eyes did not falter. She gazed at him steadily and proudly.

"I was looking for my husband," she said quietly. "Have you seen him anywhere about?"

"He was over in that direction when I last saw him."

They went side by side in the direction indicated, chatting quietly and pleasantly. The inspector felt his admiration mounting. What a woman! What self-command. What wonderful poise. A remarkable woman - and a very dangerous one. He felt sure - a very dangerous one.

He still felt very uneasy, though he was satisfied with his initial step. He had let her know that he recognised her. That would put her on her guard. She would not dare attempt anything rash.

There was the question of Merrowdene. If he could be warned...

They found the little man absently contemplating a china doll which had fallen to his share in the penny dip. His wife suggested going home and he agreed eagerly.

Mrs Merrowdene turned to the inspector: "Won't you come back with us and have a quiet cup of tea, Mr Evans?"

Was there a faint note of challenge in her voice? He thought there was. "Thank you, Mrs Merrowdene. I should like to very much."

They walked there, talking together of pleasant ordinary things. The sun shone, a breeze blew gently, everything around them was pleasant and ordinary.

Their maid was out at the fkte, Mrs Merrowdene explained, when they arrived at the charming old-world cottage. She went into her room to remove her hat, returning to set out tea and boil the kettle on a little silver lamp. From a shelf near the fireplace she took three small bowls and saucers.

"We have some very special Chinese tea," she explained. "And we always drink it in the Chinese manner - out of bowls, not cups."

She broke off, peered into a cup and exchanged it for another with an exclamation of annoyance.

"George - it's too bad of you. You've been taking these bowls again."

"I'm sorry, dear," said the professor apologetically. "They're such a convenient size. The ones I ordered haven't come."

"One of these days you'll poison us all," said his wife with a half-laugh. "Mary finds them in the laboratory and brings them back here, and never troubles to wash them out unless they've anything very noticeable in them. Why, you were using one of them for potassium cyanide the other day. Really, George, it's frightfully dangerous." Merrowdene looked a little irritated.

"Mary's no business to remove things from the laboratory. She's not to touch anything there."

"But we often leave our teacups there after tea. How is she to know? Be reasonable, dear."

The professor went into his laboratory, murmuring to himself, and with a smile Mrs Merrowdene poured boiling water on the tea and blew out the flame of the little silver lamp.

Evans was puzzled. Yet a glimmering of light penetrated to him. For some reason or other, Mrs Merrowdene was showing her hand. Was this to be the "accident"? Was she speaking of all this so as deliberately to prepare her alibi beforehand? So that when, one day, the "accident" happened, he would be forced to give evidence in her favour? Stupid of her, if so, because before that -

Suddenly he drew in his breath. She had poured the tea into the three bowls. One she set before him, one before herself, the other she placed on a little table by the fire near the chair her husband usually sat in, and it was as she placed this last one on the table that a little strange smile curved round her lips. It was the smile that did it.

He knew!

A remarkable woman - a dangerous woman. No waiting - no preparation. This afternoon - this very afternoon - with him here as witness. The boldness of it took his breath away.

It was clever - it was damnably clever. He would be able to prove nothing. She counted on his not suspecting - simply because it was "so soon". A woman of lightning rapidity of thought and action.

He drew a deep breath and leaned forward.

"Mrs Merrowdene, I'm a man of queer whims. Will you be very kind and indulge me in one of them?"

She looked inquiring but unsuspicious.

He rose, took the bowl from in front of her and crossed to the little table where he substituted it for the other. This other he brought back and placed in front of her.

"I want to see you drink this."

Her eyes met his. They were steady, unfathomable. The colour slowly drained from her face.

She stretched out her hand, raised the cup. He held his breath. Supposing all along he had made a mistake.

She raised it to her lips - at the last moment, with a shudder, she leant forward and quickly poured it into a pot containing a fern. Then she sat back and gazed at him defiantly.

He drew a long sigh of relief, and sat down again. "Well?" she said.

Her voice had altered. It was slightly mocking-defiant.

He answered her soberly and quietly: "You are a very clever woman, Mrs Merrowdene. I think you understand me. There must be no-repetition. You know what I mean?"

"I know what you mean."

Her voice was even, devoid of expression. He nodded his head, satisfied. She was a clever woman, and she didn't want to be hanged.

"To your long life and to that of your husband," he said significantly, and raised his tea to his lips.

Then his face changed. It contorted horribly... he tried to rise - to cry out... His body stiffened - his face went purple. He fell back sprawling over the chair - his limbs convulsed.

Mrs Merrowdene leaned forward, watching him. A little smile crossed her lips. She spoke to him - very softly and gently...

"You made a mistake, Mr Evans. You thought I wanted to kill George... How stupid of you - how very stupid."

She sat there a minute longer looking at the dead man, the third man who had threatened to cross her path and separate her from the man she loved.

Her smile broadened. She looked more than ever like a madonna. Then she raised her voice and called: "George, George!... Oh, do come here! I'm afraid there's been the most dreadful accident... Poor Mr Evans..."

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. (WR, M)

-to have a different philosophy of life -to be engaged on a matter of life or death -to be tried and acquitted of murder -to set one's jaw determinedly
-to exert one's authority -to put sb on one's guard -to have a fancy for sb
-a faint note of challenge -to make up one's mind -to take sb's breath away
-to arrest a criminal red-handed -to cross sb's path

2. Give the English for the Russian word in brackets. (WR)

1. One should keep it in mind that all people are different and (иметь разное мировоззрение).
2. She had been hesitating for months before she (решиться) to be operated on.
3. There was no need to investigate the case since the criminal was (поймать на месте преступления)
4. It was (нотка вызова) in his voice that made her take part in the competition.
5. The view was so spectacular that it (захватить дух).
6. Don't try to (перейти ей дорогу), because the consequences of it are quite unpredictable.

3. Give extended answers to the following questions. (O)

1. What was Evans' philosophy of life?
2. What is another test for murder?

3. Who was the first victim of Mrs Merrowdene?
5. In what way did Mrs Merrowdene's stepfather exert his authority?
6. What did the fortune-teller tell Evans?
7. What was Mrs merrowdene like?
8. Did the inspector respect Mrs Merrowdene?
9. Why did Mrs Merrowdene change the cups?
10. What was Mrs Merrowdene's method of coping with those who had crossed her path?

4. Give the Russian for the following. (WR)

1. Even now, when he had retired from the force, and had settled down in the country cottage of his dreams, his professional instinct was still active.
2. I tell you, Haydock, where that woman is concerned I'm afraid of another—accident!
3. Taking leave of his friends, he sauntered down to the village, revolving in his mind the possibilities of some kind of successful action.
4. Merrowdene of his own accord volunteered the information that he had just insured his life for his wife's benefit, and asked Evans's opinion of the company in question.
5. She had the look of an Italian Madonna which she heightened by parting her hair in the middle and looping it over her ears.
6. One she set before him, one before herself, the other she placed on a little table by the fire near the chair her husband usually sat in, and it was as she placed this last one on the table that a little strange smile curved round her lips.

5. Translate the following passages. (WR)

1. "The ex-Inspector was silent..."—"...and was killed."
2. "Turning into the post office..."—"...with an apology."
3. "Accustomed to rely..."—"..difficult thing."

6. Find in the story a word or a word-combination close in meaning to the word(s) given in italics. (WR)

1. He wished his friend wouldn't be so positive and *happy*.
2. The family *put down their roots* not far from the seashore.
3. Some parents are never *satisfied* with their children.
4. It's a dishonourable thing *to poke your nose into* other people's affairs.
5. He considered it a stupid idea to believe *prophets*.
6. He was a man of queer *caprices*.

7. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary). (WR)

-apology -accident -fault -chemistry

8. Fill each gap with a preposition. (WR)

-...sea -to be...the habit... -to be...one's line -...one's benefit -...the extent of sth -...mistake -come...the point -...an impulse -to be acquitted...murder -to find fault...sb -...question -devoid...expression

9. Write down a short description of Mrs. Merowdene using the following phrases:

-to be notorious for sth; a fine-looking woman; to have a broad, serene brow, very beautiful brown eyes, and a placid expression; to have the look of an Italian Madonna; to have a deep, rather sleepy voice; a contented, welcoming smile; self-command; a remarkable, dangerous woman; to feel uneasy; a faint note of challenge; voice devoid of expression; steady unfathomable eyes; to be damnably clever.

10. Explain the meaning of the following phrasal verbs:

-to settle down; to turn out; to be through; to come about; to come around; to light upon; to break off; to butt into; to look into.

11. Make up a list of chemicals mentioned in the story. (WR)

12. Translate the following sentences into Russian paying special attention to the words given in *italics*:

1. The boy told his father that he had dropped the radio when he fell on the stairs, but actually he had broken it *accidentally on purpose* because he wanted a new one.

2. *Fortune favours the brave.*

3. The baby *screamed blue murder* when I put it in the bath.

4. *Murder will out.*

13. Speak your mind on the following points.

1. "No good ever came of butting into other people's affairs."

2. "A murderer is seldom content with one crime."

3. Explain the title of the story.

14. Retell the story as if you were

-Mrs Merrowdene -ex-Inspector Evans

Story 8 David Herbert Lawrence The Horse Dealer's Daughter

'Well, Mabel, and what are you going to do with yourself?' asked Joe, with foolish flippancy. He felt quite safe himself. Without listening for an answer, he turned aside, worked a grain of tobacco to the tip of his tongue, and spat it out. He did not care about anything, since he felt safe himself.

The three brothers and the sister sat round the desolate breakfast table, attempting some sort of desultory consultation. The morning's post had given the final tap to the family fortunes, and all was over. The dreary dining-room itself, with its heavy mahogany furniture, looked as if it were waiting to be done away with.

But the consultation amounted to nothing. There was a strange air of ineffectuality about the three men, as they sprawled at table, smoking and reflecting vaguely on their own condition. The girl was alone, a rather short, sullen-looking young woman of twenty-seven. She did not share the same life as her brothers. She would have been good-looking, save for the impassive fixity of her face, 'bull-dog', as her brothers called it.

There was a confused tramping of horses' feet outside. The three men all sprawled round in their chairs to watch. Beyond the dark holly-bushes that separated the strip of lawn from the highroad, they could see a cavalcade of shire horses swinging out of their own yard, being taken for exercise. This was the last time. These were the last horses that would go through their hands. The young men watched with critical, callous look. They were all frightened at the collapse of their lives, and the sense of disaster in which they were involved left them no inner freedom.

Yet they were three fine, well-set fellows enough. Joe, the eldest, was a man of thirty-three, broad and handsome in a hot, flushed way. His face was red, he twisted his black moustache over a thick finger, his eyes were shallow and restless. He had a sensual way of uncovering his teeth when he laughed, and his bearing was stupid. Now he watched the horses with a glazed look of helplessness in his eyes, a certain stupor of downfall.

The great draught-horses swung past. They were tied head to tail, four of them, and they heaved along to where a lane branched off from the highroad, planting their great hoofs floutingly in the fine black mud, swinging their great rounded haunches sumptuously, and trotting a few sudden steps as they were led into the lane, round the corner. Every movement showed a massive, slumbrous strength, and a stupidity which held them in subjection. The groom at the head looked back, jerking the leading rope. And the calvalcade moved out of sight up the lane, the tail of the last horse, bobbed up tight and stiff, held out taut from the swinging great haunches as they rocked behind the hedges in a motionlike sleep.

Joe watched with glazed hopeless eyes. The horses were almost like his own body to him. He felt he was done for now. Luckily he was engaged to a woman as old as himself, and therefore her father, who was steward of a neighbouring estate, would provide him with a job. He would marry and go into harness. His life was over, he would be a subject animal now.

He turned uneasily aside, the retreating steps of the horses echoing in his ears. Then, with foolish restlessness, he reached for the scraps of bacon-rind from the plates, and making a faint whistling sound, flung them to the terrier that lay against the fender.

He watched the dog swallow them, and waited till the creature looked into his eyes. Then a faint grin came on his face, and in a high, foolish voice he said:

‘You won’t get much more bacon, shall you, you little b ——?’

The dog faintly and dismally wagged its tail, then lowered his haunches, circled round, and lay down again.

There was another helpless silence at the table. Joe sprawled uneasily in his seat, not willing to go till the family conclave was dissolved. Fred Henry, the second brother, was erect, clean-limbed, alert. He had watched the passing of the horses with more *sang-froid*. If he was an animal, like Joe, he was an animal which controls, not one which is controlled. He was master of any horse, and he carried himself with a well-tempered air of mastery. But he was not master of the situations of life. He pushed his coarse brown moustache upwards, off his lip, and glanced irritably at his sister, who sat impassive and inscrutable.

‘You’ll go and stop with Lucy for a bit, shan’t you?’ he asked. The girl did not answer.

‘I don’t see what else you can do,’ persisted Fred Henry. ‘Go as a skivvy,’ Joe interpolated laconically.

The girl did not move a muscle.

‘If I was her, I should go in for training for a nurse,’ said Malcolm, the youngest of them all. He was the baby of the family, a young man of twenty-two, with a fresh, jaunty *museau*.

But Mabel did not take any notice of him. They had talked at her and round her for so many years, that she hardly heard them at all.

The marble clock on the mantel-piece softly chimed the half-hour, the dog rose uneasily from the hearthrug and looked at the party at the breakfast table. But still they sat on in ineffectual conclave.

‘Oh, all right,’ said Joe suddenly, à propos of nothing. ‘I’ll get a move on.’

He pushed back his chair, straddled his knees with a downward jerk, to get them free, in horsy fashion, and went to the fire. Still he did not go out of the room; he was curious to know what the others would do or say. He began to charge his pipe, looking down at the dog and saying, in a high, affected voice:

‘Going wi’ me? Going wi’ me are ter? Tha’rt goin’ further than tha counts on just now, dost hear?’

The dog faintly wagged its tail, the man stuck out his jaw and covered his pipe with his hands, and puffed intently, losing himself in the tobacco, looking down all the while at the dog with an absent brown eye. The dog looked up at him in mournful distrust. Joe stood with his knees stuck out, in real horsy fashion.

‘Have you had a letter from Lucy?’ Fred Henry asked of his sister.

‘Last week,’ came the neutral reply.

‘And what does she say?’

There was no answer.

‘Does she *ask* you to go and stop there?’ persisted Fred Henry. ‘She says I can if I like.’

‘Well, then, you’d better. Tell her you’ll come on Monday.’

This was received in silence.

‘That’s what you’ll do then, is it?’ said Fred Henry, in some exasperation.

But she made no answer. There was a silence of futility and irritation in the room. Malcolm grinned fatuously.

‘You’ll have to make up your mind between now and next Wednesday,’ said Joe loudly, ‘or else find yourself lodgings on the kerbstone.’

The face of the young woman darkened, but she sat on immutable.

‘Here’s Jack Fergusson!’ exclaimed Malcolm, who was looking aimlessly out of the window.

‘Where?’ exclaimed Joe, loudly.

‘Just gone past.’

‘Coming in?’

Malcolm craned his neck to see the gate.

‘Yes,’ he said.

There was a silence. Mabel sat on like one condemned, at the head of the table. Then a whistle was heard from the kitchen. The dog got up and barked sharply. Joe opened the door and shouted:

‘Come on.’

After a moment a young man entered. He was muffled up in overcoat and a purple woollen scarf, and his tweed cap, which he did not remove, was pulled down on his

head. He was of medium height, his face was rather long and pale, his eyes looked tired.

‘Hello, Jack! Well, Jack!’ exclaimed Malcolm and Joe. Fred Henry merely said, ‘Jack.’

‘What’s doing?’ asked the newcomer, evidently addressing Fred Henry. ‘Same. We’ve got to be out by Wednesday. — Got a cold?’

‘I have — got it bad, too.’

‘Why don’t you stop in?’

‘Me stop in? When I can’t stand on my legs, perhaps I shall have a chance.’ The young man spoke huskily. He had a slight Scotch accent.

‘It’s a knock-out, isn’t it,’ said Joe, boisterously, ‘if a doctor goes round croaking with a cold. Looks bad for the patients, doesn’t it?’

The young doctor looked at him slowly.

‘Anything the matter with *you*, then?’ he asked sarcastically.

‘Not as I know of. Damn your eyes, I hope not. Why?’

‘I thought you were very concerned about the patients, wondered if you might be one yourself.’

‘Damn it, no, I’ve never been patient to no flaming doctor, and hope I never shall be,’ returned Joe.

At this point Mabel rose from the table, and they all seemed to become aware of her existence. She began putting the dishes together. The young doctor looked at her, but did not address her. He had not greeted her. She went out of the room with the tray, her face impassive and unchanged.

‘When are you off then, all of you?’ asked the doctor.

‘I’m catching the eleven-forty,’ replied Malcolm. ‘Are you goin’ down wi’ th’ trap, Joe?’

‘Yes, I’ve told you I’m going down wi’ th’ trap, haven’t I?’

‘We’d better be getting her in then. — So long, Jack, if I don’t see you before I go,’ said Malcolm, shaking hands.

He went out, followed by Joe, who seemed to have his tail between his legs.

‘Well, this is the devil’s own,’ exclaimed the doctor, when he was left alone with Fred Henry. ‘Going before Wednesday, are you?’

‘That’s the orders,’ replied the other.

‘Where, to Northampton?’

‘That’s it.’

‘The devil!’ exclaimed Fergusson, with quiet chagrin. And there was silence between the two.

‘All settled up, are you?’ asked Fergusson.

‘About.’

There was another pause.

‘Well, I shall miss yer, Freddy, boy,’ said the young doctor.

‘And I shall miss thee, Jack,’ returned the other.

‘Miss you like hell,’ mused the doctor.

Fred Henry turned aside. There was nothing to say. Mabel came in again, to finish clearing the table.

‘What are *you* going to do, then, Miss Pervin?’ asked Fergusson. ‘Going to your sister’s, are you?’

Mabel looked at him with her steady, dangerous eyes, that always made him uncomfortable, unsettling his superficial ease.

‘No,’ she said.

‘Well, what in the name of fortune *are* you going to do? Say what you mean to do,’ cried Fred Henry, with futile intensity.

But she only averted her head, and continued her work. She folded the white table-cloth, and put on the chenille cloth.

‘The sulkiest bitch that ever trod!’ muttered her brother.

But she finished her task with perfectly impassive face, the young doctor watching her interestedly all the while. Then she went out.

Fred Henry stared after her, clenching his lips, his blue eyes fixing in sharp antagonism, as he made a grimace of sour exasperation.

‘You could bray her into bits, and that’s all you’d get out of her,’ he said, in a small, narrowed tone.

The doctor smiled faintly.

‘What’s she *going* to do, then?’ he asked.

‘Strike me if I know!’ returned the other.

There was a pause. Then the doctor stirred.

‘I’ll be seeing you tonight, shall I?’ he said to his friend.

‘Ay — where’s it to be? Are we going over to Jessdale?’

‘I don’t know. I’ve got such a cold on me. I’ll come round to the Moon and Stars, anyway.’

‘Let Lizzie and May miss their night for once, eh?’ ‘That’s it — if I feel as I do now.’

‘All’s one —’

The two young men went through the passage and down to the back door together. The house was large, but it was servantless now, and desolate. At the back was a small bricked house-yard, and beyond that a big square, gravelled fine and red, and having stables on two sides. Sloping, dank, winter-dark fields stretched away on the open sides.

But the stables were empty. Joseph Pervin, the father of the family, had been a man of no education, who had become a fairly large horse dealer. The stables had been full of horses, there was a great turmoil and come-and-go of horses and of dealers and grooms. Then the kitchen was full of servants. But of late things had declined. The old man had married a second time, to retrieve his fortunes. Now he was dead and everything was gone to the dogs, there was nothing but debt and threatening.

For months, Mabel had been servantless in the big house, keeping the home together in penury for her ineffectual brothers. She had kept house for ten years. But previously, it was with unstinted means. Then, however brutal and coarse everything was, the sense of money had kept her proud, confident. The men might be foul-

mouthed, the women in the kitchen might have bad reputations, her brothers might have illegitimate children. But so long as there was money, the girl felt herself established, and brutally proud, reserved.

No company came to the house, save dealers and coarse men. Mabel had no associates of her own sex, after her sister went away. But she did not mind. She went regularly to church, she attended to her father. And she lived in the memory of her mother, who had died when she was fourteen, and whom she had loved. She had loved her father, too, in a different way, depending upon him, and feeling secure in him, until at the age of fifty-four he married again. And then she had set hard against him. Now he had died and left them all hopelessly in debt.

She had suffered badly during the period of poverty. Nothing, however, could shake the curious sullen, animal pride that dominated each member of the family. Now, for Mabel, the end had come. Still she would not cast about her. She would follow her own way just the same. She would always hold the keys of her own situation. Mindless and persistent, she endured from day to day. Why should she think? Why should she answer anybody? It was enough that this was the end, and there was no way out. She need not pass any more darkly along the main street of the small town, avoiding every eye. She need not demean herself any more, going into the shops and buying the cheapest food. This was at an end. She thought of nobody, not even of herself. Mindless and persistent, she seemed in a sort of ecstasy to be coming nearer to her fulfilment, her own glorification, approaching her dead mother, who was glorified.

In the afternoon she took a little bag, with shears and sponge and a small scrubbing brush, and went out. It was a grey, wintry day, with saddened, dark-green fields and an atmosphere blackened by the smoke of foundries not far off. She went quickly, darkly along the causeway, heeding nobody, through the town to the churchyard. There she always felt secure, as if no one could see her, although as a matter of fact she was exposed to the stare of everyone who passed along under the churchyard wall. Nevertheless, once under the shadow of the great looming church, among the graves, she felt immune from the world, reserved within the thick churchyard wall as in another country.

Carefully she clipped the grass from the grave, and arranged the pinky-white, small chrysanthemums in the tin cross. When this was done, she took an empty jar from a neighbouring grave, brought water, and carefully, most scrupulously sponged the marble headstone and the coping-stone.

It gave her sincere satisfaction to do this. She felt in immediate contact with the world of her mother. She took minute pains, went through the park in a state bordering on pure happiness, as if in performing this task she came into a subtle, intimate connexion with her mother. For the life she followed here in the world was far less real than the world of death she inherited from her mother.

The doctor's house was just by the church. Fergusson, being a mere hired assistant, was slave to the countryside. As he hurried now to attend to the outpatients in the surgery, glancing across the graveyard with his quick eye, he saw the girl at her task at the grave. She seemed so intent and remote, it was like looking into another world.

Some mystical element was touched in him. He slowed down as he walked, watching her as if spell-bound.

She lifted her eyes, feeling him looking. Their eyes met. And each looked again at once, each feeling, in some way, found out by the other. He lifted his cap and passed on down the road. There remained distinct in his consciousness, like a vision, the memory of her face, lifted from the tombstone in the churchyard, and looking at him with slow, large, portentous eyes. It was portentous, her face. It seemed to mesmerize him. There was a heavy power in her eyes which laid hold of his whole being, as if he had drunk some powerful drug. He had been feeling weak and done before. Now the life came back into him, he felt delivered from his own fretted, daily self.

He finished his duties at the surgery as quickly as might be, hastily filling up the bottles of the waiting people with cheap drugs. Then, in perpetual haste, he set off again to visit several cases in another part of his round, before teatime. At all times he preferred to walk, if he could, but particularly when he was not well. He fancied the motion restored him.

The afternoon was falling. It was grey, deadened, and wintry, with a slow, moist, heavy coldness sinking in and deadening all the faculties. But why should he think or notice? He hastily climbed the hill and turned across the dark-green fields, following the black cinder-track. In the distance, across a shallow dip in the country, the small town was clustered like smouldering ash, a tower, a spire, a heap of low, raw, extinct houses. And on the nearest fringe of the town, sloping into the dip, was Oldmeadow, the Pervins' house. He could see the stables and the outbuildings distinctly, as they lay towards him on the slope. Well, he would not go there many more times! Another resource would be lost to him, another place gone: the only company he cared for in the alien, ugly little town he was losing. Nothing but work, drudgery, constant hastening from dwelling to dwelling among the colliers and the iron-workers. It wore him out, but at the same time he had a craving for it. It was a stimulant to him to be in the homes of the working people, moving as it were through the innermost body of their life. His nerves were excited and gratified. He could come so near, into the very lives of the rough, inarticulate, powerfully emotional men and women. He grumbled, he said he hated the hellish hole. But as a matter of fact it excited him, the contact with the rough, strongly-feeling people was a stimulant applied direct to his nerves. Below Oldmeadow, in the green, shallow, soddened hollow of fields, lay a square, deep pond. Roving across the landscape, the doctor's quick eye detected a figure in black passing through the gate of the field, down towards the pond. He looked again. It would be Mabel Pervin. His mind suddenly became alive and attentive.

Why was she going down there? He pulled up on the path on the slope above, and stood staring. He could just make sure of the small black figure moving in the hollow of the failing day. He seemed to see her in the midst of such obscurity, that he was like a clairvoyant, seeing rather with the mind's eye than with ordinary sight. Yet he could see her positively enough, whilst he kept his eye attentive. He felt, if he looked away from her, in the thick, ugly falling dusk, he would lose her altogether. He followed her minutely as she moved, direct and intent, like something transmitted rather than stirring in voluntary activity, straight down the field towards the pond.

There she stood on the bank for a moment. She never raised her head. Then she waded slowly into the water.

He stood motionless as the small black figure walked slowly and deliberately towards the centre of the pond, very slowly, gradually moving deeper into the motionless water, and still moving forward as the water got up to her breast. Then he could see her no more in the dusk of the dead afternoon.

‘There!’ he exclaimed. ‘Would you believe it?’

And he hastened straight down, running over the wet, soddened fields, pushing through the hedges, down into the depression of callous wintry obscurity. It took him several minutes to come to the pond. He stood on the bank, breathing heavily. He could see nothing. His eyes seemed to penetrate the dead water. Yes, perhaps that was the dark shadow of her black clothing beneath the surface of the water.

He slowly ventured into the pond. The bottom was deep, soft clay, he sank in, and the water clasped dead cold round his legs. As he stirred he could smell the cold, rotten clay that fouled up into the water. It was objectionable in his lungs. Still, repelled and yet not heeding, he moved deeper into the pond. The cold water rose over his thighs, over his loins, upon his abdomen. The lower part of his body was all sunk in the hideous cold element. And the bottom was so deeply soft and uncertain, he was afraid of pitching with his mouth underneath. He could not swim, and was afraid.

He crouched a little, spreading his hands under the water and moving them round, trying to feel for her. The dead cold pond swayed upon his chest. He moved again, a little deeper, and again, with his hands underneath, he felt all around under the water. And he touched her clothing. But it evaded his fingers. He made a desperate effort to grasp it.

And so doing he lost his balance and went under, horribly, suffocating in the foul earthy water, struggling madly for a few moments. At last, after what seemed an eternity, he got his footing, rose again into the air and looked around. He gasped, and knew he was in the world. Then he looked at the water. She had risen near him. He grasped her clothing, and drawing her nearer, turned to take his way to land again. He went very slowly, carefully, absorbed in the slow progress. He rose higher, climbing out of the pond. The water was now only about his legs; he was thankful, full of relief to be out of the clutches of the pond. He lifted her and staggered on to the bank, out of the horror of wet, grey clay.

He laid her down on the bank. She was quite unconscious and running with water. He made the water come from her mouth, he worked to restore her. He did not have to work very long before he could feel the breathing begin again in her; she was breathing naturally. He worked a little longer. He could feel her live beneath his hands; she was coming back. He wiped her face, wrapped her in his overcoat, looked round into the dim, dark-grey world, then lifted her and staggered down the bank and across the fields.

It seemed an unthinkably long way, and his burden so heavy he felt he would never get to the house. But at last he was in the stable-yard, and then in the house-yard. He opened the door and went into the house. In the kitchen he laid her down on the hearthrug, and called. The house was empty. But the fire was burning in the grate.

Then again he kneeled to attend to her. She was breathing regularly, her eyes were wide open and as if conscious, but there seemed something missing in her look. She was conscious in herself, but unconscious of her surroundings.

He ran upstairs, took blankets from a bed, and put them before the fire to warm. Then he removed her saturated, earthy-smelling clothing, rubbed her dry with a towel, and wrapped her naked in the blankets. Then he went into the dining-room, to look for spirits. There was a little whisky. He drank a gulp himself, and put some into her mouth.

The effect was instantaneous. She looked full into his face, as if she had been seeing him for some time, and yet had only just become conscious of him.

‘Dr. Fergusson?’ she said.

‘What?’ he answered.

He was divesting himself of his coat, intending to find some dry clothing upstairs. He could not bear the smell of the dead, clayey water, and he was mortally afraid for his own health.

‘What did I do?’ she asked.

‘Walked into the pond,’ he replied. He had begun to shudder like one sick, and could hardly attend to her. Her eyes remained full on him, he seemed to be going dark in his mind, looking back at her helplessly. The shuddering became quieter in him, his life came back in him, dark and unknowing, but strong again.

‘Was I out of my mind?’ she asked, while her eyes were fixed on him all the time.

‘Maybe, for the moment,’ he replied. He felt quiet, because his strength had come back. The strange fretful strain had left him.

‘Am I out of my mind now?’ she asked.

‘Are you?’ he reflected a moment. ‘No,’ he answered truthfully, ‘I don’t see that you are.’ He turned his face aside. He was afraid now, because he felt dazed, and felt dimly that her power was stronger than his, in this issue. And she continued to look at him fixedly all the time. ‘Can you tell me where I shall find some dry things to put on?’ he asked.

‘Did you dive into the pond for me?’ she asked.

‘No,’ he answered. ‘I walked in. But I went in overhead as well.’

There was silence for a moment. He hesitated. He very much wanted to go upstairs to get into dry clothing. But there was another desire in him. And she seemed to hold him. His will seemed to have gone to sleep, and left him, standing there slack before her. But he felt warm inside himself. He did not shudder at all, though his clothes were sodden on him.

‘Why did you?’ she asked.

‘Because I didn’t want you to do such a foolish thing,’ he said.

‘It wasn’t foolish,’ she said, still gazing at him as she lay on the floor, with a sofa cushion under her head. ‘It was the right thing to do. *I* knew best, then.’

‘I’ll go and shift these wet things,’ he said. But still he had not the power to move out of her presence, until she sent him. It was as if she had the life of his body in her hands, and he could not extricate himself. Or perhaps he did not want to.

Suddenly she sat up. Then she became aware of her own immediate condition. She felt the blankets about her, she knew her own limbs. For a moment it seemed as if her reason were going. She looked round, with wild eye, as if seeking something. He stood still with fear. She saw her clothing lying scattered.

‘Who undressed me?’ she asked, her eyes resting full and inevitable on his face. ‘I did,’ he replied, ‘to bring you round.’

For some moments she sat and gazed at him awfully, her lips parted. ‘Do you love me then?’ she asked.

He only stood and stared at her, fascinated. His soul seemed to melt.

She shuffled forward on her knees, and put her arms round him, round his legs, as he stood there, pressing her breasts against his knees and thighs, clutching him with strange, convulsive certainty, pressing his thighs against her, drawing him to her face, her throat, as she looked up at him with flaring, humble eyes, of transfiguration, triumphant in first possession.

‘You love me,’ she murmured, in strange transport, yearning and triumphant and confident. ‘You love me. I know you love me, I know.’

And she was passionately kissing his knees, through the wet clothing, passionately and indiscriminately kissing his knees, his legs, as if unaware of every thing.

He looked down at the tangled wet hair, the wild, bare, animal shoulders. He was amazed, bewildered, and afraid. He had never thought of loving her. He had never wanted to love her. When he rescued her and restored her, he was a doctor, and she was a patient. He had had no single personal thought of her. Nay, this introduction of the personal element was very distasteful to him, a violation of his professional honour. It was horrible to have her there embracing his knees. It was horrible. He revolted from it, violently. And yet — and yet — he had not the power to break away.

She looked at him again, with the same supplication of powerful love, and that same transcendent, frightening light of triumph. In view of the delicate flame which seemed to come from her face like a light, he was powerless. And yet he had never intended to love her. He had never intended. And something stubborn in him could not give way.

‘You love me,’ she repeated, in a murmur of deep, rhapsodic assurance. ‘You love me.’

Her hands were drawing him, drawing him down to her. He was afraid, even a little horrified. For he had, really, no intention of loving her. Yet her hands were drawing him towards her. He put out his hand quickly to steady himself, and grasped her bare shoulder. A flame seemed to burn the hand that grasped her soft shoulder. He had no intention of loving her: his whole will was against his yielding. It was horrible. And yet wonderful was the touch of her shoulders, beautiful the shining of her face. Was she perhaps mad? He had a horror of yielding to her. Yet something in him ached also.

He had been staring away at the door, away from her. But his hand remained on her shoulder. She had gone suddenly very still. He looked down at her. Her eyes were now wide with fear, with doubt, the light was dying from her face, a shadow of

terrible greyness was returning. He could not bear the touch of her eyes' question upon him, and the look of death behind the question.

With an inward groan he gave way, and let his heart yield towards her. A sudden gentle smile came on his face. And her eyes, which never left his face, slowly, slowly filled with tears. He watched the strange water rise in her eyes, like some slow fountain coming up. And his heart seemed to burn and melt away in his breast.

He could not bear to look at her any more. He dropped on his knees and caught her head with his arms and pressed her face against his throat. She was very still. His heart, which seemed to have broken, was burning with a kind of agony in his breast. And he felt her slow, hot tears wetting his throat. But he could not move.

He felt the hot tears wet his neck and the hollows of his neck, and he remained motionless, suspended through one of man's eternities. Only now it had become indispensable to him to have her face pressed close to him; he could never let her go again. He could never let her head go away from the close clutch of his arm. He wanted to remain like that for ever, with his heart hurting him in a pain that was also life to him. Without knowing, he was looking down on her damp, soft brown hair. Then, as it were suddenly, he smelt the horrid stagnant smell of that water. And at the same moment she drew away from him and looked at him. Her eyes were wistful and unfathomable. He was afraid of them, and he fell to kissing her, not knowing what he was doing. He wanted her eyes not to have that terrible, wistful, unfathomable look. When she turned her face to him again, a faint delicate flush was glowing, and there was again dawning that terrible shining of joy in her eyes, which really terrified him, and yet which he now wanted to see, because he feared the look of doubt still more. 'You love me?' she said, rather faltering.

'Yes.' The word cost him a painful effort. Not because it wasn't true. But because it was too newly true, the *saying* seemed to tear open again his newly-torn heart. And he hardly wanted it to be true, even now.

She lifted her face to him, and he bent forward and kissed her on the mouth, gently, with the one kiss that is an eternal pledge. And as he kissed her his heart strained again in his breast. He never intended to love her. But now it was over. He had crossed over the gulf to her, and all that he had left behind had shrivelled and become void.

After the kiss, her eyes again slowly filled with tears. She sat still, away from him, with her face drooped aside, and her hands folded in her lap. The tears fell very slowly. There was complete silence. He too sat there motionless and silent on the hearthrug. The strange pain of his heart that was broken seemed to consume him. That he should love her? That this was love! That he should be ripped open in this way! — Him, a doctor! — How they would all jeer if they knew! — It was agony to him to think they might know.

In the curious naked pain of the thought he looked again to her. She was sitting there drooped into a muse. He saw a tear fall, and his heart flared hot. He saw for the first time that one of her shoulders was quite uncovered, one arm bare, he could see one of her small breasts; dimly, because it had become almost dark in the room.

'Why are you crying?' he asked, in an altered voice.

She looked up at him, and behind her tears the consciousness of her situation for the first time brought a dark look of shame to her eyes.

‘I’m not crying, really,’ she said, watching him half frightened.

He reached his hand, and softly closed it on her bare arm.

‘I love you! I love you!’ he said in a soft, low vibrating voice, unlike himself.

She shrank, and dropped her head. The soft, penetrating grip of his hand on her arm distressed her. She looked up at him.

‘I want to go,’ she said. ‘I want to go and get you some dry things.’ ‘Why?’ he said. ‘I’m all right.’

‘But I want to go,’ she said. ‘And I want you to change your things.’

He released her arm, and she wrapped herself in the blanket, looking at him rather frightened. And still she did not rise.

‘Kiss me,’ she said wistfully.

He kissed her, but briefly, half in anger.

Then, after a second, she rose nervously, all mixed up in the blanket. He watched her in her confusion, as she tried to extricate herself and wrap herself up so that she could walk. He watched her relentlessly, as she knew. And as she went, the blanket trailing, and as he saw a glimpse of her feet and her white leg, he tried to remember her as she was when he had wrapped her in the blanket. But then he didn’t want to remember, because she had been nothing to him then, and his nature revolted from remembering her as she was when she was nothing to him.

A tumbling, muffled noise from within the dark house startled him. Then he heard her voice:—‘There are clothes.’ He rose and went to the foot of the stairs, and gathered up the garments she had thrown down. Then he came back to the fire, to rub himself down and dress. He grinned at his own appearance when he had finished. The fire was sinking, so he put on coal. The house was now quite dark, save for the light of a street-lamp that shone in faintly from beyond the holly trees. He lit the gas with matches he found on the mantel-piece. Then he emptied the pockets of his own clothes, and threw all his wet things in a heap into the scullery. After which he gathered up her sodden clothes, gently, and put them in a separate heap on the copper-top in the scullery.

It was six o’clock on the clock. His own watch had stopped. He ought to go back to the surgery. He waited, and still she did not come down. So he went to the foot of the stairs and called:

‘I shall have to go.’

Almost immediately he heard her coming down. She had on her best dress of black voile, and her hair was tidy, but still damp. She looked at him — and in spite of herself, smiled.

‘I don’t like you in those clothes,’ she said.

‘Do I look a sight?’ he answered.

They were shy of one another.

‘I’ll make you some tea,’ she said.

‘No, I must go.’

‘Must you?’ And she looked at him again with the wide, strained, doubtful eyes. And again, from the pain of his breast, he knew how he loved her. He went and bent to kiss her, gently, passionately, with his heart’s painful kiss.

‘And my hair smells so horrible,’ she murmured in distraction. ‘And I’m so awful, I’m so awful! Oh, no, I’m too awful.’ And she broke into bitter, heart-broken sobbing. ‘You can’t want to love me, I’m horrible.’

‘Don’t be silly, don’t be silly,’ he said, trying to comfort her, kissing her, holding her in his arms. ‘I want you, I want to marry you, we’re going to be married, quickly, quickly — tomorrow if I can.’

But she only sobbed terribly, and cried:

‘I feel awful. I feel awful. I feel I’m horrible to you.’

‘No, I want you, I want you,’ was all he answered, blindly, with that terrible intonation which frightened her almost more than her horror lest he should *not* want her.

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. (M, WR)

-to amount to nothing -to have illegitimate children -a collapse of one’s life
-to be exposed to sth -to be a subject animal -to feel immune from the world
-to carry oneself with a well-tempered air of mastery -to be spell-bound
-to have one’s tail between one’s legs -to wear sth/sb out -to be settled up
-to be a violation of one’s professional honour

2. Give the English for the Russian word in brackets. (WR)

1. The death of his well-off wife was a (крушением надежд, концом света).
2. Being unable to envisage the dreadful consequences of what he had done he left the battlefield (поджав хвост).
3. Although Leonardo da Vinci was an (незаконнорожденный ребенок) he managed to receive first-rate education.
4. The boy had been burning the midnight oil for several weeks so he was (подверженный) stress and tantrums.
5. The audience was (зачарованный) by the magnificent grace and beauty of the ballet-dancer.
6. Not only were his clothes (изношенный) but he was (изнуренный) as well.

3. Give extended answers to the following questions. (OR)

1. What was a “collapse of life” for the Pervins family?
2. Why were Joe’s eyes glazed and hopeless while he was watching the horses?
3. How was Mabel going to “settle up”?
4. Why were the brothers so rude to their sister?
5. What had Mabel’s life been like during the ten years?
6. Why did Mabel decide to commit a suicide?
7. When did Dr. Fergusson realise that he was in love with Mabel?
8. How did Mabel react to a change in her life?
9. Was the change in Mabel’s life for the better or for the worse?
10. Will Mabel and Dr. Fergusson be together or not?

4. Give the Russian for the following. (WR)

1. The three brothers and the sister sat round the desolate breakfast table, attempting some sort of desultory consultation.
2. Now he watched the horses with a glazed look of helplessness in his eyes, a certain stupor of downfall.
3. Mabel looked at him with her steady, dangerous eyes, that always made him uncomfortable, unsettling his superficial ease.
4. Now the life came back into him, he felt delivered from his own fretted, daily self.
5. Nothing but work, drudgery, constant hasting from dwelling to dwelling among the colliers and the iron-workers.
6. He had no intention of loving her: his whole will was against his yielding.

5. Translate the following passages. (WR)

1. "For months Mabel was..."—"...brutally proud, reserved."
2. "Why was she going down..."—"...lose her altogether."
3. "After the kiss..."—"...they might know."

6. Find in the story a word or a word-combination close in meaning to the word(s) given in italics. (WR)

1. Jane was waving goodbye to her mother until she *disappeared*.
2. No matter what he said, she *paid no attention to him*.
3. Hardly had the new boss taken over, when the whole business *went down the drain*.
4. The idea of starting a new life *absorbed* him.
5. His piercing eye seemed to *go through* her.
6. He *made her conscious* by splashing some water on her face.

7. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary). (WR)

-endure -glory -silence

8. Consult your dictionary and find collocations of the following words: (WR)

-debt -eye -fashion -control

9. Fill in the gaps with a prefix: (WR)

...effectuality ...easily ...comfortable ...conscious ...tasteful ...passive
...mutable ...legitimate ...thinkably ...dispensable ...cover ...changed
...articulate ...evitable ...fathomable

10. Fill each gap with a preposition. (O, M)

-to amount...nothing -to look...sb's eyes -...the memory of sb -an intention
...doing sth -to move... ...sight -to be aware...sth -to border...sth -to yield ...sb\sth -
to go...harness -...penury...sb -to have a craving...sth -a violation...sth

11. Put into reported speech the passage: (WR)

"Dr. Fergusson?" up to "...he did not want to."

12. Translate the following sentences into Russian paying special attention to the word "horse": (WR)

1. No one trusted him as he made an impression of *being a dark horse*.
2. You're *flogging a dead horse* by asking him to lend you money.

3. She wouldn't believe this rumour unless she had heard about it *right from the horse's mouth*.

4. *Hold your horses!* I'd like to talk to you before you go.

5. *You can take a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.*

13. Retell the story: (O) 1) The saga of the Pervins family **2)** Dr. Fergusson and Mabel's love story

14. Comment on the following: (O)

1. "The sulkiest bitch that ever trod!"

2. "Joe did not care about anything, since he felt safe himself."

3. "He would marry and go into harness...he would be a subject animal."

4. "You can't want to love me, I'm horrible."

Story 9 David Herbert Lawrence You Touched Me

The Pottery House was a square, ugly, brick house girt in by the wall that enclosed the whole grounds of the pottery itself. To be sure, a privet hedge partly masked the house and its ground from the pottery-yard and works: but only partly. Through the hedge could be seen the desolate yard, and the many-windowed, factory-like pottery, over the hedge could be seen the chimneys and the outhouses. But inside the hedge, a pleasant garden and lawn sloped down to a willow pool, which had once supplied the works.

The Pottery itself was now closed, the great doors of the yard permanently shut. No more the great crates with yellow straw showing through, stood in stacks by the packing shed. No more the drays drawn by great horses rolled down the hill with a high load. No more the pottery-lasses in their clay-coloured overalls, their faces and hair splashed with grey fine mud, shrieked and larked with the men. All that was over.

'We like it much better — oh, much better — quieter,' said Matilda Rockley. 'Oh, yes,' assented Emmie Rockley, her sister.

'I'm sure you do,' agreed the visitor.

But whether the two Rockley girls really liked it better, or whether they only imagined they did, is a question. Certainly their lives were much more grey and dreary now that the grey clay had ceased to spatter its mud and silt its dust over the premises. They did not quite realize how they missed the shrieking, shouting lasses, whom they had known all their lives and disliked so much.

Matilda and Emmie were already old maids. In a thorough industrial district, it is not easy for the girls who have expectations above the common to find husbands. The ugly industrial town was full of men, young men who were ready to marry. But they were all colliers or pottery-hands, mere workmen. The Rockley girls would have about ten thousand pounds each when their father died: ten thousand pounds' worth of profitable house-property. It was not to be sneezed at: they felt so themselves, and refrained from sneezing away such a fortune on any mere member of the proletariat. Consequently, bank-clerks or nonconformist clergymen or even school-teachers having failed to come forward, Matilda had begun to give up all idea of ever leaving the Pottery House.

Matilda was a tall, thin, graceful fair girl, with a rather large nose. She was the Mary to Emmie's Martha: that is, Matilda loved painting and music, and read a good many novels, whilst Emmie looked after the house-keeping. Emmie was shorter, plumper than her sister, and she had no accomplishments. She looked up to Matilda, whose mind was naturally refined and sensible.

In their quiet, melancholy way, the two girls were happy. Their mother was dead. Their father was ill also. He was an intelligent man who had had some education, but preferred to remain as if he were one with the rest of the working people. He had a passion for music and played the violin pretty well. But now he was getting old, he was very ill, dying of a kidney disease. He had been rather a heavy whisky-drinker. This quiet household, with one servant-maid, lived on year after year in the Pottery House. Friends came in, the girls went out, the father drank himself more and more ill. Outside in the street there was a continual racket of the colliers and their dogs and children. But inside the pottery wall was a deserted quiet.

In all this ointment there was one little fly. Ted Rockley, the father of the girls, had had four daughters, and no son. As his girls grew, he felt angry at finding himself always in a house-hold of women. He went off to London and adopted a boy out of a Charity Institution. Emmie was fourteen years old, and Matilda sixteen, when their father arrived home with his prodigy, the boy of six, Hadrian.

Hadrian was just an ordinary boy from a Charity Home, with ordinary brownish hair and ordinary bluish eyes and of ordinary rather cockney speech. The Rockley girls — there were three at home at the time of his arrival — had resented his being sprung on them. He, with his watchful, charity-institution instinct, knew this at once. Though he was only six years old, Hadrian had a subtle, jeering look on his face when he regarded the three young women. They insisted he should address them as Cousin: Cousin Flora, Cousin Matilda, Cousin Emmie. He complied, but there seemed a mockery in his tone.

The girls, however, were kind-hearted by nature. Flora married and left home. Hadrian did very much as he pleased with Matilda and Emmie, though they had certain strictnesses. He grew up in the Pottery House and about the Pottery premises, went to an elementary school, and was invariably called Hadrian Rockley. He regarded Cousin Matilda and Cousin Emmie with a certain laconic indifference, was quiet and reticent in his ways. The girls called him sly, but that was unjust. He was merely cautious, and without frankness. His Uncle, Ted Rockley, understood him tacitly, their natures were somewhat akin. Hadrian and the elderly man had a real but unemotional regard for one another.

When he was thirteen years old the boy was sent to a High School in the County town. He did not like it. His Cousin Matilda had longed to make a little gentleman of him, but he refused to be made. He would give a little contemptuous curve to his lip, and take on a shy, charity-boy grin, when refinement was thrust upon him. He played truant from the High School, sold his books, his cap with its badge, even his very scarf and pocket-handkerchief, to his school-fellows, and went raking off heaven knows where with the money. So he spent two very unsatisfactory years.

When he was fifteen he announced that he wanted to leave England and go to the Colonies. He had kept touch with the Home. The Rockleys knew that, when Hadrian made a declaration, in his quiet, half-jeering manner, it was worse than useless to oppose him. So at last the boy departed, going to Canada under the protection of the Institution to which he had belonged. He said good-bye to the Rockleys without a word of thanks, and parted, it seemed, without a pang. Matilda and Emmie wept often to think of how he left them: even on their father's face a queer look came. But Hadrian wrote fairly regularly from Canada. He had entered some electricity works near Montreal, and was doing well.

At last, however, the war came. In his turn, Hadrian joined up and came to Europe. The Rockleys saw nothing of him. They lived on, just the same, in the Pottery House. Ted Rockley was dying of a sort of dropsy, and in his heart he wanted to see the boy. When the armistice was signed, Hadrian had a long leave, and wrote that he was coming home to the Pottery House.

The girls were terribly fluttered. To tell the truth, they were a little afraid of Hadrian. Matilda, tall and thin, was frail in her health, both girls were worn with nursing their father. To have Hadrian, a young man of twenty-one, in the house with them, after he had left them so coldly five years before, was a trying circumstance.

They were in a flutter. Emmie persuaded her father to have his bed made finally in the morning-room downstairs, whilst his room upstairs was prepared for Hadrian. This was done, and preparations were going on for the arrival, when, at ten o'clock in the morning the young man suddenly turned up, quite unexpectedly. Cousin Emmie, with her hair bobbed up in absurd little bobs round her forehead, was busily polishing the stair-rods, while Cousin Matilda was in the kitchen washing the drawing-room ornaments in a lather, her sleeves rolled back on her thin arms, and her head tied up oddly and coquettishly in a duster.

Cousin Matilda blushed deep with mortification when the self-possessed young man walked in with his kit-bag, and put his cap on the sewing machine. He was little and self-confident, with a curious neatness about him that still suggested the Charity Institution. His face was brown, he had a small moustache, he was vigorous enough in his smallness.

'Well, is it Hadrian!' exclaimed Cousin Matilda, wringing the lather off her hand.

'We didn't expect you till tomorrow.'

'I got off Monday night,' said Hadrian, glancing round the room.

'Fancy!' said Cousin Matilda. Then, having dried her hands, she went forward, held out her hand, and said:

'How are you?'

'Quite well, thank you,' said Hadrian.

'You're quite a man,' said Cousin Matilda.

Hadrian glanced at her. She did not look her best: so thin, so large-nosed, with that pink-and-white checked duster tied round her head. She felt her disadvantage. But she had had a good deal of suffering and sorrow, she did not mind any more.

The servant entered — one that did not know Hadrian.

'Come and see my father,' said Cousin Matilda.

In the hall they roused Cousin Emmie like a partridge from cover. She was on the stairs pushing the bright stair-rods into place. Instinctively her hand went to the little knobs, her front hair bobbed on her forehead.

‘Why!’ she exclaimed, crossly. ‘What have you come today for?’

‘I got off a day earlier,’ said Hadrian, and his man’s voice so deep and unexpected was like a blow to Cousin Emmie.

‘Well, you’ve caught us in the midst of it,’ she said, with resentment. Then all three went into the middle room.

Mr. Rockley was dressed — that is, he had on his trousers and socks — but he was resting on the bed, propped up just under the window, from whence he could see his beloved and resplendent garden, where tulips and apple-trees were ablaze. He did not look as ill as he was, for the water puffed him up, and his face kept its colour. His stomach was much swollen. He glanced round swiftly, turning his eyes without turning his head. He was the wreck of a handsome, well-built man.

Seeing Hadrian, a queer, unwilling smile went over his face. The young man greeted him sheepishly.

‘You wouldn’t make a life-guardsman,’ he said. ‘Do you want something to eat?’ Hadrian looked round — as if for the meal.

‘I don’t mind,’ he said.

‘What shall you have — egg and bacon?’ asked Emmie shortly.

‘Yes, I don’t mind,’ said Hadrian.

The sisters went down to the kitchen, and sent the servant to finish the stairs.

‘Isn’t he *altered*?’ said Matilda, *sotto voce*.

‘Isn’t he!’ said Cousin Emmie. ‘*What* a little man!’

They both made a grimace, and laughed nervously.

‘Get the frying-pan,’ said Emmie to Matilda.

‘But he’s as cocky as ever,’ said Matilda, narrowing her eyes and shaking her head knowingly, as she handed the frying-pan.

‘Mannie!’ said Emmie sarcastically. Hadrian’s new-fledged, cock-sure manliness evidently found no favour in her eyes.

‘Oh, he’s not bad,’ said Matilda. ‘You don’t want to be prejudiced against him.’ I’m not prejudiced against him, I think he’s all right for looks,’ said Emmie, ‘but there’s too much of the little mannie about him.’

‘Fancy catching us like this,’ said Matilda.

‘They’ve no thought for anything,’ said Emmie with contempt. ‘You go up and get dressed, our Matilda. I don’t care about him. I can see to things, and you can talk to him. I shan’t.’

‘He’ll talk to my father,’ said Matilda, meaningful.

‘*Sly* —!’ exclaimed Emmie, with a grimace.

The sisters believed that Hadrian had come hoping to get something out of their father — hoping for a legacy. And they were not at all sure he would not get it. Matilda went upstairs to change. She had thought it all out how she would receive Hadrian, and impress him. And he had caught her with her head tied up in a duster, and her thin arms in a basin of lather. But she did not care. She now dressed herself

most scrupulously, carefully folded her long, beautiful, blonde hair, touched her pallor with a little rouge, and put her long string of exquisite crystal beads over her soft green dress. Now she looked elegant, like a heroine in a magazine illustration, and almost as unreal.

She found Hadrian and her father talking away. The young man was short of speech as a rule, but he could find his tongue with his 'uncle'. They were both sipping a glass of brandy, and smoking, and chatting like a pair of old cronies. Hadrian was telling about Canada. He was going back there when his leave was up.

'You wouldn't like to stop in England, then?' said Mr. Rockley.

'No, I wouldn't stop in England,' said Hadrian.

'How's that? There's plenty of electricians here,' said Mr. Rockley.

'Yes. But there's too much difference between the men and the employers over here — too much of that for me,' said Hadrian.

The sick man looked at him narrowly, with oddly smiling eyes. 'That's it, is it?' he replied.

Matilda heard and understood. 'So that's your big idea, is it, my little man,' she said to herself. She had always said of Hadrian that he had no proper *respect* for anybody or anything, that he was sly and *common*. She went down to the kitchen for a *sotto voce* confab with Emmie.

'He thinks a rare lot of himself!' she whispered.

'He's somebody, he is!' said Emmie with contempt.

'He thinks there's too much difference between masters and men, over here,' said Matilda.

'Is it any different in Canada?' asked Emmie.

'Oh, yes — democratic,' replied Matilda, 'He thinks they're all on a level over there.' 'Ay, well he's over here now,' said Emmie dryly, 'so he can keep his place.'

As they talked they saw the young man sauntering down the garden, looking casually at the flowers. He had his hands in his pockets, and his soldier's cap neatly on his head. He looked quite at his ease, as if in possession. The two women, fluttered, watched him through the window.

'We know what he's come for,' said Emmie, churlishly. Matilda looked a long time at the neat khaki figure. It had something of the charity-boy about it still; but now it was a man's figure, laconic, charged with plebeian energy. She thought of the derisive passion in his voice as he had declaimed against the propertied classes, to her father.

'You don't know, Emmie. Perhaps he's not come for that,' she rebuked her sister. They were both thinking of the money.

They were still watching the young soldier. He stood away at the bottom of the garden, with his back to them, his hands in his pockets, looking into the water of the willow pond. Matilda's dark-blue eyes had a strange, full look in them, the lids, with the faint blue veins showing, dropped rather low. She carried her head light and high, but she had a look of pain. The young man at the bottom of the garden turned and looked up the path. Perhaps he saw them through the window. Matilda moved into shadow.

That afternoon their father seemed weak and ill. He was easily exhausted. The doctor came, and told Matilda that the sick man might die suddenly at any moment — but then he might not. They must be prepared.

So the day passed, and the next. Hadrian made himself at home. He went about in the morning in his brownish jersey and his khaki trousers, collarless, his bare neck showing. He explored the pottery premises, as if he had some secret purpose in so doing, he talked with Mr. Rockley, when the sick man had strength. The two girls were always angry when the two men sat talking together like cronies. Yet it was chiefly a kind of politics they talked.

On the second day after Hadrian's arrival, Matilda sat with her father in the evening. She was drawing a picture which she wanted to copy. It was very still, Hadrian was gone out somewhere, no one knew where, and Emmie was busy. Mr. Rockley reclined on his bed, looking out in silence over his evening-sunny garden.

'If anything happens to me, Matilda,' he said, 'you won't sell this house — you'll stop here —'

Matilda's eyes took their slightly haggard look as she stared at her father.

'Well, we couldn't do anything else,' she said.

'You don't know what you might do,' he said. 'Everything is left to you and Emmie, equally. You do as you like with it — only don't sell this house, don't part with it.' 'No,' she said.

'And give Hadrian my watch and chain, and a hundred pounds out of what's in the bank — and help him if he ever wants helping. I haven't put his name in the will.' 'Your watch and chain, and a hundred pounds — yes. But you'll be here when he goes back to Canada, father.'

'You never know what'll happen,' said her father.

Matilda sat and watched him, with her full, haggard eyes, for a long time, as if tranced. She saw that he knew he must go soon — she saw like a clairvoyant.

Later on she told Emmie what her father had said about the watch and chain and the money.

'What right has *he*' — *he* — meaning Hadrian — 'to my father's watch and chain — what has it to do with him? Let him have the money, and get off,' said Emmie. She loved her father.

That night Matilda sat late in her room. Her heart was anxious and breaking, her mind seemed entranced. She was too much entranced even to weep, and all the time she thought of her father, only her father. At last she felt she must go to him.

It was near midnight. She went along the passage and to his room. There was a faint light from the moon outside. She listened at his door. Then she softly opened and entered. The room was faintly dark. She heard a movement on the bed.

'Are you asleep?' she said softly, advancing to the side of the bed.

'Are you asleep?' she repeated gently, as she stood at the side of the bed. And she reached her hand in the darkness to touch his forehead. Delicately, her fingers met the nose and the eyebrows, she laid her fine, delicate hand on his brow. It seemed fresh and smooth — very fresh and smooth. A sort of surprise stirred her, in her entranced

state. But it could not waken her. Gently, she leaned over the bed and stirred her fingers over the low-growing hair on his brow.

‘Can’t you sleep tonight?’ she said.

There was a quick stirring in the bed. ‘Yes, I can,’ a voice answered. It was Hadrian’s voice. She started away. Instantly, she was wakened from her late-at-night trance. She remembered that her father was downstairs, that Hadrian had his room. She stood in the darkness as if stung.

‘It is you, Hadrian?’ she said. ‘I thought it was my father.’ She was so startled, so shocked, that she could not move. The young man gave an uncomfortable laugh, and turned in his bed.

At last she got out of the room. When she was back in her own room, in the light, and her door was closed, she stood holding up her hand that had touched him, as if it were hurt. She was almost too shocked, she could not endure.

‘Well,’ said her calm and weary mind, ‘it was only a mistake, why take any notice of it.’

But she could not reason her feelings so easily. She suffered, feeling herself in a false position. Her right hand, which she had laid so gently on his face, on his fresh skin, ached now, as if it were really injured. She could not forgive Hadrian for the mistake: it made her dislike him deeply.

Hadrian too slept badly. He had been awakened by the opening of the door, and had not realized what the question meant. But the soft, straying tenderness of her hand on his face startled something out of his soul. He was a charity boy, aloof and more or less at bay. The fragile exquisiteness of her caress startled him most, revealed unknown things to him.

In the morning she could feel the consciousness in his eyes, when she came downstairs. She tried to bear herself as if nothing at all had happened, and she succeeded. She had the calm self-control, self-indifference, of one who has suffered and borne her suffering. She looked at him from her darkish, almost drugged blue eyes, she met the spark of consciousness in his eyes, and quenched it. And with her long, fine hand she put the sugar in his coffee.

But she could not control him as she thought she could. He had a keen memory stinging his mind, a new set of sensations working in his consciousness. Something new was alert in him. At the back of his reticent, guarded mind he kept his secret alive and vivid. She was at his mercy, for he was unscrupulous, his standard was not her standard.

He looked at her curiously. She was not beautiful, her nose was too large, her chin was too small, her neck was too thin. But her skin was clear and fine, she had a high-bred sensitiveness. This queer, brave, high-bred quality she shared with her father. The charity boy could see it in her tapering fingers, which were white and ringed. The same glamour that he knew in the elderly man he now saw in the woman. And he wanted to possess himself of it, he wanted to make himself master of it. As he went about through the old pottery-yard, his secretive mind schemed and worked. To be master of that strange soft delicacy such as he had felt in her hand upon his face — this was what he set himself towards. He was secretly plotting.

He watched Matilda as she went about, and she became aware of his attention, as of some shadow following her. But her pride made her ignore it. When he sauntered near her, his hands in his pockets, she received him with that same commonplace kindness which mastered him more than any contempt. Her superior breeding seemed to control him. She made herself feel towards him exactly as she had always felt: he was a young boy who lived in the house with them, but was a stranger. Only, she dared not remember his face under her hand. When she remembered that, she was bewildered. Her hand had offended her, she wanted to cut it off. And she wanted, fiercely, to cut off the memory in him. She assumed she had done so.

One day, when he sat talking with his 'uncle', he looked straight into the eyes of the sick man, and said:

'But I shouldn't like to live and die here in Rawsley.'

'No — well — you needn't,' said the sick man.

'Do you think Cousin Matilda likes it?'

'I should think so.'

'I don't call it much of a life,' said the youth. 'How much older is she than me, Uncle?'

The sick man looked at the young soldier.

'A good bit,' he said.

'Over thirty?' said Hadrian.

'Well, not so much. She's thirty-two.' Hadrian considered a while.

'She doesn't look it,' he said. Again the sick father looked at him.

'Do you think she'd like to leave here?' said Hadrian.

'Nay, I don't know,' replied the father, restive.

Hadrian sat still, having his own thoughts. Then in a small, quiet voice, as if he were speaking from inside himself, he said:

'I'd marry her if you wanted me to.'

The sick man raised his eyes suddenly, and stared. He stared for a long time.

The youth looked inscrutably out of the window.

'You!' said the sick man, mocking, with some contempt. Hadrian turned and met his eyes. The two men had an inexplicable understanding.

'If you wasn't against it,' said Hadrian.

'Nay,' said the father, turning aside, 'I don't think I'm against it. I've never thought of it. But — But Emmie's the youngest.'

He had flushed, and looked suddenly more alive. Secretly he loved the boy. 'You might ask her,' said Hadrian.

The elder man considered.

'Hadn't you better ask her yourself?' he said.

'She'd take more notice of you,' said Hadrian.

They were both silent. Then Emmie came in.

For two days Mr. Rockley was excited and thoughtful. Hadrian went about quietly, secretly, unquestioning. At last the father and daughter were alone together. It was

very early morning, the father had been in much pain. As the pain abated, he lay still, thinking.

‘Matilda!’ he said suddenly, looking at his daughter.

‘Yes, I’m here,’ she said.

‘Ay! I want you to do something —

’ She rose in anticipation.

‘Nay, sit still. I want you to marry Hadrian —’

She thought he was raving. She rose, bewildered and frightened.

‘Nay, sit you still, sit you still. You hear what I tell you.’

‘But you don’t know what you’re saying, father.’

‘Ay, I know well enough. I want you to marry Hadrian, I tell you.’

She was dumbfounded. He was a man of few words.

‘You’ll do what I tell you,’ he said.

She looked at him slowly.

‘What put such an idea in your mind?’ she said proudly.

‘He did.’

Matilda almost looked her father down, her pride was so offended.

‘Why, it’s disgraceful,’ she

said. ‘Why?’

She watched him slowly.

‘What do you ask me for?’ she said. ‘It’s disgusting.’

‘The lad’s sound enough,’ he replied, testily.

‘You’d better tell him to clear out,’ she said, coldly.

He turned and looked out of the window. She sat flushed and erect for a long time.

At length her father turned to her, looking really malevolent.

‘If you won’t,’ he said, ‘you’re a fool, and I’ll make you pay for your foolishness, do you see?’

Suddenly a cold fear gripped her. She could not believe her senses. She was terrified and bewildered. She stared at her father, believing him to be delirious, or mad, or drunk. What could she do?

‘I tell you,’ he said. ‘I’ll send for Whittle tomorrow if you don’t. You shall neither of you have anything of mine.’

Whittle was the solicitor. She understood her father well enough: he would send for his solicitor, and make a will leaving all his property to Hadrian: neither she nor Emmie should have anything. It was too much. She rose and went out of the room, up to her own room, where she locked herself in.

She did not come out for some hours. At last, late at night, she confided in Emmie.

‘The sliving demon, he wants the money,’ said Emmie. ‘My father’s out of his mind.’

The thought that Hadrian merely wanted the money was another blow to Matilda.

She did not love the impossible youth — but she had not yet learned to think of him as a thing of evil. He now became hideous to her mind.

Emmie had a little scene with her father next day.

‘You don’t mean what you said to our Matilda yesterday, do you, father?’ she asked aggressively.

‘Yes,’ he replied.

‘What, that you’ll alter your will?’ ‘Yes.’

‘You won’t,’ said his angry daughter.

But he looked at her with a malevolent little smile.

‘Annie!’ he shouted. ‘Annie!’

He had still power to make his voice carry. The servant maid came in from the kitchen.

‘Put your things on, and go down to Whittle’s office, and say I want to see Mr. Whittle as soon as he can, and will he bring a will-form.’

The sick man lay back a little — he could not lie down. His daughter sat as if she had been struck. Then she left the room.

Hadrian was pottering about in the garden. She went straight down to him.

‘Here,’ she said. ‘You’d better get off. You’d better take your things and go from here, quick.’

Hadrian looked slowly at the infuriated girl. ‘Who says so?’ he asked.

‘We say so — get off, you’ve done enough mischief and damage.’ ‘Does Uncle say so?’

‘Yes, he does.’

‘I’ll go and ask him.’

But like a fury Emmie barred his way.

‘No, you needn’t. You needn’t ask him nothing at all. We don’t want you, so you can go.’

‘Uncle’s boss here.’

‘A man that’s dying, and you crawling round and working on him for his money! — you’re not fit to live.’

‘Oh!’ he said. ‘Who says I’m working for his money?’

‘I say. But my father told our Matilda, and *she* knows what you are. *She* knows what you’re after. So you might as well clear out, for all you’ll get — guttersnipe!’

He turned his back on her, to think. It had not occurred to him that they would think he was after the money. He *did* want the money — badly. He badly wanted to be an employer himself, not one of the employed. But he knew, in his subtle, calculating way, that it was not for money he wanted Matilda. He wanted both the money and Matilda. But he told himself the two desires were separate, not one. He could not do with Matilda, *without* the money. But he did not want her *for* the money.

When he got this clear in his mind, he sought for an opportunity to tell it her, lurking and watching. But she avoided him. In the evening the lawyer came. Mr. Rockley seemed to have a new access of strength — a will was drawn up, making the previous arrangements wholly conditional. The old will held good, if Matilda would consent to marry Hadrian. If she refused then at the end of six months the whole property passed to Hadrian.

Mr. Rockley told this to the young man, with malevolent satisfaction. He seemed to have a strange desire, quite unreasonable, for revenge upon the women who had surrounded him for so long, and served him so carefully.

‘Tell her in front of me,’ said Hadrian.

So Mr. Rockley sent for his daughters.

At last they came, pale, mute, stubborn. Matilda seemed to have retired far off, Emmie seemed like a fighter ready to fight to the death. The sick man reclined on the bed, his eyes bright, his puffed hand trembling. But his face had again some of its old, bright handsomeness. Hadrian sat quiet, a little aside: the indomitable, dangerous charity boy.

‘There’s the will,’ said their father, pointing them to the paper.

The two women sat mute and immovable, they took no notice.

‘Either you marry Hadrian, or he has everything,’ said the father with satisfaction.

‘Then let him have everything,’ said Matilda boldly.

‘He’s not! He’s not!’ cried Emmie fiercely. ‘He’s not going to have it. The guttersnipe!’

An amused look came on her father’s face. ‘You hear that, Hadrian,’ he said.

‘I didn’t offer to marry Cousin Matilda for the money,’ said Hadrian, flushing and moving on his seat.

Matilda looked at him slowly, with her dark-blue, drugged eyes. He seemed a strange little monster to her.

‘Why, you liar, you know you did,’ cried Emmie.

The sick man laughed. Matilda continued to gaze strangely at the young man. ‘She knows I didn’t,’ said Hadrian.

He too had his courage, as a rat has indomitable courage in the end. Hadrian had some of the neatness, the reserve, the underground quality of the rat. But he had perhaps the ultimate courage, the most unquenchable courage of all.

Emmie looked at her sister.

‘Oh, well,’ she said. ‘Matilda — don’t bother. Let him have everything, we can look after ourselves.’

‘I know he’ll take everything,’ said Matilda, abstractedly.

Hadrian did not answer. He knew in fact that if Matilda refused him he would take everything, and go off with it.

‘A clever little mannie —!’ said Emmie, with a jeering grimace.

The father laughed noiselessly to himself. But he was tired. . . .

‘Go on, then,’ he said. ‘Go on, let me be quiet.’ Emmie turned and looked at him.

‘You deserve what you’ve got,’ she said to her father bluntly. ‘Go on,’ he answered mildly. ‘Go on.’

Another night passed — a night nurse sat up with Mr. Rockley. Another day came. Hadrian was there as ever, in his woollen jersey and coarse khaki trousers and bare neck. Matilda went about, frail and distant, Emmie black-browed in spite of her

blondness. They were all quiet, for they did not intend the mystified servant to learn anything.

Mr. Rockley had very bad attacks of pain, he could not breathe. The end seemed near. They all went about quiet and stoical, all unyielding. Hadrian pondered within himself. If he did not marry Matilda he would go to Canada with twenty thousand pounds. This was itself a very satisfactory prospect. If Matilda consented he would have nothing — she would have her own money.

Emmie was the one to act. She went off in search of the solicitor and brought him with her. There was an interview, and Whittle tried to frighten the youth into withdrawal — but without avail. The clergyman and relatives were summoned — but Hadrian stared at them and took no notice. It made him angry, however.

He wanted to catch Matilda alone. Many days went by, and he was not successful: she avoided him. At last, lurking, he surprised her one day as she came to pick gooseberries, and he cut off her retreat. He came to the point at once.

‘You don’t want me, then?’ he said, in his subtle, insinuating voice. ‘I don’t want to speak to you,’ she said, averting her face.

‘You put your hand on me, though,’ he said. ‘You shouldn’t have done that, and then I should never have thought of it. You shouldn’t have touched me.’

‘If you were anything decent, you’d know that was a mistake, and forget it,’ she said. ‘I know it was a mistake — but I shan’t forget it. If you wake a man up, he can’t go to sleep again because he’s told to.’

‘If you had any decent feeling in you, you’d have gone away,’ she replied.

‘I didn’t want to,’ he replied.

She looked away into the distance. At last she asked:

‘What do you persecute me for, if it isn’t for the money. I’m old enough to be your mother. In a way I’ve been your mother.’

‘Doesn’t matter,’ he said. ‘You’ve been no mother to me. Let us marry and go out to Canada — you might as well — you’ve touched me.’

She was white and trembling. Suddenly she flushed with anger.

‘It’s so *indecent*,’ she said.

‘How?’ he retorted. ‘You touched me.’

But she walked away from him. She felt as if he had trapped her. He was angry and depressed, he felt again despised.

That same evening she went into her father’s room. ‘Yes,’ she said suddenly. ‘I’ll marry him.’

Her father looked up at her. He was in pain, and very ill.

‘You like him now, do you?’ he said, with a faint smile.

She looked down into his face, and saw death not far off. She turned and went coldly out of the room.

The solicitor was sent for, preparations were hastily made. In all the interval Matilda did not speak to Hadrian, never answered him if he addressed her. He approached her in the morning.

‘You’ve come round to it, then?’ he said, giving her a pleasant look from his twinkling, almost kindly eyes. She looked down at him and turned aside. She looked down on him both literally and figuratively. Still he persisted, and triumphed. Emmie raved and wept, the secret flew abroad. But Matilda was silent and unmoved, Hadrian was quiet and satisfied, and nipped with fear also. But he held out against his fear. Mr. Rockley was very ill, but unchanged.

On the third day the marriage took place. Matilda and Hadrian drove straight home from the registrar, and went straight into the room of the dying man. His face lit up with a clear twinkling smile.

‘Hadrian — you’ve got her?’ he said, a little hoarsely.

‘Yes,’ said Hadrian, who was pale round the gills.

‘Ay, my lad, I’m glad you’re mine,’ replied the dying man. Then he turned his eyes closely on Matilda.

‘Let’s look at you, Matilda,’ he said. Then his voice went strange and unrecognizable.

‘Kiss me,’ he said.

She stooped and kissed him. She had never kissed him before, not since she was a tiny child. But she was quiet, very still.

‘Kiss him,’ the dying man said.

Obediently, Matilda put forward her mouth and kissed the young husband. ‘That’s right! That’s right!’ murmured the dying man.

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. (M, WR)

-to be an old maid -to be short of speech -to have expectations above the common -
to have a keen memory stinging one’s mind -to look after the house-keeping

-to be dumbfounded -to keep touch with sth -to be not fit to live

-to be a trying circumstance -to be hastily made -to see to sth -
sb’s face lights up with a smile

2. Give the English for the Russian word in brackets. (WR)

1. In 19th century, women over 30 who were not married were considered (старая дева).

2. Only ambitious and goal-getting people, who (хотеть большего), are sure to achieve success.

3. Since he had just finished university, lack of experience was a (затруднительное обстоятельство) for him.

4. She used to (заведовать) laundry and ironing.

5. She was (шокировать) by the news of her father’s sudden death.

6. After all he had put her through, she considered him (быть недостойным жить).

3. Give extended answers to the following questions. (O)

1. Why were the sisters considered old maids?

2. What was the sisters’ attitude towards Hadrian?

3. Why were the sisters a bit afraid of Hadrian’s arrival?

4. What was Hadrian’s arrival like? What was the aim of it?

5. How did Hadrian and Mr Rockley treat each other?

6. What mistake did Matilda make one night?
7. How did Matilda's father make her pay for her mistake?
8. What were Hadrian's plans for the future?
9. Did Hadrian want only money?
10. What did Matilda do to her father that she had never done before?

4. Give the Russian for the following. (WR)

1. They did not quite realize how they missed the shrieking, shouting lasses, whom they had known all their lives and disliked them.
2. He would give a little contemptuous curve to his lip, and take on a shy charity-boy grin, when refinement was thrust upon him.
3. Cousin Matilda blushed deep with mortification when the self-possessed young man walked in with his kit-bag, and put his cap on the sewing machine.
4. She now dressed herself most scrupulously, carefully folded her long, beautiful, blonde hair, touched her pallor with a little rouge, and put her long string of exquisite crystal beads over her soft green dress.
5. But the soft, straying tenderness of her hand on his face startled something out of his soul.
6. She was at his mercy, for he was unscrupulous, his standard was not her standard.

5. Translate the following passages. (WR)

1. "But whether the two Rockley girls..."—"...and disliked so much."
2. "In the quiet, melancholy..."—"...whiskey-drinker."
3. "That night Matilda..."—"...on the bed."
4. "He turned his back on her..."—"...her for the money."

6. Find in the story a word or a word-combination close in meaning to the word(s) given in italics. (O)

1. The air was filled with the voices of shrieking, shouting *girls* and boys.
2. Da Vinci was a man of many *talents*.
3. Although he used to be a *child genius*, he didn't manage to get any profit out of it and died in poverty.
4. Her husband's numerous love affairs were a great *disappointment* to her.
5. In spite the long separation, they were talking like *old friends*.
6. She thought he was *insane*, because after all he had done he still wanted to be her boyfriend.

7. Fill each gap with a preposition. (WR, M)

-to have a passion...sth -to die... -to be...ease -...bay -to keep touch...sth
 -to be prejudiced... -...the bottom of sth -to be...sb's mercy -...the protection of sth
 -to have no respect...sb -to part...sth -to take notice...sth

8. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary). (WR)

-profit -charity -different -glamour-contempt

9. Consult your dictionary and find collocations of the following words: (WR)

-notice -advantage -profit -favour

10. Explain the meaning of the following idioms. Make up sentences of your own using them: (O)

-an old flame; steal sb's heart; the man of one's dreams; break sb's heart; wear one's heart on one's sleeve; all's fair in love and war; the black sheep of the family; play hard to get; to tie the knot; blood is thicker than water.

11. Fill in the gaps with a prefix: (WR)

...difference ...expectedly ...known ...explicable ...reasonable
...quenchable ...emotional ...real ...scrupulous ...questioning
...recognizable ...yielding ...satisfactory ...comfortable ...scrutably
...graceful ...movable ...decent

12. Make sketches of the main characters (Matilda, Emmie, Hadrian) using the following phrases: (O)

-to be old maids; to have expectations above common; to look after the house-keeping; to have no accomplishments; to have a naturally refined and sensible mind; kind-hearted by nature; ordinary; charity institution instinct; to regard sb with a certain laconic indifference; to play truant; to keep touch with the home; self-possessed, vigorous; to have a good deal of suffering and sorrow; to be as cocky as ever; to reason one's feelings.

13. Retell the story as if you were (O)

-Emmie and Matilda Rockley -Hadrian -Mr Rockley

14. Speak your mind on the following points. (O)

1. "If you wake a man up, he can't go to sleep again because he's told to."
2. "It is not easy for the girls who have expectations above common to find husbands."
3. "But the soft, straying tenderness of her hand on his face startled something out of his soul."

Story 10 David Herbert Lawrence The Lovely Lady

At seventy-two, Pauline Attenborough could still sometimes be mistaken, in the half-light, for thirty. She really was a wonderfully-preserved woman, of perfect chic. Of course it helps a great deal to have the right frame. She would be an exquisite skeleton, and her skull would be an exquisite skull, like that of some Etruscan woman with feminine charm still in the swerve of the bone and the pretty, naïve teeth.

Mrs Attenborough's face was of the perfect oval and slightly flat type that wears best. There is no flesh to sag. Her nose rode serenely, in its finely-bridged curve. Only the big grey eyes were a tiny bit prominent, on the surface of her face, and they gave her away most. The bluish lids were heavy, as if they ached sometimes with the strain of keeping the eyes beneath them arch and bright; and at the corners of the eyes were fine little wrinkles which would slacken into haggardness, then be pulled up tense again to that bright, gay look like a Leonardo woman who really could laugh outright. Her niece Cecilia was perhaps the only person in the world who was aware of the invisible little wire which connected Pauline's eye-wrinkles with Pauline's willpower. Only Cecilia consciously watched the eyes go haggard and old and tired, and remain so, for hours; until Robert came home. Then ping! — the mysterious little wire that worked between Pauline's will and her face went taut, the weary, haggard, prominent eyes suddenly began to gleam, the eyelids arched, the queer, curved

eyebrows which floated in such frail arches on Pauline's forehead began to gather a mocking significance, and you had the REAL lovely lady, in all her charm.

She really had the secret of everlasting youth; that is to say, she could don her youth again like an eagle. But she was sparing of it. She was wise enough not to try being young for too many people. Her son Robert, in the evenings, and Sir Wilfrid Knipe sometimes in the afternoon to tea; then occasional visitors on Sunday, when Robert was home — for these she was her lovely and changeless self, that age could not wither, nor custom stale; so bright and kindly and yet subtly mocking, like Mona Lisa, who knew a thing or two. But Pauline knew more, so she needn't be smug at all. She could laugh that lovely, mocking Bacchante laugh of hers, which was at the same time never malicious, always good-naturedly tolerant, both of virtues and vices — the former, of course, taking much more tolerating. So she suggested, roguishly.

Only with her niece Cecilia she did not trouble to keep up the glamour. Ciss was not very observant, anyhow; and, more than that, she was plain; more still, she was in love with Robert; and most of all, she was thirty, and dependent on her aunt Pauline. Oh, Cecilia — why make music for her?

Cecilia, called by her aunt and by her cousin Robert just Ciss, like a cat spitting, was a big, dark-complexioned, pug-faced young woman who very rarely spoke, and when she did couldn't get it out. She was the daughter of a poor Congregational clergyman who had been, while he lived, brother to Ronald, Aunt Pauline's husband. Ronald and the Congregational minister were both well dead, and Aunt Pauline had had charge of Ciss for the last five years.

They lived all together in a quite exquisite though rather small Queen Anne house some twenty-five miles out of town, secluded in a little dale, and surrounded by small but very quaint and pleasant grounds. It was an ideal place and an ideal life for Aunt Pauline, at the age of seventy-two. When the kingfishers flashed up the little stream in her garden, going under the alders, something still flashed in her heart. She was that kind of woman.

Robert, who was two years older than Ciss, went every day to town, to his chambers in one of the Inns. He was a barrister, and, to his secret but very deep mortification, he earned about a hundred pounds a year. He simply COULDN'T get above that figure, though it was rather easy to get below it. Of course, it didn't matter. Pauline had money. But then, what was Pauline's was Pauline's, and though she could give almost lavishly, still, one was always aware of having a LOVELY and UNDESERVED present made to one. Presents are so much nicer when they're undeserved, Aunt Pauline would say.

Robert, too, was plain, and almost speechless. He was medium sized, rather broad and stout, though not fat. Only his creamy, clean-shaven face was rather fat, and sometimes suggestive of an Italian priest, in its silence and its secrecy. But he had grey eyes like his mother, but very shy and uneasy, not bold like hers. Perhaps Ciss was the only person who fathomed his awful shyness and malaise, his habitual feeling that he was in the wrong place: almost like a soul that has got into a wrong body. But he never did anything about it. He went up to Chambers, and read law. It was, however, all the weird old processes that interested him. He had, unknown to

everybody but his mother, a quite extraordinary collection of old Mexican legal documents — reports of processes and trials, pleas, accusations: the weird and awful mixture of ecclesiastical law and common law in seventeenth-century Mexico. He had started a study in this direction through coming across the report of a trial of two English sailors, for murder, in Mexico, in 1620, and he had gone on, when the next document was an accusation against a Don Miguel Estrada for seducing one of the nuns of the Sacred Heart Convent in Oaxaca in 1680.

Pauline and her son Robert had wonderful evenings with these old papers. The lovely lady knew a little Spanish. She even looked a trifle Spanish herself, with a high comb and a marvellous dark-brown shawl embroidered in thick silvery silk embroidery. So she would sit at the perfect old table, soft as velvet in its deep brown surface, a high comb in her hair, ear-rings with dropping pendants in her ears, her arms bare and still beautiful, a few strings of pearls round her throat, a puce velvet dress on and this or another beautiful shawl, and by candlelight she looked, yes, a Spanish high-bred beauty of thirty-two or three. She set the candles to give her face just the chiaroscuro she knew suited her; her high chair that rose behind her face was done in old green brocade, against which her face emerged like a Christmas rose.

They were always three at table, and they always drank a bottle of champagne: Pauline two glasses, Ciss two glasses, Robert the rest. The lovely lady sparkled and was radiant. Ciss, her black hair bobbed, her broad shoulders in a very nice and becoming dress that Aunt Pauline had helped her to make, stared from her aunt to her cousin and back again, with rather confused, mute hazel eyes, and played the part of an audience suitably impressed. She WAS impressed, somewhere, all the time. And even rendered speechless by Pauline's brilliancy, even after five years. But at the bottom of her consciousness was the data of as weird a document as Robert ever studied: all the things she knew about her aunt and her cousin.

Robert was always a gentleman, with an old-fashioned, punctilious courtesy that covered his shyness quite completely. He was, and Ciss knew it, more confused than shy. He was worse than she was. Cecilia's own confusion dated from only five years back. Robert's must have started before he was born. In the lovely lady's womb he must have felt VERY confused.

He paid all his attention to his mother, drawn to her as a humble flower to the sun. And yet, priest-like, he was all the time aware, with the tail of his consciousness, that Ciss was there, and that she was a bit shut out of it, and that something wasn't right. He was aware of the third consciousness in the room. Whereas to Pauline, her niece Cecilia was an appropriate part of her own setting, rather than a distinct consciousness.

Robert took coffee with his mother and Ciss in the warm drawing-room, where all the furniture was so lovely, all collectors' pieces — Mrs Attenborough had made her own money, dealing privately in pictures and furniture and rare things from barbaric countries — and the three talked desultorily till about eight or half-past. It was very pleasant, very cosy, very homely even; Pauline made a real home cosiness out of so much elegant material. The chat was simple, and nearly always bright. Pauline was

her REAL self, emanating a friendly mockery and an odd, ironic gaiety — till there came a little pause.

At which Ciss always rose and said good-night, and carried out the coffee-tray, to prevent Burnett from intruding any more.

And then! ah, then, the lovely, glowing intimacy of the evening, between mother and son, when they deciphered manuscripts and discussed points, Pauline with that eagerness of a girl for which she was famous. And it was quite genuine. In some mysterious way she had SAVED UP her power for being thrilled, in connection with a man. Robert, solid, rather quiet and subdued, seemed like the elder of the two — almost like a priest with a young girl pupil. And that was rather how he felt.

Ciss had a flat for herself just across the courtyard, over the old coach-house and stables. There were no horses. Robert kept his car in the coach-house. Ciss had three very nice rooms up there, stretching along in a row one after the other, and she had got used to the ticking of the stable clock.

But sometimes she did not go to her rooms. In the summer she would sit on the lawn, and from the open window of the drawing-room upstairs she would hear Pauline's wonderful, heart-searching laugh. And in winter the young woman would put on a thick coat and walk slowly to the little balustraded bridge over the stream, and then look back at the three lighted windows of that drawing-room where mother and son were so happy together.

Ciss loved Robert, and she believed that Pauline intended the two of them to marry — when she was dead. But poor Robert, he was so convulsed with shyness already, with man or woman. What would he be when his mother was dead? — in a dozen more years. He would be just a shell, the shell of a man who had never lived.

The strange, unspoken sympathy of the young with one another, when they are overshadowed by the old, was one of the bonds between Robert and Ciss. But another bond, which Ciss did not know how to draw tight, was the bond of passion. Poor Robert was by nature a passionate man. His silence and his agonised, though hidden, shyness were both the result of a secret physical passionateness. And how Pauline could play on this! Ah, Ciss was not blind to the eyes which he fixed on his mother

— eyes fascinated yet humiliated, full of shame. He was ashamed that he was not a man. And he did not love his mother. He was fascinated by her. Completely fascinated. And for the rest, paralysed in a life-long confusion.

Ciss stayed in the garden till the lights leapt up in Pauline's bedroom — about ten o'clock. The lovely lady had retired. Robert would now stay another hour or so, alone. Then he, too, would retire. Ciss, in the dark outside, sometimes wished she could creep up to him and say: "Oh, Robert! It's all wrong!" But Aunt Pauline would hear. And, anyhow, Ciss couldn't do it. She went off to her own rooms, once more, once more, and so forever.

In the morning coffee was brought up on a tray to each of the rooms of the three relatives. Ciss had to be at Sir Wilfrid Knipe's at nine o'clock, to give two hours' lessons to his little grand-daughter. It was her sole serious occupation, except that she played the piano for the love of it. Robert set off to town about nine. And as a rule, Aunt Pauline appeared to lunch, though sometimes not till tea-time. When she

appeared, she looked fresh and young. But she was inclined to fade rather rapidly, like a flower without water, in the daytime. Her hour was the candle hour.

So she always rested in the afternoon. When the sun shone, if possible she took a sun-bath. This was one of her secrets. Her lunch was very light; she could take her sun-and-air-bath before noon or after, as it pleased her. Often it was in the afternoon, when the sun shone very warmly into a queer little yew-walled square just behind the stables. Here Ciss stretched out the lying-chair and rugs, and put the light parasol handy in the silent little enclosure of thick dark yew-hedges beyond the old red walls of the unused stables. And hither came the lovely lady with her book. Ciss then had to be on guard in one of her own rooms, should her aunt, who was very keen-eared, hear a footstep.

One afternoon it occurred to Cecilia that she herself might while away this rather long afternoon hour by taking a sun-bath. She was growing restive. The thought of the flat roof of the stable buildings, to which she could climb from a loft at the end, started her on a new adventure. She often went on to the roof; she had to, to wind up the stable clock, which was a job she had assumed to herself. Now she took a rug, climbed out under the heavens, looked at the sky and the great elm-tops, looked at the sun, then took off her things and lay down perfectly securely, in a corner of the roof under the parapet, full in the sun.

It was rather lovely, to bask all one's length like this in warm sun and air. Yes, it was very lovely! It even seemed to melt some of the hard bitterness of her heart, some of that core of unspoken resentment which never dissolved. Luxuriously, she spread herself, so that the sun should touch her limbs fully, fully. If she had no other lover, she should have the sun! She rolled over voluptuously.

And suddenly her heart stood still in her body, and her hair almost rose on end as a voice said very softly, musingly, in her ear:

"No, Henry dear! It was not my fault you died instead of marrying that Claudia. No, darling. I was quite, quite willing for you to marry her, unsuitable though she was." Cecilia sank down on her rug, powerless and perspiring with dread. That awful voice, so soft, so musing, yet so unnatural. Not a human voice at all. Yet there must, there MUST be someone on the roof! Oh, how unspeakably awful!

She lifted her weak head and peeped across the sloping leads. Nobody! The chimneys were too narrow to shelter anybody. There was nobody on the roof. Then it must be someone in the trees, in the elms. Either that, or — terror unspeakable — a bodiless voice! She reared her head a little higher.

And as she did so, came the voice again:

"No, darling! I told you you would tire of her in six months. And you see it was true, dear. It was true, true, true! I wanted to spare you that. So it wasn't I who made you feel weak and disabled, wanting that very silly Claudia — poor thing, she looked so woebegone afterwards! — wanting her and not wanting her. You got yourself into that perplexity, my dear. I only warned you. What else could I do? And you lost your spirit and died without ever knowing me again. It was bitter, bitter —"

The voice faded away. Cecilia subsided weakly on to her rug, after the anguished tension of listening. Oh, it was awful. The sun shone, the sky was blue, all seemed so

lovely and afternoony and summery. And yet, oh, horror! — she was going to be forced to believe in the supernatural! And she loathed the supernatural, ghosts and voices and rappings and all the rest.

But that awful, creepy, bodiless voice, with its rusty sort of whispers of an overtone! It had something so fearfully familiar in it, too! And yet was so utterly uncanny. Poor Cecilia could only lie there unclothed, and so all the more agonisingly helpless, inert, collapsed in sheer dread.

And then she heard the thing sigh! — a deep sigh that seemed weirdly familiar, yet was not human. “Ah well, ah well! the heart must bleed. Better it should bleed than break. It is grief, grief! But it wasn’t my fault, dear. And Robert could marry our poor, dull Ciss tomorrow, if he wanted her. But he doesn’t care about it, so why force him into anything?” The sounds were very uneven, sometimes only a husky sort of whisper. Listen! Listen!

Cecilia was about to give vent to loud and piercing screams of hysteria, when the last two sentences arrested her. All her caution and her cunning sprang alert. It was Aunt Pauline! It **MUST** be Aunt Pauline, practising ventriloquism, or something like that. What a devil she was!

Where was she? She must be lying down there, right below where Cecilia herself was lying. And it was either some fiend’s trick of ventriloquism, or else thought-transference. The sounds were very uneven; sometimes quite inaudible, sometimes only a brushing sort of noise. Ciss listened intently. No, it could not be ventriloquism. It was worse: some form of thought-transference that conveyed itself like sound. Some horror of that sort! Cecilia still lay weak and inert, too terrified to move; but she was growing calmer with suspicion. It was some diabolic trick of that unnatural woman.

But **WHAT** a devil of a woman! She even knew that she, Cecilia, had mentally accused her of killing her son Henry. Poor Henry was Robert’s elder brother, twelve years older than Robert. He had died suddenly when he was twenty-two, after an awful struggle with himself, because he was passionately in love with a young and very good-looking actress, and his mother had humorously despised him for the attachment. So he had caught some sudden ordinary disease, but the poison had gone to his brain and killed him before he ever regained consciousness. Ciss knew the few facts from her own father. And lately she had been thinking that Pauline was going to kill Robert as she had killed Henry. It was clear murder: a mother murdering her sensitive sons, who were fascinated by her: the Circe!

“I suppose I may as well get up,” murmured the dim, unbreathing voice. “Too much sun is as bad as too little. Enough sun, enough love-thrill, enough proper food, and not too much of any of them, and a woman might live forever. I verily believe, forever. If she absorbs as much vitality as she expends. Or perhaps a trifle more!”

It was certainly Aunt Pauline! How — how terrible! She, Ciss, was hearing Aunt Pauline’s thoughts. Oh, how ghastly! Aunt Pauline was sending out her thoughts in a sort of radio, and she, Ciss, had to **HEAR** what her aunt was thinking. How ghastly! How insufferable! One of them would surely have to die.

She twisted and lay inert and crumpled, staring vacantly in front of her. Vacantly! Vacantly! And her eyes were staring almost into a hole. She was staring in it unseeing, a hole going down in the corner, from the lead gutter. It meant nothing to her. Only it frightened her a little more.

When suddenly, out of the hole came a sigh and a last whisper: "Ah well! Pauline! Get up, it's enough for today." Good God! Out of the hole of the rain-pipe! The rain-pipe was acting as a speaking-tube! Impossible! No, quite possible. She had read of it even in some book. And Aunt Pauline, like the old and guilty woman she was talked aloud to herself. That was it!

A sullen exultance sprang in Ciss's breast. THAT was why she would never have anybody, not even Robert, in her bedroom. That was why she never dozed in a chair, never sat absent-minded anywhere, but went to her room, and kept to her room, except when she roused herself to be alert. When she slackened off she talked to herself! She talked in a soft little crazy voice to herself. But she was not crazy. It was only her thoughts murmuring themselves aloud.

So she had qualms about poor Henry! Well she might have! Ciss believed that Aunt Pauline had loved her big, handsome, brilliant first-born much more than she loved Robert, and that his death had been a terrible blow and a chagrin to her. Poor Robert had been only ten years old when Henry died. Since then he had been the substitute. Ah, how awful!

But Aunt Pauline was a strange woman. She had left her husband when Henry was a small child, some years even before Robert was born. There was no quarrel. Sometimes she saw her husband again, quite amiably, but a little mockingly. And she even gave him money.

For Pauline earned all her own. Her father had been a Consul in the East and in Naples, and a devoted collector of beautiful exotic things. When he died, soon after his grandson Henry was born, he left his collection of treasures to his daughter. And Pauline, who had really a passion and a genius for loveliness, whether in texture or form or colour, had laid the basis of her fortune on her father's collection. She had gone on collecting, buying where she could, and selling to collectors or to museums. She was one of the first to sell old, weird African figures to the museums, and ivory carvings from New Guinea. She bought Renoir as soon as she saw his pictures. But not Rousseau. And all by herself she made a fortune.

After her husband died she had not married again. She was not even KNOWN to have had lovers. If she did have lovers, it was not among the men who admired her most and paid her devout and open attendance. To these she was a "friend".

Cecilia slipped on her clothes and caught up her rug, hastening carefully down the ladder to the loft. As she descended she heard the ringing, musical call: "All right, Ciss"—which meant that the lovely lady was finished, and returning to the house.

Even her voice was wonderfully young and sonorous, beautifully balanced and self-possessed. So different from the little voice in which she talked to herself. THAT was much more the voice of an old woman.

Ciss hastened round to the yew enclosure, where lay the comfortable chaise longue with the various delicate rugs. Everything Pauline had was choice, to the fine straw

mat on the floor. The great yew walls were beginning to cast long shadows. Only in the corner where the rugs tumbled their delicate colours was there hot, still sunshine. The rugs folded up, the chair lifted away, Cecilia stooped to look at the mouth of the rain-pipe. There it was, in the corner, under a little hood of masonry and just projecting from the thick leaves of the creeper on the wall. If Pauline, lying there, turned her face towards the wall, she would speak into the very mouth of the tube. Cecilia was reassured. She had heard her aunt's thoughts indeed, but by no uncanny agency.

That evening, as if aware of something, Pauline was a little quieter than usual, though she looked her own serene, rather mysterious self. And after coffee she said to Robert and Ciss:

"I'm so sleepy. The sun has made me so sleepy. I feel full of sunshine like a bee. I shall go to bed, if you don't mind. You two sit and have a talk."

Cecilia looked quickly at her cousin.

"Perhaps you'd rather be alone?" she said to him.

"No — no," he replied. "Do keep me company for a while, if it doesn't bore you." The windows were open, the scent of honeysuckle wafted in, with the sound of an owl. Robert smoked in silence. There was a sort of despair in his motionless, rather squat body. He looked like a caryatid bearing a weight.

"Do you remember Cousin Henry?" Cecilia asked him suddenly. He looked up in surprise.

"Yes. Very well," he said.

"What did he look like?" she said, glancing into her cousin's big, secret-troubled eyes, in which there was so much frustration.

"Oh, he was handsome: tall, and fresh-coloured, with mother's soft brown hair." As a matter of fact, Pauline's hair was grey. "The ladies admired him very much; and he was at all the dances."

"And what kind of character had he?"

"Oh, very good-natured and jolly. He liked to be amused. He was rather quick and clever, like mother, and very good company."

"And did he love your mother?"

"Very much. She loved him too — better than she does me, as a matter of fact. He was so much more nearly her idea of a man."

"Why was he more her idea of a man?"

"Tall — handsome — attractive, and very good company — and would, I believe, have been very successful at law. I'm afraid I am merely negative in all those respects."

Ciss looked at him attentively, with her slow-thinking hazel eyes. Under his impassive mask she knew he suffered.

"Do you think you are so much more negative than he?" she said. He did not lift his face. But after a few moments he replied:

"My life, certainly, is a negative affair."

She hesitated before she dared ask him:

"And do you mind?"

He did not answer her at all. Her heart sank.

“You see, I’m afraid my life is as negative as yours is,” she said. “And I’m beginning to mind bitterly. I’m thirty.”

She saw his creamy, well-bred hand tremble.

“I suppose,” he said, without looking at her, “one will rebel when it is too late.” That was queer, from him.

“Robert!” she said. “Do you like me at all?”

She saw his dusky-creamy face, so changeless in its folds, go pale. “I am very fond of you,” he murmured.

“Won’t you kiss me? Nobody ever kisses me,” she said pathetically.

He looked at her, his eyes strange with fear and a certain haughtiness. Then he rose, and came softly over to her, and kissed her gently on the cheek.

“It’s an awful shame, Ciss!” he said softly.

She caught his hand and pressed it to her breast.

“And sit with me sometimes in the garden,” she said, murmuring with difficulty.

“Won’t you?”

He looked at her anxiously and searchingly.

“What about mother?”

Ciss smiled a funny little smile, and looked into his eyes. He suddenly flushed crimson, turning aside his face. It was a painful sight.

“I know,” he said. “I am no lover of women.”

He spoke with sarcastic stoicism, against himself, but even she did not know the shame it was to him.

“You never try to be,” she said.

Again his eyes changed uncannily.

“Does one have to try?” he said.

“Why, yes. One never does anything if one doesn’t try.”

He went pale again.

“Perhaps you are right,” he said.

In a few minutes she left him, and went to her rooms. At least she had tried to take off the everlasting lid from things.

The weather continued sunny, Pauline continued her sun-baths, and Ciss lay on the roof eavesdropping, in the literal sense of the word. But Pauline was not to be heard. No sound came up the pipe. She must be lying with her face away into the open. Ciss listened with all her might. She could just detect the faintest, faintest murmur away below, but no audible syllable.

And at night, under the stars, Cecilia sat and waited in silence, on the seat which kept in view the drawing-room windows and the side door into the garden. She saw the light go up in her aunt’s room. She saw the lights at last go out in the drawing-room. And she waited. But he did not come. She stayed on in the darkness half the night, while the owl hooted. But she stayed alone.

Two days she heard nothing; her aunt’s thoughts were not revealed; and at evening nothing happened. Then, the second night, as she sat with heavy, helpless persistence

in the garden, suddenly she started. He had come out. She rose and went softly over the grass to him.

“Don’t speak!” he murmured.

And in silence, in the dark, they walked down the garden and over the little bridge to the paddock, where the hay, cut very late, was in cock. There they stood disconsolate under the stars.

“You see,” he said, “how can I ask for love, if I don’t feel any love in myself? You know I have a real regard for you —”

“How CAN you feel any love, when you never feel anything?” she said. “That is true,” he replied.

And she waited for what next.

“And how can I marry?” he said. “I am a failure even at making money. I can’t ask my mother for money.”

She sighed deeply.

“Then don’t bother yet about marrying,” she said. “Only love me a little. Won’t you?”

He gave a short laugh.

“It sounds so atrocious, to say it is hard to begin,” he said. She sighed again. He was so stiff to move.

“Shall we sit down a minute?” she said. And then, as they sat on the hay, she added: “May I touch you? Do you mind?”

“Yes, I mind. But do as you wish,” he replied, with that mixture of shyness and queer candour which made him a little ridiculous, as he knew quite well. But in his heart there was almost murder.

She touched his black, always tidy, hair, with her fingers.

“I suppose I shall rebel one day,” he said again suddenly.

They sat some time, till it grew chilly. And he held her hand fast, but he never put his arms round her. At last she rose, and went indoors, saying good-night.

The next day, as Cecilia lay stunned and angry on the roof, taking her sun-bath, and becoming hot and fierce with sunshine, suddenly she started. A terror seized her in spite of herself. It was the voice.

“Caro, caro, tu non l’hai visto!” it was murmuring away, in a language Cecilia did not understand. She lay and writhed her limbs in the sun, listening intently to words she could not follow. Softly, whisperingly, with infinite caressiveness and yet with that subtle, insidious arrogance under its velvet, came the voice, murmuring in Italian: “Bravo, si, molto bravo, poverino, ma uomo come te non sarà mai, mai, mai!” Oh, especially in Italian Cecilia heard the poisonous charm of the voice, so caressive, so soft and flexible, yet so utterly egoistic. She hated it with intensity as it sighed and whispered out of nowhere. Why, why should it be so delicate, so subtle and flexible and beautifully controlled, when she herself was so clumsy? Oh, poor Cecilia, she writhed in the afternoon sun, knowing her own clownish clumsiness and lack of suavity, in comparison.

“No, Robert dear, you will never be the man your father was, though you have some of his looks. He was a marvellous lover, soft as a flower yet piercing as a humming-

bird. Cara, cara mia bellissima, ti ho aspettato come l'agonissante aspetta la morte, morte deliziosa, quasi quasi troppo deliziosa per una mera anima humana. He gave himself to a woman as he gave himself to God. Mauro! Mauro! How you loved me! How you loved me!"

The voice ceased in reverie, and Cecilia knew what she had guessed before — that Robert was not the son of her Uncle Ronald, but of some Italian.

"I am disappointed in you, Robert. There is no poignancy in you. Your father was a Jesuit, but he was the most perfect and poignant lover in the world. You are a Jesuit like a fish in a tank. And that Ciss of yours is the cat fishing for you. It is less edifying even than poor Henry."

Cecilia suddenly bent her mouth down to the tube, and said in a deep voice: "Leave Robert alone! Don't kill him as well."

There was dead silence in the hot July afternoon that was lowering for thunder. Cecilia lay prostrate, her heart beating in great thumps. She was listening as if her whole soul were an ear. At last she caught the whisper:

"Did someone speak?"

She leaned again to the mouth of the tube:

"Don't kill Robert as you killed me," she said, with slow enunciation, and a deep but small voice.

"Ah!" came the sharp little cry. "Who is that speaking?" "Henry," said the deep voice.

There was dead silence. Poor Cecilia lay with all the use gone out of her. And there was dead silence. Till at last came the whisper:

"I didn't kill Henry. No, no! No, no! Henry, surely you can't blame me! I loved you, dearest; I only wanted to help you."

"You killed me!" came the deep, artificial, accusing voice. "Now let Robert live. Let him go! Let him marry!"

There was a pause.

"How very, very awful!" mused the whispering voice. "Is it possible, Henry, you are a spirit, and you condemn me?"

"Yes, I condemn you!"

Cecilia felt all the pent-up rage going down that rain-pipe. At the same time, she almost laughed. It was awful.

She lay and listened and listened. No sound! As if time had ceased, she lay inert in the weakening sun, till she heard a far-off rumble of thunder. She sat up. The sky was yellowing. Quickly she dressed herself, went down, and out to the corner of the stables.

"Aunt Pauline!" she called discreetly. "Did you hear thunder?"

"Yes. I am going in. Don't wait," came a feeble voice.

Cecilia retired, and from the loft watched, spying, as the figure of the lovely lady, wrapped in a lovely wrap of old blue silk, went rather tottering to the house.

The sky gradually darkened. Cecilia hastened in with the rugs. Then the storm broke. Aunt Pauline did not appear to tea. She found the thunder trying. Robert also did not arrive till after tea, in the pouring rain. Cecilia went down the covered passage to her

own house, and dressed carefully for dinner, putting some white columbines at her breast.

The drawing-room was lit with a softly-shaded lamp. Robert, dressed, was waiting, listening to the rain. He too seemed strangely crackling and on edge. Cecilia came in, with the white flowers nodding at her dusky breast. Robert was watching her curiously, a new look on his face. Cecilia went to the bookshelves near the door, and was peering for something, listening acutely. She heard a rustle, then the door softly opening. And as it opened, Ciss suddenly switched on the strong electric light by the door.

Her aunt, in a dress of black lace over ivory colour, stood in the doorway. Her face was made up, but haggard with a look of unspeakable irritability, as if years of suppressed exasperation and dislike of her fellow-men had suddenly crumpled her into an old witch.

“Oh, aunt!” cried Cecilia.

“Why, mother, you’re a little old lady!” came the astounded voice of Robert — like an astonished boy, as if it were a joke.

“Have you only just found it out?” snapped the old woman venomously.

“Yes! Why, I thought —” his voice tailed out in misgiving.

The haggard, old Pauline, in a frenzy of exasperation, said:

“Aren’t we going down?”

She had not even noticed the excess of light, a thing she shunned. And she went downstairs almost tottering.

At table she sat with her face like a crumpled mask of unspeakable irritability. She looked old, very old, and like a witch. Robert and Cecilia fetched furtive glances at her. And Ciss, watching Robert, saw that he was so astonished and repelled by his mother’s looks that he was another man.

“What kind of a drive home did you have?” snapped Pauline, with an almost gibbering irritability.

“It rained, of course,” he said.

“How clever of you to have found that out!” said his mother, with the grisly grin of malice that had succeeded her arch smile.

“I don’t understand,” he said, with quiet suavity.

“It’s apparent,” said his mother, rapidly and sloppily eating her food.

She rushed through the meal like a crazy dog, to the utter consternation of the servant. And the moment it was over she darted in a queer, crab-like way upstairs. Robert and Cecilia followed her, thunderstruck, like two conspirators.

“You pour the coffee. I loathe it! I’m going. Good-night!” said the old woman, in a succession of sharp shots. And she scrambled out of the room.

There was a dead silence. At last he said:

“I’m afraid mother isn’t well. I must persuade her to see a doctor.” “Yes,” said Cecilia.

The evening passed in silence. Robert and Ciss stayed on in the drawing-room, having lit a fire. Outside was cold rain. Each pretended to read. They did not want to separate. The evening passed with ominous mysteriousness, yet quickly.

At about ten o'clock the door suddenly opened, and Pauline appeared, in a blue wrap. She shut the door behind her, and came to the fire. Then she looked at the two young people in hate, real hate.

"You two had better get married quickly," she said, in an ugly voice. "It would look more decent; such a passionate pair of lovers!"

Robert looked up at her quietly.

"I thought you believed that cousins should not marry, mother," he said.

"I do. But you're not cousins. Your father was an Italian priest." Pauline held her daintily-slippered foot to the fire, in an old coquettish gesture. Her body tried to repeat all the old graceful gestures. But the nerve had snapped, so it was a rather dreadful caricature.

"Is that really true, mother?" he asked.

"True! What do you think? He was a distinguished man, or he wouldn't have been my lover. He was far too distinguished a man to have had you for a son. But that joy fell to me."

"How unfortunate all round," he said slowly.

"Unfortunate for you? YOU were lucky. It was MY misfortune," she said acidly to him.

She was really a dreadful sight, like a piece of lovely Venetian glass that has been dropped and gathered up again in horrible, sharp-edged fragments.

Suddenly she left the room again.

For a week it went on. She did not recover. It was as if every nerve in her body had suddenly started screaming in an insanity of discordance. The doctor came, and gave her sedatives, for she never slept. Without drugs she never slept at all, only paced back and forth in her room, looking hideous and evil, reeking with malevolence. She could not bear to see either her son or her niece. Only when either of them came she asked, in pure malice:

"Well! When's the wedding? Have you celebrated the nuptials yet?"

At first Cecilia was stunned by what she had done. She realised vaguely that her aunt, once a definite thrust of condemnation had penetrated her beautiful armour, had just collapsed, squirming, inside her shell. It was too terrible. Ciss was almost terrified into repentance. Then she thought: "This is what she always was. Now let her live the rest of her days in her true colours."

But Pauline would not live long. She was literally shrivelling away. She kept her room, and saw no one. She had her mirrors taken away.

Robert and Cecilia sat a good deal together. The jeering of the mad Pauline had not driven them apart, as she had hoped. But Cecilia dared not confess to him what she had done.

"Do you think your mother ever loved anybody?" Ciss asked him tentatively, rather wistfully, one evening.

He looked at her fixedly.

"Herself!" he said at last.

"She didn't even LOVE herself," said Ciss. "It was something else. What was it?" She lifted a troubled, utterly puzzled face to him.

“Power,” he said curtly.

“But what power?” she asked. “I don’t understand.”

“Power to feed on other lives,” he said bitterly. “She was beautiful, and she fed on life. She has fed on me as she fed on Henry. She put a sucker into one’s soul, and sucked up one’s essential life.”

“And don’t you forgive her?” “No.”

“Poor Aunt Pauline!”

But even Ciss did not mean it. She was only aghast.

“I KNOW I’ve got a heart,” he said, passionately striking his breast. “But it’s almost sucked dry. I KNOW I’ve got a soul, somewhere. But it’s gnawed bare. I HATE people who want power over others.”

Ciss was silent. What was there to say?

And two days later Pauline was found dead in her bed, having taken too much veronal, for her heart was weakened.

From the grave even she hit back at her son and her niece. She left Robert the noble sum of one thousand pounds, and Ciss one hundred. All the rest, with the nucleus of her valuable antiques, went to form the “Pauline Attenborough Museum”.

Method Guide

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur.

-to give sb away -to practise ventriloquism -to trouble to keep up the glamour -
to be a devoted collector -to be suggestive of sth -to eavesdrop
-to be paralysed in a life-long confusion -sedatives -to perspire with dread
-to live in one’s true colours -to give vent to sth -to put a sucker into one’s soul

2. Make up sentences of your own using these phrases.

3. Give extended answers to the following questions.

1. In what way did Robert differ from his mother?
2. Can you prove that “the lovely lady” had the secret of everlasting youth? What was her attitude to it?
3. What was Robert’s hobby?
4. What was the bond between Robert and Ciss?
5. What was Ciss’ sole serious occupation?
6. What made Ciss be going to believe in the supernatural?
7. What happened to Robert’s brother?
8. Why was Pauline compared to Circe?
9. What was Pauline’s recipe concerning a woman’s living forever?
10. How did Pauline treat her sons?
11. How did Pauline make her fortune?

4. Translate the following passages.

1. “She really had the secret...” — “...suggested, roguishly.”
2. “But what a devil of a woman!” — “...the Circe!”

5. Find synonyms of the following words:

-exquisite -to give sb away -lovely -confused -to prevent sb from

6. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary). (WR)

-power -vitality -radiant -rare -luxury -rebel

7. Fill each gap with a preposition.

-to be dependent...sb/sth -to unknown...sb -to do sth...love of it -to put a sucker...sb's soul -...the age of -to be aware...sth -to be...guard -to feed...other lives -to be suggestive...sb/sth -...nature -to give vent...sth

10. What adjectives are used with the following nouns? Find a few examples in the story.

-skeleton -teeth -woman -present -beauty -voice -a collector

11. Describe the main characters in detail.

12. Retell the story in short.

13. Speak your mind on the following points.

1. The title of the story.
2. Can Ciss be accused of Pauline's death?
3. Speculate upon Robert and Ciss's future.

Story 11 Virginia Woolf The Legacy

"For Sissy Miller." Gilbert Clandon, taking up the pearl brooch that lay among a litter of rings and brooches on a little table in his wife's drawing-room, read the inscription: "For Sissy Miller, with my love."

It was like Angela to have remembered even Sissy Miller, her secretary. Yet how strange it was, Gilbert Clandon thought once more, that she had left everything in such order — a little gift of some sort for every one of her friends. It was as if she had foreseen her death. Yet she had been in perfect health when she left the house that morning, six weeks ago; when she stepped off the kerb in Piccadilly and the car had killed her.

He was waiting for Sissy Miller. He had asked her to come; he owed her, he felt, after all the years she had been with them, this token of consideration. Yes, he went on, as he sat there waiting, it was strange that Angela had left everything in such order. Every friend had been left some little token of her affection. Every ring, every necklace, every little Chinese box — she had a passion for little boxes — had a name on it. And each had some memory for him. This he had given her; this — the enamel dolphin with the ruby eyes — she had pounced upon one day in a back street in Venice. He could remember her little cry of delight. To him, of course, she had left nothing in particular, unless it were her diary. Fifteen little volumes, bound in green leather, stood behind him on her writing table. Ever since they were married, she had kept a diary. Some of their very few — he could not call them quarrels, say tiffs — had been about that diary. When he came in and found her writing, she always shut it or put her hand over it. "No, no, no," he could hear her say, "After I'm dead — perhaps." So she had left it him, as her legacy. It was the only thing they had not shared when she was alive. But he had always taken it for granted that she would outlive him. If only she had stopped one moment, and had thought what she was doing, she would be alive now. But she had stepped straight off the kerb, the driver of

the car had said at the inquest. She had given him no chance to pull up. . . . Here the sound of voices in the hall interrupted him.

“Miss Miller, Sir,” said the maid.

She came in. He had never seen her alone in his life, nor, of course, in tears. She was terribly distressed, and no wonder. Angela had been much more to her than an employer. She had been a friend. To himself, he thought, as he pushed a chair for her and asked her to sit down, she was scarcely distinguishable from any other woman of her kind. There were thousands of Sissy Millers — drab little women in black carrying attache cases. But Angela, with her genius for sympathy, had discovered all sorts of qualities in Sissy Miller. She was the soul of discretion; so silent; so trustworthy, one could tell her anything, and so on.

Miss Miller could not speak at first. She sat there dabbing her eyes with her pocket handkerchief. Then she made an effort.

“Pardon me, Mr. Clandon,” she said.

He murmured. Of course he understood. It was only natural. He could guess what his wife had meant to her.

“I’ve been so happy here,” she said, looking round. Her eyes rested on the writing table behind him. It was here they had worked — she and Angela. For Angela had her share of the duties that fall to the lot of a prominent politician’s wife. She had been the greatest help to him in his career. He had often seen her and Sissy sitting at that table — Sissy at the typewriter, taking down letters from her dictation. No doubt Miss Miller was thinking of that, too. Now all he had to do was to give her the brooch his wife had left her. A rather incongruous gift it seemed. It might have been better to have left her a sum of money, or even the typewriter. But there it was — “For Sissy Miller, with my love.” And, taking the brooch, he gave it her with the little speech that he had prepared. He knew, he said, that she would value it. His wife had often worn it. . . . And she replied, as she took it almost as if she too had prepared a speech, that it would always be a treasured possession. . . . She had, he supposed, other clothes upon which a pearl brooch would not look quite so incongruous. She was wearing the little black coat and skirt that seemed the uniform of her profession. Then he remembered — she was in mourning, of course. She, too, had had her tragedy — a brother, to whom she was devoted, had died only a week or two before Angela. In some accident was it? He could not remember — only Angela telling him. Angela, with her genius for sympathy, had been terribly upset. Meanwhile Sissy Miller had risen. She was putting on her gloves. Evidently she felt that she ought not to intrude. But he could not let her go without saying something about her future. What were her plans? Was there any way in which he could help her?

She was gazing at the table, where she had sat at her typewriter, where the diary lay. And, lost in her memories of Angela, she did not at once answer his suggestion that he should help her. She seemed for a moment not to understand. So he repeated:

“What are your plans, Miss Miller?”

“My plans? Oh, that’s all right, Mr. Clandon,” she exclaimed. “Please don’t bother yourself about me.”

He took her to mean that she was in no need of financial assistance. It would be better, he realized, to make any suggestion of that kind in a letter. All he could do now was to say as he pressed her hand, "Remember, Miss Miller, if there's any way in which I can help you, it will be a pleasure. . . ." Then he opened the door. For a moment, on the threshold, as if a sudden thought had struck her, she stopped. "Mr. Clandon," she said, looking straight at him for the first time, and for the first time he was struck by the expression, sympathetic yet searching, in her eyes. "If at any time," she continued, "there's anything I can do to help you, remember, I shall feel it, for your wife's sake, a pleasure . . ."

With that she was gone. Her words and the look that went with them were unexpected. It was almost as if she believed, or hoped, that he would need her. A curious, perhaps a fantastic idea occurred to him as he returned to his chair. Could it be, that during all those years when he had scarcely noticed her, she, as the novelists say, had entertained a passion for him? He caught his own reflection in the glass as he passed. He was over fifty; but he could not help admitting that he was still, as the looking-glass showed him, a very distinguished-looking man.

"Poor Sissy Miller!" he said, half laughing. How he would have liked to share that joke with his wife! He turned instinctively to her diary. "Gilbert," he read, opening it at random, "looked so wonderful. . . ." It was as if she had answered his question. Of course, she seemed to say, you're very attractive to women. Of course Sissy Miller felt that too. He read on. "How proud I am to be his wife!" And he had always been very proud to be her husband. How often, when they dined out somewhere, he had looked at her across the table and said to himself, She is the loveliest woman here! He read on. That first year he had been standing for Parliament. They had toured his constituency. "When Gilbert sat down the applause was terrific. The whole audience rose and sang: 'For he's a jolly good fellow.' I was quite overcome." He remembered that, too. She had been sitting on the platform beside him. He could still see the glance she cast at him, and how she had tears in her eyes. And then? He turned the pages. They had gone to Venice. He recalled that happy holiday after the election. "We had ices at Florians." He smiled — she was still such a child; she loved ices. "Gilbert gave me a most interesting account of the history of Venice. He told me that the Doges . . ." she had written it all out in her schoolgirl hand. One of the delights of travelling with Angela had been that she was so eager to learn. She was so terribly ignorant, she used to say, as if that were not one of her charms. And then — he opened the next volume — they had come back to London. "I was so anxious to make a good impression. I wore my wedding dress." He could see her now sitting next old Sir Edward; and making a conquest of that formidable old man, his chief. He read on rapidly, filling in scene after scene from her scrappy fragments. "Dined at the House of Commons. . . . To an evening party at the Lovegroves. Did I realize my responsibility, Lady L. asked me, as Gilbert's wife?" Then, as the years passed — he took another volume from the writing table — he had become more and more absorbed in his work. And she, of course, was more often alone. . . . It had been a great grief to her, apparently, that they had had no children. "How I wish," one entry read, "that Gilbert had a son!" Oddly enough he had never much regretted that

himself. Life had been so full, so rich as it was. That year he had been given a minor post in the government. A minor post only, but her comment was: "I am quite certain now that he will be Prime Minister!" Well, if things had gone differently, it might have been so. He paused here to speculate upon what might have been. Politics was a gamble, he reflected; but the game wasn't over yet. Not at fifty. He cast his eyes rapidly over more pages, full of the little trifles, the insignificant, happy, daily trifles that had made up her life.

He took up another volume and opened it at random. "What a coward I am! I let the chance slip again. But it seemed selfish to bother him with my own affairs, when he has so much to think about. And we so seldom have an evening alone." What was the meaning of that? Oh, here was the explanation — it referred to her work in the East End. "I plucked up courage and talked to Gilbert at last. He was so kind, so good. He made no objection." He remembered that conversation. She had told him that she felt so idle, so useless. She wished to have some work of her own. She wanted to do something — she had blushed so prettily, he remembered, as she said it, sitting in that very chair — to help others. He had bantered her a little. Hadn't she enough to do looking after him, after her home? Still, if it amused her, of course he had no objection. What was it? Some district? Some committee? Only she must promise not to make herself ill. So it seemed that every Wednesday she went to Whitechapel. He remembered how he hated the clothes she wore on those occasions. But she had taken it very seriously, it seemed. The diary was full of references like this: "Saw Mrs. Jones . . . She has ten children. . . . Husband lost his arm in an accident. . . . Did my best to find a job for Lily." He skipped on. His own name occurred less frequently. His interest slackened. Some of the entries conveyed nothing to him. For example: "Had a heated argument about socialism with B. M." Who was B. M.? He could not fill in the initials; some woman, he supposed, that she had met on one of her committees. "B. M. made a violent attack upon the upper classes. . . . I walked back after the meeting with B. M. and tried to convince him. But he is so narrow-minded." So B. M. was a man — no doubt one of those "intellectuals," as they call themselves, who are so violent, as Angela said, and so narrowminded. She had invited him to come and see her apparently. "B. M. came to dinner. He shook hands with Minnie!" That note of exclamation gave another twist to his mental picture. B. M., it seemed, wasn't used to parlourmaids; he had shaken hands with Minnie. Presumably he was one of those tame working men who air their views in ladies' drawing-rooms. Gilbert knew the type, and had no liking for this particular specimen, whoever B. M. might be. Here he was again. "Went with B. M. to the Tower of London. . . . He said revolution is bound to come . . . He said we live in a Fool's Paradise." That was just the kind of thing B. M. would say — Gilbert could hear him. He could also see him quite distinctly — a stubby little man, with a rough beard, red tie, dressed as they always did in tweeds, who had never done an honest day's work in his life. Surely Angela had the sense to see through him? He read on. "B. M. said some very disagreeable things about —" The name was carefully scratched out. "I told him I would not listen to any more abuse of —" Again the name was obliterated. Could it have been his own name? Was that why Angela covered the page so quickly when he

came in? The thought added to his growing dislike of B. M. He had had the impertinence to discuss him in this very room. Why had Angela never told him? It was very unlike her to conceal anything; she had been the soul of candour. He turned the pages, picking out every reference to B. M. "B. M. told me the story of his childhood. His mother went out charring . . . When I think of it, I can hardly bear to go on living in such luxury. . . . Three guineas for one hat!" If only she had discussed the matter with him, instead of puzzling her poor little head about questions that were much too difficult for her to understand! He had lent her books. KARL MARX, THE COMING REVOLUTION. The initials B.M., B. M., B. M., recurred repeatedly. But why never the full name? There was an informality, an intimacy in the use of initials that was very unlike Angela. Had she called him B. M. to his face? He read on. "B. M. came unexpectedly after dinner. Luckily, I was alone." That was only a year ago. "Luckily"—why luckily?—"I was alone." Where had he been that night? He checked the date in his engagement book. It had been the night of the Mansion House dinner. And B. M. and Angela had spent the evening alone! He tried to recall that evening. Was she waiting up for him when he came back? Had the room looked just as usual? Were there glasses on the table? Were the chairs drawn close together? He could remember nothing—nothing whatever, nothing except his own speech at the Mansion House dinner. It became more and more inexplicable to him—the whole situation; his wife receiving an unknown man alone. Perhaps the next volume would explain. Hastily he reached for the last of the diaries—the one she had left unfinished when she died. There, on the very first page, was that cursed fellow again. "Dined alone with B. M. . . . He became very agitated. He said it was time we understood each other. . . . I tried to make him listen. But he would not. He threatened that if I did not . . ." the rest of the page was scored over. She had written "Egypt. Egypt. Egypt," over the whole page. He could not make out a single word; but there could be only one interpretation: the scoundrel had asked her to become his mistress. Alone in his room! The blood rushed to Gilbert Clandon's face. He turned the pages rapidly. What had been her answer? Initials had ceased. It was simply "he" now. "He came again. I told him I could not come to any decision. . . . I implored him to leave me." He had forced himself upon her in this very house. But why hadn't she told him? How could she have hesitated for an instant? Then: "I wrote him a letter." Then pages were left blank. Then there was this: "No answer to my letter." Then more blank pages; and then this: "He has done what he threatened." After that—what came after that? He turned page after page. All were blank. But there, on the very day before her death, was this entry: "Have I the courage to do it too?" That was the end. Gilbert Clandon let the book slide to the floor. He could see her in front of him. She was standing on the kerb in Piccadilly. Her eyes stared; her fists were clenched. Here came the car. . . .

He could not bear it. He must know the truth. He strode to the telephone. "Miss Miller!" There was silence. Then he heard someone moving in the room. "Sissy Miller speaking"—her voice at last answered him. "Who," he thundered, "is B. M.?"

He could hear the cheap clock ticking on her mantelpiece; then a long drawn sigh. Then at last she said:
“He was my brother.”

He WAS her brother; her brother who had killed himself. “Is there,” he heard Sissy Miller asking, “anything that I can explain?”
“Nothing!” he cried. “Nothing!”

He had received his legacy. She had told him the truth. She had stepped off the kerb to rejoin her lover. She had stepped off the kerb to escape from him.

Story 11 Virginia Woolf The Legacy

1. Memorize the following words/word-combinations, find synonyms and antonyms. Study the sentences in which they occur. (WR)

-to owe sb a token of consideration -to pluck up courage -to leave sth as one's legacy -sb's interest slackens -to pull up -to give another twist to sb's mental picture -to be a treasured possession -to be bound to do sth -to entertain a passion for sb -to be the soul of candour -to give an account of sth -to rejoin one's lover

2. Make up sentences of your own using these phrases. (WR)

3. Give extended answers to the following questions. (O)

1. What puzzles Gilbert Clandon about the circumstances surrounding his wife's death?
2. What does Gilbert assume caused her death?
3. How does Gilbert initially account for Sissy Miller's extreme distress when she enters the room? What does he later remember about her?
4. Why does Gilbert feel the gift of a brooch to Sissy Miller is a «rather incongruous gift»?
5. Why does Sissy Miller extend an offer to help Gilbert?
6. What does “that first year” refer to? What was Gilbert trying to achieve then? Was he successful?
7. Why did Gilbert particularly enjoy travelling with his wife?
8. What are Gilbert's career ambitions at the age of fifty?
9. Why did Angela Clandon want to do volunteer work in the East End of London? What was Gilbert's response to her request?
10. What two political ideologies are contrasted in the story?
11. Why was Angela so amazed when B.M. shook hands with Minnie?
12. What does Gilbert assume B. M. wanted Angela to do? What do you think B. M. Asked Angela to do?

4. Give the Russian for the following. (WR)

1. This he had given her; this—the enamel dolphin with the ruby eyes—she had pounced upon one day in a back street in Venice.
2. Fifteen little volumes, bound in green leather, stood behind him on her writing table.
3. He took her to mean that she was in no need of financial assistance.
4. If only she had discussed the matter with him, instead of puzzling her poor little head about questions that were much too difficult for her to understand.

5. Translate the following passages: (WR)

1. “Her eyes rested...»--«...help her?”

2. “He took up another volume...” — “he had shaken hands with Minnie.”

6. The following adjectives do not appear in the story, but they could apply to the main characters. Decide which adjectives apply to which character and make up sentences using them. (WR)

-arrogant -loyal -modest -vain -lonely -radical -patronizing -bitter -
deceitful -compassionate -argumentative -hard-working

7. Fill each gap with a preposition. (WR, M)

-to be...perfect health -have a passion...sth -genius...sympathy-to be
lost...memories of smb -...sb's sake -...random -to have no liking...sb

8. Find all possible derivatives of the following words (consult your dictionary)

-wonder -value -decision

9. Consult your dictionary and find collocations of the following words:

-order -diary -legacy

10. Make sketches of the main characters. (WR)

11. Retell the story as if you were:

-Gilbert Clandon -Angela Clandon -Sissy Miller

12. Translate the following sentences paying attention to the words in bold:

1. She wrote several **diary entries** that day.

2. Did you **put the meeting date in** your diary?

3. The army was called in to **restore order**.

4. Casual clothes are **the order of the day**.

5. People accepted the class system **as part of the natural order of things**.

6. He dared to challenge **the established order**.

7. The invasion **left a legacy of** hatred and fear.

13. Speak your mind on the following points:

1. How does Gilbert Clandon's limited point of view influence his perception of his wife, B. M., and Sissy Miller? Give as many examples as possible.

2. Do you feel at all sympathetic toward Gilbert Clandon?

3. In your view should Angela Clandon have confessed to what was going on while she was still alive?

4. Why do you suppose Angela was so attracted to B. M.?

5. How is adultery viewed in our country? Are there moral or legal constraints against it?

6. Is suicide considered to be morally wrong?

7. Is it customary to keep a diary?

Учебное издание

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