ДОНСКОЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ ТЕХНИЧЕСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ

УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ДИСТАНЦИОННОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ И ПОВЫШЕНИЯ КВАЛИФИКАЦИИ
Кафедра «Лингвистика и иностранные языки»

УЧЕБНОЕ ПОСОБИЕ

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Оглавление

PLAN OF ANALYSING AND DISCUSSING A STORY 3

REUNION.....6

SAMPLE ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT 9

THE ROCKING-HORSE WINNER.....12

TACTICAL EXERCISE 28

RICOCHET 41

THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE 48

PLAN OF ANALYSING AND DISCUSSING A STORY

1. The main idea of the text (story, abstract). Give its subject in one word or in a short phrase, e.g. love, family relations, war ... The title of the text.

2. Composition of the text. What does the text present? (narration, description, character drawing, an account of events, dialogue, etc.). Who tells the story? Is it told by one of the characters or by a narrator outside the story? The participation of the author in the events.

3. Setting of the events. Where does the story take place and when? Does the setting matter to the story or could it have taken place equally well in some other place and at some other time?

4. Give a brief summary of the text.

5. Study the structure of the text. What parts does it fall into? Suggest possible titles.

6. What key is the text written in? Does the mood change from part to part? If so, what is the prevailing, dominant mood? Is it satirical, humorous, pathetic or unemotional? How can you prove it?

7. Main and minor characters. What are they like – in appearance, speech, behaviour. The speech of a person is very important. It reveals his/her individual experience, culture and psychology, social position, profession, etc. Does the author use direct or indirect methods to describe the characters?

8. What is the author's point of view on the problems raised in the story? Does he/she sympathize with his/her characters?

9. What sort of language is used in the text? Is it simple or elaborate, plain or metaphorical?

10. Give your opinion of the story.

Word combinations which may come helpful in analyzing the text

- to deal with problems of topical interest
- to draw (portray) the character truthfully
- the character is merely sketched
- a vivid description of smth
- the story is set in…, the scene is laid in…
- as the story unfolds…
- the author's power (gift) of observation
- the author keeps us in suspense

- the author resorts to the direct/indirect method of description
- the character is the mouth-piece of the author, the author looks through his eyes
- the text is rich in the choice of words
- a character is characterized through his speech as uneducated person
- the author avoids common, neutral words and uses emotionally coloured ones
- the vocabulary is elaborate
- the abundant use of colloquial expressions and idioms serves to make the dialogue sound natural
- …apt examples to prove the above stated idea
- digressions from the thread of narration
- uneducated dialectal speech represents all kinds of deviations from standard English: phonetic, graphic…
- the reader inevitably associates smb with smth
- smb's inner qualities are in full harmony with his/her appearance
- the idea is not expressed in a straightforward categorical manner
- all the other sentences of the paragraph explain or clarify the main idea
- the sentence… introduces the main idea of the extract
- the next paragraph adds some details to the reader's knowledge of the character
- the extract presents narration interwoven and interlaced with dialogues
- the (last) sentence is the culminating point of the text
- the phrase (sentence) may be regarded as a logical summing up of what was previously said
- the author's sympathy towards smb is seen from…
- to emphasize/underline smth

The mood (key) may be:

- *epic mood* is typical of the description of events that have been completed in the past and are viewed by the narrator in retrospect; this key is impersonal, dry, matter-of-fact;
- *dramatic, emotional or elevated mood* is created through the expression of agitation (exclamatory sentences, emotive words);
- *lyrical mood* – the text contains the expression of the au-

thor's feelings, his emotive attitude to life, his thoughts; the language is elevated, there are *many poetic words and stylistic devices;*

- *humorous mood* reflects the comical aspect of life, points out some contradictions, discrepancy between form and contents;
- *irony* unlike humour indicates mockery of something or somebody; the emphasis is laid on the opposition between the literal and the intended meaning of a statement – one thing is said and the opposite is implied. Humour always causes laughter while the function of irony is not to produce a humorous effect but a feeling of irritation, pity, regret, displeasure.

REUNION

BY J. CHEEVER

The last time I saw my father was in Grand Central Station. I was going from my grandmother's in the Adirondacks to a cottage on the Cape that my mother had rented, and I wrote my father that I would be in New York between trains for an hour and a half, and asked if we could have lunch together. His secretary wrote to say that he would meet me at the information booth at noon, and at twelve o'clock sharp I saw him coming through the crowd. He was a stranger to me - my mother divorced him three years ago and I hadn't seen him since - but as soon as I saw him I felt that he was my father, my flesh and blood, my future and my doom. I knew that when I was grown I would be something like him; I would have to plan my campaigns within his limitations. He was a big, good-looking man, and I was terribly happy to see him again. He struck me on the back and shook my hand. `Hi, Charlie,' he said. `Hi, boy. I'd like to take you up to my club, but it's in the Sixties, and if you have to catch an early train I guess we'd better get something to eat around here.' He put his arm around me, and I smelled my father the way my mother sniffs a rose. It was a rich compound of whiskey, after-shave lotion, shoe polish, woolens, and the rankness of the mature male. I hoped that someone would see us together. I wished that we could be photographed. I wanted some record of our having been together.

We went out of the station and up a side street to a restaurant. It was still early, and the place was empty. The bartender was quarrelling with a delivery boy, and there was one very old waiter in a red coat down by the kitchen door. We sat down, and my father hailed the waiter in a loud voice. *`Kellner!'* he shouted. *`Carbon! Cameriere! You!'* His boisterousness in the empty restaurant seemed out of place. `Could we have a little service here!' he shouted. `Chop-chop.' Then he clapped his hands. This caught the waiter's attention, and he shuffled over to our table.

`Were you clapping your hands at me?' he asked.

`Calm down, calm down, *sommelier*,' my father said. `If it isn't too much to ask of you - if it wouldn't be above and beyond the call of duty, we would like a couple of Beefeater Gibsons.'

`I don't like to be clapped at,' the waiter said.

`I should have brought my whistle,' my father said. `I have a whistle that is audible only to the ears of old waiters. Now, take out

your little pad and your little pencil and see if you can get this straight: two Beefeater Gibsons. Repeat after me: two Beefeater Gibsons.'

`I think you'd better go somewhere else,' the waiter said quietly.

`That,' said my father, `is one of the most brilliant suggestions I have ever heard. Come on, Charlie, let's get the hell out of here.'

I followed my father out of that restaurant into another. He was not so boisterous this time. Our drinks came, and he cross-questioned me about the baseball season. He then struck the edge of his empty glass with his knife and began shouting again. *`Garcon! Kellner! Cameriere! You!* Could we trouble you to bring us two more of the same.' `How old is the boy?' the waiter asked.

`That,' my father said, is none of your God-damned business.'

`I'm sorry, sir,' the waiter said, `but I won't serve the boy another drink.'

`Well, I have some news for you,' my father said. `I have some very interesting news for you. This doesn't happen to be the only restaurant in New York. They've opened another on the corner. Come on, Charlie.'

He paid the bill, and I followed him out of the restaurant into another. Here the waiters wore pink jackets like hunting coats, and there was a lot of horse tack on the walls. We sat down, and my father began to shout again. `Master of the hounds! Tallyhoo and all that sort of thing. We'd like a little something in the way of a stirrup cup. Namely, two Bibson Geefeaters.'

`Two Bibson Geefeaters?' the waiter asked, smiling.

`You know damned well what I want,' my father said angrily. `I want two Beefeater Gibsons, and make it snappy. Things have changed in jolly old England. So my friend the duke tells me. Let's see what England can produce in the way of a cocktail.'

`This isn't England,' the waiter said.

`Don't argue with me,' my father said. `Just do as you're told.'

`I just thought you might like to know where you are,' the waiter said.

`If there is one thing I cannot tolerate,' my father said, `it is an impudent domestic. Come on, Charlie.'

The fourth place we went to was Italian. *`Buon giorno,'* my father said. *`Per favore, possiamo avere due cocktail americani, forti, forti. Molto gin, poco vermut.'*

`I don't understand Italian,' the waiter said.

`Oh, come off it,' my father said. `You understand Italian, and

you know damned well you do. *Vogliamo due cocktail americani. Subito.'*

The waiter left us and spoke with the captain, who came over to our table and said, `I'm sorry, sir, but this table is reserved.'

`All right,' my father said. `Get us another table.' `All the tables are reserved,' the captain said.

`I get it,' my father said. `You don't desire our patronage. Is that it? Well, the hell with you. *Vada all'inferno*. Let's go, Charlie.'

`I have to get my train,' I said.

`I sorry, sonny,' my father said. `I'm terribly sorry,' He put his arm around me and pressed me against him. `I'll walk you back to the station. If there had only been time to go up to my club.'

`That's all right, Daddy,' I said.

`I'll get you a paper,' he said. `I'll get you a paper to read on the train.'

Then he went up to a news stand and said, `Kind sir, will you be good enough to favour me with one of your God-damned, no-good, ten-cent afternoon papers?' The clerk turned away from him and stared at a magazine cover. `Is it asking too much, kind sir,' my father said, `is it asking too much for you to sell me one of your disgusting specimens of yellow journalism?'

`I have to go, Daddy,' I said. `It's late.'

`Now, just wait a second, sonny,' he said. `Just wait a second. I want to get a rise out of this chap.'

`Goodbye, Daddy,' I said, and I went down the stairs and got my train, and that was the last time I saw my father.

SAMPLE ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

The story under discussion vividly represents Cheever's typical features as a sharp observer of life, a subtle psychologist with a great gift of penetrating into the minds of his characters at crucial moments of their lives, a skilful writer. It represents the narrator's recollection of an episode of his teenage life which reflects the complexity of `fathers-sons' relations.

Cheever writes in his own brief seemingly casual manner, but the verbal plane is only the top of the iceberg. The story of a trivial episode of a boy's meeting with his father turns into an indictment of the whole class with its hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness.

The story describes a crucial moment in the main character's life, though on the surface nothing extraordinary happens. The moment is crucial because the character is a teenager who is passing this serious period of his life which, to a great extent, determines everybody's adult life. The event described is very important for the boy. He meets his father whom he hasn't seen for 3 years and he looks forward to this meeting as a beginning of his wonderful reunion with his father. The meeting however turns out to be a complete disappointment. So the title `Reunion' acquires an ironic implication because in fact it is not a story of reunion but a story of separation. The irony is enhanced by framing - the story opens and ends with the same words `the last time I saw my father'.

Thus the author introduces the theme of the story - a teenager's frustration and crash of his hopes. But it is not only the psychological conflict of the boy's cheated expectations that is in the focus of the writer's attention but also the external conflict between material wealth and spiritual degradation.

The story is the first person narration. It is obvious that the narrator recollects the event when he is already a mature man. At first it may seem that the man is not inclined to tell the reader much about his life and feeling, but a skilful reader will always discern deeper implications behind words. The boy is a neglected child whose parents are divorced and it seems he does not even have a permanent place of living (home); he is constantly travelling from his mother to his grandmother and back. The boy hasn't seen his father for 3 years which implies that his father neglects him and his mother doesn't encourage their meetings.

It was apparently the boy's personal decision to write to his father and appoint the meeting. However the answer came not directly

from his father but from his secretary who wrote that he would come at noon. The father was punctual (as a reliable businessman) and came at 12 o'clock sharp. When Charlie saw him he experienced contradictory feelings - the father was a stranger to him but at the same time `his flesh and blood, his future and his doom'. This periphrasis backed by parallelism reveals the boy's psychological state at the moment - he was excited, elated, full of hope and expectation. The hackneyed oxymoron `terribly happy' adds to the description.

The reader sees the man through the son's perception and he cannot but see that the boy is proud of his father (`a big good-looking man'), he longs to have a father, a real man by his side. This idea is emphasized by parallelism in the last three sentences of the first paragraph (I hoped, I wished, I wanted). His father `smelled' of what the son lacked in his teenager life with two females, mother and grandmother.

The central part of the story describes the father and the son's visiting four restaurants. Instead of taking the son to his club and having a quiet talk with him the father brought him to a restaurant in a side street, very small and common (there was only one old waiter, the bartender was quarrelling with a delivery boy). But they did not stay there long as the father was rude and boisterous which is contrasted to the waiter's polite and quiet manner. The father's aggressive behaviour made the waiter ask the man to leave the place. So father and son went from restaurant to restaurant and wherever they came the man was rude. He was getting drunk which increased his aggressiveness. He did not seem to notice his son. The author doesn't describe Charlie's feeling and his reaction to the father's intoxicated behaviour but it is evident that the boy couldn't have liked it.

He started to feel ashamed and disappointed. The father did not seem to be interested in the son's life and studies. Only once he cross-questioned Charlie about the baseball season, while the boy longed to be asked about his ambitions and aspirations. The reader feels that the boy gradually realizes what his father is like and in frustration he says he has to go and get his train. This makes the father stop and think how he could please his son before the departure. He was obviously a rich man but to had come to the meeting without a present and now he wanted to compensate for it but could think of nothing better than buying a newspaper for the son. The scene at the news stand was the last straw - the father was humiliating the news stand clerk speaking in his usual manner mixing formal and rude vocabulary. The boy couldn't stand it any longer, he was utterly disappointed and he knew that he `would have to plan his future without

his father'. He lifted abruptly without waiting for his father to say a proper goodbye to him.

The fact that Charlie did not try to contact his father later speaks for itself. He went through a traumatic experience but he got over it. Thus the conflict lies not only on the psychological plane but on the social plane either. The author reveals the realities of the disintegration of the manners and morals of society, where bright surfaces conceal tensions, disorders, anxieties and frustrations of life.

THE ROCKING-HORSE WINNER

BY D.H. LAWRENCE

There was a woman who was beautiful, who started with all the advantages, yet she had no luck. She married for love, and the love turned to dust. She had bonny children, yet she felt they had been thrust upon her, and she could not love them. They looked at her coldly, as if they were finding fault with her. And hurriedly she felt she must cover up some fault in herself. Yet what it was that she must cover up she never knew. Nevertheless, when her children were present, she always felt the centre of her heart go hard. This troubled her, and in her manner she was all the more gentle and anxious for her children, as if she loved them very much. Only she herself knew that at the centre of her heart was a hard little place that could not feel love, no, not for anybody. Everybody else said of her: "She is such a good mother. She adores her children." Only she herself, and her children themselves, knew it was not so. They read it in each other's eyes.

There were a boy and two little girls. They lived in a pleasant house, with a garden, and they had discreet servants, and felt themselves superior to anyone in the neighbourhood.

Although they lived in style, they felt always an anxiety in the house. There was never enough money. The mother had a small income, and the father had a small income, but not nearly enough for the social position which they had to keep up. The father went into town to some office. But though he had good prospects, these prospects never materialised. There was always the grinding sense of the shortage of money, though the style was always kept up.

At last the mother said: "I will see if I can't make something." But she did not know where to begin. She racked her brains, and tried this thing and the other, but could not find anything successful. The failure made deep lines come into her face. Her children were growing up, they would have to go to school. There must be more money, there must be more money. The father, who was always very handsome and expensive in his tastes, seemed as if he never would be able to do anything worth doing. And the mother, who had a great belief in herself, did not succeed any better, and her tastes were just as expensive.

And so the house came to be haunted by the unspoken phrase: There must be more money! There must be more money! The chil-

dren could hear it all the time though nobody said it aloud. They heard it at Christmas, when the expensive and splendid toys filled the nursery. Behind the shining modern rocking-horse, behind the smart doll's house, a voice would start whispering: "There must be more money! There must be more money!" And the children would stop playing, to listen for a moment. They would look into each other's eyes, to see if they had all heard. And each one saw in the eyes of the other two that they too had heard. "There must be more money! There must be more money!"

It came whispering from the springs of the still-swaying rocking-horse, and even the horse, bending his wooden, champing head, heard it. The big doll, sitting so pink and smirking in her new pram, could hear it quite plainly, and seemed to be smirking all the more self-consciously because of it. The foolish puppy, too, that took the place of the teddy-bear, he was looking so extraordinarily foolish for no other reason but that he heard the secret whisper all over the house: "There must be more money!"

Yet nobody ever said it aloud. The whisper was everywhere, and therefore no one spoke it. Just as no one ever says: "We are breathing!" in spite of the fact that breath is coming and going all the time.

"Mother," said the boy Paul one day, "why don't we keep a car of our own? Why do we always use uncle's, or else a taxi?"

"Because we're the poor members of the family," said the mother.

"But why are we, mother?"

"Well - I suppose," she said slowly and bitterly, "it's because your father has no luck."

The boy was silent for some time.

"Is luck money, mother?" he asked, rather timidly.

"No, Paul. Not quite. It's what causes you to have money."

"Oh!" said Paul vaguely. "I thought when Uncle Oscar said filthy lucker, it meant money."

"Filthy lucre does mean money," said the mother. "But it's lucre, not luck."

"Oh!" said the boy. "Then what is luck, mother?"

"It's what causes you to have money. If you're lucky you have money. That's why it's better to be born lucky than rich. If you're rich, you may lose your money. But if you're lucky, you will always get more money."

"Oh! Will you? And is father not lucky?"

"Very unlucky, I should say," she said bitterly.

The boy watched her with unsure eyes.

"Why?" he asked.

"I don't know. Nobody ever knows why one person is lucky and another unlucky."

"Don't they? Nobody at all? Does nobody know?"

"Perhaps God. But He never tells."

"He ought to, then. And aren't you lucky either, mother?"

"I can't be, if I married an unlucky husband."

"But by yourself, aren't you?"

"I used to think I was, before I married. Now I think I am very unlucky indeed."

"Why?"

"Well - never mind! Perhaps I'm not really," she said.

The child looked at her to see if she meant it. But he saw, by the lines of her mouth, that she was only trying to hide something from him.

"Well, anyhow," he said stoutly, "I'm a lucky person."

"Why?" said his mother, with a sudden laugh.

He stared at her. He didn't even know why he had said it.

"God told me," he asserted, brazening it out.

"I hope He did, dear!" she said, again with a laugh, but rather bitter.

"He did, mother!"

"Excellent!" said the mother, using one of her husband's exclamations.

The boy saw she did not believe him; or rather, that she paid no attention to his assertion. This angered him somewhere, and made him want to compel her attention.

He went off by himself, vaguely, in a childish way, seeking for the clue to 'luck'. Absorbed, taking no need of other people, he went about with a sort of stealth*, seeking inwardly for luck. He wanted luck, he wanted it, he wanted it. When the two girls were playing dolls in the nursery, he would sit on his big rocking-horse, charging madly into space, with a frenzy that made the little girls peer at him uneasily. Wildly the horse careered, the waving dark hair of the boy tossed, his eyes had a strange glare in them. The little girls dared not speak to him.

When he had ridden to the end of his mad little journey, he climbed down and stood in front of his rocking-horse, staring fixedly into its lowered face. Its red mouth was slightly open, its big eye was wide and glassy-bright.

"Now!" he would silently command the snorting steed. "Now

take me to where there is luck! Now take me!"

And he would slash the horse on the neck with the little whip he had asked Uncle Oscar for. He knew the horse could take him to where there was luck, if only he forced it. So he would mount again and start on his furious ride, hoping at last to get there.

"You'll break your horse, Paul!" said the nurse.

"He's always riding like that! I wish he'd leave off!" said his elder sister Joan.

But he only glared down on them in silence. Nurse gave him up. She could make nothing of him. Anyhow, he was growing beyond her.

One day his mother and his Uncle Oscar came in when he was on one of his furious rides. He did not speak to them.

"Hallo, you young jockey! Riding a winner?" said his uncle.

"Aren't you growing too big for a rocking-horse? You're not a very little boy any longer, you know," said his mother.

But Paul only gave a blue glare from his big, rather close-set eyes. He would speak to nobody when he was in full tilt*. His mother watched him with an anxious expression on her face.

At last he suddenly stopped forcing his horse into the mechanical gallop and slid down.

"Well, I got there!" he announced fiercely, his blue eyes still flaring, and his sturdy long legs straddling apart.

"Where did you get to?" asked his mother.

"Where I wanted to go," he flared back at her.

"That's right, son!" said Uncle Oscar. "Don't you stop till you get there. What's the horse's name?"

"He doesn't have a name," said the boy.

"Gets on without all right?" asked the uncle.

"Well, he has different names. He was called Sansovino last week."

"Sansovino, eh? Won the Ascot*. How did you know this name?"

"He always talks about horse-races with Bassett," said Joan.

The uncle was delighted to find that his small nephew was posted with all the racing news. Bassett, the young gardener, who had been wounded in the left foot in the war and had got his present job through Oscar Cresswell, whose batman he had been, was a perfect blade of the 'turf'*. He lived in the racing events, and the small boy lived with him.

Oscar Cresswell got it all from Bassett.

"Master Paul comes and asks me, so I can't do more than tell

him, sir," said Bassett, his face terribly serious, as if he were speaking of religious matters.

"And does he ever put anything on a horse he fancies?"

"Well - I don't want to give him away - he's a young sport, a fine sport, sir. Would you mind asking him himself? He sort of takes a pleasure in it, and perhaps he'd feel I was giving him away, sir, if you don't mind.

Bassett was serious as a church.

The uncle went back to his nephew and took him off for a ride in the car.

"Say, Paul, old man, do you ever put anything on a horse?" the uncle asked.

The boy watched the handsome man closely.

"Why, do you think I oughtn't to?" he parried.

"Not a bit of it! I thought perhaps you might give me a tip for the Lincoln."

The car sped on into the country, going down to Uncle Oscar's place in Hampshire.

"Honour* bright?" said the nephew.

"Honour bright, son!" said the uncle.

"Well, then, Daffodil."

"Daffodil! I doubt it, sonny. What about Mirza?"

"I only know the winner," said the boy. "That's Daffodil."

"Daffodil, eh?" There was a pause. Daffodil was an obscure horse comparatively.

"Uncle!"

"Yes, son?"

"You won't let it go any further, will you? I promised Bassett."

"Bassett be damned, old man! What's he got to do with it?"

"We're partners. We've been partners from the first. Uncle, he lent me my first five shillings, which I lost. I promised him, honour bright, it was only between me and him; only you gave me that ten-shilling note I started winning with, so I thought you were lucky. You won't let it go any further, will you?"

The boy gazed at his uncle from those big, hot, blue eyes, set rather close together. The uncle stirred and laughed uneasily.

"Right you are, son! I'll keep your tip private. How much are you putting on him?"

"All except twenty pounds," said the boy. "I keep that in reserve."

The uncle thought it a good joke.

"You keep twenty pounds in reserve, do you, you young ro-

mancer? What are you betting, then?"

"I'm betting three hundred," said the boy gravely. "But it's between you and me, Uncle Oscar! Honour bright?"

The uncle burst into a roar of laughter.

"It's between you and me all right, you young Nat Gould*," he said, laughing. "But where's your three hundred?"

"Bassett keeps it for me. We're partners."

"You are, are you! And what is Bassett putting on Daffodil?"

"He won't go quite as high as I do, I expect. Perhaps he'll go a hundred and fifty."

"What, pennies?" laughed the uncle.

"Pounds," said the child, with a surprised look at his uncle. "Bassett keeps a bigger reserve than I do."

Between wonder and amusement Uncle Oscar was silent. He pursued the matter no further, but he determined to take his nephew with him to the Lincoln races.

"Now, son," he said, "I'm putting twenty on Mirza, and I'll put five for you on any horse you fancy. What's your pick?"

"Daffodil, uncle."

"No, not the fiver on Daffodil!"

"I should if it was my own fiver," said the child.

"Good! Good! Right you are! A fiver for me and a fiver for you on Daffodil."

The child had never been to a race-meeting before, and his eyes were blue fire. He pursed his mouth tight and watched. A Frenchman just in front had put his money on Lancelot. Wild with excitement, he flayed his arms up and down, yelling "Lancelot! Lancelot!" in his French accent.

Daffodil came in first, Lancelot second, Mirza third. The child, flushed and with eyes blazing, was curiously serene. His uncle brought him four five-pound notes, four to one.

"What am I to do with these?" he cried, waving them before the boy's eyes.

"I suppose we'll talk to Bassett," said the boy. "I expect I have fifteen hundred now; and twenty in reserve; and this twenty."

His uncle studied him for some moments.

"Look here, son!" he said. "You're not serious about Bassett and that fifteen hundred, are you?"

"Yes, I am. But it's between you and me, uncle. Honour bright?"

"Honour bright all right, son! But I must talk to Bassett."

"If you'd like to be a partner, uncle, with Bassett and me, we

could all be partners. Only, you'd have to promise, honour bright, uncle, not to let it go beyond us three. Bassett and I are lucky, and you must be lucky, because it was your ten shillings I started winning with."

Uncle Oscar took both Bassett and Paul into Richmond Park for an afternoon, and there they talked.

"It's like this, you see, sir," Bassett said. "Master Paul would get me talking about racing events, spinning yarns*, you know, sir. And he was always keen on knowing if I'd made or if I'd lost. It's about a year since, now, that I put five shillings on Blush of Dawn for him: and we lost. Then the luck turned, with that ten shillings he had from you: that we put on Singhalese. And since that time, it's been pretty steady, all things considering. What do you say, Master Paul?"

"We're all right when we're sure," said Paul. "It's when we're not quite sure that we go down."

"Oh, but we're careful then," said Bassett.

"But when are you sure?" smiled Uncle Oscar.

"It's Master Paul, sir," said Bassett in a secret, religious voice. "It's as if he had it from heaven. Like Daffodil, now, for the Lincoln. That was as sure as eggs."*

"Did you put anything on Daffodil?" asked Oscar Cresswell.

"Yes, sir, I made my bit."

"And my nephew?"

Bassett was obstinately silent, looking at Paul.

"I made twelve hundred, didn't I, Bassett? I told uncle I was putting three hundred on Daffodil."

"That's right," said Bassett, nodding.

"But where's the money?" asked the uncle.

"I keep it safe locked up, sir. Master Paul he can have it any minute he likes to ask for it."

"What, fifteen hundred pounds?"

"And twenty! And forty, that is, with the twenty he made on the course."

"It's amazing!" said the uncle.

"If Master Paul offers you to be partners, sir, I would, if I were you: if you'll excuse me," said Bassett.

Oscar Cresswell thought about it.

"I'll see the money," he said.

They drove home again, and, sure enough, Bassett came round to the garden-house with fifteen hundred pounds in notes. The twenty pounds reserve was left with Joe Glee, in the Turf Commission deposit.

"You see, it's all right, uncle, when I'm sure! Then we go strong, for all we're worth, don't we, Bassett?"

"We do that, Master Paul."

"And when are you sure?" said the uncle, laughing.

"Oh, well, sometimes I'm absolutely sure, like about Daffodil," said the boy; "and sometimes I have an idea; and sometimes I haven't even an idea, have I, Bassett? Then we're careful, because we mostly go down."

"You do, do you! And when you're sure, like about Daffodil, what makes you sure, sonny?"

"Oh, well, I don't know," said the boy uneasily. "I'm sure, you know, uncle; that's all."

"It's as if he had it from heaven, sir," Bassett reiterated.

"I should say so!" said the uncle.

But he became a partner. And when the Leger was coming on Paul was 'sure' about Lively Spark, which was a quite inconsiderable horse. The boy insisted on putting a thousand on the horse, Bassett went for five hundred, and Oscar Cresswell two hundred. Lively Spark came in first, and the betting had been ten to one against him. Paul had made ten thousand.

"You see," he said. "I was absolutely sure of him."

Even Oscar Cresswell had cleared two thousand.

"Look here, son," he said, "this sort of thing makes me nervous."

"It needn't, uncle! Perhaps I shan't be sure again for a long time."

"But what are you going to do with your money?" asked the uncle.

"Of course," said the boy, "I started it for mother. She said she had no luck, because father is unlucky, so I thought if I was lucky, it might stop whispering."

"What might stop whispering?"

"Our house. I hate our house for whispering."

"What does it whisper?"

"Why – why," the boy fidgeted, "why, I don't know. But it's always short of money, you know, uncle."

"I know it, son, I know it."

"You know people send mother writs, don't you, uncle?"

"I'm afraid I do," said the uncle.

"And then the house whispers, like people laughing at you behind your back. It's awful, that is! I thought if I was lucky…"

"You might stop it," added the uncle.

The boy watched him with big blue eyes, that had an uncanny cold fire in them, and he said never a word.

"Well, then!" said the uncle. "What are we doing?"

"I shouldn't like mother to know I was lucky," said the boy.

"Why not, son?"

"She'd stop me."

"I don't think she would."

"Oh!" - and the boy writhed in an odd way - "I don't want her to know, uncle."

"All right, son! We'll manage it without her knowing."

They managed it very easily. Paul, at the other's suggestion, handed over five thousand pounds to his uncle, who deposited it with the family lawyer, who was then to inform Paul's mother that a relative had put five thousand pounds into his hands, which sum was to be paid out a thousand pounds at a time, on the mother's birthday, for the next five years.

"So she'll have a birthday present of a thousand pounds for five successive years," said Uncle Oscar. "I hope it won't make it all the harder for her later."

Paul's mother had her birthday in November. The house had been 'whispering' worse than ever lately, and, even in spite of his luck, Paul could not bear up against it. He was very anxious to see the effect of the birthday letter, telling his mother about the thousand pounds.

When there were no visitors, Paul now took his meals with his parents, as he was beyond the nursery control. His mother went into town nearly every day. She had discovered that she had an odd knack of sketching furs and dress materials, so she worked secretly in the studio of a friend who was the chief 'artist' for the leading drapers. She drew the figures of ladies in furs and ladies in silk and sequins for the newspaper advertisements. This young woman artist earned several thousand pounds a year, but Paul's mother only made several hundreds, and she was again dissatisfied. She so wanted to be first in something, and she did not succeed, even in making sketches for drapery advertisements.

She was down to breakfast on the morning of her birthday. Paul watched her face as she read her letters. He knew the lawyer's letter. As his mother read it, her face hardened and became more expressionless. Then a cold, determined look came on her mouth. She hid the letter under the pile of others, and said not a word about it.

"Didn't you have anything nice in the post for your birthday, mother?" said Paul.

"Quite moderately nice," she said, her voice cold and hard and absent. She went away to town without saying more.

But in the afternoon Uncle Oscar appeared. He said Paul's mother had had a long interview with the lawyer, asking if the whole five thousand could not be advanced at once, as she was in debt.

"What do you think, uncle?" said the boy.

"I leave it to you, son."

"Oh, let her have it, then! We can get some more with the other," said the boy.

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, laddie!" said Uncle Oscar.

"But I'm sure to know for the Grand National; or the Lincolnshire; or else the Derby. I'm sure to know for one of them," said Paul.

So Uncle Oscar signed the agreement, and Paul's mother touched the whole five thousand. Then something very curious happened. The voices in the house suddenly went mad, like a chorus of frogs on a spring evening. There were certain new furnishings, and Paul had a tutor. He was really going to Eton, his father's school, in the following autumn. There were flowers in the winter, and a blossoming of the luxury Paul's mother had been used to. And yet the voices in the house, behind the sprays of mimosa and almond-blossom, and from under the piles of iridescent cushions, simply trilled and screamed in a sort of ecstasy: "There must be more money! Oh-h-h; there must be more money. Oh, now, now-w! Now-w-w - there must be more money! - more than ever! More than ever!"

It frightened Paul terribly. He studied away at his Latin and Greek with his tutor. But his intense hours were spent with Bassett. The Grand National had gone by: he had not 'known', and had lost a hundred pounds. Summer was at hand. He was in agony for the Lincoln. But even for the Lincoln he didn't 'know', and he lost fifty pounds. He became wild-eyed and strange, as if something were going to explode in him.

"Let it alone, son! Don't you bother about it!" urged Uncle Oscar. But it was as if the boy couldn't really hear what his uncle was saying. "I've got to know for the Derby!

"I've got to know for the Derby!" the child reiterated, his big blue eyes blazing with a sort of madness.

His mother noticed how overwrought he was.

"You'd better go to the seaside. Wouldn't you like to go now to the seaside, instead of waiting? I think you'd better," she said, looking down at him anxiously, her heart curiously heavy because of him.

But the child lifted his uncanny blue eyes.

"I couldn't possibly go before the Derby, mother!" he said. "I couldn't possibly!"

"Why not?" she said, her voice becoming heavy when she was opposed. "Why not? You can still go from the seaside to see the Derby with your Uncle Oscar, if that that's what you wish. No need for you to wait here. Besides, I think you care too much about these races. It's a bad sign. My family has been a gambling family, and you won't know till you grow up how much damage it has done. But it has done damage. I shall have to send Bassett away, and ask Uncle Oscar not to talk racing to you, unless you promise to be reasonable about it: go away to the seaside and forget it. You're all nerves!"

"I'll do what you like, mother, so long as you don't send me away till after the Derby," the boy said.

"Send you away from where? Just from this house?"

"Yes," he said, gazing at her.

"Why, you curious child, what makes you care about this house so much, suddenly? I never knew you loved it."

He gazed at her without speaking. He had a secret within a secret, something he had not divulged, even to Bassett or to his Uncle Oscar.

But his mother, after standing undecided and a little bit sullen for some moments, said:

"Very well, then! Don't go to the seaside till after the Derby, if you don't wish it. But promise me you won't think so much about horse-racing and events as you call them!"

"Oh no," said the boy casually. "I won't think much about them, mother. You needn't worry. I wouldn't worry, mother, if I were you."

"If you were me and I were you," said his mother, "I wonder what we should do!"

"But you know you needn't worry, mother, don't you?" the boy repeated.

"I should be awfully glad to know it," she said wearily.

"Oh, well, you can, you know. I mean, you ought to know you needn't worry," he insisted.

"Ought I? Then I'll see about it," she said.

Paul's secret of secrets was his wooden horse, that which had no name. Since he was emancipated from a nurse and a nursery-governess, he had had his rocking-horse removed to his own bedroom at the top of the house.

"Surely you're too big for a rocking-horse!" his mother had remonstrated.

"Well, you see, mother, till I can have a real horse, I like to

have some sort of animal about," had been his quaint answer.

"Do you feel he keeps you company?" she laughed.

"Oh yes! He's very good, he always keeps me company, when I'm there," said Paul.

So the horse, rather shabby, stood in an arrested prance in the boy's bedroom.

The Derby was drawing near, and the boy grew more and more tense. He hardly heard what was spoken to him, he was very frail, and his eyes were really uncanny. His mother had sudden strange seizures of uneasiness about him. Sometimes, for half an hour, she would feel a sudden anxiety about him that was almost anguish. She wanted to rush to him at once, and know he was safe.

Two nights before the Derby, she was at a big party in town, when one of her rushes of anxiety about her boy, her first-born, gripped her heart till she could hardly speak. She fought with the feeling, might and main, for she believed in common sense. But it was too strong. She had to leave the dance and go downstairs to telephone to the country. The children's nursery-governess was terribly surprised and startled at being rung up in the night.

"Are the children all right, Miss Wilmot?"

"Oh yes, they are quite all right."

"Master Paul? Is he all right?"

"He went to bed as right as a trivet*. Shall I run up and look at him?"

"No," said Paul's mother reluctantly. "No! Don't trouble. It's all right. Don't sit up. We shall be home fairly soon." She did not want her son's privacy intruded upon.

"Very good," said the governess.

It was about one o'clock when Paul's mother and father drove up to their house. All was still. Paul's mother went to her room and slipped off her white fur cloak. She had told her maid not to wait up for her. She heard her husband downstairs, mixing a whisky and soda.

And then, because of the strange anxiety at her heart, she stole upstairs to her son's room. Noiselessly she went along the upper corridor. Was there a faint noise? What was it?

She stood, with arrested muscles, outside his door, listening. There was a strange, heavy, and yet not loud noise. Her heart stood still. It was a soundless noise, yet rushing and powerful. Something huge, in violent, hushed motion. What was it? What in God's name was it? She ought to know. She felt that she knew the noise. She knew what it was.

Yet she could not place it. She couldn't say what it was. And on and on it went, like a madness.

Softly, frozen with anxiety and fear, she turned the door-handle.

The room was dark. Yet in the space near the window, she heard and saw something plunging to and fro. She gazed in fear and amazement.

Then suddenly she switched on the light, and saw her son, in his green pyjamas, madly surging on the rocking-horse. The blaze of light suddenly lit him up, as he urged the wooden horse, and lit her up, as she stood, blonde, in her dress of pale green and crystal, in the doorway.

"Paul!" she cried. "Whatever are you doing?"

"It's Malabar!" he screamed in a powerful, strange voice. "It's Malabar!"

His eyes blazed at her for one strange and senseless second, as he ceased urging his wooden horse. Then he fell with a crash to the ground, and she, all her tormented motherhood flooding upon her, rushed to gather him up.

But he was unconscious, and unconscious he remained, with some brain fever. He talked and tossed, and his mother sat stonily by his side.

"Malabar! It's Malabar! Bassett, Bassett, I know! It's Malabar!"

So the child cried, trying to get up and urge the rocking-horse that gave him his inspiration.

"What does he mean by Malabar?" asked the heart-frozen mother.

"I don't know," said the father stonily.

"What does he mean by Malabar?" she asked her brother Oscar.

"It's one of the horses running for the Derby," was the answer.

And, in spite of himself, Oscar Cresswell spoke to Bassett, and himself put a thousand on Malabar: at fourteen to one.

The third day of the illness was critical: they were waiting for a change. The boy, with his rather long, curly hair, was tossing ceaselessly on the pillow. He neither slept nor regained consciousness, and his eyes were like blue stones. His mother sat, feeling her heart had gone, turned actually into a stone.

In the evening Oscar Cresswell did not come, but Bassett sent a message, saying could he come up for one moment, just one moment? Paul's mother was very angry at the intrusion, but on second thoughts she agreed. The boy was the same. Perhaps Bassett might

bring him to consciousness.

The gardener, a shortish fellow with a little brown moustache and sharp little brown eyes, tiptoed into the room, touched his imaginary cap to Paul's mother, and stole to the bedside, staring with glittering, smallish eyes at the tossing, dying child. "Master Paul!" he whispered.

"Master Paul! Malabar came in first all right, a clean win. I did as you told me. You've made over seventy thousand pounds, you have; you've got over eighty thousand. Malabar came in all right, Master Paul."

"Malabar! Malabar! Did I say Malabar, mother? Did I say Malabar? Do you think I'm lucky, mother? I knew Malabar, didn't I? Over eighty thousand pounds! I call that lucky, don't you, mother? Over eighty thousand pounds! I knew, didn't I know I knew? Malabar came in all right. If I ride my horse till I'm sure, then I tell you, Bassett, you can go as high as you like. Did you go for all you were worth, Bassett?"

"I went a thousand on it, Master Paul."

"I never told you, mother, that if I can ride my horse, and get there, then I'm absolutely sure - oh, absolutely! Mother, did I ever tell you? I am lucky!"

"No, you never did," said his mother.

But the boy died in the night.

And even as he lay dead, his mother heard her brother's voice saying to her, "My God, Hester, you're eighty-odd thousand to the good, and a poor devil of a son to the bad. But, poor devil, poor devil, he's best gone out of a life where he rides his rocking-horse to find a winner."

Notes

with a sort of stealth – (*here)* with his own secret

to be in full tilt – to be tilted up to the limit

Ascot – the famous race-course and horse races at Ascot Heath in Berkshire, England

blade of the "turf" – *(here)* a man of the turf

Honour bright - (*colloquial)* on my honour

Nat Gould – a famous financier

spinning yarns – (*colloquial)* fabulous stories

as sure as eggs – *(here)* sure thing

as right as a trivet – (*colloquial)* in perfect order

Vocabulary Work

1. Find these words and expressions in the text of the story and translate them.

the love turned to dust, to be thrust upon, she racked her brains, worth doing, filthy lucre, to compel smb's attention, to give smb away, to give smb a tip, to burst into a roar of laughter, writs, overwrought, uncanny eyes, you're all nerves, sullen, let smb nerves go to pieces, to grow tense, might and main, common sense, faint noise, her heart stood still, frozen with anxiety and fear, to tiptoe.

2. Translate the following sentences into English.

1. Несмотря на то, что их мама очень верила в себя, она ничего не добилась.
2. Хотя они жили роскошно, они всегда чувствовали тревогу в доме.
3. Этот фильм стоит того, чтобы его посмотрели.
4. Погруженный в свои мысли, не обращая внимания на других людей, он шел со своей собственной тайной и искал удачу.
5. Она заставляла работать мозги, пробовала то одно, то другое, но так и не смогла найти ничего удачного.
6. Он одолжил мне пять шиллингов, которые я сразу же проиграл.
7. Он всегда очень хочет знать, выиграл я или проиграл.
8. Я не хочу его предавать, он доверяет мне.
9. Дядя был рад узнать, что его маленький племянник в курсе всех событий.
10. Ты не мог бы мне намекнуть, кто станет победителем?
11. Пол всегда заставлял его рассказывать о событиях на скачках.
12. Не переживай! Я сохраню все в секрете.
13. Его ранили во время второй мировой войны.
14. Элен была очень уставшей и почувствовала, как будто что-то в ней взорвалось.
15. Шум на улице ужасно их напугал.
16. Вместо того чтобы делать уроки, она смотрела телевизор.
17. Его жуткая улыбка напугала всех до смерти.

3. Give definitions for the following words using an English-English dictionary.

anxious (adj)
failure (n)
bitter (adj)
obscure (adj)

yell (v)
debt (n)
shabby (adj)

Discussion

1. Discuss some problem questions.

1. What role did Uncle Oscar play in the life of the little boy? Why didn't he put an end to Paul's betting as soon as he noticed something uncanny about him?

2. What do "the voice in the house", the whispering stand as a symbol of?

3. What was it that brought on Paul's brain-fever? What was the true cause of his death?

2. Give a character sketch of:

1) Paul
2) Mother
3) Uncle Oscar

3. Give a detailed analysis of the story.

TACTICAL EXERCISE

BY EVELYN WAUGH

John Verney married Elizabeth in 1938, but it was not until the winter of 1945 that he came to hate her steadily and fiercely. There had been countless brief gusts of hate before this, for it was a thing which came easily to him. He was not what is normally described as a bad-tempered man, rather the reverse; a look of fatigue and abstraction was the only visible sign of the passion which possessed him, as others are possessed by laughter or desire, several times a day.

During the war he passed among those he served with as a phlegmatic fellow. He did not have his good or his bad days; they were all uniformly good and bad; good, in that he did what had to be done, expeditiously without ever "getting in a flap" or "going off the deep end"; bad, from the intermittent, invisible sheet-lightning of hate which flashed and flickered deep inside him at every obstruction or reverse. In his orderly room when, as a company commander, he faced the morning procession of defaulters and malingerers; in the mess when the subalterns disturbed his reading by playing the wireless; at the Staff College when the "syndicate" disagreed with his solution; at Brigade H.Q. when the staff-sergeant mislaid a file or the telephone orderly muddled a call; when the driver of his car missed a turning; later, in hospital, when the doctor seemed to look too cursorily at his wound and the nurses stood gossiping jauntily at the beds of more likeable patients instead of doing their duty to him—in all the annoyances of army life which others dismissed with an oath and a shrug, John Verney's eyelids drooped wearily, a tiny grenade of hate exploded and the fragments rang and ricocheted round the steel walls of his mind.

There had been less to annoy him before the war. He had some money and the hope of a career in politics. Before marriage he served his apprenticeship to the Liberal party in two hopeless by-elections. The Central Office then rewarded him with a constituency in outer London which offered a fair chance in the next General Election. In the eighteen months before the war he nursed this constituency from his flat in Belgravia* and travelled frequently on the continent to study political conditions. These studies convinced him that war was inevitable; he denounced the Munich agreement pungently and se-

cured a commission in the territorial army.

Into this peacetime life Elizabeth fitted unobtrusively. She was his cousin. In 1938 she had reached the age of twenty-six, four years his junior, without falling in love. She was a calm, handsome young woman, an only child, with some money of her own and more to come. As a girl, in her first season, an injudicious remark, let slip and overheard, got her the reputation of cleverness. Those who knew her best ruthlessly called her "deep."

Thus condemned to social failure, she languished in the ball-rooms of Pont Street* for another year and then settled down to a life of concert-going and shopping with her mother, until she surprised her small circle of friends by marrying John Verney. Courtship and consummation were tepid, cousinly, harmonious. They agreed, in face of the coming war, to remain childless. No one knew what Elizabeth felt or thought about anything. Her judgments were mainly negative, deep or dull as you cared to take them. She had none of the appearance of a woman likely to inflame great hate.

John Verney was discharged from the Army early in 1945 with an M.C.* and one leg, for the future, two inches shorter than the other. He found Elizabeth living in Hampstead with her parents, his uncle and aunt. She had kept him informed by letter of the changes in her condition but, preoccupied, he had not clearly imagined them.

Their flat had been requisitioned by a government office; their furniture and books sent to a repository and totally lost, partly burned by a bomb, partly pillaged by firemen. Elizabeth, who was a linguist, had gone to work in a clandestine branch of the Foreign Office.

Her parents' house had once been a substantial Georgian villa overlooking the Heath*. John Verney arrived there early in the morning after a crowded night's journey from Liverpool. The wrought-iron railings and gates had been rudely torn away by the salvage collectors, and in the front garden, once so neat, weeds and shrubs grew in a rank jungle trampled at night by courting soldiers. The back garden was a single, small bomb-crater; heaped clay, statuary and the bricks and glass of ruined greenhouses; dry stalks of willow-herb stood breast high over the mounds. All the windows were gone from the back of the house, replaced by shutters of card and board, which put the main rooms in perpetual darkness. "Welcome to Chaos and Old Night,"* said his uncle genially.

There were no servants; the old had fled, the young had been conscribed for service. Elizabeth made him some tea before leaving for her office.

Here he lived, lucky, Elizabeth told him, to have a home. Furni-

ture was unprocurable, furnished flats commanded a price beyond their income, which was now taxed to a bare wage. They might have found something in the country, but Elizabeth, being childless, could not get release from her work. Moreover, he had his constituency.

This, too, was transformed. A factory, wired round like a prisoner-of-war camp, stood in the public gardens. The streets surrounding it, once the trim houses of potential Liberals, had been bombed, patched, confiscated, and filled with an immigrant proletarian population. Every day he received a heap of complaining letters from constituents exiled in provincial boardinghouses. He had hoped that his decoration and his limp might earn him sympathy, but he found the new inhabitants indifferent to the fortunes of war. Instead they showed a sceptical curiosity about Social Security. "They're nothing but a lot of reds," said the Liberal agent.

"You mean I shan't get in?"

"Well, we'll give them a good fight. The Tories are putting up a Battle-of-Britain pilot. I'm afraid he'll get most of what's left of the middle-class vote."

In the event John Verney came bottom of the poll, badly. A rancorous Jewish schoolteacher was elected. The Central Office paid his deposit, but the election had cost him dear. And when it was over there was absolutely nothing for John Verney to do.

He remained in Hampstead, helped his aunt make the beds after Elizabeth had gone to her office, limped to the greengrocer and fishmonger and stood, full of hate, in the queues; helped Elizabeth wash up at night. They ate in the kitchen, where his aunt cooked deliciously the scanty rations. His uncle went three days a week to help pack parcels for Java. Elizabeth, the deep one, never spoke of her work, which, in fact, was concerned with setting up hostile and oppressive governments in Eastern Europe.

One evening at a restaurant, a man came and spoke to her, a tall young man whose sallow, aquiline face was full of intellect and humour. "That's the head of my department," she said. "He's so amusing."

"Looks like a Jew."

"I believe he is. He's a strong Conservative and hates the work," she added hastily, for since his defeat in the election John had become fiercely anti-Semitic.

"There is absolutely no need to work for the State now," he said. "The war's over."

"Our work is just beginning. They won't let any of us go. You must understand what conditions are in this country."

It often fell to Elizabeth to explain "conditions" to him. Strand by strand, knot by knot, through the coalless winter, she exposed the vast net of government control which had been woven in his absence. He had been reared in traditional Liberalism and the system revolted him. More than this, it had him caught, personally, tripped up, tied, tangled; wherever he wanted to go, whatever he wanted to do or have done, he found himself baffled and frustrated. And as Elizabeth explained she found herself defending. This regulation was necessary to avoid that ill; such a country was suffering, as Britain was not, for having neglected such a precaution; and so on, calmly and reasonably.

"I know it's maddening, John, but you must realize it's the same for everyone."

"That's what all you bureaucrats want," he said. "Equality through slavery. The two-class state—proletarians and officials."

Elizabeth was part and parcel of it. She worked for the State and the Jews. She was a collaborator with the new, alien, occupying power. And as the winter wore on and the gas burned feebly in the stove, and the rain blew in through the patched windows, as at length spring came and buds broke in the obscene wilderness round the house, Elizabeth in his mind became something more important. She became a symbol. For just as soldiers in far-distant camps think of their wives, with a tenderness they seldom felt at home, as the embodiment of all the good things they have left behind, wives who perhaps were scolds and drabs, but in the desert and jungle become transfigured until their trite air-letters become texts of hope, so Elizabeth grew in John Verney's despairing mind to more than human malevolence as the archpriestess and maenad of the century of the common man.

"You aren't looking well, John," said his aunt. "You and Elizabeth ought to get away for a bit. She is due for leave at Easter."

"The State is granting her a supplementary ration of her husband's company, you mean. Are we sure she has filled in all the correct forms? Or are commissars of her rank above such things?"

Uncle and aunt laughed uneasily. John made his little jokes with such an air of weariness, with such a droop of the eyelids that they sometimes struck chill in that family circle. Elizabeth regarded him gravely and silently.

John was far from well. His leg was in constant pain so that he no longer stood in queues. He slept badly; as also, for the first time in her life, did Elizabeth. They shared a room now, for the winter rains had brought down ceilings in many parts of the shaken house and the

upper rooms were thought to be unsafe. They had twin beds on the ground floor in what had once been her father's library.

In the first days of his homecoming John had been amorous. Now he never approached her. They lay night after night six feet apart in the darkness. Once when John had been awake for two hours he turned on the lamp that stood on the table between them. Elizabeth was lying with her eyes wide open staring at the ceiling.

"I'm sorry. Did I wake you?"

"I haven't been asleep."

"I thought I'd read for a bit. Will it disturb you?"

"Not at all."

She turned away. John read for an hour. He did not know whether she was awake or asleep when he turned off the light.

Often after that he longed to put on the light, but was afraid to find her awake and staring. Instead he lay, as others lie in a luxurious rapture of love, hating her.

It did not occur to him to leave her; or, rather, it did occur from time to time, but he hopelessly dismissed the thought. Her life was bound tight to his; her family was his family; their finances were intertangled and their expectations lay together in the same quarters. To leave her would be to start fresh, alone and naked in a strange world; and lame and weary at the age of thirty-eight, John Verney had not the heart to move.

He loved no one else. He had nowhere to go, nothing to do. Moreover he suspected, of late, that it would not hurt her if he went. And, above all, the single steadfast desire left to him was to do her ill. "I wish she were dead," he said to himself as he lay awake at night. "I wish she were dead."

Sometimes they went out together. As the winter passed, John took to dining once or twice a week at his club. He assumed that on these occasions she stayed at home, but one morning it transpired that she too had dined out the evening before. He did not ask with whom, but his aunt did, and Elizabeth replied, "Just someone from the office."

"The Jew?" John asked.

"As a matter of fact, it was."

"I hope you enjoyed it."

"Quite. A beastly dinner, of course, but he's very amusing."

One night when he returned from his club, after a dismal little dinner and two crowded Tube journeys, he found Elizabeth in bed and deeply asleep. She did not stir when he entered. Unlike her normal habit, she was snoring. He stood for a minute, fascinated by this new

and unlovely aspect of her, her head thrown back, her mouth open and slightly dribbling at the corner. Then he shook her. She muttered something, turned over and slept heavily and soundlessly.

Half an hour later, as he was striving to compose himself for sleep, she began to snore again. He turned on the light, looked at her more closely and noticed with surprise, which suddenly changed to joyous hope, that there was a tube of unfamiliar pills, half empty, beside her on the bed table.

He examined it. "24 Comprimés narcotiques, hypnotiques,"* he read, and then in large, scarlet letters, "NE PAS DEPASSER DEUX."* He counted those which were left. Eleven.

With tremulous butterfly wings Hope began to flutter in his heart, became a certainty. He felt a fire kindle and spread inside him until he was deliciously suffused in every limb and organ. He lay, listening to the snores, with the pure excitement of a child on Christmas Eve. "I shall wake up tomorrow and find her dead," he told himself, as once he had felt the flaccid stocking at the foot of his bed and told himself, "Tomorrow I shall wake up and find it full." Like a child, he longed to sleep to hasten the morning and, like a child, he was wildly, ecstatically sleepless. Presently he swallowed two of the pills himself and almost at once was unconscious.

Elizabeth always rose first to make breakfast for the family. She was at the dressing table when sharply, without drowsiness, his memory stereoscopically clear about the incidents of the night before, John awoke. "You've been snoring," she said.

Disappointment was so intense that at first he could not speak. Then he said, "You snored, too, last night."

"It must be the sleeping tablet I took. I must say it gave me a good night."

"Only one?"

"Yes, two's the most that's safe."

"Where did you get them?"

"A friend at the office—the one you called the Jew. He has them prescribed by a doctor for when he's working too hard. I told him I wasn't sleeping, so he gave me half a bottle."

"Could he get me some?"

"I expect so. He can do most things like that."

So he and Elizabeth began to drug themselves regularly and passed long, vacuous nights. But often John delayed, letting the beatific pill lie beside his glass of water, while, knowing the vigil was terminable at will, he postponed the joy of unconsciousness, heard Elizabeth's snores, and hated her sumptuously.

One evening while the plans for the holiday were still under discussion, John and Elizabeth went to the cinema. The film was a murder story of no great ingenuity but with showy scenery. A bride murdered her husband by throwing him out of a window, down a cliff. Things were made easy for her by his taking a lonely lighthouse for their honeymoon. He was very rich and she wanted his money. All she had to do was confide in the local doctor and a few neighbours that her husband frightened her by walking in his sleep; she doped his coffee, dragged him from the bed to the balcony—a feat of some strength—where she had already broken away a yard of balustrade, and rolled him over. Then she went back to bed, gave the alarm next morning, and wept over the mangled body which was presently discovered half awash on the rocks. Retribution overtook her later, but at the time the thing was a complete success.

"I wish it were as easy as that," thought John, and in a few hours the whole tale had floated away in those lightless attics of the mind where films and dreams and funny stories lie spider-shrouded for a lifetime unless, as sometimes happens, an intruder brings them to light.

Such a thing happened a few weeks later when John and Elizabeth went for their holiday. Elizabeth found the place.

It belonged to someone in her office. It was named Good Hope Fort, and stood on the Cornish coast.* "It's only just been derequisitioned," she said: "I expect we shall find it in pretty bad condition."

"We're used to that," said John. It did not occur to him that she should spend her leave anywhere but with him. She was as much part of him as his maimed and aching leg.

They arrived on a gusty April afternoon after a train journey of normal discomfort. A taxi drove them eight miles from the station, through deep Cornish lanes, past granite cottages and disused, archaic tin-workings. They reached the village which gave the house its postal address, passed through it and out along a track which suddenly emerged from its high banks into open grazing land on the cliff's edge, high, swift clouds and sea-birds wheeling overhead, the turf at their feet alive with fluttering wild flowers, salt in the air, below them the roar of the Atlantic breaking on the rocks, a middle-distance of indigo and white tumbled waters and beyond it the serene arc of the horizon. Here was the house.

"Your father," said John, "would now say, 'Your castle hath a pleasant seat.'*

"Well, it has rather, hasn't it?"

It was a small stone building on the very edge of the cliff, built

a century or so ago for defensive purposes, converted to a private house in the years of peace, taken again by the Navy during the war as a signal station, now once more reverting to gentler uses. Some coils of rusty wire, a mast, the concrete foundations of a hut, gave evidence of its former masters.

They carried their things into the house and paid the taxi.

"A woman comes up every morning from the village. I said we shouldn't want her this evening. I see she's left us some oil for the lamps. She's got a fire going, too, bless her, and plenty of wood. Oh, and look what I've got as a present from father. I promised not to tell you until we arrived. A bottle of whisky. Wasn't it sweet of him. He's been hoarding his ration for three months ..." Elizabeth talked brightly as she began to arrange the luggage. "There's a room for each of us. This is the only proper living room, but there's a study in case you feel like doing any work. I believe we shall be quite comfortable ..."

The living room was built with two stout bays, each with a french window opening on a balcony which overhung the sea. John opened one and the sea-wind filled the room. He stepped out, breathed deeply, and then said suddenly: "Hullo, this is dangerous."

At one place, between the windows, the cast-iron balustrade had broken away and the stone ledge lay open over the cliff. He looked at the gap and at the foaming rocks below, momentarily puzzled. The irregular polyhedron of memory rolled uncertainly and came to rest.

He had been here before, a few weeks ago, on the gallery of the lighthouse in that swiftly forgotten film. He stood there, looking down. It was exactly thus that the waves had come swirling over the rocks, had broken and dropped back with the spray falling about them. This was the sound they had made; this was the broken ironwork and the sheer edge.

Elizabeth was still talking in the room, her voice drowned by wind and sea. John returned to the room, shut and fastened the door. In the quiet she was saying "... only got the furniture out of store last week. He left the woman from the village to arrange it. She's got some queer ideas, I must say. Just look where she put ..."

"What did you say this house was called?"

"Good Hope."

"A good name."

That evening John drank a glass of his father-in-law's whisky, smoked a pipe and planned. He had been a good tactician. He made a leisurely, mental "appreciation of the situation." Object: murder.

When they rose to go to bed he asked: "You packed the tab-

lets?"

"Yes, a new tube. But I am sure I shan't want any tonight."

"Neither shall I," said John, "the air is wonderful."

During the following days he considered the tactical problem. It was entirely simple. He had the "staff-solution"* already. He considered it in the words and form he had used in the army. "... Courses open to the enemy ... achievement of surprise ... consolidation of success." The staff-solution was exemplary. At the beginning of the first week, he began to put it into execution.

Already, by easy stages, he had made himself known in the village. Elizabeth was a friend of the owner; he the returned hero, still a little strange in civvy street. "The first holiday my wife and I have had together for six years," he told them in the golf club and, growing more confidential at the bar, hinted that they were thinking of making up for lost time and starting a family.

On another evening he spoke of war-strain, of how in this war the civilians had had a worse time of it than the services. His wife, for instance; stuck it all through the blitz; office work all day, bombs at night. She ought to get right away, alone somewhere for a long stretch; her nerves had suffered; nothing serious, but to tell the truth he wasn't quite happy about it. As a matter of fact, he had found her walking in her sleep once or twice in London.

His companions knew of similar cases; nothing to worry about, but it wanted watching; didn't want it to develop into anything worse. Had she seen a doctor?

Not yet, John said. In fact she didn't know she had been sleep-walking. He had got her back to bed without waking her. He hoped the sea air would do her good. In fact, she seemed much better already. If she showed any more signs of the trouble when they got home, he knew a very good man to take her to.

The golf club was full of sympathy. John asked if there was a good doctor in the neighbourhood. Yes, they said, old Mackenzie in the village, a first-class man, wasted in a little place like that; not at all a stick-in-the-mud. Read the latest books; psychology and all that. They couldn't think why Old Mack had never specialized and made a name for himself.

"I think I might go and talk to Old Mack about it," said John.

"Do. You couldn't find a better fellow."

Elizabeth had a fortnight's leave. There were still three days to go when John went off to the village to consult Dr. Mackenzie. He found a grey-haired, genial bachelor in a consulting room that was more like a lawyer's office than a physician's, book-lined, dark, per-

meated by tobacco smoke.

Seated in the shabby leather armchair he developed in more precise language the story he had told in the golf club. Dr. Mackenzie listened without comment.

"It's the first time I've run up against anything like this," he concluded.

At length Dr. Mackenzie said: "You got pretty badly knocked about in the war, Mr. Verney?"

"My knee. It still gives me trouble."

"Bad time in hospital?"

"Three months. A beastly place outside Rome."

"There's always a good deal of nervous shock in an injury of that kind. It often persists when the wound is healed."

"Yes, but I don't quite understand ..."

"My dear Mr. Verney, your wife asked me to say nothing about it, but I think I must tell you that she has already been here to consult me on this matter."

"About her sleep-walking? But she can't ..." then John stopped.

"My dear fellow, I quite understand. She thought you didn't know. Twice lately you've been out of bed and she had to lead you back. She knows all about it."

John could find nothing to say.

"It's not the first time," Dr. Mackenzie continued, "that I've been consulted by patients who have told me their symptoms and said they had come on behalf of friends or relations. Usually it's girls who think they're in the family-way. It's an interesting feature of your case that you should want to ascribe the trouble to someone else, probably the decisive feature. I've given your wife the name of a man in London who I think will be able to help you. Meanwhile I can only advise plenty of exercise, light meals at night ..."

John Verney limped back to Good Hope Fort in a state of consternation. Security had been compromised; the operation must be cancelled; initiative had been lost ... all the phrases of the tactical school came to his mind, but he was still numb after this unexpected reverse. A vast and naked horror peeped at him and was thrust aside.

When he got back Elizabeth was laying the supper table. He stood on the balcony and stared at the gaping rails with eyes smarting with disappointment. It was dead calm that evening. The rising tide lapped and fell and mounted again silently among the rocks below. He stood gazing down, then he turned back into the room.

There was one large drink left in the whisky bottle. He poured it out and swallowed it. Elizabeth brought in the supper and they sat

down. Gradually his mind grew a little calmer. They usually ate in silence. At last he said: "Elizabeth, why did you tell the doctor I had been walking in my sleep?"

She quietly put down the plate she had been holding and looked at him curiously. "Why?" she said gently. "Because I was worried, of course. I didn't think you knew about it."

"But have I been?"

"Oh yes, several times—in London and here. I didn't think it mattered at first, but the night before last I found you on the balcony, quite near that dreadful hole in the rails. I was really frightened. But it's going to be all right now. Dr. Mackenzie has given me the name ..."

It was possible, thought John Verney; nothing was more likely.

He had lived night and day for ten days thinking of that opening, of the sea and rock below, the ragged ironwork and the sharp edge of stone. He suddenly felt defeated, sick and stupid, as he had as he lay on the Italian hillside with his smashed knee. Then as now he had felt weariness even more than pain.

"Coffee, darling."

Suddenly he roused himself. "No," he almost shouted. "No, no, no."

"Darling, what is the matter? Don't get excited. Are you feeling ill? Lie down on the sofa near the window."

He did as he was told. He felt so weary that he could barely move from his chair.

"Do you think coffee would keep you awake, love? You look quite fit to drop already. There, lie down."

He lay down and, like the tide slowly mounting among the rocks below, sleep rose and spread in his mind. He nodded and woke with a start.

"Shall I open the window, darling, and give you some air?"

"Elizabeth," he said, "I feel as if I have been drugged." Like the rocks below the window—now awash, now emerging clear from falling water; now awash again, deeper; now barely visible, mere patches on the face of gently eddying foam—his brain was softly drowning. He roused himself, as children do in nightmare, still scared, still half asleep. "I can't be drugged," he said loudly, "I never touched the coffee."

"Drugs in the coffee?" said Elizabeth gently, like a nurse soothing a fractious child. "Drugs in the coffee? What an absurd idea. That's the kind of thing that only happens on the films, darling."

He did not hear her. He was fast asleep, snoring stertorously by

the open window.

Notes

Belgravia – the smart and very expensive residential area of London

Pont Street – a street in London associated with wealthy upper middle-class society

M.C. – Military Cross, a decoration

the Heath – Hampstead Heath parkland in a London suburb

"Welcome to Chaos and Old Night" - a reference to the words of Milton in his poem "Paradise Lost".

'24 Comprimés narcotiques, hypnotiques' – *(French)* 24 sleeping pills

'Ne pas dépasser deux' - *(French)* no more than two

the Cornish coast – situated in Cornwall, in the south-west of England

'Your castle hath a pleasant seat' – a quotation from *Macbeth* by Shakespeare

staff-solution – the official answer to a problem set by instructors at the Army Staff College

Vocabulary Work

1. Find these words and expressions in the text of the story and translate them.

fiercely, to get in a flap, to go off the deep end, to gossip jauntily, dismissed with an oath and a shrug, a tiny grenade of hate exploded, to nurse the constituency, condemned to social failure, tepid, to discharge, limp, scanty, to mutter, to confide in, to put smth into execution, on behalf of, in a family way.

2. Find in the text as many words as possible denoting.

a) Military Terms;

b) Political Terms.

3. Put the words in the right order. Make up sentences.

1. had; service; the; for; servants; been; young; conscribed;

2. hoped; him; limp; had; might; his; earn; he; sympathy; that;

3. him; subalterns; playing; the; by; disturbed; wireless;

4. indifferent; the; found; to; war; inhabitants; he; the; of; new; fortunes;

5. had; a; been; tactician; good; he;

6. their; the; carried; into; and; taxi; they; things; house; paid; the.

4. Give definitions for the following words using an Eng-

lish-English dictionary.

wound (n)
indifferent (adj)
poll (n)
feebly (adv)
hoard (v)
weariness (n)

Discussion

1. Agree or disagree with the following statements. Prove your answer with details.

1. John and Elizabeth got married for love.
2. John was a bad-tempered man.
3. Those who knew Elizabeth the best called her "deep".
4. John and his wife became very rich after the war.
5. Everyone cared for John and his limp.
6. John was far from well, he slept badly.
7. Elizabeth always stayed at home while her husband went to the night clubs.
8. John was sorry for Elizabeth who took pills.
9. One evening John and Elizabeth went to the concert.

2. Give a character sketch of:

a) John;
b) Elizabeth.

3. Discuss some problem-questions.

1. How did the war affect John Verney, his wife and their relationship?
2. Do you find the end of the story suggestive of any follow up?
3. Who of the two, John or Elizabeth, seems a more sympathetic character to you and why? With whom, to your mind, are the sympathies of the author?

4. Give a detailed analysis of the story.

Лингвистика

RICOCHET

BY ANGELA NOEL

Owen had planned to wear gloves. He had an ancient pair in brown leather, which he wore for Sunday chapel* in winter. But his farmer's hands were clumsy in them and this was delicate work.

Owen Parry stopped and looked about him with a little rat-smile. Why bother with gloves at all? This was his own cottage, wasn't it? The police would expect to find his fingerprints all over it. These were his two wooden chairs, now standing back to back and apart by a carefully measured distance.

The shot gun was his, too. Of course it bore his fingerprints. Now the gun lay across the backs of the two chairs, firmly held with rope and wire. It pointed at his only door.

The gun was cocked. From the trigger, a string was looped to the door handle. When that door was thrown back, the string would jerk tight. And when did his brother Huw not throw doors wide?

For a moment Owen's stomach welled in him but he held himself taut. Switch

on an inviting light, he told himself, and leave the cottage by a window.

His brother would be here before evening chapel.

`To talk about re-stocking the farm,' Owen had lied nervously while persuading

him to come.

`Huh, re-stocking, is it?' Huw had grunted. `Looking ahead, aren't we?'

Both their faces were still grey from the nightmare of foot-and-mouth disease* that had devastated their farm. By compulsory order, their whole flock had been slaughtered. Their dogs too had to go, their beautiful faithful intelligent dogs. Even Beth, whom they all loved best.

Owen sighed at the thought of Beth but her memory strengthened his will. He had suffered enough. He set off for the village to create his alibi.

Even now, surrounded by the tragedy of empty hills, he felt his passion surge for this place he'd always known, for the lovely sweep of valley, for the curl of polished-steel river, for the farmhouse with its close family of buildings.

Soon it would all be his and his alone. He would work and care

and live again. The hills would sing with the bleat of a healthy flock and there would be dogs once more, streaming them down to the river meadow.

Though there'd never be another bitch quite like Beth. Even today, heading for the village, Owen imagined he still heard her barking, barking up at the deserted sheepfold on the hill behind his cottage.

Some partnership it had been with his brother! It wasn't enough that Huw had married Rhiannon, the girl they both loved, the pretty, sympathetic, pliable Rhiannon. Or that Huw and his wife took over the good stone farmhouse, leaving Owen to move out to the musty riverside cottage.

Worst of all, after the first year or two, Huw was not even making Rhiannon happy and their marriage, unblessed by children, had begun slowly to wither at the edges.

Huw was a black-haired giant, bass-voiced, rock-strong. To him, being without child was traumatic, demeaning. He imagined the village sniggered behind its net curtains. `There goes Huw Parry, owns half the valley with his brother, married these

five years and can't get his wife pregnant.'

And who in that lonely valley could the sad Rhiannon turn to but her brother-in-law? Didn't she know, as any woman knows, that he'd always loved her?

`Like the river you are, Owen Parry,' she told him, `slow and deep.'

As children, both boys had played and danced and kissed with her. But they were children no longer. One day Owen took his sister-in-law in his arms and the dream he had nurtured for all those silent years woke to reality.

But the birth of Margo wrought a change in Huw that stunned both Owen and Rhiannon. Overnight, it seemed, Huw stood tall again. He sang at his work and displayed a tenderness the other two had not known he possessed.

For the second time in his life, Owen had seen Rhiannon slipping from him to cleave to Huw. The old fire smouldered anew, silent and menacing inside him. One day it must blaze.

The slaughter of the flock it was that finally set the fire alight.

None of it need have happened, hadn't Owen said so again and again? One slobbering ewe they'd found, just one, and that they could easily have disposed of in secret. Then with gallons of disinfectant they could have tried, at least they could have tried, to protect the rest of the flock from the scourge of foot-and-mouth.

But oh no! Huw, upright God fearing chapel man that he was,

Huw must call the authorities. Younger and bigger, he'd tossed Owen aside and marched for the telephone. The nightmare had been set in motion. The inspectors came and passed the death sentence on sheep and dogs alike.

`I hope you're satisfied, Huw Parry,' said Owen that night and he felt a lifetime's resentment of his brother slip over the edge into something deeper and much harder to control.

Owen had made one last appeal to Rhiannon. Huw was outside, staring morosely at the river. Margo they could hear in the yard, calling tearfully for the vanished Beth.

`Huw can't bring himself to tell her about having to shoot Beth,' Rhiannon said tenderly, watching her husband from her kitchen window. `I'll never forget how he looked as he led Beth away and she went, waving that plume tail of hers, obedient to the last. Beth was always Margo's favourite and it broke his heart to have to do it.'

Owen's arm tightened across Rhiannon's shoulders. `We can't go on like this, love,' he said. `You've got to tell Huw the truth. Let him find some other farm. We'll re-stock as soon as they'll let us and we'll set up house here like the family we really are.'

He glanced covetously at the firm dry walls, the roominess and solidity of the place, so different from his miserable cottage.

But when his gaze returned to Rhiannon, her blank look killed his hope.

`Is it mad you are, Owen Parry?' she said. `Would I tell my man to go, after all he's suffered, after all this destruction and grief? Would I rob him of his land and his child -?'

`Whose child?' said Owen.

Rhiannon paled. `God forgive me, he's as good as a father to her.'

Owen spread his hands. `It's childless you'd be to this day if you hadn't turned to me.'

She shook her head of long dark hair. `Oh I know you were good to me when my marriage was going badly, Owen. I needed you then. But Huw and me, we're so much happier now. You must see that. He's a different man. He worships Margo – and I won't let you take her from him. I'll deny every word you say and it's me he'll believe.'

Owen grasped her shoulders, thin under his demanding hands, and shook her. Her dark hair flopped forward, then she threw up her head and defied him.

He wanted to roar at her, `You have used me like a prize ram!' But he quelled the words. If once he turned Rhiannon against himself,

his life would be without meaning.

He'd walked away, sickened by the knowledge of what he must do.

That night Owen wept, alone in his musty cottage, and his deepest distress was for Margo, his brown-eyed elf. No choir ever sang like that child laughing . . .

While Huw lived, Rhiannon would be his wife, Margo his daughter. What choice had they left him? A man could only take or lose - so much.

Owen brooded for a week, a scheme simmering in his mind.

He might have pulled the trigger himself - but he knew his courage would fail him. Huw had only to look at him with those blazing black eyes of his and Owen would feel his strength of purpose drain away into the ground. And how to convince people it was an accident? No, Huw must be the one to pull the trigger. And hadn't the slaughter of an entire flock, a lifetime's work, been known to drive a man to suicide? Hadn't Huw been morose of late, since their loss? What better place to choose than his brother's home to spare his wife and child from finding his body?

Thus was born the idea of the trap.

Grudgingly, Huw had agreed to come down to Owen's cottage this Sunday afternoon to talk about the farm. Huw would fling open the door and it would all be over. He wouldn't even suffer or know a moment's suspicion. A small price to pay for another's happiness, Owen thought.

Owen would walk back from the village after chapel, clutching his watertight alibi. It would take only minutes to falsify the evidence, to remove all signs of wire and string, and to place the gun in the dead man's hands. Then Owen would run in innocent horror to telephone the police. The widow would weep in his arms.

Now Owen's heart thundered in his breast as he left his cottage and his gun, waiting, behind him.

The village lay freezing in the Sunday afternoon quiet. Though not, apparently,

too cold for Mrs Price, Groceries, forever at her door.

`Terrible to be idle, isn't it?' she said, with relish.

Owen stopped. What better witness to his whereabouts this Sunday afternoon, she with her mind like the hoard of a squirrel, packed tight with seeds of suspicion and sweet nuts of scandal?

When at last Mrs Price ran out of chatter, he called on Ma Hughes and asked politely about her arthritis. Ma Hughes offered him tea.

Owen left Ma Hughes when he'd barely enough time to reach chapel. He entered that hushed place, let the door fall to with a thud and broke into a fit of coughing.

Afterwards, his irreverence apparently forgiven, they asked him where Huw was. `Can't remember when last Huw Parry missed chapel,' they all said.

Owen shook his head and murmured about depression.

Despite the cold, Owen was sweating as he left the lane and slowly crunched back over the crystal grass to his cottage.

He reached his door, put out his hand . . .

No, wait. The gun might still be cocked, if for any reason Huw had failed to come down. Even in death, he didn't trust his brother. He peered nervously in through

his lighted window.

Owen's scream split the night.

He burst into the cottage, jaw slack, eyes protruding, hands dragging at his hair. He gaped down at the two sprawled and bloody bodies on his floor.

Margo and the sheepdog Beth.

He prodded the bitch with his shoe and it was rigid. He couldn't touch the child. His own daughter. He covered his face.

His mind was a vortex of horror and bewilderment. Then the truth flashed against his closed lids.

Huw had cheated. He had never slaughtered the bitch as ordered. He must have hidden her. Suddenly Owen recalled that ghostly barking from the sheepfold. Of course! Then today she must have escaped, perhaps found and released by a delighted Margo, and they'd come bounding down the hillside to tell her Uncle Owen the good news . . .

It took only a few minutes to discard the wire and string, reload the gun and

blow out the side of his head.

The explosion awoke the sleeping child. Margo started up, crying, as the noise renewed her terror. She looked only at Beth, who had not moved. She remembered trying to keep up with Beth and how the bitch bounded at the cottage door ahead of her, the unbearable noise and how the bitch fell whimpering and twitching. She had flung herself down, fondling Beth, trying to rouse her, getting covered in the animal's blood. She must have cried herself to sleep on the floor.

Now she turned and fled screaming from the cottage. Halfway home, stumbling through the moonlight, she cannoned into Huw. `Oh

Margo, my Margo, I've been searching for you this past two hours!' Huw scooped up the child and carried her joyously home, thanking the Lord for the safety of his beloved daughter. He decided it was too late now to go and see Owen.

Notes

ricochet – a sudden sharp change of the direction of a moving object such as stone or bullet when it hits a surface at an angle

chapel – a building used for Christian worship by members of one of the Nonconformist sects of the Protestant religion (e.g. the Methodists, who are very strong in Wales)

foot-and-mouth disease – a very infectious disease that affects farm animals; in Britain (though not in other countries) the disease is controlled by the obligatory slaughter of infected animals

Vocabulary Work

1. Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and word combinations.

найти отпечатки пальцев, тщательно отмеренное расстояние, ружье было взведено, опустошить ферму, забить стадо, бездетный брак, вынашивать мечту, привести в действие, вынести смертный приговор, разбить сердце, отрицать каждое слово, неопровержимое алиби, сфабриковать улики, распростертое тело.

2. Find these words and expressions in the text of the story and translate them.

the bleat of the flock, a pliable wife, to snigger behind the net curtains, musty riverside cottage, to call the authorities, to stare morosely, to glance covetously, to defy smb, to brood for a week, to simmer in the mind, to pull the trigger, to drive smb to a suicide, a vortex of horror and bewilderment.

3. Find all nouns and adjectives which characterize:

1) Owen Parry

2) Rhiannon

Discussion

1. Agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. Family quarrels are bitter things. They don't go by any rules. They're not like aches or wounds; they're more like splits in the skin that won't heal because there's not enough material. (F. Scott Fitzgerald).

2. Envy slays itself by its own arrows.

3. If kick a stone in anger, you'll hurt your own foot. (Korean

proverb).

4. I suppose everyone tells white lies. Quite often they're necessary to make someone feel better or prevent feelings from being hurt. (Richard Chamberlain).

2. Discuss some problem-questions.

1. Which do you think was more important for Owen, sole possession and management of the farm, or living with Rhiannon and being able to claim Margo as his own daughter?

2. Why do you think Rhiannon chose to marry Huw rather than Owen? What is your opinion of her own character? Is she partly to blame for the tragedy? Why, or why not?

3. Do you think that the tragedy would have been prevented if Rhiannon and Margo had left Huw and moved in with Owen? What do you think Huw would have done?

3. Give a detailed analysis of the story.

THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

BY GRAHAM GREENE

It was the strangest murder trial I ever attended. They named it the Peckham* murder in the headlines, though Northwood Street, where the old woman was found battered to death, was not strictly speaking in Peckham. This was not one of those cases of circumstantial evidence in which you feel the jurymen's* anxiety because mistakes have been made - like domes of silence muting the court. No, this murderer was all but found with the body: no one present when the Crown counsel* outlined his case believed that the man in the dock stood any chance at all.

He was a heavy stout man with bulging bloodshot eyes. All his muscles seemed to be in his thighs. Yes, an ugly customer, one you wouldn't forget in a hurry - and that was an important point because the Crown proposed to call four witnesses who hadn't forgotten him, who had seen him hurrying away from the little red villa in Northwood Street. The clock had just struck two in the morning.

Mrs Salmon in 15 Northwood Street had been unable to sleep: she heard a door click shut and thought it was her own gate. So she went to the window and saw Adams (that was his name) on the steps of Mrs Parker's house. He had just come out and he was wearing gloves. He had a hammer in his hand and she saw him drop it into the laurel bushes by the front gate. But before he moved away, he had looked up - at her window. The fatal instinct that tells a man when he is watched exposed him in the light of a streetlamp to her gaze - his eyes suffused with horrifying and brutal fear, like an animal's when you raise a whip. I talked afterwards to Mrs Salmon, who naturally after the astonishing verdict went in fear herself. As I imagine did all the witnesses Henry MacDougall, who had been driving home from Benfleet late and nearly ran Adams down at the corner of Northwood Street. Adams was walking in the middle of the road looking dazed. And old Mr Wheeler, who lived next door to Mrs Parker, at No. 12, and was wakened by a noise – like a chair falling - through the thin-as-paper villa wall, and got up and looked out of the window, just as Mrs Salmon had done, saw Adams's back and, as he turned, those bulging eyes. In Laurel Avenue he had been seen by yet another witness - his luck was badly out; he might as well have committed the crime in broad daylight.

`I understand,' counsel said, `that the defence proposes to plead mistaken identity. Adams's wife will tell you that he was with

her at two in the morning on February 14, but after you have heard the witnesses for the Crown and examined carefully the features of the prisoner, I do not think you will be prepared to admit the possibility of a mistake.'

It was all over, you would have said, but the hanging.

After the formal evidence had been given by the policeman who had found the body and the surgeon who examined it, Mrs Salmon was called. She was the ideal witness, with her slight Scotch accent and her expression of honesty, care and kindness.

The counsel for the Crown brought the story gently out. She spoke very firmly. There was no malice in her, and no sense of importance at standing there in the Central Criminal Court with a judge in scarlet hanging on her words and the reporters writing them down. Yes, she said, and then she had gone downstairs and rung up the police station.

`And do you see the man here in court?'

She looked straight at the big man in the dock, who stared hard at her with his Pekingese* eyes without emotion.

`Yes,' she said, `there he is.'

`You are quite certain?'

She said simply, `I couldn't be mistaken, sir.'

It was all as easy as that.

`Thank you, Mrs Salmon.'

Counsel for the defence rose to cross-examine. If you had reported as many murder trials as I have, you would have known beforehand what line he would take. And I was right, up to a point.

`Now, Mrs Salmon, you must remember that a man's life may depend on your evidence.'

`I do remember it, sir.'

`Is your eyesight good?'

`I have never had to wear spectacles, sir.'

`You are a woman of fifty-five?'

`Fifty-six, sir.' `And the man you saw was on the other side of the road?'

`Yes, sir.'

`And it was two o'clock in the morning. You must have remarkable eyes, Mrs Salmon?'

`No, sir. There was moonlight, and when the man looked up, he had the lamplight on his face.'

`And you have no doubt whatever that the man you saw is the prisoner?'

I couldn't make out what he was at. He couldn't have expected

any other answer than the one he got.

`None whatever, sir. It isn't a face one forgets.'

Counsel took a look round the court for a moment. Then he said, `Do you mind, Mrs Salmon, examining again the people in court? No, not the prisoner. Stand up, please, Mr Adams,' and there at the back of the court with thick stout body and muscular legs and a pair of bulging eyes, was the exact image of the man in the dock. He was even dressed the same - tight blue suit and striped tie.

`Now think very carefully, Mrs Salmon. Can you still swear that the man you saw drop the hammer in Mrs Parker's garden was the prisoner - and not this man, who is his twin brother?'

Of course she couldn't. She looked from one to the other and didn't say a word.

There the big brute sat in the dock with his legs crossed, and there he stood too at the back of the court and they both stared at Mrs Salmon. She shook her head.

What we saw then was the end of the case. There wasn't a witness prepared to swear that it was the prisoner he'd seen. And the brother? He had his alibi, too; he was with his wife.

And so the man was acquitted for lack of evidence. But whether - if he did the murder and not his brother - he was punished or not, I don't know. That extraordinary day had an extraordinary end. I followed Mrs Salmon out of court and we got wedged in the crowd who were waiting, of course, for the twins. The police tried to drive the crowd away, but all they could do was keep the road-way clear for traffic. I learned later that they tried to get the twins to leave by a back way, but they wouldn't. One of them - no one knew which - said, `I've been acquitted, haven't I?' and they walked bang out of the front entrance. Then it happened. I don't know how, though I was only six feet away. The crowd moved and somehow one of the twins got pushed on to the road right in front of a bus.

He gave a squeal like a rabbit and that was all; he was dead, his skull smashed just as Mrs Parker's had been. Divine vengeance? I wish I knew. There was the other Adams getting on his feet from beside the body and looking straight over at Mrs Salmon. He was crying, but whether he was the murderer or the innocent man nobody will ever be able to tell. But if you were Mrs Salmon, could you sleep at night?

Notes

Peckham – a district in London

jurymen – a group of people in a court of justice, who must

listen to the evidence and decide if the accused is innocent or guilty

Crown counsel – a barrister appointed by the government to conduct the case for the prosecution

pekingese – a type of small dog with large bulging eyes

Vocabulary Work

1. Find in the text English equivalents for the following words and word combinations.

избить до смерти, у него не было никаких шансов, глаза навыкате, ему сильно не везло, средь бела дня, ловить каждое слово, не мог понять, к чему он клонит, точная копия человека на скамье подсудимых, одинаково одет, вклиниться в толпу, разогнать толпу, небесное возмездие.

2. Find these words and expressions in the text of the story and translate them.

an ugly customer, his luck was badly out, hanging on her words, with his legs crossed, the man was acquitted for lack of evidence, he gave a squeal like a rabbit.

3. Look through the story and find all the words associated with lawcourts and justice.

Discussion

1. Agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. There is a higher court than courts of justice and that is the court of conscience. It supersedes all other courts. (Mahandas Gandhi).

2. Justice is nothing to do with what goes on in a courtroom. Justice is what comes out of a courtroom. (Clarence Darrow).

3. Judgment for an evil thing is many times delayed some day or two, some century or two, but it is sure as life, it is sure as death. (Thomas Carlyle).

2. Discuss some problem-questions.

1. Do you think Adams's acquittal was right, legally or morally?

2. What would you do if you were Mrs Salmon, after the trial and the death of one of the Adams brothers?

3. Do you think that the man who died was deliberately pushed in front of the bus? And if so, who do you think pushed him? Was it a bystander, the guilty brother, or the innocent brother? What might their motives be?

3. Give a detailed analysis of the story.