Empower with English

A Collection of Literary Works

Course: Empower with English

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Compiler's Note

If you have any suggestions, reviews, comments or drawings to include in further version of this book or cute photos of cats, mail me at arjuna.ug2024 at cmi dot ac dot in.

Happy reading,
Arjun Maneesh Agarwal

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Compiled by Arjun Maneesh Agarwal

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1 An Astrologer's Day

By RK Laxman

Punctually at midday he opened his bag and spread out his professional equipment, which consisted of a dozen cowrie shells, a square piece of cloth with obscure mystic charts on it, a notebook, and a bundle of palmyra writing. His forehead was resplendent with sacred ash and vermilion, and his eyes sparkled with a sharp abnormal gleam which was really an outcome of a continual searching look for customers, but which his simple clients took to be a prophetic light and felt comforted. The power of his eyes was considerably enhanced by their position placed as they were between the painted forehead and the dark whiskers which streamed down his cheeks Even a half-wit's eyes would sparkle in such a setting. To crown the effect he wound a saffron-coloured turban around his head. This colour scheme never failed. People were attracted to him as bees are attracted to cosmos or dahlia stalks. He sat under the boughs of a spreading tamarind tree which flanked a path running through the Town Hall Park. It was a remarkable place in many ways : a surging crowd was always moving up and down this narrow road morning till night. A variety of trades and occupations was represented all along its way : medicine sellers, sellers of stolen hardware and junk, magicians, and, above all, an auctioneer of cheap cloth, who created enough din all day to attract the whole town. Next to him in vociferousness came a vendor of fried groundnut, who gave his ware a fancy name each day, calling it "Bombay Ice-Cream" one day, and on the next "Delhi Almond," and on the third " Raja's Delicacy" and so on and so forth, and people flocked to him. A considerable portion of this crowd dallied before the astrologer too. The astrologer transacted his business by the light of a flare which crackled and smoked up above the groundnut heap nearby. Half the enchantment of the place was due to the fact that it did not have the benefit of municipal lighting. The place was lit up by shop lights.

One or two had hissing gaslights, some had naked flares stuck on poles, some were lit up by old cycle lamps, and one or two, like the astrologer's, managed without lights of their own. It was a bewildering criss-cross of light rays and moving shadows. This suited the astrologer very well, for the simple reason that he had not in the least intended to be an astrologer when he began life; and he knew no more of what was going to happen to others than he knew what was going to happen to himself next minute. He was as much a stranger to the stars as were his innocent customers. Yet he said things which pleased and astonished everyone: that was more a matter of study, practice, and shrewd guesswork. All the same, it was as much an honest man's labour as any other, and he deserved the wages he carried home at the end of a day. He had left his village without any previous thought or plan. If he had continued there he would have carried on the work of his forefathers namely, tilling the land, living, marrying, and ripening in his cornfield and ancestral home. But that was not to be. He had to leave home without telling anyone, and he could not rest till he left it behind a couple of hundred miles. To a villager it is a great deal, as if an ocean flowed between. He had a working analysis of mankind's troubles : marriage, money, and the tangles of human ties. Long practice had sharpened his perception. Within five minutes he understood what was wrong. He charged three pies per question, never opened his mouth till the other had spoken for at least ten minutes, which

provided him enough stuff for a dozen answers and advices. When he told the person before him, gazing at his palm, "In many ways you are not getting the fullest results for your efforts," nine out of ten were disposed to agree with him. Or he questioned: "Is there any woman in your family, maybe even a distant relative, who is not well disposed towards you? " Or he gave an analysis of character: " Most of your troubles are due to your nature. How can you be otherwise with Saturn where he is? You have an impetuous nature and a rough exterior."

This endeared him to their hearts immediately, for; even the mildest of us loves to think that he has a forbidding exterior. The nuts vendor blew out his flare and rose to go home. This was a signal for the astrologer to bundle up too, since it left him in darkness except for a little shaft of green light which strayed in from somewhere and touched the ground before him. He picked up his cowrie shells and paraphernalia and was putting them back into his bag when the green shaft of light was blotted out; he looked up and saw a man standing before him. He sensed a possible client and said:"You look so careworn. It will do you good to sit down for a while and chat with me." The other grumbled some reply vaguely. The astrologer pressed his invitation; whereupon the other thrust his palm under his nose, saying: "You call yourself an astrologer?" The astrologer felt challenged and said, tilting the other's palm towards the green shaft of light: "Yours is a nature . . ." " Oh, stop that," the other said. " Tell me something worth while. . . ." Our friend felt piqued. "I charge only three pies per question, and what you get ought to be good enough for your money. . ." At this the other withdrew his arm, took out an anna, and flung it out to him, saying: " I have some questions to ask. If I prove you are bluffing, you must return that anna to me with interest." "If you find my answers satisfactory, will you give me five rupees?" "No." "Or will you give me eight annas?" "All right, provided you give me twice as much if you are wrong," said the stranger. This pact was accepted after a little further argument. The astrologer sent up a prayer to heaven as the other lit a cheroot. The astrologer caught a glimpse of his face by the matchlight. There was a pause as cars hooted on the road and jutka drivers swore at their horses, and the babble of the crowd agitated the semi-darkness of the park.

The other sat down, sucking his cheroot, puffing out, sat there ruthlessly. The astrologer felt very uncomfortable. "Here, take your anna back. I am not used to such challenges. It is late for me today. . . ." He made preparations to bundle up. The other held his wrist and said: "You can't get out of it now. You dragged me in while I was passing." The astrologer shivered in his grip; and his voice shook and became faint. "Leave me today. I will speak to you tomorrow." The other thrust his palm in his face and said: "Challenge is challenge. Go on." The astrologer proceeded, with his throat drying up: "There is a woman . . ." "Stop," said the other. "I don't want all that. Shall I succeed in my present search or not? Answer this and go. Otherwise I will not let you go till you disgorge all your coins."The astrologer muttered a few incantations and replied: "All right. I will speak. But will you give me a rupee if what I say is convincing? Otherwise I will not open my mouth, and you may do what you like." After a good deal of haggling the other agreed. The astrologer said: "You were left for dead. Am I right? " "Ah, tell me more." "A knife has passed through you once ? " said the astrologer. "Good fellow! " He bared his chest to show the scar. "What else? "And then you were pushed into a well nearby in the field. You were left for dead." "I should have been dead if some passer-by had not chanced to peep into the well," exclaimed the other, overwhelmed by enthusiasm."When shall I get at him ? " he asked, clenching his fist. "In the next world," answered the astrologer. "He died four months ago in a far off town. You will never see any more of him."

The other groaned on hearing it. The astrologer proceeded: "Guru Nayak " "You know my name ! " the other said, taken aback. "As I know all other things. Guru Nayak, listen carefully to what I have to say. Your village is two day's journey due north of this town. Take the next train and be gone. I see once again great danger to your life if you go from home." He took out a pinch of sacred ash and held it to him. " Rub it on your forehead and go home. Never travel southward again, and you will live to be a hundred." "Why should I leave home again ? " the other said reflectively. " I was only going away

now and then to look for him and to choke out his life if I met him." He shook his head regretfully. " He has escaped my hands. I hope at least he died as he deserved." "Yes," said the astrologer. " He was crushed under a lorry."The other looked gratified to hear it. The place was deserted by the time the astrologer picked up his articles and put them into his bag. The green shaft was also gone, leaving the place in darkness The stranger had gone off into the night, after giving the astrologer a handful of coins. It was nearly midnight when the astrologer reached home. His wife was waiting for him at the door and demanded an explanation. He flung the coins at her and said: " Count them. One man gave all that." "Twelve and a half annas," she said, counting. She was overjoyed. " I can buy some jaggery and coconut tomorrow. The child has been asking for sweets for so many days now. I will prepare some nice stuff for her." "The swine has cheated me! He promised me a rupee," said the astrologer. She looked up at him."You look worried. What is wrong?" " Nothing."

After dinner, sitting on the pyol, he told her: "Do you know a great load is gone from me today? I thought I had the blood of a man on my hands all these years. That was the reason why I ran away from home, settled here, and married you. He is alive."She gasped. " You tried to kill! " "Yes, in our village, when I was a silly youngster. We drank, gambled, and quarrelled badly one day. Why think of it now? Time to sleep," he said, yawning, and stretched himself on the pyol.

Glossary

- Punctually: Doing something at the exact agreed-upon time.
- Resplendent: Shining brightly or beautifully.
- Vermilion: A bright red color.
- Abnormal: Not typical, unusual.
- Whiskers: Facial hair, typically on the cheeks.
- Saffron-colored: A deep orange-yellow color.
- Surging: Moving suddenly and powerfully.
- Vociferousness: Loudness and noise.
- Palmyra: A type of palm tree; also refers to the leaves used for writing.
- Perception: The ability to understand or notice something.
- Impetuous: Acting quickly without thought or care.
- Cheroot: A type of cigar with both ends open.
- Jutka: A traditional horse-drawn carriage in India.
- Enchantment: The feeling of being fascinated or mesmerized.
- Incantations: Words spoken as part of a magic spell.
- Groaned: Made a deep sound of pain, distress, or despair.
- Overjoyed: Extremely happy.
- Pyol: A raised platform or veranda outside a house.
- Tangles: Complex or confused situations.

Questions

1. What do you think the astrologer's personality is like, based on his interactions with his clients? Do you see him as deceitful or resourceful? Why?
2. What could the significance of the green shaft of light be in the story? How does it add to the overall atmosphere or meaning?
3. Why do you think the astrologer fled from his village and settled into his current life? How does this background shape his present character?
4. What might the author be suggesting about the nature of belief and deception through the portrayal of the astrologer's profession?
5. The astrologer's wife is happy with the extra coins, but he is upset about being cheated. What does this tell us about their relationship and their values?
6. How does the confrontation between the astrologer and Guru Nayak reveal deeper truths about both characters? What does this reveal about human nature?
7. What do you think is the astrologer's real motivation in helping Guru Nayak? Is it purely for survival, or is there an element of redemption involved?
8. The setting in the park is described in vivid detail. How does the physical environment reflect or influence the emotions and actions of the characters in the story?
9. In your opinion, why does the astrologer decide to tell his wife the truth about his past after so many years? What does this reveal about his emotional state at the end of the story?
10. Do you think the astrologer feels guilt or relief at the end of the story? Why? How do his actions throughout the narrative support your interpretation?

2 Julius Caesar

By William Shakespeare

2.1 Act I, Scene I

Rome. A street

Flavius. Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home!
Is this a holiday? What, know you not,
Being mechanical, you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day without the sign
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?
Is this a holiday? What, know you not,
Being mechanical, you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day without the sign
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?

First Commoner. Why, sir, a carpenter.

Marullus. Where is thy leather apron and thy rule? What dost thou with thy best apparel on?
You, sir, what trade are you?

Second Commoner. Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.

Marullus. But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.

Second Commoner. A trade, sir, that, I hope, I may use with a safe conscience; which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

Marullus. What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what trade?

Second Commoner. Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me: yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

Marullus. What meanest thou by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

Second Commoner. Why, sir, cobble you.

Flavius. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

Second Commoner. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl: I meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters, but withal I am indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I recover them. As proper men as ever trod upon neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork.

Flavius. But wherefore art not in thy shop today? Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

Second Commoner. Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get myself into more work. But, indeed, sir, we make holiday to see Caesar and to rejoice in his triumph.

Marullus. Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome
To grace in captive bonds his chariot-wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made a universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks,
To hear the replication of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?

And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

Flavius. Go, go, good countrymen, and for this fault,
Assemble all the poor men of your sort;
Draw them to Tiber banks, and weep your tears
Into the channel, till the lowest stream
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.

(Exeunt all the Commoners)

Flavius. See whether their basest metal be not moved;
They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.
Go you down that way towards the Capitol;
This way will I: disrobe the images,
If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies.

Marullus. May we do so?
You know it is the feast of Lupercal.

Flavius. It is no matter; let no images
Be hung with Caesar's trophies. I'll about
And drive away the vulgar from the streets:
So do you too, where you perceive them thick.
These growing feathers pluck'd from Caesar's wing
Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,
Who else would soar above the view of men
And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

(Exeunt)

Glossary

- Mechanical: People who work with their hands, like tradesmen or laborers.
- Labouring day: A working day, as opposed to a holiday.
- Apparel: Clothing or attire.
- Knave: An insulting term for a dishonest or troublesome person.
- Meddle: To interfere in matters that are not one's concern.
- Awl: A small pointed tool used for making holes in leather.
- Tributaries: People or nations that pay tribute to another as a sign of dependence.
- Concave: Curved inward like the inside of a circle.
- Cull: To select or pick out.
- Ingratitude: A lack of thankfulness or appreciation.
- Intermit: To temporarily pause or stop.
- Exalted: Held in high regard; elevated.
- Vulgar: Common people, often considered lower class.
- Servile: Submissive, like a servant or slave.

Questions

1. Why do you think Flavius orders the commoners to go home and criticizes them for celebrating? What might this reveal about his feelings towards Caesar?
2. The Second Commoner speaks with humor, using puns like "mender of bad soles" and "cobble you." What does this suggest about his character and attitude towards authority figures like Marullus?

3. Marullus becomes angry with the commoners for celebrating Caesar's triumph over Pompey. Why do you think he feels such strong anger, and how might his views reflect broader tensions in Rome at this time?

4. The commoners once celebrated Pompey, but now they cheer for Caesar. What does this change in loyalty tell us about the Roman people's relationship with their leaders? How might it reflect their attitudes towards power?

5. Flavius talks about plucking Caesar's "growing feathers" to keep him from flying too high. How can this be seen as a metaphor for Caesar's growing power? What does this say about Flavius' fears or goals?

6. What do you think motivates Flavius and Marullus to remove Caesar's decorations and disperse the crowds? Is it only political, or do they have personal reasons for their behavior?

7. Do you sympathize with the commoners celebrating Caesar's return, or with Marullus and Flavius criticizing them? What reasoning supports your perspective?

2.2 Act I, Scene II

A public place.

(Flourish. Enter CAESAR, ANTONY, for the course, CALPURNIA, PORTIA, DECIUS BRUTUS, CICERO, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and CASCA; a great crowd following, among them a SOOTHSAYER)

Caesar. Calpurnia!

Casca. Peace, ho! Caesar speaks.

Caesar. Calpurnia!

Calpurnia. Here, my lord.

Caesar. Stand you directly in Antonius' way,
When he doth run his course. Antonius!

Antony. Caesar, my lord?

Caesar. Forget not, in your speed, Antonius,
To touch Calpurnia; for our elders say,

The barren, touched in this holy chase, Shake off their sterile curse.

Antony. I shall remember:
When Caesar says 'do this,' it is perform'd.

Caesar. Set on; and leave no ceremony out.

(Flourish)

Soothsayer. Caesar!

Caesar. Ha! who calls?

Casca. Bid every noise be still: peace yet again!

Caesar. Who is it in the press that calls on me?
I hear a tongue, shriller than all the music,
Cry 'Caesar!' Speak; Caesar is turn'd to hear.

Soothsayer. Beware the ides of March.

Caesar. What man is that?

Brutus. A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.

Caesar. Set him before me; let me see his face.

Cassius. Fellow, come from the throng; look upon Caesar.

Caesar. What say'st thou to me now? speak once again.

Soothsayer. Beware the ides of March.

Caesar. He is a dreamer; let us leave him: pass.

(Sennet. Exeunt all except BRUTUS and CASSIUS)

Cassius. Will you go see the order of the course?

Brutus. Not I.

Cassius. I pray you, do.

Brutus. I am not gamesome: I do lack some part
Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.
Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires;
I'll leave you.

Cassius. Brutus, I do observe you now of late:
I have not from your eyes that gentleness
And show of love as I was wont to have:
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over your friend that loves you.

Brutus. Cassius,
Be not deceived: if I have veil'd my look,
I turn the trouble of my countenance
Merely upon myself. Vexed I am
Of late with passions of some difference,
Conceptions only proper to myself,
Which give some soil perhaps to my behaviours;
But let not therefore my good friends be grieved—
Among which number, Cassius, be you one—
Nor construe any further my neglect,
Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,
Forgets the shows of love to other men.

Cassius. Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion;
By means whereof this breast of mine hath buried
Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

Brutus. No, Cassius; for the eye sees not itself
But by reflection, by some other things.

Cassius. 'Tis just:
And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
That you have no such mirrors as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
That you might see your shadow. I have heard,
Where many of the best respect in Rome,
Except immortal Caesar, speaking of Brutus
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes.

Brutus. Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius,
That you would have me seek into myself
For that which is not in me?

Cassius. Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear:
And since you know you cannot see yourself
So well as by reflection, I, your glass,
Will modestly discover to yourself
That of yourself which you yet know not of.
And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus:
Were I a common laugher, or did use
To stale with ordinary oaths my love
To every new protester; if you know
That I do fawn on men and hug them hard
And after scandal them, or if you know
That I profess myself in banqueting
To all the rout, then hold me dangerous.

Flourish and shout.

Brutus What means this shouting? I do fear the people
Choose Caesar for their king.

Cassius Ay, do you fear it?
Then must I think you would not have it so.

Brutus I would not, Cassius, yet I love him well.
But wherefore do you hold me here so long?
What is it that you would impart to me?
If it be aught toward the general good,
Set honor in one eye and death i' the other,
And I will look on both indifferently.
For let the gods so speed me, as I love
The name of honor more than I fear death.

Cassius I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
As well as I do know your outward favor.
Well, honor is the subject of my story.
I cannot tell what you and other men
Think of this life; but for my single self,
I had as lief not be as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Caesar, so were you;
We both have fed as well, and we can both
Endure the winter's cold as well as he.
For once upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Caesar said to me 'Darst thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,
Accoutred as I was, I plungèd in
And bade him follow; so indeed he did.
The torrent roared, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside,
And stemming it with hearts of controversy.
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
Caesar cried 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'
I, as Aeneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
Did I the tirèd Caesar. And this man
Is now become a god, and Cassius is
A wretched creature, and must bend his body,
If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.
He had a fever when he was in Spain,
And when the fit was on him I did mark
How he did shake. 'Tis true, this god did shake!
His coward lips did from their color fly,
And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world
Did lose his lustre. I did hear him groan —
Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans
Mark him, and write his speeches in their books,
Alas, it cried 'Give me some drink, Titinius,'
As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world
And bear the palm alone.

(Shouts. Trumpets sound.)

Brutus Another general shout!
I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honors that are heaped on Caesar.

Cassius Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonorable graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates.
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
'Brutus' and 'Caesar' — what should be in that 'Caesar'?
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?
Write them together, yours is as fair a name.
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well.
Weigh them, it is as heavy. Conjure with 'em,
'Brutus' will start a spirit as soon as 'Caesar'.
Now in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed!
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
When went there by an age, since the great flood,
But it was famed with more than with one man?
When could they say, till now, that talked of Rome,

That her wide walls encompassed but one man?
Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough,
When there is in it but one only man.
O, you and I have heard our fathers say
There was a Brutus once that would have brooked
Th'eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king.

Brutus That you do love me, I am nothing jealous.
What you would work me to, I have some aim.
How I have thought of this, and of these times,
I shall recount hereafter. For this present,
I would not —so with love I might entreat you —
Be any further moved. What you have said
I will consider; what you have to say
I will with patience hear, and find a time
Both meet to hear and answer such high things.
Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this:
Brutus had rather be a villager
Than to repute himself a son of Rome
Under these hard conditions as this time
Is like to lay upon us.
Cassius I am glad That my weak words
have struck but thus much show Of fire from Brutus.

(Re-enter Caesar and his train of followers.)

Brutus The games are done and Caesar is returning.

Cassius As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve,
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
What hath proceeded worthy note today.

Brutus I will do so. But, look you, Cassius,
The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train.
Calpurnia's cheek is pale, and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being crossed in conference by some senators.

Cassius Casca will tell us what the matter is.

Caesar Antonius!-

Antony Caesar?

Caesar (Privately to Antony) Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep a-nights.
Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: Such men are dangerous.

Antony Fear him not, Caesar, he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman and well given.

Caesar Would he were fatter! But I fear him not;
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much,
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays.
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mocked himself and scorned his spirit
That could be moved to smile at anything.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be feared
Than what I fear; for always I am Caesar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him.

(Exeunt Caesar and his Train. Casca stays.)

Casca You pull'd me by the cloak. Would you speak with me?

Brutus Ay, Casca; tell us what hath chanced today,
That Caesar looks so sad.

Casca Why, you were with him, were you not?

Brutus I should not then ask Casca what had chanced.

Casca Why, there was a crown offered him; and being
offered him, he put it by with the back of his hand, thus; and then the people fell a-shouting.

Brutus What was the second noise for?

Casca Why, for that too.

Cassius They shouted thrice. What was the last cry for?

Casca Why, for that too.

Brutus Was the crown offered him thrice?

Casca Ay, marry, was't, and he put it by thrice, every time gentler than other, and at every putting-by mine honest neighbors shouted.

Cassius Who offered him the crown?

Casca Why, Antony.

Brutus Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca.

Casca I can as well be hanged as tell the manner of it. It was
mere foolery; I did not mark it. I saw Mark Antony offer
him a crown —yet 'twas not a crown neither, 'twas one

of these coronets — and, as I told you, he put it by once; but for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again;
but, to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time; he put it the third time by; and still as he refused it, the rabblement hooted and clapped their chapped hands and threw up their sweaty nightcaps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown that it had almost choked Caesar, for he swooned and fell down at it.
And for mine own part, I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air.

Cassius But, soft, I pray you; what, did Caesar swoon?

Casca He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at mouth, and was speechless.

Brutus 'Tis very like; he hath the falling sickness.

Cassius No, Caesar hath it not; but you and I,
And honest Casca, we have the falling sickness.

Casca I know not what you mean by that, but I am sure Caesar fell down. If the tag-rag people did not clap him and hiss him, according as he pleased and displeased them, as they use to do the players in the theatre, I am no true man.

Brutus What said he when he came unto himself?

Casca Marry, before he fell down, when he perceived the common herd was glad he refused the crown, he plucked, me, ope his doublet and offered them his throat to cut. An I had been a man of any occupation, if I would not have taken him at a word, I would I might go to hell among the rogues. And so he fell. When he came to himself again, he said, if he had done or said anything amiss, he desired their worships to think it was his infirmity. Three or four wenches, where I stood, cried 'Alas, good soul!' and for- gave him with all their hearts. But there's no heed to be taken of them; if Caesar had stabbed their mothers, they would have done no less.

Brutus And after that he came thus sad away?

Casca Ay.

Cassius Did Cicero say anything?

Casca Ay, he spoke Greek.

Cassius To what effect?

Casca Nay, an I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i' th' face again. But those that understood him smiled at one another and shook their heads; but, for mine own part, it was Greek to me. I could tell you more news too: Marullus and Flavius, for pulling scarfs off Caesar's images, are put to silence. Fare you well. There was more foolery yet, if I could remember it.

Cassius Will you sup with me tonight, Casca?

Casca No, I am promised forth.

Cassius Will you dine with me tomorrow?

Casca Ay, if I be alive, and your mind hold, and your dinner worth the eating.

Cassius Good, I will expect you.

Casca Do so. Farewell both.

(Exit Casca.)

Brutus What a blunt fellow is this grown to be!
He was quick mettle when he went to school.

Cassius So is he now in execution
Of any bold or noble enterprise,
However he puts on this tardy form.
This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,
Which gives men stomach to digest his words
With better appetite.

Brutus And so it is. For this time I will leave you.
Tomorrow, if you please to speak with me,
I will come home to you; or, if you will,
Come home to me, and I will wait for you.

Cassius I will do so. Till then, think of the world.

(Exit Brutus.)

Casius Well, Brutus, thou art noble, yet I see
Thy honorable metal may be wrought
From that it is disposed. Therefore it is meet
That noble minds keep ever with their likes;
For who so firm that cannot be seduced?
Caesar doth bear me hard, but he loves Brutus.
If I were Brutus now, and he were Cassius,
He should not humor me. I will this night,
In several hands, in at his windows throw,
As if they came from several citizens,
Writings, all tending to the great opinion
That Rome holds of his name, wherein obscurely
Caesar's ambition shall be glancèd at.
And after this let Caesar seat him sure,
For we will shake him, or worse days endure.

(Exit.)

Glossary

- Flourish: A bold or extravagant gesture or action, typically to attract attention.
- Sterile: Unable to reproduce or barren.
- Soothsayer: A person supposed to be able to foresee the future.
- Ides: A day in the Roman calendar, typically the middle of the month; in this case, March 15.
- Throng: A large, densely packed crowd of people.
- Vexed: Troubled or annoyed.
- Cogitations: The act of thinking deeply about something; contemplation.
- Accoutred: Fully armed or equipped.
- Sinews: Tendons or muscles, representing strength.
- Lustre: A soft glow or shine.
- Chidden: Scolded or rebuked.
- Ferret: To search or hunt for something.
- Sleek-headed: Having smooth, well-groomed hair.
- Stale: To lose freshness or originality.
- Loath: Reluctant or unwilling.
- Fain: Gladly or willingly.
- Rabblement: A disorderly crowd or mob.
- Swoon: Faint from extreme emotion.
- Tag-rag: Common or low-class people

Questions

1. Why do you think Caesar insists on Antony touching Calpurnia during the race? What does this reveal about his beliefs or superstitions?
2. How does Antony's response to Caesar ("When Caesar says 'do this,' it is perform'd") demonstrate his loyalty and attitude toward Caesar? Do you think he is sincere?
3. Brutus mentions being "at war" with himself. What might be causing this internal struggle, and how does it affect his relationships with others?
4. How does Cassius appeal to Brutus' sense of honor and self-worth when convincing him to join the conspiracy? Do you think Cassius is being genuine, or does he have ulterior motives?
5. Why does Caesar dismiss the soothsayer's warning about the Ides of March? How might this foreshadow events later in the play?

6. Based on the interaction with Antony about Cassius, how would you describe Caesar's personality? Does he seem confident or insecure?
7. What do you think Caesar's repeated refusal of the crown represents? Why might he hesitate to accept it, even though he appears tempted?
8. Casca describes the events surrounding the offering of the crown in a mocking, dismissive way. What does this say about his attitude towards Caesar and the public?
9. How does the Roman public react to Caesar refusing the crown? What does this reveal about their relationship with him?
10. How does Cassius' description of Caesar as someone who "doth bestride the narrow world like a colossus" hint at the future tension and conflict in the play?

2.3 Act III, Scene II

The Forum.

(Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS, and a throng of Citizens)

Citizens. We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.

Brutus. Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.
Cassius, go you into the other street,
And part the numbers.
Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;
Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;
And public reasons shall be rendered
Of Caesar's death.

First Citizen. I will hear Brutus speak.

Second Citizen. I will hear Cassius; and compare their reasons, When severally we hear them rendered.

(Exit CASSIUS, with some of the Citizens. BRUTUS goes into the pulpit)

Third Citizen. The noble Brutus is ascended: silence!

Brutus. Be patient till the last.
Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge.
If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men?
As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition.
Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

All. None, Brutus, none.

Brutus. Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus.
The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death.

(Enter ANTONY and others, with CAESAR's body)

Brutus. Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony: who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not?
With this I depart,—that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

All. Live, Brutus! live, live!

First Citizen. Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

Second Citizen. Give him a statue with his ancestors.

Third Citizen. Let him be Caesar.

Fourth Citizen. Caesar's better parts
Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

First Citizen. We'll bring him to his house with shouts and clamours.

Brutus. My countrymen,—

Second Citizen. Peace, silence! Brutus speaks.

First Citizen. Peace, ho!

Brutus. Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony:
Do grace to Caesar's corpse, and grace his speech
Tending to Caesar's glories; which Mark Antony,
By our permission, is allowed to make.
I do entreat you, not a man depart,
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

(Exit)

First Citizen. Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.

Third Citizen. Let him go up into the public chair;
We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

Antony. For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you.

(Goes into the pulpit)

Fourth Citizen. What does he say of Brutus?

Third Citizen. He says, for Brutus' sake,
He finds himself beholding to us all.

Fourth Citizen. 'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.

First Citizen. This Caesar was a tyrant.

Third Citizen. Nay, that's certain:
We are blest that Rome is rid of him.

Second Citizen. Peace! let us hear what Antony can say.

Antony. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

First Citizen. Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

Second Citizen. If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Caesar has had great wrong.

Third Citizen. Has he, masters?
I fear there will a worse come in his place.

Fourth Citizen. Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown;
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

First Citizen. If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

Second Citizen. Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

Third Citizen. There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

Fourth Citizen. Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

Antony. But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world; now lies he there.
And none so poor to do him reverence.
O masters, if I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honourable men:
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honourable men.
But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar;
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will:
Let but the commons hear this testament—
Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read—
And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood,
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.

Fourth Citizen. We'll hear the will: read it, Mark Antony.

All. The will, the will! we will hear Caesar's will.

Antony. Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;

It is not meet you know how Caesar loved you.
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;
And, being men, hearing the will of Caesar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad:
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;
For, if you should, O, what would come of it!

Fourth Citizen. Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony;
You shall read us the will, Caesar's will.

Antony. Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it:
I fear I wrong the honourable men
Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar; I do fear it.

Fourth Citizen. They were traitors: honourable men!

All. The will! the testament!

Second Citizen. They were villains, murderers: the will! read the will.

Antony. You will compel me, then, to read the will?
Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar,
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?

All. Come down.

Second Citizen. Descend.

Third Citizen. You shall have leave.

(Antony comes down)

Fourth Citizen. A ring; stand round.

First Citizen. Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.

Second Citizen. Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

Antony. Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.

All. Stand back; room; bear back.

Antony. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.
You all do know this mantle: I remember
The first time ever Caesar put it on;
'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,
That day he overcame the Nervii:
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
See what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,
As rushing out of doors, to be resolved
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statue,
Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,
Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.
O, now you weep; and, I perceive, you feel
The dint of pity: these are gracious drops.
Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,
Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

First Citizen. O piteous spectacle!

Second Citizen. O noble Caesar!

Third Citizen. O woful day!

Fourth Citizen. O traitors, villains!

First Citizen. O most bloody sight!

Second Citizen. We will be revenged.

All. Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay! Let not a traitor live!

Antony. Stay, countrymen.

First Citizen. Peace there! hear the noble Antony.

Second Citizen. We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

Antony. Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny.
They that have done this deed are honourable:
What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,
That made them do it: they are wise and honourable,
And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.
I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts:
I am no orator, as Brutus is;
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,
That love my friend; and that they know full well
That gave me public leave to speak of him:
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;

Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue
In every wound of Caesar that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

All. We'll mutiny.

First Citizen. We'll burn the house of Brutus.

Third Citizen. Away, then! come, seek the conspirators.

Antony. Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

All. Peace, ho! Hear Antony. Most noble Antony!

Antony. Why, friends, you go to do you know not what:
Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?
Alas, you know not: I must tell you then:
You have forgot the will I told you of.

All. Most true. The will! Let's stay and hear the will.

Antony. Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal.
To every Roman citizen he gives,
To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.

Second Citizen. Most noble Caesar! We'll revenge his death.

Third Citizen. O royal Caesar!

Antony. Hear me with patience.

All. Peace, ho!

Antony. Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
His private arbours and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,
And to your heirs for ever, common pleasures,
To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.
Here was a Caesar! when comes such another?

First Citizen. Never, never. Come, away, away!
We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
Take up the body.

Second Citizen. Go fetch fire.

Third Citizen. Pluck down benches.

Fourth Citizen. Pluck down forms, windows, any thing.

(Exeunt Citizens with the body)

Antony. Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt!

(Enter a Servant)

Servant. Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

Antony. Where is he?

Servant. He and Lepidus are at Caesar's house.

Antony. And thither will I straight to visit him:
He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,
And in this mood will give us any thing.

Servant. I heard him say, Brutus and Cassius
Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.

Antony. Belike they had some notice of the people,
How I had moved them. Bring me to Octavius.

(Exeunt)

Glossary

- Throng: A large, densely packed crowd of people.
- Censure: To express severe disapproval of someone or something.
- Valiant: Possessing or showing courage or determination.
- Ambitious: Having or showing a strong desire and determination to succeed.
- Bondman: A person bound in servitude or slavery.
- Extenuated: To make (guilt or an offense) seem less serious or more forgivable.
- Pulpit: A raised platform or podium used for speaking in public.

- Beholding: Owing thanks or having an obligation to someone.
- Grievous: Causing great sorrow or suffering; severe.
- Mutiny: Open rebellion against authority.
- Ransom: Money demanded for the release of a captive.
- Sterner: Strict, harsh, or showing disapproval.
- Testament: A person's will, especially the part relating to personal property.
- O'ershot: To surpass or exceed the intended point.
- Napkins: In this context, cloths used for wiping or covering something (often wounds).
- Mantle: A cloak or covering, often symbolic of authority or status.
- Vesture: Clothing or garments.
- Arbours: Shaded garden areas formed by trees or climbing plants.
- Recreate: To refresh or entertain oneself.

Questions

1. Why does Brutus claim that Caesar had to die? Do you think Brutus' reasoning is convincing? Why or why not?
2. What kind of person do you think Brutus is, based on his speech? Do his words reflect loyalty, guilt, or something else?
3. Why do the citizens initially support Brutus after his speech? What does this reveal about their perception of leadership?
4. How does Antony use the phrase "honourable man" in his speech? Is he sincere or sarcastic, and how do you know?
5. Why does Antony focus on Caesar's will and show his wounds to the crowd? How does this change their opinion?
6. Brutus and Antony both discuss Caesar's ambition. How does each character define or understand ambition? Do you agree with either perspective?
7. Antony repeatedly claims he does not wish to incite mutiny, yet the crowd becomes enraged. How does Antony achieve this without directly calling for rebellion?
8. What does the rapid shift in the citizens' loyalty—from Brutus to Antony—suggest about the nature of public opinion in the play?
9. Brutus justifies Caesar's assassination for the good of Rome. How does Antony's speech reveal the unintended consequences of Brutus' actions?
10. Antony emphasizes Caesar's wounds and his mantle in the speech. What might these symbolize for the Roman citizens and for Antony's argument?

3 Srinivasa Ramanujan

By C.P. Snow

3.0.1 Introduction

Srinivasa Ramanujan was born in Erode in 1887. He had his schooling at Kumbakkonam, a small temple town in South India. His obsession with mathematics was such that at age 13 he mastered trigonometry and made his own theorems. But since he was not good in other subjects he could not complete his degree. He worked in Chennai Port Trust, where, after completing his office work, he would pursue his own research in mathematics.

His life underwent a sea change when his genius was recognized by the great mathematician Hardy and Ramanujan sailed to Cambridge in 1914. After the completion of his research he was made the fellow of the Royal society in 1918. He also became the first Indian Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. He returned to India in 1919 but his ill-health took its toll and he died the same year when he was hardly 33.

3.0.2 About the text

This extract is from the book Variety of Men by C.P. Snow. This passage on Ramanujan, is a part of the biographical sketch of the mathematician Hardy and it tells us how Hardy 'discovered' Ramanujan. Ramanujan had sent to Hardy some theorems without proofs and had asked for his opinion. Hardy at first wondered if it was the work of a fraud, but was later convinced that Ramanujan was really a genius. Hardy arranged to bring Ramanujan to Cambridge in 1914. Ramanujan worked hard in Cambridge for five years. Hardy and Ramanujan together produced five papers of the highest class. This extract brings out the genius as well as the fine human qualities in both Hardy and Ramanujan.

3.0.3 Reading

About his discovery of Ramanujan, Hardy showed no secrecy at all. It was, he wrote, the one romantic incident in his life: anyway, it is an admirable story, and one which showers credit on nearly everyone (with two exceptions) in it. One morning, early in 1913, he found, among the letters on his breakfast table, a large untidy envelope decorated with Indian stamps. When he opened it, he found sheets of paper by no means clean, on which, in a non-English script, were line after line of symbols. Hardy glanced at them without enthusiasm. He was by this time, at the age of thirty-six, a world famous mathematician; and world famous mathematicians, he had discovered, are unusually exposed to cranks. He was accustomed to receiving manuscripts from strangers, proving the prophetic wisdom of the Great Pyramid, the revelations of the Elders of Zion, or the cryptograms that Bacon had inserted in the plays of the so-called Shakespeare.

So Hardy felt, more than anything, bored. He glanced at the letter, written in halting English, signed by an unknown Indian, asking him to give an opinion of these mathematical discoveries. The script

appeared to consist of theorems, most of them, wild or fantastic looking, one or two already well-known, laid out as though they were original. There were no proofs of any kind. Hardy was not only bored, but irritated. It seemed like a curious kind of fraud. He put the manuscript aside, and went on with his day's routine. Since his routine did not vary throughout his life, it is possible to reconstruct it. First he read the Times over his breakfast. This happened in January, and if there were any Australian cricket scores, he would start with them, studied with clarity and intense attention.
Then, from about nine to one, unless he was giving a lecture, he worked at his own mathematics. Four hours' creative work a day is about the limit for a mathematician, he used to say. Lunch, a light meal, in hall. After lunch he loped off for a real game of tennis in the university court. (If it had been summer, he would have walked down to Fenner's to watch cricket.) In the late afternoon, a stroll back to his rooms. That particular day, though, while the time-table wasn't altered, internally things were not going according to plan. At the back of his mind, getting in the way of his complete pleasure in his game, the Indian manuscript nagged away. Wild theorems. Theorems such as he had never seen before, nor imagined. A fraud of genius?

A question was forming itself in his mind. As it was Hardy's mind, the question was forming itself with epigrammatic clarity: is a fraud of genius more probable than an unknown mathematician of genius?

Clearly the answer was no. Back in his rooms in Trinity, he had another look at the script. He sent word to Littlewood (probably by messenger, certainly not by telephone, for which, like all mechanical contrivances including fountain pens, he had a deep distrust) that they must have a discussion after all.
When the meal was over, there may have been a slight delay. Hardy liked a glass of wine, but, despite the glorious vistas of "Alan St. Aubyn' which had fired his youthful imagination, he found he did not really enjoy lingering in the combination- room over port and walnuts. Littlewood, a good deal more pleasure-loving, did. So there may have been a delay. Anyway, by nine o'clock or so they were in one of Hardy's rooms, with the manuscript stretched out in front of them.

That is an occasion at which one would have liked to be present. Hardy with his combination of remorseless clarity and intellectual dash (he was very English, but in argument he showed the characteristics that Latin minds have often assumed to be their own). Littlewood, imaginative, powerful, humorous, apparently it did not take them long. Before midnight they knew, and knew for certain. The writer of these manuscripts was a man of genius. That was as much as they could judge, that night. It was only later that Hardy decided that Ramanujan was, in terms of natural mathematical genius, in the class of Gaus and Euler; but that he could not expect, because of the defects of his education and because he had come on the scene too late in the line of mathematical history, to make a contribution on the same scale.

It all sounds easy, the kind of judgment great mathematicians should have been able to make. But | mentioned there were two persons who do not come out of the story with credit. Out of chivalry Hardy concealed this in all that he said or wrote about Ramanujan. The two people concerned have now been dead, however, for many years, and it is time to tell the truth. It is simple. Hardy was not the first eminent mathematician to be sent the Ramanujan manuscripts. There had been two before him, both English, both of the highest professional standing. They had each returned the manuscript without comment. | don't think history relates what they said, if anything, when Ramanujan became famous. Anyone who has been sent unsolicited material will have a sneaking sympathy with them.

Anyway, the following day Hardy went into action. Ramanujan must be brought to England, Hardy decided. Money was not a majorproblem. Trinity has usually been good at supporting unorthodox talent (the college did the same for Kapitsa a few years later). Once Hardy was determined, no human agency could have stopped Ramanujan, but they needed a certain amount of help from a superhuman one.

Ramanujan turned out to be a poor clerk in Madras, living with his wife on twenty pounds a year. But he was,also a Brahmin, usually strict about his religious observances, with a mother who was even stricter. It seemed impossible that he could break the ban and cross the waters. Fortunately his mother had the highest respect for the goddess of Namakkal. One morning Ramanujan's mother made a startling announcement. She had a dream the previous night in which she saw her son seated in a big hall among a group of Europeans and the goddess of Namakkal had commanded her not to stand in the way of her son fulfilling his life's purpose. This, say Ramanujan's Indian biographers, was a very agreeable surprise to all concerned.

In 1914 Ramanujan arrived in England. So far as Hardy could detect (though in this respect I should not trust his insight far) Ramanujan, despite the difficulties of breaking the caste laws, did not believe much in theological doctrine, except for a vague pantheistic benevolence, any more than Hardy did himself. But he did certainly believe in ritual. When Trinity put him up in college—within four years he became a Fellow—there was no "Alan St. Aubyn" self-indulgence for him at all. Hardy used to find him ritually changing into his pyjamas, cooking vegetables rather miserably in a frying-pan in his own room.

Their association was a strangely touching one. Hardy did not forget that he was in the presence of genius; but genius that was, even in mathematics, almost untrained. Ramanujan had not been able to enter Madras University because he could not matriculate in English. Accordingly to Hardy's report, he was always amiable and good-natured, but no doubt he sometimes found Hardy's conversation outside mathematics more than a little baffling. He seemed to have listened with a patient smile on his good, friendly, homely face. Even inside mathematics they had to come to terms with the difference in their education. Ramanujan was self-taught; he knew nothing of the modern rigour; in a sense he didn't know what a proof was. In an uncharacteristically sentimental moment, Hardy once wrote that if he had been better educated, he would have been less Ramanujan. Coming back to his ironic senses, Hardy later corrected himself and said that the statement was nonsense. If Ramanujan had been better educated, he would have been even more wonderful than he was. In fact, Hardy was obliged to teach him some formal mathematics as though Ramanujan had been a scholarship candidate at Winchester. Hardy said that this was the most singular experience of his life; what did modern mathematics look like to someone who had the deepest insight, but who had literally never heard of most of it?
Anyway, they produced together five papers of the highest class, in which Hardy showed supreme originality of his own (more is known of the details of this collaboration than of the Hardy-Littlewood one). Generosity and imagination were, for once, rewarded in full.

This is a story of human virtue. Once people had started behaving well, they went on behaving better. It is good to remember that England gave Ramanujan such honours as were possible. The Royal Society elected him a Fellow at the age of thirty (which, even for a mathematician, is very young). Trinity also elected him a Fellow in the same year. He was the first Indian to be given either of these distinctions. He was amiably grateful. But he soon became ill.

Hardy used to visit him, as he lay dying in hospital at Putney. It was on one of those visits that there happened the incident of the taxi-cab number. Hardy had gone out to Putney by taxi, as usual his chosen method of conveyance. He went into the room where Ramanujan was lying. Hardy, always clumsy about introducing a conversation, said, probably without a greeting and certainly as his first remark: "The number of my taxi-cab was 1729. It seems to me rather a dull number." To which Ramanujan replied: "No, Hardy! No, Hardy! It is a very interesting number. *It is the smallest number expressible as the sum of two cubes in two different ways.*"

This is the exchange as Hardy recorded it. It must be substantially accurate. He was the most honest of men and further, no one could possibly have invented it. It was difficult, in wartime, to move Ramanujan to a kinder climate. He died of tuberculosis, back in Madras, two years after the

war. As Hardy wrote in the Apology, in his roll-call of mathematicians: “Galoi died at twenty-one, Abel at twenty-seven, Ramanujan at thirty-three, Riemann at forty. I do not know an instance of a major mathematical advance initiated by a man past fifty”.

Glossary

- Obsession: An overwhelming preoccupation with a specific subject or activity.
- Theorems: Mathematical statements that have been proven based on previously established rules or axioms.
- Sea change: A profound or notable transformation.
- Fellow: A member of a scholarly society or institution, often granted to someone who has made significant contributions to a field.
- Chivalry: Courteous behavior, especially from men towards women, but also used to describe honorable and brave behavior in general.
- Fraud: Deliberate deception for personal gain, often involving trickery or false claims.
- Matriculate: To enroll or be admitted into a college or university.
- Pantheistic: The belief that God or divinity is present in everything in the universe.
- Unorthodox: Contrary to what is usual, traditional, or accepted; unconventional.
- Baffling: Extremely confusing or difficult to understand.
- Generosity: Willingness to give more than is necessary or expected.
- Tuberculosis: A bacterial infection that primarily affects the lungs.
- Cryptogram: A text or message written in code or cipher.

Questions

1. Why do you think Hardy initially believed Ramanujan’s work to be a fraud? What does this reveal about Hardy’s personality?
2. Explore Hardy’s cautious and skeptical nature when first encountering something extraordinary, and discuss his experiences as a mathematician.
3. Ramanujan struggled with religious and cultural challenges when moving to England. How does the dream his mother had impact the decision? What might this tell us about the role of faith in his life?
4. Examine how religious beliefs, especially those of his family, influenced Ramanujan’s decision-making and his ability to pursue his career.
5. How does Hardy’s relationship with Ramanujan highlight the differences in their personalities and educational backgrounds? How do they manage to work together despite these differences?
6. Analyze the personal dynamics between Hardy and Ramanujan, focusing on mutual respect, intellectual collaboration, and cultural differences.

7. Why do you think the story of the taxi-cab number has become so famous? What does this exchange tell us about Ramanujan's mathematical genius?
8. Discuss the significance of Ramanujan's ability to see deep mathematical patterns even in seemingly mundane things, highlighting his extraordinary talent.
9. Hardy mentions several mathematicians who died young. What might be his motivation for pointing out this pattern, and how does it relate to Ramanujan's story?
10. Explore the idea of mathematical brilliance being linked to youth and the tragic loss of potential when genius dies young, as in Ramanujan's case.
11. What do you think was Hardy's primary motivation in bringing Ramanujan to England? Do you see his actions as altruistic, professional, or both?
12. Reflect on Hardy's motivations—whether they stemmed from academic curiosity, personal interest, or a genuine desire to help Ramanujan succeed.
13. Two other eminent mathematicians returned Ramanujan's manuscript without comment. Why do you think they did this, and how does this reflect broader attitudes towards unconventional work in academia?
14. Discuss the difficulties of breaking into established academic circles and how unconventional thinkers like Ramanujan can be overlooked or dismissed initially.
15. Hardy had to teach Ramanujan formal mathematics. What does this say about the nature of genius and formal education? Do you think Ramanujan's lack of formal training hindered or enhanced his genius?
16. Analyze the relationship between formal education and innate talent, encouraging students to consider the value of both structured learning and creative, self-taught approaches.
17. Ramanujan could not matriculate in English, and this affected his education. How might cultural and linguistic barriers hinder brilliant minds from succeeding? Can you think of any modern parallels to this?
18. Discuss the impact of cultural and language barriers on education and opportunity, reflecting on how these obstacles persist in modern times.

4 My Last Duchess

By Robert Browning

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat." Such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?— too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame

This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—which I have not—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, “Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark”—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse—
E’en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene’er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will’t please you rise? We’ll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master’s known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter’s self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we’ll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

Glossary

- Durst Dare (archaic form)
- Countenance: Facial expression
- Earnest: Serious and sincere
- Mantle: A loose sleeveless cloak
- Officious: Interfering and intruding
- Munificence: Great generosity
- Avowed: Declared openly
- Pretense: A claim, especially a false or ambitious one

Questions

1. What does the Duke’s description of the Duchess’s smile reveal about his character and his relationship with her?
2. How does the Duke’s attitude towards the painting reflect his views on control and possession?
3. What can be inferred about the Duke’s values and priorities based on his criticism of the Duchess’s behavior?

4. How does the Duke's manner of speaking to the envoy (the listener) reflect his social status and personality?
5. What significance might the mention of "Neptune taming a sea-horse" at the end of the poem have in relation to the Duke's character?
6. How does the Duke's description of Fra Pandolf's painting process contribute to our understanding of the Duchess's character?
7. What does the Duke's reluctance to "stoop" suggest about his approach to relationships and communication?
8. How does the structure of the poem, as a dramatic monologue, affect the reader's perception of the Duke and the story he tells?
9. What might be the symbolic meaning behind the Duke's act of drawing and closing the curtain on the Duchess's portrait?
10. How does the juxtaposition of art and reality (the painting vs. the real Duchess) contribute to the overall themes of the poem?

5 Ulysses

By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
For ever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle,—

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Glossary

- Mete: To distribute or measure out
- Dole: To distribute sparingly or reluctantly
- Lees: The sediment or dregs of a liquid
- Scudding: Moving fast in a straight line
- Hyades: A cluster of stars in the constellation Taurus
- Vext: Annoyed or disturbed (archaic spelling of "vexed")

- Wherethro': Through which (archaic)
- Unburnish'd: Not polished or shiny
- Frolic: Playful or merry
- Strove: Past tense of strive, to make great efforts

Questions

1. How does Ulysses' attitude towards aging reflect his character and values?
2. What does the metaphor of "drinking life to the lees" suggest about Ulysses' philosophy on life?
3. How does the contrast between Ulysses and his son Telemachus contribute to the poem's themes?
4. What might the "untravell'd world" symbolize in the context of Ulysses' experiences and desires?
5. How does Tennyson use maritime imagery to convey Ulysses' state of mind and aspirations?
6. What does Ulysses' description of his mariners reveal about his leadership style and relationships?
7. How does the poem's structure, moving from reflection to action, mirror Ulysses' internal journey?
8. What might the reference to "Happy Isles" and Achilles symbolize in the context of Ulysses' final voyage?
9. How does the poem's final stanza reflect on the human condition and the process of aging?
10. In what ways does Ulysses' monologue challenge or reinforce traditional notions of heroism?
11. How might a reader interpret Ulysses' desire to "seek a newer world" in relation to personal growth and self-discovery?
12. What does the phrase "One equal temper of heroic hearts" suggest about Ulysses' view of his companions and their shared purpose?

6 A Devoted Son

By Anita Desai

When the results appeared in the morning papers, Rakesh scanned them barefoot and in his pajamas, at the garden gate, then went up the steps to the verandah where his father sat sipping his morning tea and bowed down to touch his feet.

"A first division, son?" his father asked, beaming, reaching for the papers.
"At the top of the list, papa," Rakesh murmured, as if awed. "First in the country."

Bedlam broke loose then. The family whooped and danced. The whole day long visitors streamed into the small yellow house at the end of the road to congratulate the parents of this Wunderkind, to slap Rakesh on the back and fill the house and garden with the sounds and colors of a festival. There were garlands and halwa, party clothes and gifts (enough fountain pens to last years, even a watch or two), nerves and temper and joy, all in a multicolored whirl of pride and great shining vistas newly opened: Rakesh was the first son in the family to receive an education, so much had been sacrificed in order to send him to school and then medical college, and at last the fruits of their sacrifice had arrived, golden and glorious.

To everyone who came to him to say "Mubarak, Varmaji, your son has brought you glory," the father said, "Yes, and do you know what is the first thing he did when he saw the results this morning? He came and touched my feet. He bowed down and touched my feet." This moved many of the women in the crowd so much that they were seen to raise the ends of their saris and dab at their tears while the men reached out for the betel-leaves and sweetmeats that were offered around on trays and shook their heads in wonder and approval of such exemplary filial behavior. "One does not often see such behavior in sons any more," they all agreed, a little enviously perhaps. Leaving the house, some of the women said, sniffing, "At least on such an occasion they might have served pure ghee sweets," and some of the men said, "Don't you think old Varma was giving himself airs? He needn't think we don't remember that he comes from the vegetable market himself, his father used to sell vegetables, and he has never seen the inside of a school." But there was more envy than rancor in their voices and it was, of course, inevitable—not every son in that shabby little colony at the edge of the city was destined to shine as Rakesh shone, and who knew that better than the parents themselves?

And that was only the beginning, the first step in a great, sweeping ascent to the radiant heights of fame and fortune. The thesis he wrote for his M.D. brought Rakesh still greater glory, if only in select medical circles. He won a scholarship. He went to the USA (that was what his father learnt to call it and taught the whole family to say—not America, which was what the ignorant neighbors called it, but, with a grand familiarity, "the USA") where he pursued his career in the most prestigious of all hospitals and won encomiums from his American colleagues which were relayed to his admiring and glowing family. What was more, he came back, he actually returned to that small yellow house in the once-new but increasingly shabby colony, right at the end of the road where the rubbish vans tipped out their stinking contents for pigs to nose in and rag-pickers to build their shacks on, all steaming and smoking just outside the neat wire fences and welltended gardens. To this Rakesh returned and

the first thing he did on entering the house was to slip out of the embraces of his sisters and brothers and bow down and touch his father's feet.

As for his mother, she gloated chiefly over the strange fact that he had not married in America, had not brought home a foreign wife as all her neighbors had warned her he would, for wasn't that what all Indian boys went abroad for? Instead he agreed, almost without argument, to marry a girl she had picked out for him in her own village, the daughter of a childhood friend, a plump and uneducated girl, it was true, but so old-fashioned, so placid, so complaisant that she slipped into the household and settled in like a charm, seemingly too lazy and too good-natured to even try and make Rakesh leave home and set up independently, as any other girl might have done. What was more, she was pretty—really pretty, in a plump, pudding way that only gave way to fat—soft, spreading fat, like warm wax—after the birth of their first baby, a son, and then what did it matter?

For some years Rakesh worked in the city hospital, quickly rising to the top of the administrative organization, and was made a director before he left to set up his own clinic. He took his parents in his car—a new, sky-blue Ambassador with a rear window full of stickers and charms revolving on strings—to see the clinic when it was built, and the large sign-board over the door on which his name was printed in letters of red, with a row of degrees and qualifications to follow it like so many little black slaves of the regent. Thereafter his fame seemed to grow just a little dimmer—or maybe it was only that everyone in town had grown accustomed to it at last—but it was also the beginning of his fortune for he now became known not only as the best but also the richest doctor in town.

However, all this was not accomplished in the wink of an eye. Naturally not. It was the achievement of a lifetime and it took up Rakesh's whole life. At the time he set up his clinic his father had grown into an old man and retired from his post at the kerosene dealer's depot at which he had worked for forty years, and his mother died soon after, giving up the ghost with a sigh that sounded positively happy, for it was her own son who ministered to her in her last illness and who sat pressing her feet at the last moment—such a son as few women had borne.

For it had to be admitted—and the most unsuccessful and most rancorous of neighbors eventually did so—that Rakesh was not only a devoted son and a miraculously good-natured man who contrived somehow to obey his parents and humor his wife and show concern equally for his children and his patients, but there was actually a brain inside this beautifully polished and formed body of good manners and kind nature and, in between ministering to his family and playing host to many friends and coaxing them all into feeling happy and grateful and content, he had actually trained his hands as well and emerged an excellent doctor, a really fine surgeon. How one man—and a man born to illiterate parents, his father having worked for a kerosene dealer and his mother having spent her life in a kitchen—had achieved, combined and conducted such a medley of virtues, no one could fathom , but all acknowledged his talent and skill.

It was a strange fact, however, that talent and skill, if displayed for too long, cease to dazzle. It came to pass that the most admiring of all eyes eventually faded and no longer blinked at his glory. Having retired from work and having lost his wife, the old father very quickly went to pieces, as they say. He developed so many complaints and fell ill so frequently and with such mysterious diseases that even his son could no longer make out when it was something of significance and when it was merely a peevish whim. He sat huddled on his string bed most of the day and developed an exasperating habit of stretching out suddenly and lying absolutely still, allowing the whole family to fly around him in a flap, wailing and weeping, and then suddenly sitting up, stiff and gaunt, and spitting out a big gob of betel-juice as if to mock their behavior.

He did this once too often: there had been a big party in the house, a birthday party for the youngest son, and the celebrations had to be suddenly hushed, covered up and hustled out of the way when the daughter-in-law discovered, or thought she discovered, that the old man, stretched out from end to end of his string bed, had lost his pulse; the party broke up, dissolved, even turned into

a band of mourners, when the old man sat up and the distraught daughter-in-law received a gob of red spittle right on the hem of her organza sari. After that no one much cared if he sat up crosslegged on his bed, hawking and spitting, or lay down flat and turned gray as a corpse. Except, of course, for that pearl amongst pearls, his son Rakesh.

It was Rakesh who brought him his morning tea, not in one of the china cups from which the rest of the family drank, but in the old man's favorite brass tumbler, and sat at the edge of his bed, comfortable and relaxed with the string of his pajamas dangling out from under his fine lawn night-shirt, and discussed or, rather, read out the morning news to his father. It made no difference to him that his father made no response apart from spitting. It was Rakesh, too, who, on returning from the clinic in the evening, persuaded the old man to come out of his room, as bare and desolate as a cell, and take the evening air out in the garden, beautifully arranging the pillows and bolsters on the divan in the corner of the open verandah. On summer nights he saw to it that the servants carried out the old man's bed onto the lawn and himself helped his father down the steps and onto the bed, soothing him and settling him down for a night under the stars.

All this was very gratifying for the old man. What was not so gratifying was that he even undertook to supervise his father's diet. One day when the father was really sick, having ordered his daughter-in-law to make him a dish of soojie halwa and eaten it with a saucerful of cream, Rakesh marched into the room, not with his usual respectful step but with the confident and rather contemptuous stride of the famous doctor, and declared, "No more halwa for you, papa. We must be sensible, at your age. If you must have something sweet, Veena will cook you a little kheer, that's light, just a little rice and milk. But nothing fried, nothing rich. We can't have this happening again."

The old man who had been lying stretched out on his bed, weak and feeble after a day's illness, gave a start at the very sound, the tone of these words. He opened his eyes—rather, they fell open with shock—and he stared at his son with disbelief that darkened quickly to reproach. A son who actually refused his father the food he craved? No, it was unheard of, it was incredible. But Rakesh had turned his back to him and was cleaning up the litter of bottles and packets on the medicine shelf and did not notice while Veena slipped silently out of the room with a little smirk that only the old man saw, and hated.

Halwa was only the first item to be crossed off the old man's diet. One delicacy after the other went—everything fried to begin with, then everything sweet, and eventually everything, everything that the old man enjoyed.

The meals that arrived for him on the shining stainless steel tray twice a day were frugal to say the least—dry bread, boiled lentils, boiled vegetables and, if there were a bit of chicken or fish, that was boiled too. If he called for another helping—in a cracked voice that quavered theatrically—Rakesh himself would come to the door, gaze at him sadly and shake his head, saying, "Now, papa, we must be careful, we can't risk another illness, you know," and although the daughter-in-law kept tactfully out of the way, the old man could just see her smirk sliding merrily through the air. He tried to bribe his grandchildren into buying him sweets (and how he missed his wife now, that generous, indulgent and illiterate cook), whispering, "Here's fifty paise," as he stuffed the coins into a tight, hot fist. "Run down to the shop at the crossroads and buy me thirty paise worth of jalebis, and you can spend the remaining twenty paise on yourself. Eh? Understand? Will you do that?" He got away with it once or twice but then was found out, the conspirator was scolded by his father and smacked by his mother and Rakesh came storming into the room, almost tearing his hair as he shouted through compressed lips, "Now papa, are you trying to turn my little son into a liar? Quite apart from spoiling your own stomach, you are spoiling him as well—you are encouraging him to lie to his own parents. You should have heard the lies he told his mother when she saw him bringing back those jalebis wrapped up in filthy newspaper. I don't allow anyone in my house to buy sweets in the bazaar, papa, surely you know that. There's cholera in the city, typhoid, gastroenteritis—I see these cases daily in the hospital, how

can I allow my own family to run such risks?" The old man sighed and lay down in the corpse position. But that worried no one any longer.

There was only one pleasure left in the old man now (his son's early morning visits and readings from the newspaper could no longer be called that) and those were visits from elderly neighbors. These were not frequent as his contemporaries were mostly as decrepit and helpless as he and few could walk the length of the road to visit him any more. Old Bhatia, next door, however, who was still spry enough to refuse, adamantly, to bathe in the tiled bathroom indoors and to insist on carrying out his brass mug and towel, in all seasons and usually at impossible hours, into the yard and bathe noisily under the garden tap, would look over the hedge to see if Varma were out on his verandah and would call to him and talk while he wrapped his dhoti about him and dried the sparse hair on his head, shivering with enjoyable exaggeration. Of course these conversations, bawled across the hedge by two rather deaf old men conscious of having their entire households overhearing them, were not very satisfactory but Bhatia occasionally came out of his yard, walked down the bit of road and came in at Varma's gate to collapse onto the stone plinth built under the temple tree. If Rakesh was at home he would help his father down the steps into the garden and arrange him on his night bed under the tree and leave the two old men to chew betel-leaves and discuss the ills of their individual bodies with combined passion.

"At least you have a doctor in the house to look after you," sighed Bhatia, having vividly described his martyrdom to piles.

"Look after me?" cried Varma, his voice cracking like an ancient clay jar. "He— he does not even give me enough to eat."

"What?" said Bhatia, the white hairs in his ears twitching. "Doesn't give you enough to eat? Your own son?"

"My own son. If I ask him for one more piece of bread, he says no, papa, I weighed out the ata myself and I can't allow you to have more than two hundred grams of cereal a day. He weighs the food he gives me, Bhatia—he has scales to weigh it on. That is what it has come to."

"Never," murmured Bhatia in disbelief. "Is it possible, even in this evil age, for a son to refuse his father food?"

"Let me tell you," Varma whispered eagerly. "Today the family was having fried fish—I could smell it. I called to my daughter-in-law to bring me a piece. She came to the door and said no. . . ."

"Said no?" It was Bhatia's voice that cracked. A drongo shot out of the tree and sped away. "No?"

"No, she said no, Rakesh has ordered her to give me nothing fried. No butter, he says, no oil. . . ."

"No butter? No oil? How does he expect his father to live?" Old Varma nodded with melancholy triumph. "That is how he treats me—after I have brought him up, given him an education, made him a great doctor. Great doctor! This is the way great doctors treat their fathers, Bhatia," for the son's sterling personality and character now underwent a curious sea change. Outwardly all might be the same but the interpretation had altered: his masterly efficiency was nothing but cold heartlessness, his authority was only tyranny in disguise.

There was cold comfort in complaining to neighbors and, on such a miserable diet, Varma found himself slipping, weakening and soon becoming a genuinely sick man. Powders and pills and mixtures were not only brought in when dealing with a crisis like an upset stomach but became a regular part of his diet—became his diet, complained Varma, supplanting the natural foods he craved. There were pills to regulate his bowel movements, pills to bring down his blood pressure, pills to deal with his arthritis and, eventually, pills to keep his heart beating. In between there were panicky rushes to the hospital, some humiliating experience with the stomach pump and enema, which left him frightened and helpless. He cried easily, shriveling up on his bed, but if he complained of a pain or even a vague, gray fear in the night, Rakesh would simply open another bottle of pills and force him to take one. "I have my duty to you papa," he said when his father begged to be let off.

"Let me be," Varma begged, turning his face away from the pills on the outstretched hand. "Let me die. It would be better. I do not want to live only to eat your medicines."

"Papa, be reasonable."

"I leave that to you," the father cried with sudden spirit. "Leave me alone, let me die now, I cannot live like this."

"Lying all day on his pillows, fed every few hours by his daughter-in-law's own hand, visited by every member of his family daily—and then he says he does not want to live 'like this,'" Rakesh was heard to say, laughing, to someone outside the door.

"Deprived of food," screamed the old man on the bed, "his wishes ignored, taunted by his daughter-in-law, laughed at by his grandchildren—that is how I live." But he was very old and weak and all anyone heard was an incoherent croak, some expressive grunts and cries of genuine pain. Only once, when old Bhatia had come to see him and they sat together under the temple tree, they heard him cry, "God is calling me—and they won't let me go."

The quantities of vitamins and tonics he was made to take were not altogether useless. They kept him alive and even gave him a kind of strength that made him hang on long after he ceased to wish to hang on. It was as though he were straining at a rope, trying to break it, and it would not break, it was still strong. He only hurt himself, trying.

In the evening, that summer, the servants would come into his cell, grip his bed, one at each end, and carry it out to the verandah, there sitting it down with a thump that jarred every tooth in his head. In answer to his agonized complaints they said the doctor sahib had told them he must take the evening air and the evening air they would make him take—thump. Then Veena, that smiling, hypocritical pudding in a rustling sari, would appear and pile up the pillows under his head till he was propped up stiffly into a sitting position that made his head swim and his back ache.

"Let me lie down," he begged. "I can't sit up any more."

"Try, papa, Rakesh said you can if you try," she said, and drifted away to the other end of the verandah where her transistor radio vibrated to the lovesick tunes from the cinema that she listened to all day.

So there he sat, like some stiff corpse, terrified, gazing out on the lawn where his grandsons played cricket, in danger of getting one of their hard-spun balls in his eye, and at the gate that opened onto the dusty and rubbish-heaped lane but still bore, proudly, a newly touched-up signboard that bore his son's name and qualifications, his own name having vanished from the gate long ago.

At last the sky-blue Ambassador arrived, the cricket game broke up in haste, the car drove in smartly and the doctor, the great doctor, all in white, stepped out. Someone ran up to take his bag from him, others to escort him up the steps. "Will you have tea?" his wife called, turning down the transistor set. "Or a Coca-Cola? Shall I fry you some samosas?" But he did not reply or even glance in her direction. Ever a devoted son, he went first to the corner where his father sat gazing, stricken, at some undefined spot in the dusty yellow air that swam before him. He did not turn his head to look at his son. But he stopped gobbling air with his uncontrolled lips and set his jaw as hard as a sick and very old man could set it.

"Papa," his son said, tenderly, sitting down on the edge of the bed and reaching out to press his feet.

Old Varma tucked his feet under him, out of the way, and continued to gaze stubbornly into the yellow air of the summer evening.

"Papa, I'm home."

Varma's hand jerked suddenly, in a sharp, derisive movement, but he did not speak.

"How are you feeling, papa?"

Then Varma turned and looked at his son. His face was so out of control and all in pieces, that the multitude of expressions that crossed it could not make up a whole and convey to the famous man

exactly what his father thought of him, his skill, his art.

"I'm dying," he croaked. "Let me die, I tell you."

"Papa, you're joking," his son smiled at him, lovingly. "I've brought you a new tonic to make you feel better. You must take it, it will make you feel stronger again. Here it is. Promise me you will take it regularly, papa."

Varma's mouth worked as hard as though he still had a gob of betel in it (his supply of betel had been cut off years ago). Then he spat out some words, as sharp and bitter as poison, into his son's face. "Keep your tonic—I want none—I want none—I won't take any more of—of your medicines. None. Never," and he swept the bottle out of his son's hand with a wave of his own, suddenly grand, suddenly effective.

His son jumped, for the bottle was smashed and thick brown syrup had splashed up, staining his white trousers. His wife let out a cry and came running. All around the old man was hubbub once again, noise, attention.

He gave one push to the pillows at his back and dislodged them so he could sink down on his back, quite flat again. He closed his eyes and pointed his chin at the ceiling, like some dire prophet, groaning, "God is calling me—now let me go."

Glossary

- Bedlam - chaos, uproar, confusion
- Encomiums - high praise or formal expressions of praise
- Exasperating - intensely irritating or frustrating
- Peevish - easily irritated or annoyed
- Contemptuous - showing deep disrespect or scorn
- Frugal - simple and plain; economical
- Decrepit - worn out or ruined due to age or neglect
- Adamantly - firmly, unwaveringly
- Derisive - expressing contempt or mockery
- Hubbub - noisy confusion or excitement

Questions

1. Is the author taking a morel stand?
2. Do you see a catch 22 situation here?
3. Despite the devotion of the son, the story ends in total bitterness. How could this been avoided?
4. How does Rakesh's transformation from a devoted son to a controlling caregiver reflect the complexities of parent-child relationships in modern times?
5. Analyze the symbolism of food in the story. How does the control over the father's diet represent larger themes of power and autonomy?

6. The story presents Rakesh as both a ”devoted son” and someone who strictly controls his father’s life. How do you interpret this paradox? Is Rakesh truly acting in his father’s best interest?
7. Examine how the narrator’s portrayal of Veena (the daughter-in-law) changes throughout the story. What might this suggest about family dynamics and power relations?
8. The story ends with the father’s desperate act of throwing away the medicine. What does this action symbolize about human dignity and the right to make choices about one’s own life?
9. How does the author use the neighbors’ changing perceptions of Rakesh to explore themes of success, reputation, and family duty?
10. The father keeps saying ”God is calling me.” What deeper meaning might this phrase hold beyond its literal interpretation?
11. The text mentions that Rakesh’s ”masterly efficiency was nothing but cold heartlessness, his authority was only tyranny in disguise.” How does this transformation in perspective contribute to the story’s themes?
12. How does the description of the physical space (the house, the garden, the verandah) reflect the emotional dynamics between the characters?
13. What commentary might the author be making about the conflict between modern medical knowledge and traditional ways of life through this story?

7 Ballad of Father Gilligan

By William Butler Yeats

The old priest Peter Gilligan
Was weary night and day
For half his flock were in their beds
Or under green sods lay.
Once, while he nodded in a chair
At the moth-hour of the eve
Another poor man sent for him,
And he began to grieve.
'I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,
For people die and die;
And after cried he, 'God forgive!
My body spake not I!'
He knelt, and leaning on the chair
He prayed and fell asleep;
And the moth-hour went from the fields,
And stars began to peep.
They slowly into millions grew,
And leaves shook in the wind
And God covered the world with shade
And whispered to mankind.
Upon the time of sparrow chirp
When the moths came once more,
The old priest Peter Gilligan
Stood upright on the floor.
'Mavrone, mavrone! The man has died
While I slept in the chair.'
He roused his horse out of its sleep
And rode with little care.
He rode now as he never rode,
By rocky lane and fen;
The sick man's wife opened the door,
'Father! you come again!'
'And is the poor man dead?' he cried
'He died an hour ago.'
The old priest Peter Gilligan

In grief swayed to and fro.
'When you were gone, he turned and died,
As merry as a bird.'
The old priest Peter Gilligan
He knelt him at that word.
'He Who hath made the night of stars
For souls who tire and bleed,
Sent one of this great angels down,
To help me in my need.
'He Who is wrapped in purple robes,
With planets in His care
Had pity on the least of things
Asleep upon a chair.'

7.1 Glossary

- Weary - tired, exhausted
- Sods - pieces of earth with grass growing on them (referring to graves)
- Moth-hour - twilight or dusk when moths appear
- Mavrone - an Irish exclamation of grief meaning "my dear" or "alas"
- Fen - low, marshy land
- Peep - to appear gradually or partially visible

7.2 Questions

1. How does the poet's choice to set the story at the "moth-hour" contribute to the overall mood and meaning of the poem? What might moths symbolize in this context?
2. The priest grieves and says "My body spake not I!" What does this reveal about his character and the internal conflict he faces?
3. How does the description of nature (stars, leaves, wind) throughout the poem contribute to its spiritual themes?
4. What do you think is the significance of God "whisper[ing] to mankind" in the poem? How does this connect to the larger message of divine intervention?
5. The priest experiences both guilt and relief by the end of the poem. How does this emotional journey reflect broader themes about human limitations and divine grace?
6. The poem describes the priest riding "as he never rode." What does this tell us about his sense of duty and character?
7. How does the poet's description of God as being "wrapped in purple robes, with planets in His care" yet having "pity on the least of things" develop the theme of divine compassion?
8. What message might the poet be trying to convey about the relationship between human effort and divine intervention?

9. How does the contrast between the priest's distress and the dying man being "as merry as a bird" contribute to the poem's meaning?

10. In what ways does the poem explore the balance between physical limitations and spiritual duties? What commentary might this make about the role of religious leaders?

8 The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

By Samuel Taylor Coleridge

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?
The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.'
He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.
He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.
The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.
'The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.
The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.
Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—'
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.
The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes

The merry minstrelsy.
  The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.
  And now the STORM-BLAST came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.
  With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.
  And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.
  And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.
  The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!
  At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.
  It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!
  And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!
  In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white Moon-shine.'
  'God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?'—With my cross-bow
I shot the ALBATROSS.

8.1 Glossary

- Wherefore - for what reason, why
- Quoth - said or spoke
- Eftsoons - soon after, immediately
- Kirk - church
- Minstrelsy - a group of musicians/singers
- O'ertaking - overtaking
- Clifts - cliffs
- Ken - see or recognize
- Swound - a fainting fit or swoon
- Thorough - through (archaic usage)
- Vespers - evening prayers
- Hollo - a call or shout

8.2 Questions

1. Why do you think the poet chose to have the Mariner stop a wedding guest specifically? What might this contrast between celebration and the dark tale symbolize?
2. How does the description of the Mariner's "glittering eye" and its effect on the Wedding-Guest suggest about the power of storytelling?
3. The Wedding-Guest is compared to "a three years' child." What does this comparison reveal about the nature of the Mariner's tale and its impact?
4. How does the poet's personification of natural elements (Sun, Storm-blast) contribute to the poem's atmosphere and themes?
5. What might the Albatross symbolize in the context of the poem? Why might the poet have chosen this particular bird?
6. How does the gradual transformation of the environment from pleasant to hostile reflect deeper themes in the poem?
7. The Mariner's shooting of the Albatross seems unprovoked. What might this suggest about human nature and our relationship with the natural world?
8. How does the poet's use of contrast (wedding celebration vs. dark tale, warmth vs. cold, hospitality vs. hostility) enhance the poem's meaning?
9. What might be the significance of describing the Albatross as "a Christian soul"? How does this religious reference add to the poem's themes?
10. The Mariner cannot help but tell his tale, and the Wedding-Guest cannot help but listen. What might this compulsion represent about guilt, confession, and human experience?

9 The Pie and the Tart

by Hugh Chesterman

Characters

***Pierre**, vagabond.*
***Jean**, vagabond.*
***Gaultier**, a pastry cook.*
***Marion**, his wife.*

The Play

The scene is laid outside GAULTIER'S cake shop in Paris. The time is the middle of the fifteenth century. The Act could be played on a curtained stage with one door, back centre. The only furniture is a bench, right. JEAN and PIERRE are discovered, the former seated on the bench, in an attitude of extreme dejection; the latter pacing up and down, blowing on his fingers. Both must indicate that they are cold and hungry.

JEAN *(regarding PIERRE'S restless pacing)*: Must you keep doing that? PIERRE: It's this blasted cold. If I stop walking I shall freeze. I'm dying of hunger and cold.

JEAN : So am I. But I prefer to die sitting down.

PIERRE : We make a pretty pair, you and I. Paris should be proud of us. *(Displaying his rags.)* There are twenty-three holes in this tunic. I know because I counted them this morning. That's only reckoning the ones that let the wind through. No doubt there are others. But let that pass.

JEAN : The holes in your tunic don't interest me. What I am concerned about is the hollow in my stomach. We must live; and without a meal.....

PIERRE : That's what I said to Judge Gaston when I was pinched last month for begging.

JEAN : Said what?

PIERRE : He asked me why I did it, and I said, "Well, your honour, I must live." And he looked me up and down and said, "I really don't see the necessity."

JEAN : A wag, that Judge.

PIERRE : He didn't know what it was to be hungry. See here, my pretty, this can't go on. I'm going to knock on every door in this street. And since charity begins at home I shall begin right here. *(Indicating the cake shop.)* You'd better not be seen. Go into the next street and try your luck there. *(JEAN begins to go, but PIERRE calls him back.)* Wait a minute, brother; let's hear what you can do. *(JEAN knocks on the bench and assumes a mendicant voice and attitude.)*

JEAN : "For the love of St. Agatha and all the blessed saints, have pity on a poor Miserable who has had no food for three days." How's that?

PIERRE : Not bad. But make it seven days and squint slightly. It's a sure sign of starvation.

(Exit JEAN)

PIERRE : (Knocking on the cake shop door): Alms, good sir; for the love of God and all His blessed angels, take pity on a poor traveller who has had no food for a week.

*(**GAULTIER** comes to the door. He is a man of about fifty, well preserved and obviously content with his lot.)*

GAULTIER : Go away. I've got nothing for you. My wife is away and I am busy. You'd better go to the next street.

*(M.**GAULTIER** slams the door. Exit **PIERRE**, R. Enter **JEAN**, L. He looks at the door, hesitates and then knocks.)*

JEAN : For the love of St. Agatha, St. Nicholas, St. Crispin and all the blessed company of Heaven, have pity upon a poor Miserable who has had no food for seven days.

*(The door is opened by **MARION**. She is younger than her husband, stoutish, but comely.)* **MARION**: Go away, beggar. My husband is out and I have nothing for you. You'd better call again when he comes back.

*(**MARION** shuts the door. **JEAN** sits disconsolately on the bench. Presently **GAULTIER** comes out of the shop. He makes as if to go out, R., but remembers something and goes back towards the shop. **MARION** appears at the door)*

GAULTIER : Ah, Marion. I am just off to dine with the Mayor. He keeps none too good a table. I am thinking that I'd better take that eel pie with me - the big one that I made last Monday. Just get it for me. Hurry; I mustn't be late.

MARION: Very good, husband.

*(She goes back into the shop, but **GAULTIER** calls her back.)*

GAULTIER : Wait. I can't very well be seen carrying an eel pie through the streets of Paris, can I? Not quite the thing for a man of my position. Do you think you could bring it along after me?

MARION: Quite impossible. I've too much to do to run errands. Why not send someone back for it?

GAULTIER : A good idea. But who?

MARION: Well, you'll be bound to meet someone on the way.

GAULTIER : Yes, but how will you know if he's the right one? Anyone might just come and say they had been sent.

MARION: I hadn't thought of that.

GAULTIER : I have it. I'll tell the messenger, when I have found him, to kiss your hand. That will be the sign and you'll know that everything is all right.

MARION *(laughing)*: Well, choose a good-looking one. (Coyly): Madame Gaultier's hand is not for everyone to kiss.

*(**MARION** returns to the shop. **GAULTIER** exit, R. **JEAN** who has overheard all the foregoing, sits pondering. Presently enter **PIERRE** L.)*

PIERRE : Any luck?

JEAN : Yes — and no.

PIERRE : What does that mean?

JEAN (after a pause) : Look here. Are you ready to do exactly as I tell you? And no questions asked?

PIERRE : I'll do anything to keep my stomach quiet.

JEAN : Very well. Now listen. I am going into the next street. Directly I am gone, go up to the door, knock on it and say.....

PIERRE : Thanks. I've been there once today already. I got what I expected. *(Mimicking M **GAULTIER**'S pompous manner.)* "Go away, beggar! Go away; I'm busy. Go into the next street." Bah! *(He spits.)*

JEAN : Never mind about that. Listen. I say directly I am gone, go up to the door and knock on it. The lady will come to the door.....

PIERRE : But how do you....

JEAN : Don't interrupt. The lady will come to the door. When she does so you will take her hand and kiss it.

PIERRE : Kiss the lady's hand? I think you're making a slight mistake, brother. I'm not lovesick; I'm starving.

JEAN : Wait. That's not all. When you have kissed her hand you will say, "Madam, I am sent by M. Gaultier to fetch the pie." She will then give you a large eel pie and .....

PIERRE : And the heavens will open; roast fowl and nectarines will be seen to rain upon us from the clouds, and champagne will be heard gurgling in the gutters. Where did you learn this conjuring trick?

JEAN : Very well. Believe it or not as you like. The point is: are you hungry, or are you not?

PIERRE : *(rubbing his waist-line)* Hungry? I've a hollow in here that all the birds of the air could nest in.

JEAN : Then do as I tell you. If it doesn't come off, never trust me again. But it will.

PIERRE : Criminy, Jean, I believe you're serious!

JEAN : Of course I'm serious.

PIERRE : All right. I'll do it.

JEAN : Good.

PIERRE : Tell me again. What do I have to do?

JEAN : It's all quite simple. Go up and knock at the door and say, "Please, Madam, M. Gaultier has sent me for the eel pie." She won't give it to you till you have kissed her hand. That's important.

PIERRE : But suppose the husband comes to the door?

JEAN : He won't. He's out. I happen to know it. Never mind how, but I do. Now, I'm going round the corner. I shall be back in five minutes, and don't you start dinner till I come!

*(Exit **JEAN**, R. **PIERRE** knocks on the door. **MARION** answers it.)*

PIERRE : Good morning, lady. I have come from M. Pie, who sends me to fetch the Gaultier - I should say I have come from M. Gaultier, who sends me to fetch the pie - the eel pie.

MARION: And how am I to know you are his messenger?

PIERRE : Ah! (Coyly.) Allow me, lady, to kiss your hand. (He attempts to seize her hand, but **MARION** snatches it away.) **MARION**: All right. That will do. Wait there and I will get it. (Exit and reappears with pie.) Here it is. Take care how you carry it. It's a very good pie.

PIERRE : Rest assured, lady, I shall take the greatest care of it. As a carrier of eel pies I claim to be second to none in all Paris. It shall travel thus, close to my bosom. As a mother with her bantlings, as a shepherd with his ewes, as St. Ursula with her maidens, so will I play the guardian angel with this pie. It shall.....

MARION: Be off, then. And don't waste time in getting there.

*(She closes the door. After she had gone **PIERRE** stands holding the pie as if stupefied. He then places it carefully on the bench and sits beside it. He gazes at it lovingly, prodding it now and then with his fingers.)*

PIERRE : This must be a dream; and presently I shall wake. One of those dreams that are too good to last. I know, because I've had them once or twice before. *(Picking up the pie tenderly and sniffing it.)* Good dream, last a little longer. Just now I haven't the very least desire to wake up.

*(Enter **JEAN**.)*

JEAN : Well, what did I tell you?

PIERRE : *(Putting his fingers to his lips)*: Sh ! Don't speak too loud. You might wake me up.

JEAN : *(laughing and clapping him on the back)*: Wake up, then. It's dinner time. *(Picking up the pie.)* We won't wait for the nectarines and the champagne. This will do to start with.

*(He goes out, carrying the pie in front of him. **JEAN** follows as if in a trance, nose in the air, sniffing. After a pause, enter **GAULTIER**. He is obviously angry and rather out of breath. He knocks on the door.*

***MARION** opens it.)* **MARION**: What, back already?

GAULTIER : The mayor was out. Nice way to treat a guest, eh? Asks him to dinner and then goes out and forgets all about it. I'll get even with him for it one day, mark my words. Gaspard Gaultier is not the man to be treated like that. Oh, no!

MARION: But what will you do for dinner?

GAULTIER :Dine at home, of course. Where else?

MARION: But there's nothing in the house to eat.

GAULTIER :Nothing to eat? What are you talking about? There's the eel pie, isn't there?

MARION: But... you sent for it. I gave it to your messenger not a quarter of an hour ago.

GAULTIER *(Picking up his ears)*: Eh! What's that?

MARION: I gave the pie to the man who came for it. Just as you told me to. He kissed my hand, as you said he would, and I told him to hurry. Didn't you meet him on the road?

GAULTIER : I sent no messenger.

MARION: But....

GAULTIER : I say I sent no messenger. (Suddenly threateningly.) What have you done with the pie? I believe you've eaten it!

MARION: Now don't be absurd, Gaspard. Of course I haven't eaten it. I tell you the messenger came, as you arranged, and I gave him the pie. You must be crazy. If you didn't send him, who else did?

GAULTIER : If this is a joke, woman, let me tell you that it's in very bad taste. I'll soon see for myself if the pie is there or not. And if it isn't, you'll have to find a good explanation.

*(He strides into the shop, followed by **MARION**. After a considerable pause re-enter **JEAN** and **PIERRE**. They sit, arms round each other's shoulders, at one end of the bench.)*

PIERRE : Jean, my stomach being, as it were, now composed, my brain is beginning to function. I have an idea.

JEAN : Slowly, my friend, slowly. My doctor warned me that after a meal the brain must not be overworked. It is in the interest of digestion.

PIERRE : Agreed. We will approach the problem cautiously. In the matter of the pie which we have just eaten, you will agree that it was a masterpiece.

JEAN : It was the work of an artist.

PIERRE : The composition was faultless - the flavour, just so. And then the crust. Was ever such a crust? *(Picking his teeth with his fingers.)* The memory of it still abides with me.

JEAN : And what eels! The tenderness, the plasticity! I wonder where he catches them.

PIERRE : He does not catch them. They give themselves up. No eel could resist the blandishments of such an artist as M. Gaultier. To my mind the pie had but one fault.

JEAN : And that?

PIERRE : Its singularity. There should have been two. Listen, my Jean. When I was waiting at M. Gaultier's door, I saw a tart. It was on a shelf just outside the kitchen. I think it was a cranberry tart. I was allowed one glimpse of it and the vision faded. But it was a tart to dream about: succulent, spiced, sugared, white as a maid's bosom: the very tart to sit affably on a foundation of eel pie. I see no reason why the tart should not be ours. Would not you like to go and fetch it?

JEAN : But how?

PIERRE : You know the formula, "M. Gaultier sends me", etc., and the hand of Madame Gaultier is both small and white. Believe me, you will enjoy the experience.

JEAN : *(getting up from the bench)*: I'll do it. But she mustn't see you.

PIERRE : All right. I'll be round the corner. To it, then, and goodluck. *(Exit **PIERRE**,L.)*

JEAN *(KNOCKING AT THE DOOR)*: Hullo, there!

*(**MARION** comes to the door)*

MARION: And what do you want ?

JEAN : **GAULTIER** has sent me, lady. He finds that the eel pie is not large enough to go round. He wants the cranberry tart which he says is on the kitchen shelf. And, oh, yes, I am to kiss your hand. Then you'll know it's me.

MARION: *(giving away nothing by voice or expression)*: He wants the cranberry tart, does he? Very well, if you'll wait there I will get it. *(Goes back into the shop.)*

JEAN : If life was always as easy as this! And to think that only an hour ago I was in danger of starving to death. Well, for what we are about to receive....

*(Before he can finish the sentence **GAULTIER** runs out from the shop and begins to cudgel him)*

GAULTIER: Thief, dog, cut-purse, reptile, rapscallion, slubberdegullion! What have you done with my pie?

JEAN : Stop beating me! Stop beating me, and I'll tell you.

GAULTIER : (Still beating him): No lies, now! Where is it? What have you done with it?

JEAN : I can't tell you till you stop beating me.

GAULTIER : (Dropping the cudgel) Well?

JEAN : It was no fault of mine, sir. It was my friend. About ten minutes ago, when you were talking to your wife, he overheard you say that you were sending someone back for the pie. And so he came and he took the pie. He did it with the best intention in the world. If he'd known there was going to be all this fuss about it he would never have done it.

GAULTIER : And where is he now?

JEAN : Not far away. I'll go and get him.

GAULTIER : You'd better. And see here. If you're not back with the pie, I'll have you both hanged for thieving. I'll give you five minutes. Not a minute more. *(**GAULTIER** goes back into the shop. **JEAN** stands downstage, rubbing his bruises. Presently enter **PIERRE**, L.)*

PIERRE : Any luck?

JEAN : Not at all. She says she can't give the tart to just anyone. It must be the same messenger who came for the pie, or none at all. I kissed her hand till it was all sticky, but she wouldn't budge an inch.

PIERRE : Well, that's easy. I must go myself. You get out of sight. I'll soon show you how these things are managed.

*(Exit **JEAN**, R., **PIERRE** knocks at the door. **GAULTIER** opens it.)*

GAULTIER : *(seizing him by the collar)*: Are you the dog who took away my pie? *(Shaking him.)* Answer. What have you done with it? No lies, or I'll have the law on you!

PIERRE : Leave go of me and I'll explain. *(**GAULTIER** releases him.)* You see, sir, it was this way. I overheard you telling your wife that you wanted a messenger. So I presented myself to madame. She gave me the pie and I carried it straight to the Mayor's house.

GAULTIER : I see. And I suppose he was delighted to see you?

PIERRE : He couldn't find words enough to thank me.

GAULTIER : You are a liar! The Mayor is out.

PIERRE : Ah, sir. That's where you're wrong. He was out; but he's home again. He returned just after you left. He was most grateful for the pie, and he's expecting your honour for dinner. He said he hoped you wouldn't keep him waiting.

GAULTIER : Well, well! So that was it. And I thought he'd forgotten all about it. See here now. Run back to his Worship and say I shall be with him in five minutes. I'll give something for your trouble. Hurry, or he'll think I'm not coming.

PIERRE : Very good, sir... and the tart?

GAULTIER : Eh? Oh, yes. The tart. I'll get it. *(He goes in and returns with the tart.)* There you are. Carry it carefully. Tell the Mayor I shan't be many minutes. You can wait for me at his gate.

*(**GAULTIER** goes back into the shop calling "**MARION**!" Presently enter Jean,L. He sees Pierre holding aloft the tart.)*

JEAN : Criminy! But you've got it!

PIERRE : *(presenting his disengaged hand to be kissed)* : Sir, M. Gaultier presents you with this cranberry tart and bids you kiss my hand.

*(Jean advances slowly and makes a show of taking Pierre's hand as if to kiss it. But instead, he snatches away the tart and runs out, closely pursued by **PIERRE**.)*

CURTAIN

9.1 Glossary

- Dejection (from stage directions): A state of sadness or depression
- Mendicant (Jean's line): A beggar or someone who lives by begging
- Bantlings (Pierre's line): A young child or baby
- Cudgel (stage direction): To beat with a thick stick
- Slubberdegullion (Gaultier's line): A slovenly, dirty, or worthless person
- Cut-purse: A thief who steals by cutting purses or bags
- Rapscallion: A mischievous or unscrupulous person

9.2 Questions

1. What do you think the writer is trying to convey about human resourcefulness and desperation through Jean and Pierre's actions?
2. How would you describe Pierre's personality based on his dialogue and actions? Is he more comical or pragmatic?
3. What traits of Jean's character come across in his plan to acquire food? Does it show ingenuity, opportunism, or something else?
4. How does the interaction between Jean and Pierre illustrate the theme of camaraderie and survival?
5. Do you think Jean and Pierre's deception is justified given their circumstances? Why or why not?
6. How do you view Gaultier's reaction to the missing pie? Is it reasonable, or does it reveal flaws in his character?
7. The eel pie serves as a central object in the play. What does it symbolize in the context of the characters' struggles and social commentary?
8. How does the act of begging or feigned begging reflect the societal structure of 15th-century Paris as depicted in the play?
9. How might Marion's perception of the beggars change if she learned the truth about their deception? Would she sympathize with their plight or feel angered by their deceit?

10. What do you think the play suggests about wealth and class through the stark contrast between the beggars and Gaultier's family?

11. Based on the events so far, how do you predict Gaultier and Marion will react if they discover both Jean and Pierre's identities and the stolen pie?

12. Does the play suggest that moral compromises are acceptable when survival is at stake? Discuss with reference to Jean and Pierre's actions.

10 Stanley finds Livingstone

By Lawrence Wilson

10.1 About David Livingstone

David Livingstone was born in 1813 in Scotland to very religious parents. A Scottish missionary cum explorer; he was different from other missionaries and other explorers. He decided to explore the dark interiors of Africa and find out the source of the river Nile. He wanted to evangelize less and explore more and accepted the assignment from Royal Geographical Society in 1865. Though hampered by bouts of malaria and dysentery, he managed to find a number of water bodies. At one point there were rumours that he was dead as there was no sign of his whereabouts. In 1869, nearly four years after he was sent, New York Herald sent Stanley on an assignment to Ujiji near Lake Tanganyika to find David Livingstone.

10.2 About the text

This extract is from Lawrence Wilson's Stanley Finds Livingstone. It graphically describes the travails faced by Stanley in his attempt to find Livingstone. Stanley undertook the expedition after fully equipping himself with arms, ammunitions, bales of cloth, tents, medicines, money and coloured beads (native equivalent of money). There were five caravans in all and they had to pass through nearly 750 miles. Stanley faced every kind of problem including, sickness, pillage and mutiny. At the end of all the traumatic experiences, Stanley found Dr. Livingstone. Approaching Livingstone, Stanley spoke the famous words 'Dr. Livingstone, I presume.' Livingstone received him with kindness and Stanley's report of his meeting became one of the biggest journalistic scoops.

10.3 Reading

Late on an October night in 1869, James Gordon Bennett, Jr., the proprietor of the New York Herald, was in his bedroom at the Grand Hotel, Paris, when there was a knock on the door and a short, frowning, ugly young man presented himself.
"Who are you?" asked Bennett.
"My name is Stanley."
"Ah, yes." This was the special correspondent whom Bennett had summoned from covering the civil war in Spain. "Where do you think Livingstone is?" he said, coming straight to the point.
"I really don't know, Sir."
"Do you think he is alive?"
"He may be and he may not be."

"Well I think he is alive and I am going to send you to find him."
So began one of the most challenging journalistic assignments ever issued. Livingstone, the famous medical missionary and explorer who had penetrated almost one-third of unknown Africa and whose career was followed eagerly by millions in England and the United States, was thought to be somewhere in the middle of the Dark Continent—if he was alive. He had gone to Africa for the third time in 1865, starting from Zanzibar towards the interior and for the last four years no white man had set eyes on him. Rumours came that he had been murdered, but were disproved by letters from him. Then absolute silence fell and for the last twelve months Livingstone's whereabouts, his state of health, his activities had caused anxious conjecture. Here Bennett had seen his chance for a scoop and in Stanley the man to make it.
"Do what you think best," he told him, "but find Livingstone," and added money was no object. If the expedition cost more than a thousand pounds, then he must draw another thousand and when that was finished, another, and then another.
"But find Livingstone."
With these words ringing in his ears Stanley left Paris and however casual, Bennett could never have realized just how well he had chosen his man. Stanley had a strong American twang and called himself an American citizen, but he was not. He had been born in Denbigh, North Wales, in 1841, the illegitimate son of Elizabeth Parry, a butcher's daughter and John Rowland, a farmer. Neither parent would have anything to do with him and at six the unwanted child had been dumped into the terror and loneliness of a workhouse run by a sadistic ex-miner. Years of ill-treatment ended when the boy struck back one day, left his tormentor unconscious and fled to relatives who gave him odd jobs till, aged seventeen, he sailed as a cabin boy from Liverpool to New Orleans.
In the States the youth was unofficially adopted by a kindly merchant, Henry Morton Stanley, who gave him fatherly affection and his name, but died soon after. Stanley fought for the Confederates in the American Civil War, served as a seaman in merchant ships and the federal navy, then was taken on by the *New York Herald* as a special correspondent covering the British campaign in Abyssinia. Burning in him was an urge to prove himself by outstanding achievement and so he accepted by a hostile world, and the assignment to find Livingstone was just what he needed; a clear-cut task, a chance for heroism, the prospect of fame if he succeeded. That he knew nothing of the African jungle, nothing of how to handle natives, nothing—except what his imagination conjured—of the dangers he would meet merely added to the challenge.
In January, 1871, having covered meanwhile the opening of the Suez Canal and traveled for his paper as far as Karachi, he was facing his first difficulties in Zanzibar. As a point to aim for he chose Ujiji, a place on the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, where Livingstone had been last heard of. But that was nearly 750 miles from the coast and to get there a massive expedition would be needed. No money had come from Bennett and Stanley had only eighty pounds in his pocket. But thanks to his zeal and powers of persuasion, he managed to borrow a large sum from the American consul, taking care to conceal the real object of his journey.
Within the short space of a month Stanley had organized his expedition. He decided to take supplies to last two years—arms, ammunition, clothing, tents, medicines, cooking utensils—food as much as could be carried and the native equivalent of money in the form of coloured beads, rolls of cloth and wire. The beads were a problem: most tribes would accept only certain shapes and colours. Taking what advice he could, Stanley spent eight thousand dollars on "currency", knowing that without it tribal chiefs would refuse to let him pass through their territory and the expedition might starve.
Finally, with everything packed into seventy-pound loads that could be carried on the head, the supplies weighed over six tons. As porters, two hundred Zanzibaris were engaged and two white men, both ex-merchant navy, to help supervise; a number of donkeys were bought. The whole party sailed for the mainland in March and at Bagamoyo on the coast more porters had to be hired. This took time

and before the expedition could start—split into five ”caravans” with Stanley bringing up the rear—the rainy season with its mud and swollen rivers was almost on them.
But all were in high spirits as they set off, taking their women and cattle with them, the men singing at the top of their voices, the column guide waving the American flag and Stanley in white flannels and solar helmet cavorting on a bay horse to laughter and cheers from the locals.
There were various routes into the interior, but being in a hurry and ”possessed by the power to achieve,” Stanley chose to go due west and unwittingly took the hardest. The country was open savannah and under the rains soon turned to a bog. Temperatures were colossal, sometimes reaching 128 degrees, and there were myriads of insects which attacked men and animals and brought devastating fevers.
So the march was hard enough, but for Stanley there were graver problems. The natives were not interested in the expedition except to earn money or seize a chance to desert and steal the bales they were carrying. When the going became too tough they dropped away like flies and for the next eight months Stanley had to keep the column together by moral and often physical force.
Men who ran away, men who fell ill with smallpox, dysentery, elephantiasis or malaria, men who collapsed and died on the march, native chiefs who demanded extortionate payment before letting the column pass, savage tribes who waited to fall shrieked on the travellers and stripped them of all they possessed, starvation, thirst, exhaustion of body and mind—all these troubles lay in wait.

Meanwhile, ten miles from the start, the first of many marshy rivers was encountered where pack-animals had to be unloaded and led over a makeshift bridge of tree trunks and porters sank to their waists in slimy ooze. Then the column went climbing up to a plateau, and from there followed a regular caravan route used by Arab traders, moving from village to village where food and water could be obtained. These places were mostly hotbeds of disease and soon Stanley’s two horses died and many of the men were ill.

Stanley dosed them and did not hesitate to use a whip when he judged them well enough to move on. Then, rousing the column before dawn with a tattoo on a cooking pan, he led them, on foot himself this time, at a killing pace to their next bivouac.

For several days, the expedition trudged southwest and then west through an impressive town called Simbamwenni (recently identified as the modern Morogoro) towards an encampment on the far side where, for the first time of many, the leader went down with malaria. The site, used by generations of Arab traders and their porters, was filthy and Stanley, tossing with fever in his tent, was plagued by armies of ants and centipedes.

For two months Stanley passed his apprenticeship in African travel and by May the worst physical difficulties were over when the expedition reached higher land beyond the Usagara mountains. There he joined an Arab convoy for safety, but their combined forces were soon attacked by hostile tribes, while Stanley again went down with fever. With his well-armed men he was not afraid of enemy spears, but endless haggling over tribute at tribal boundaries exasperated him and more than once his hot temper nearly led to disaster. But the worst trial of all was still to come. At Tabora, a township about 200 miles east of Lake Tanganyika, Stanley received devastating news: over all the country between him and his goal a full-scale war raged, with local tribes fighting Arab slavers for domination of the region. Stanley led his men to fight with the Arabs against him. Most of them were killed. Stanley collapsed with fever again. Then Mirambo attacked Tabora; Stanley prepared for a last-ditch defence—and was saved by Mirambo driving off with his booty-laden warriors.

After three months in Tabora, Stanley set off again with fresh recruits, and to avoid the battle area took a wide detour to the south through unknown country which tripled the remaining distance to Ujiji. Several men succumbed to smallpox and fever; others deserted and capturing them, Stanley flogged them and chained them together. His iron will drove the party on, mastering even a mutiny when he was in danger of his life.

Then came a country rich in game. There was an orgy of hunting and eating, and though stricken with fever again, Stanley began to feel that he might, after all, reach Ujiji. But was Livingstone there? Days later at a village he heard a rumour from travellers that a white man was somewhere ahead of him.

The news was vague, but enough to make Stanley's heart beat faster. Because there was still danger from hostile tribes he plunged into uninhabited country, part thick forest, part marsh and ravine, where he sank up to his neck in deep holes and then marched on, a mud pie on two legs, thinking it indecent to take off his clothes. The natives no doubt had a good laugh, but they admired and feared him and followed him willingly, now, even existing for some time on sweetened tea when there was an absence of game.

Weeks passed till, sixty miles short of Ujiji, an African caravan coming from the opposite direction reported that a white man with a grey beard had just arrived there. "Hurrah!" wrote Stanley in his diary. "This is Livingstone. He must be Livingstone. He can be no other... But we must not march too quick, lest he hears that we are coming and runs away..."

Marching quickly, the column soon landed in more trouble. The self-styled "king" of the Waha tribe, whose territory had to be crossed, demanded a ruinous tribute, which rather than put his men against an overwhelming force, Stanley paid—only to find next day that the next village on the route forewarned and the king's brother clamouring for an equal payment.

But five more villages lay ahead where more rolls of cloth could have to be handed over and Stanley simply could not meet this new demand. If he refused, on the other hand, the savages would descend and pillage his column to the bone. The only alternative was flight—and in the darkness one night, guided by two deserted slaves, he and his men crept away and by forced marches over plains and hills escaped from the Waha country.

Then came picturesque valleys, wild fruit-trees and beautiful flowers. The men were in high spirits. Ujiji lay ahead, and from a mountain spur came the first glimpse of Lake Tanganyika. Stanley was overwhelmed. But Livingstone? Already with pounding heart Stanley had ordered a servant to lay out his new flannel suit, oil his boots, chalk his helmet and fit a new puggaree "that I may make as presentable an appearance as possible before the white man with the grey beard."

The "braves" strode away light-heartedly down the mountainside towards the town and while still a mile away, Stanley ordered the column to close up, the American flag to be held aloft at the front, the Zanzibar flag at the rear and as was customary, repeated volleys to be fired to announce the arrival of the caravan.

The people of Ujiji rushed up to meet and welcome him. Suddenly Stanley heard a voice say, "Good morning, Sir!" and turning saw a native with a gleaming row of white teeth. "And who the mischief are you?" "I am Susi, the servant of Dr. Livingstone."

Susi ran back to tell his master and the column moved towards Livingstone's house where a crowd was already collecting. A slim, grey-bearded figure came out. "I see the doctor, Sir" said Stanley's servant.

At this moment Stanley suddenly felt uncertain. The doctor was an educated man from the British Isles where Stanley had suffered so much. How would he receive the workhouse brat? Stanley had indeed performed miracles. He had blazed a trail, brought needed supplies hundreds of miles, and braved death many times. But still he could not be sure: "I did not know", he wrote later, how he would receive me; so I did what cowardice and false pride suggested—was the best thing—walked deliberately to him, took off my hat, and said: "Dr. Livingstone. I presume?"

But the doctor was kind, and grateful and did not even mind that Stanley represented the New York Herald and with him in the next few weeks Stanley came to know the meaning of veneration, while in his heart, fanned by Livingstone's great example, burst into full fame the love of African exploration which was never to leave him.

10.4 Glossary

- **Evangelize**: To preach or spread a religious message, often aiming to convert others.
- **Travails**: Painful or laborious efforts or challenges.
- **Pillage**: The act of looting or stealing, often during a conflict.
- **Mutiny**: Rebellion against authority, particularly by soldiers or sailors.
- **Bivouac**: A temporary camp without tents or cover.
- **Apprenticeship**: A period of learning or training under an experienced guide.
- **Convoy**: A group of vehicles or people traveling together for protection.
- **Exasperated**: Intensely irritated or annoyed.
- **Tribute**: Payment made periodically, especially by one ruler or country to another, as a sign of dependence.
- **Detour**: A longer, alternative route taken to avoid something.
- **Succumbed**: Failed to resist pressure, temptation, or other forces; yielded.
- **Puggaree**: A light scarf wound around a hat or helmet, often used for protection against the sun.
- **Veneration**: Great respect or reverence for someone or something.

10.5 Qustions

1. Why do you think the writer chose to emphasize Stanley's struggles and determination in this narrative?
2. How does the author create suspense about whether Stanley would find Livingstone?
3. How is Stanley's personality revealed through his handling of challenges and his leadership style?
4. What aspects of Dr. Livingstone's personality are highlighted in his reception of Stanley?
5. How do you feel about Stanley's use of physical force to maintain discipline during the expedition? Was it justified?
6. In your opinion, does the author portray Stanley as a hero or a flawed individual? Support your view with examples from the text.
7. What does the encounter between Stanley and the "king" of the Waha tribe reveal about the complexities of the expedition?
8. How significant is the moment when Stanley says, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" in the context of the narrative?
9. The text reflects themes of perseverance and resilience. How effectively do you think these themes are communicated through Stanley's journey?
10. The narrative touches on colonial interactions with African tribes. How does the author portray these interactions, and what might this say about the attitudes of the time?