

## SECTION A : READING SKILLS

### CHAPTER-1 UNSEEN PASSAGES

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The students are required to do a thorough study and have understanding of the given comprehension passages which may consist of one or more than one paragraphs. The main purpose of this activity is to test the reading ability of the students and their intellectual skills. This section carries a weightage of **20 marks**.

**Types of Passages :** There are two types of passages which help to test the reading skills of the students during their examination. They are :

**1. Discursive Passage :** A Discursive passage consists of 400-450 words to test inference, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and vocabulary. It may also include opinions or feedback. The students are able to come to a conclusion through their reasoning power rather than intuition. They discuss the subject to reach a balanced and objective approach.

**2. Case-based Factual Passage :** A case based factual passage contains visual input- statistical data, chart etc. and it is of 200-250 words to assess inference, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and vocabulary.

A good factual passage encourages the reader to compare or contrast the relevant information regarding facts, data, etc. A student learns to get a comprehensive view of the subject and he discusses to improve his or her mental ability. There may be instructive, descriptive and reporting passages in this section.

### Tips to Know :

**Tips for solving comprehension passages :**

- (i) Read the passage thoroughly. The reading should be quick.
- (ii) Focus on the relevant details and underline them with a pen or a pencil.
- (iii) Read the questions carefully and go back to the passage to find the answers.
- (iv) The answers are generally in a logical sequence.
- (v) To find the answer of the vocabulary based questions like synonyms etc., replace the word with the meaning. If you find that it is the same in meaning, the answer is correct.
- (vi) To find the correct option in Multiple Choice Questions, go through all the options. Re-read the passage and then tick the correct option.

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### Marking Scheme

**Objective :** Local and global comprehension of a text.

**To identify the main points of the text.**

**Marking :** Discursive passage 10 marks—1 mark for each correct answer. (MCQ/Objective type question / Very Short Answer Questions)

Case-based passage 10 marks—1 mark for each correct MCQ/Objective type question / Very Short Answer Questions

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## SECTION B : GRAMMAR & CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

### CHAPTER-1 GRAMMAR

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#### 1. Tenses

The tense of a verb denotes the time of an action' *i.e.*, present, past and future. There are twelve tense forms. The principal tense forms are—indefinite, continuous, perfect and perfect continuous.

## Revision of Tenses

Tenses	Auxiliary Verbs	Main Verbs
Present Indefinite	do, does (Negative, Interrogative)	I form – s or – es Affirmative I form (Negative, Interrogative and Negative-Interrogative)
Present Continuous	is, am, are	I form + ing
Present Perfect	has, have	III form
Present Perfect Continuous	has been, have been	I form + ing + since (definite time)/ for (with indefinite time)
Past Indefinite	did (Negative, Interrogative)	II form (Affirmative) I form (Negative, Interrogative and Negative-Interrogative)
Past Continuous	was, were	I form + ing
Past Perfect	had	III form
Past Perfect Continuous	had been	I form + ing + since (definite time)/ for (with indefinite time)
Future Indefinite	shall (I, we), will (Others)	I form
Future Continuous	will be, shall be	I form + ing
Future Perfect	will have, shall have	III form
Future Perfect Continuous	will have been, shall have been	I form + ing + since (definite time)/ for (with indefinite time)

## Common Errors in the Usage of Tenses

## Incorrect

1. I have come yesterday.
2. I am working here since 1999.
3. I am going to school on foot everyday.
4. I am having a blue pen.
5. He is having a large family.
6. If it will rain, we shall not go out.

## Correct

1. I came yesterday.
2. I have been working here since 1999.
3. I go to school on foot everyday.
4. I have a blue pen.
5. He has a large family.
6. If it rains, we shall not go out.

## 2. Modals

Modal auxiliaries are helping verbs such as can, must, could and would, which are used with main verbs to express specific ideas denoting specific expressions such as possibility, permission, necessity, obligation etc.

1. **Will and Shall** : 'Will' expresses intention, promise, threat, determination.  
e.g. : I will try to come. (promise)  
I will kill you. (determination)  
'Shall' expresses order, threat, promise, determination, intention :  
e.g. : Shall I go with you ? (intention)
5. **'Might'** expresses a suggestion, possibility :  
e.g. : It might rain.
6. **'Can'** expresses ability, permission :  
e.g. : I can swim. (ability)

You shall be punished. (threat)

2. **Should** expresses duty, advice, polite request :  
e.g. : You should take care of yourself. (advice)  
Should I help you ? (polite request)
3. **Would** expresses determination, habitual action, willingness, wish :  
e.g. : Would that I were a bird. (wish)
4. **'May'** expresses possibility, permission, wish, purpose :  
e.g. : May you live long ! (wish)  
May I come in ? (permission)

Can I leave? (permission)

7. **'Could'** expresses past ability, polite request :  
e.g. : Could you please help me ? (polite request)  
In his youth, he could pick the whole bundle himself.
8. **'Must'** expresses compulsion :  
e.g. : You must obey my orders.
9. **'Need'** expresses obligation or necessity :  
e.g. : Need he solve all the sums ?
10. **Dare** means 'to have the courage to do something':  
e.g. : You dare not do this.
11. **Used to** expresses a habit in the past. Used to + V.  
e.g. : I used to swim when I was young.
12. **Has to/have to** expresses some compulsion, obligation or necessity in the present or future tense.  
Has to/have to + V.  
e.g. : Mohan has to finish his work in time.
13. **Had to** expresses compulsion, obligation or necessity in the past.  
Had to + V.  
e.g. : He was instructed that he had to finish his work before 5 p.m.

### 3. Reported Speech

The words spoken by a person can be reported in two ways – Direct and Indirect.

When we quote the words exactly same as spoken by a person, we call it **direct speech**.

By reporting the meaning of the spoken words by the speaker, without quoting the actual words, it is **indirect speech**. For example:

e.g. : Sohan said to Mohan, "I am going to school." (Direct Speech)

Sohan told Mohan that he was going to school. (Indirect Speech)

**Rules for changing Direct Speech into Indirect Speech :**

#### 1. Change in Tenses :

(1) If the reporting verb is in the present or the future tense, the tense of the reported speech is not changed :

e.g. Satish says, "I am flying a kite."

Satish says that he is flying a kite.

(2) If the reporting verb is in the past tense, then the tense of the reported speech will change as follows :

Direct	Indirect
(1) Present Indefinite	Past Indefinite
e.g. Write	Wrote
(2) Present Progressive	Past Progressive
e.g. am/is/are writing	was/were writing
(3) Present Perfect	Past Perfect
e.g. have/has written	had written
(4) Past Simple	Past Perfect
e.g. wrote	had written
(5) Past Continuous	Past perfect Continuous
e.g. was/were writing	had been writing
(6) Past Perfect and Past Perfect Continuous	remain unchanged
(7) Future	Conditional
e.g. will write	would write

**2. Change in Pronouns :**

- (1) The first person pronouns (I, me, my, we, us, our) in the reported speech change according to the subject of the reporting verb.
- (2) The pronouns of the second person (you, your, yourself) in the reported speech change according to the object of the reporting verb.
- (3) The pronouns of the third person do not change. *e.g.* :
  - (i) He said, "I like the book."  
He said that he liked the book.
  - (ii) He said to me, "Do you like her ?"  
He asked me if I liked her.

**3. Changes in words expressing nearness, time, auxiliaries etc.**

this	changes into	that
these	changes into	those
now	changes into	then
here	changes into	there
today	changes into	that day
tomorrow	changes into	the next day
yesterday	changes into	the previous day
last night	changes into	the previous night
can	changes into	could
may	changes into	might
will/shall	changes into	would/should
ago	changes into	before
just	changes into	then
come	changes into	go

**4. In statements, 'that' is used as the connector.**

In **questions**, the indirect speech is introduced by verbs like 'asked' or 'inquired' etc. and 'if' or 'whether' is used to connect the questions with yes-no answer type sentences.

While introducing **commands or requests**, the indirect speech is introduced by verbs expressing command or request and the imperative mood is changed to the infinitive.

In **exclamatory sentences**, the reporting verb is changed to expressions like 'exclaimed with joy'/sorrow etc., as per the mood, conveyed by the reported speech.

**Examples :**

1. Statement      He said to Sita, "I have passed the test."  
                         He told Sita that he had passed the test.
2. Interrogative    I said to him, "Where are you going ?"  
                         I asked him where he was going.  
                         I said to her, "Do you know him ?"  
                         I asked her if she knew him.
3. Imperative      She said to me, "Open the door."  
                         She ordered me to open the door.
4. Exclamatory     He said, "Alas ! I am ruined."  
                         He exclaimed with sorrow that he was ruined.

**4. Determiners**

Determiners are the words which come before nouns. They limit the noun by giving additional information about the noun. Determiners and nouns together make noun phrases.

*e.g.* : a boy; every boy.

The following are the most commonly used determiners :

**Articles** : a, an, the.

**Possessives** : my, our, your, his, her, its, their.

**Demonstratives** : this, that, these, those.

**Interrogatives** : which, whose (not where, when and what, unless they are followed by a noun).

**Quantifiers** : few, a few, the few, many, much, more, each, every, some, any, little, a little, the little.

**Cardinal Numbers** : one, two, forty.

**Ordinals** : first, second, last, next.

**Distributive** : all, both, half, either, neither, each, every.

**Determiners of Quantity** :

**Many** is used only with plural nouns and to show a large number.

**Much** is used with uncountable nouns indicating a large quantity.

**Some** is used in affirmative sentences.

e.g. : There are *some* books in the bag.

**Any** is used in interrogative or negative sentences.

e.g. : Are there *any* children in the park ?

There aren't *any* children in the park.

**Each** and **every** indicate single units in a group. **Each** refers to individual members of a small group, while **every** to members of a large group.

e.g.: We can help *each* other.

*Every* student wants to participate in the quiz show.

**All** is used to indicate the whole group rather than its components.

e.g. : *All* the children in this building like to play.

**Few** means not many (hardly any). Negative in sense.

**A few** means at least some number. Positive in sense.

**The few** means quite a handful specific numbers.

e.g. *Few* students are interested in reading books (hardly any).

*A few* students are good at Mathematics (at least some).

*The few* students, who **scored** good marks (very few scored good marks), are my friends.

Similarly, **little**, **a little** and **the little** denote quantity.

He had *little* milk. (Not much, negative)

He had *a little* milk. (Some at least)

He drank *the little* milk I had. (quite enough/ whatever quantity available)

## 5. Subject-Verb Concord/Agreement

The basic principle of subject-verb agreement is that singular subjects need singular verbs.

Plural subjects need plural verbs.

e.g. : The *girl* is playing.

The *girls* are playing.

- (1) When two or more singular nouns refer to the same person or thing, the verb must be singular.  
*My sister, guide, and friend has come.*
- (2) When two subjects are joined by 'as well as', 'with', 'along with', the verb agrees with the first subject.  
*The king, along with his friends, has arrived.*
- (3) Two or more singular subjects joined by 'and' take a plural verb.  
*He and I are brothers.*

- (4) Either, neither, each, every and everyone are followed by a singular verb :  
*Each of the boys was given a prize.*  
Neither of the students was absent.
- (5) When a plural noun expresses some specific quantity or amount, considered as a whole, the verb is in singular :  
*Three kilometers is a small distance.*
- (6) The verb agrees with the number of the nouns that follow the verb, in case of introductory 'there' :  
*There are fifty boys in the class.*
- (7) Some nouns which are plural in form but singular in meaning, take a singular verb.  
*Economics is a dull subject.*
- (8) A plural noun which is the name of a country or province or the title of a book, is followed by a singular verb.  
*"The Arabian Nights" has interesting stories.*
- (9) Collective nouns like group, crowd, flock, regiment, etc., are generally followed by a singular verb.  
*A crowd of people rushes into the hall.*
- (10) When the subject consists of 'one of' + plural noun', the verb is singular.  
*One of the students was talking.*
- (11) Some nouns which appear to be singular in form take a plural verb.  
*The police have arrested three terrorists.*
- (12) Nouns such as food, furniture, clothing, etc., take a singular verb.  
*This furniture is very old.*
- (13) Some nouns which appear to be plural in form but when preceded by 'a pair of' take a singular verb. e.g. : shoes, scissors, trousers, etc.  
*A pair of shoes was bought by him.*  
But when these nouns are used without 'a pair of', they take a plural verb.  
*His shoes have worn out.*
- (14) A collective noun such as jury, committee, family, etc., takes a singular verb when considered one unit. But when they are regarded as individuals, they take a plural verb.  
*The jury is about to give its decision.*  
*The jury are divided in their opinion.*

## CHAPTER-2

### GAP FILLING

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#### Revision Notes

In this chapter, there will be a number of questions framed/asked in previous years' board exams to test the candidate's knowledge of functional grammar, structure and the use of correct language pattern.

It is compulsory to fill all the blanks with suitable grammar items out of the given options. They may consist of correct use of verbs, tenses, determiners, modals, reported speech etc.

## CHAPTER-3

### EDITING

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#### Revision Notes

Editing is a review of the technical manner in which a piece of writing i.e., an extract/ a paragraph is written.

In other words, students have to look for the mistakes in grammar and related citation-style, punctuation etc. They also review word-choices, the clarity of sentences and the corrections to connect ideas to make them flow smoothly as well as clearly.

(4 marks each)



## CHAPTER-4

# SENTENCE TRANSFORMATION

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### 1. Dialogue Writing & Reporting Dialogues

The purpose of dialogue writing is to enable the students to develop the given input in a grammatically correct and meaningful conversation. While writing the sentences, one must take care to avoid errors and ensure that the following grammatical elements are kept in mind:

- Tenses
- Subject-verb agreement
- Sentence connectors
- Appropriate punctuation
- Sentence form
- Correct use of imperative

## CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS

### CHAPTER-5

## DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH (PERSON/PLACE/EVENT/ SITUATION)

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### Introduction :

A **descriptive paragraph** describes a person, situation, place or an event. Detailed information allows the reader to form an image in his or her imagination. The better the description, the clearer the image. The description allows the reader to form a better mental image of whatever is being described.

In a descriptive paragraph, you have to write about what a person, place, or event is like. Sometimes, you may describe where a place is located. The purpose of descriptive writing is to make the readers see, feel, and hear what has already been seen, felt, and heard by the writer. Whether we are describing a person, a place or an event, our aim is to reveal the subject through vivid and carefully selected details.

### Types of Descriptive Writing :

- **Description of People** : This portrays not only the physical appearance of a person but also shows the readers why the subject is important or special.
- **While describing a person** what you choose to describe, depends on the topic and purpose.
  - \* When describing a person, you are not obliged to describe every single detail about the person's appearance.
  - \* Sometimes it is better to focus on one or two outstanding features that convey something about the person's character.
- **Diary Entry** : Writing a brief account of what occurs in writer's life, either at a specific moment or for a longer period as his personal memoir, to provide some glimpses of the past incidents.

### Tips to write a Descriptive Paragraph :

- (i) Style should be informal and personal.
- (ii) Always use short sentences.
- (iii) Language should be simple, polite and effective.
- (iv) Word limit should be strictly followed.
- (v) Make sure to choose a meaningful person, place, or event.
- (vi) First introduce the person you are describing.
- (vii) Engage the reader's sense of sight.

- (viii) Describe smells and tastes if you can.
- (ix) Describe how the moment or item feels.
- (x) Describe how your subject sounds.

## CHAPTER-6

# STORY WRITING

### Introduction

A short story is different from a novel. In short story, there is only one plot, one or two main characters and a central theme. Story writing is an imaginative skill and creative art. Story writing depends on a deep thinking, creative imagination, ability of planning, expert narrative technique and effective and impressive language.

### How to write a short story

It is true that specific standards can be applied in story writing as it depends upon the imagination of the writer, but there are numerous ways to shape an impressive story. Some of these ways are as follow :

1. First and foremost, one who intends to write a story, should find out the central character and peep into her/his characteristics and qualities.
2. The writer should adopt techniques in which the reader should find himself/herself spell bound. The details should enhance the interest of the readers.
3. All the events should be kept in proper sequence to avoid any kind of confusions and complexities.
4. The writer should use a wide range of thought process.
5. The writer may use her/his personal experiences to give a realistic approach to the story.
6. The climax of the story should be apt and according to the expectation and mind set of readers. They should not be in a dilemma. They should be clear in their minds.

### Tips to write a short story

- There should be only one plot of the story.
- Story is always written in past tense.
- The theme of the story should be fabricated encircling the central character of the story.
- The end of the story should be clear and devoid of ambiguity.
- Effective language and simple sentences are the basic requirements of the story writing.
- To maintain the readers interest and curiosity, there must be twists and turns in the plot.
- The story should end with a moral.
- The word limit should be maintained.

### Format

- Context
- Introduction of characters
- Plot
- Climax

### Marking Scheme

Content	:	2.5 marks
Expression	:	2.5 marks

Under content, credit should be given for the candidate's creativity in presenting ideas.



# CHAPTER-7

## DIARY ENTRY

### Introduction

Diaries are a great way to keep track of the past, analyse the present and think about the future. In fact, diary entry is a very personal form of writing, having no hard and fast rule. It reflects our creativity, imagination, expression etc. Every entry starts with the day and date.

**An effective diary entry includes the following points :**

1. It is written in the first person.
2. Not only is it a chronicle of the events that have taken place on that day and date, but also a spontaneous expression of emotions.
3. A diary, being just another form of creative writing, will follow all the normal rules of any good writing. One must keep in mind the sentence construction, paragraphs etc.
4. Stress on feelings and emotions rather than on the event itself.
5. At the end of the diary entry, put the signature.
6. One must follow the word limit strictly.

### LITERATURE : PROSE

### CHAPTER-1

### THE FUN THEY HAD

—Issac Asimov

### Summary

- This is a story set in a futuristic scenario of around 150 years hence. In this phase of human development, every activity of education has become dependent on electronic media. There are telebooks in which the words move across the screen. The teachers are mechanical robots and the school is in an adjacent room in the house, where the student sits with the mechanical teacher, reading instructions on the screen and giving answers. It is a very boring process as there is no interaction between the teacher and the student.
- One day, Margie, an eleven year old girl, made an entry in her diary, 'Today Tommy found a real book'. Tommy was two years older to Margie. He had found the book in the attic of his room. Till then, they had never seen a real book. They had only heard from grandfather that there used to be books written on paper. They were very excited to find this book because it was a new discovery for them.
- The book was on the concept of school. The school was that of an old system. From this book they learnt a lot of things about the schools in the past. They learnt that there used to be a separate building for school where children went for studying. The classrooms contained a number of students who were taught by a human teacher. Since all learned the same things, they could easily help each other and could also easily interact with the human teachers. Margie used to dream of lot of kids going to school together, laughing, playing and helping each other. This appeared more interesting than sitting alone in a room in front of a computerised robot and reading instructions on the screen, without being able to ask any questions. As a result she started hating her school even more.

## CHAPTER-2

# THE SOUND OF MUSIC

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—Deborah Cowley

### Part 1

## Evelyn Glennie

### Summary

- Evelyn Glennie, the most sought-after musician internationally, is a multi-percussionist who can play thousands of instruments to perfection. Surprisingly, she achieved this status in spite of her disability as she was profoundly deaf. But she learnt to listen with her body instead of the ears. She feels the sound through her body.
- Evelyn was eleven years old when it was discovered that she had a hearing problem. She wanted to pursue her career in music but her teachers discouraged her. It was Ron Forbes who recognised her potential and supported her. He advised her not to listen through her ears but try to sense it in some other way. This proved to be the turning point. She learnt to open her body and mind to the sounds and vibrations. After that she never looked back. She had mastered the art of interpreting different vibrations of sound on her body.
- She joined the prestigious Royal Academy of Music and scored the highest marks in the history of the Academy. She worked hard and with determination stood against all odds and got right to the top. In 1991, she was presented with the *Royal Philharmonic Society's* prestigious 'Soloist of the year award'. Apart from the regular concerts, Evelyn gave free concerts in hospitals, prisons and also to aspiring young musicians. She became a source of inspiration for the deaf and other handicapped children. She inspired them and made them believe that if Evelyn could do, so could they.

### Part 2

## Bismillah Khan

### Summary

- This chapter throws light on the origin of *Shehnai* and the life of all time great *Shehnai Vadaak* – Bismillah Khan. The winner of Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award of India, for his dedication to music and his love for India.
- '*Pungi*', a musical instrument was banned by Emperor Aurangzeb because of its shrill and unpleasant sound. In fact, it was regarded more of a noise maker rather than a musical instrument. It was modified and perfected by a barber who belonged to a family of professional musicians. He played it in the chamber of the king. Its sound was so appreciated by the emperor that it was made a part of *Naubat*. Since, it was played for the first time in Shah's chamber by a *nai*, it came to be known as *Shehnai*.
- Traditionally, it was played in the temples and on every auspicious domestic occasion also. Its sound was regarded as auspicious. But it was treated as an incomplete musical instrument, not capable of creating independent pages. But Bismillah Khan broke this myth.
- Bismillah belongs to the Banaras (now Varanasi) Gharana. He was born in 1916 at Dumraon, in Bihar. From 5 years of age, he used to visit the Bihariji Temple and sing Bhojpuri '*Chaita*' there. For his melodious singing, as a child he used to earn a big *Laddu* from the local Bhojpuri King. At the age of 6, he moved to Banaras. There under the guidance and training of his maternal uncle, Ali Baksh, he started picking up the finer nuances of *shehnai*. He used to spend most of his time practicing on the banks of the River Ganges. The themes of his music were deeply affected by the sounds of flowing water of the Ganga.
- He got the best performer award at All India Music Conference in Allahabad in 1930. In 2001, he won 3 awards the Padma Bhushan, Padmashree and Padma Vibhushan. He was invited to play the *shehnai* from the ramparts of the Red Fort in 1947, becoming the first to greet the independent India. He won many international awards also. He became the first Indian to perform at the Lincoln Central Hall, USA. An auditorium in Tehran was named after him—*Tahar Mosiquee Ustaad Bismillah Khan*.
- Bismillah was very fond of Banaras and Dumraon. He declined an offer from one of his students to settle in the USA, as he was not willing to stay away for long from Banaras and its holy river Ganga. He ventured into

the film world also. He contributed his music in two movies. His composition 'Dil ka khillona hai.....' for movie 'Goonj Uthi Shehnai', was a chartbuster. But he could not associate himself with the artificial glamour of the film world. For him, music was his soul, his life.

## CHAPTER-3

### THE LITTLE GIRL

—Katherine Mansfield

#### Summary

- Kezia was a little girl who lived with her mother, her father and her grandmother. She was afraid of her father and used to avoid him. She used to feel relieved on seeing her father going to his office. Kezia was so afraid of her father that she stuttered in front of him. He appeared to her as a harsh, rude and critical human being. Her Grandmother wanted her to understand her parents better, and would ask her to go to the drawing room to chat with her parents. But she found them indifferent towards her.
- One day her Grandmother suggested that she should prepare a pin cushion for her father's birthday. Kezia stitched the three sides of the pin cushion casing. Now, she wanted to stuff it with something. In her mother's room on the bed table, she found many sheets of fine paper. She tore them off into small pieces, filled the pin cushion and stitched the fourth side. By mistake she had used the very papers, which contained her father's very important speech for the Port Authority. Though she accepted her mistake and tried to explain the reasons behind it, her father was too angry to listen to anything and punished her with a bashing of ruler on her palms. She failed to understand the punishment meted out to her when she had already accepted her mistake. Bitterly she said, 'What did God make fathers for?'
- One evening, she saw Mr. McDonald playing with his five children, laughing and enjoying with them. This convinced Kezia that all fathers are not alike. Some are loving and caring like Mr. McDonald and some are cruel like her father.
- But soon, her attitude towards her father also changed. One day, her mother had to be taken to the hospital and her grandmother accompanied her. Kezia was left alone in the house with the cook. The day was fine. But the night was a different issue. She woke up in the middle of the night screaming as she had a horrible nightmare. She was weeping out of fear. When she opened her eyes, she saw her father beside her bed. He carried her to his bedroom, and made her warm and comfortable on his bed. Father told her to rub her feet with his legs and set them warm. She felt very safe and comfortable with him.
- It was then she realised that her father was not a giant after all. She could also sense that he loved and cared for her in his own way. She realised that he had to work the whole day to provide for his family and was too tired by the evening to play with her.

## CHAPTER-4

### A TRULY BEAUTIFUL MIND

—Albert Einstein

#### Summary

- Albert Einstein was born on 14 March in the year 1879 in the German city of Ulm. For about two and a half years, he could not speak and when he did learn to speak, he uttered every word twice. His playmates called him 'Brother Boring', and his mother regarded him a freak because of the abnormally large size of his head. At school, his headmaster regarded him as stupid and good for nothing. But he proved them all wrong.
- At the age of 6, at the behest of his mother, he learned to play the violin. He became a gifted violinist. At the age of 15, his family shifted to Munich. He did not feel at ease with the strict regimentation of the school and left it for good. Later on, for higher education, he joined the University in Zurich because the atmosphere there was more liberal and amenable to new ideas and concepts. He showed more interest in Physics and Mathematics. He met a fellow student, Mileva Maric at the University- equally intelligent and clever. Later on they married and had two sons but unfortunately their marriage did not survive and were divorced in 1919.

- After completing his education, Albert worked as a technical expert in the patent office at Bern. Here, he worked secretly on his idea of relativity. In 1915, he published his paper on special theory of relativity, followed by the world famous equation  $E = mc^2$ .
- In 1915, he published his paper on *General Theory of Relativity*, which gave an absolutely new definition to the concept of gravity. This theory made him a known personality. In 1919, during the solar eclipse, his theory came out to be accurate and revolutionised Physics. In 1933, he emigrated to USA as Nazis had come to power in Germany. He did not want his finding and research to be used for destruction. In 1938, when Germany discovered the principle of Nuclear Fission, he was the first person to write to the American President about the dangers of the atomic bombs.
- In 1945, when America dropped the Atomic Bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, he was deeply hurt and wrote to the United Nations for the formation of a World Government to prevent recurrence of such destruction. He spent his later days in politics advocating world peace and democracy. He died at the age of 76 in the year 1955.

## CHAPTER-5

### THE SNAKE AND THE MIRROR

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—Vaikom Mohammad Basheer

#### Summary

It is a story about a doctor, who had recently commenced his practice. He lived in a small rented room which was an out house. It had two windows and a tiled roof. The tiles were supported by gables which rested on the beam and there was no electricity. The room was infested with rats.

One hot summer night, he had his meals at the restaurant and returned home. He lighted the kerosene lamp, took off his coat and shirt and opened the two windows. He settled on the chair and took out a medical book to read. There was a large mirror on the table on which stood a lamp. Since it was too hot to sleep, and he had nothing better to do, he sat down in front of the mirror, admiring himself, admiring his looks and smile and planning what he should do to look more presentable. Gradually, his thoughts shifted from self-admiration to planning of his marriage. He thought that he would marry a rich doctor having a good practice and that he would choose a fat lady as his wife so that she would not be able to run and catch him.

He was so engrossed in his day dreaming that he did not give much importance to the sudden silence. The rats had stopped scampering and there was a sound of something falling behind him. But he was slow to react. By the time he turned around to have a look, a snake had wriggled over the back of the chair and landed on his shoulders and coiled round his left arm above the elbow. It was a dangerous cobra and its hood spread out, hardly three inches from his face.

The doctor sat there like a stone statue, afraid to move lest the snake may strike back. He thought of various medicines he had and if any was good enough to save him if the snake did bite him.

In this moment of fear of death, he realised the presence of God. God had punished him for being too proud and arrogant. He realised that he was but a mere human, a poor man, and had nothing much to boast about.

The moment he accepted his true worth, God appeared, pleased and the snake left him of its own free will and sat on the table in front of the mirror.

The doctor got up silently and rushed out of the door. Next morning when he came back, all his belongings had been pilfered but for his dirty vest which was too dirty even for the thief.

The story clearly highlights the fact that one should not be proud of oneself because whatever he has, is a gift of God. Without his benign support you are nothing. The moment he realised this, God recalled the snake, who left without hurting him.

## CHAPTER-6

### MY CHILDHOOD

—A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

#### Summary

- Abdul Kalam was born in a middle class Muslim family in Rameshwaram. He had three brothers and one sister. His father was a generous and wise man. His mother was a hospitable lady. They lived in their ancestral house on Mosque Street. His father lived a simple life but provided all necessities to his children. His parents were neither much educated nor rich, yet were generous and kind. Many outsiders ate with the family every day. Kalam inherited the qualities of honesty and self – discipline from his parents.
- Kalam was only 8 years old when the Second World War broke out in 1939. Then, there was a great demand for tamarind seeds. Abdul used to collect those seeds and sell them in the market. His cousin Shamsuddin distributed newspapers and employed him as a helping hand. This way he earned his first wages. He inherited faith in goodness and kindness from his parents.
- Kalam's family respected all religions. They took part in the Hindu festivals as well. His mother and grandmother told stories from the Ramayana and the life of the Prophet to the children at bed time. Kalam had three friends- *Ramanandha Sastry*, the son of a high priest of the Rameshwaram temple, *Aravindam* and *Sivaprakasan*. They had different religious backgrounds and upbringing. They never felt any difference among themselves. They adopted different professions when they grew up.
- One day when Abdul was in 5<sup>th</sup> standard at the Rameshwaram Elementary School, a new teacher came to their class. He used to wear a cap, which set him apart as a Muslim. Kalam always sat in the front row- next to Ramanandha Sastry, but the teacher could not tolerate a Hindu Priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. Kalam was asked to sit on the back bench. Both the friends felt very sad and told their parents about the incident after school. Ramanandha's father called the teacher and told him not to spread the poison of communal hatred and social inequality in the minds of innocent children. He told the teacher to either apologise or leave the school and city. The teacher apologised and reformed himself.
- Once Abdul's science teacher invited him to dinner at his home. His wife refused to serve Kalam dinner in her kitchen as she believed in religious segregation. The teacher himself served him food and sat beside him to eat his own meal. His wife observed from behind the door and did not find any change in Abdul's behaviour. After dinner, the teacher again invited him to join them next weekend. This time the wife served food inside the kitchen with her own hands.
- When the Second World War had ended, Kalam asked his father to permit him to go to Ramanthapuram to study. His father knew that Kalam would have to go away to grow up and so he permitted him. He told his hesitant wife that they should give their children their love but, not force their thoughts on them.

## CHAPTER-7

### REACH FOR THE TOP

—Santosh Yadav,  
Maria Sharapova

#### Summary

##### I. SANTOSH YADAV

Santosh Yadav is the only woman in the world who has climbed Mount Everest twice. Santosh was born in Joniya; a village in Haryana, as the sixth child to her parents. She is the only sister to five brothers.

Her parents were the rich landowners. They could have sent her to Delhi for studying, but she was educated in the village school. When she was sixteen, she refused to marry and warned her parents that she would never marry if she did not get proper education. She got admission in a school in Delhi but her parents refused to pay the fees. She told them she would take up a part time job, eventually they relented. Santosh passed High School and joined Maharani College in Jaipur.



Her room in Kasturba Hostel faced the Aravalli Hills. From there she used to see the villagers going up the hill and disappearing. She decided to see by herself as to why the climbers disappeared. When she went there, she met only a few climbers who encouraged her to take climbing. Then there was no looking back. Santosh saved money and enrolled herself in the Uttarkashi Nehru Institute of Mountaineering. She went on an expedition every year. She had an iron will, physical endurance and mental toughness. Eventually, her efforts started bearing fruits.

In 1988, she joined the Aravalli mountaineers and in 1992 she became the youngest woman to climb Mt. Everest. Within twelve months, Santosh became the member of the Indo-Nepalese Women's Expedition and set a record of being the only woman to have climbed Mt. Everest twice.

She was honoured with Padamashri, one of the nation's top honours.

It was a proud moment for her to unfurl the Indian tricolour flag on top of the world. She acted there as an environmentalist also and brought down 500 kilograms of rubbish from the Himalayas.

## II. MARIA SHARAPOVA

Maria Sharapova, a Siberian teenager, became the world's number one tennis player on 22 August, 2005. She was 10 years old when she was sent to America with her father for her training, while her mother was forced to stay behind. She helped her father while he struggled to support her. This made her determined and mentally tough. She bagged the ladies' single crown at Wimbledon in 2004. Her journey from Siberia to the top of women's tennis has touched many hearts. She says that she works hard and her sacrifices have been worth it.

She says that she is proud to be a Russian. Even though the US is a big part of her life she will play the Olympics for Russia if they want her to.

Her hobbies are fashion, singing and dancing. She loves reading novels of Arthur Conan Doyle.

Sharapova cannot be put in a category. She has the talent, a desire to succeed and readiness to sacrifice. She finds money a motivation but more than that is her desire to be number one.

## CHAPTER-8

### KATHMANDU

—Vikram Seth

### Summary

The lesson *Kathmandu* is a description of the two famous temples of that city. One is the Pashupatinath Temple. The other is the Boudhnath Stupa, the Buddhist shrine of Kathmandu.

At Pashupatinath temple a sign proclaims 'Entrance for the Hindus only'. There is much crowd and utter confusion. All sorts of animals roam around the grounds. People push each other to make their way to the Lord. A group of Westerners claims itself to be Hindus and ask for permission to come in, but the policeman at the gate is not convinced. Monkeys can be seen fighting.

The holy Bagmati flows by the side of the temple. It has washerwomen on its banks. There is also a small shrine on the river bank. It seems that half of the shrine is immersed in the river and half out of it. The people believe that the whole shrine will come out of the temple one day. Then the goddess inside will escape and the period of 'Kalyug' will be over.

At the Boudhnath Stupa, there is a sense of stillness. There is a road running around the temple. Small shops of Tibetan immigrants stand on its outer edge. There is no crowd here.

Kathmandu is a crowded place. There are deities in the busiest streets which are crowded with fruit sellers, flute sellers, hawkers of postcards, etc. The shops sell western cosmetics, film rolls and chocolates. The author indulges himself here mindlessly. Then, he decides to go back home. He buys his ticket and comes back to his hotel.

In a corner of the square near the hotel, a flute seller catches his attention. His carefree style pleases him. It reminds him of the commonality of all mankind.

There is no culture that does not have its flute. The deep '*bansuri*' is of Hindustani classical music. The flutes of South America are clear and breathy. The Chinese ones are high pitched. The music of the flutes is universal.

The author feels himself wondered to see that flute is so common all over the world.



## CHAPTER-9

### IF I WERE YOU

—Douglas James

#### Summary

This is the story of an intruder. He entered the house of a playwright. He, however, did not know that the owner of the house was a playwright. He only knew him as Gerrard. He had thought that he was a mystery man, lived in the wilds of Essex, did not meet people and gave his orders over the phone.

The intruder was a criminal and was being chased by the police. He thought he resembled Gerrard so he had planned to kill Gerrard and live in that cottage by himself.

Gerrard was preparing to leave his house for a dress rehearsal. He had packed his bag with props for the drama. The intruder threatened to kill Gerrard and told him that he intended to live in his house as Gerrard since he looked like him. He even learnt to imitate Gerrard's voice.

The intruder was about to shoot Gerrard. Then Gerrard warned him to be careful and not to kill him. He told the intruder that he too was a criminal and a murderer, so the police would anyway hang him, if not as himself then as Gerrard.

Hearing this, the intruder began to think. This was an opportunity for Gerrard to act. He asked the intruder to run with him in his car to reach a safer place as the police were about to come there soon. He opened a door which was, in fact, a cupboard. The intruder looked in to see what it was.

Just then, Gerrard gave him a push. The revolver fell as the intruder stepped into the cupboard. Gerrard shut the door and picked up the revolver. Then he telephoned to call the police to arrest the intruder.

#### LITERATURE : POEMS

### CHAPTER-1

### THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

—Robert Frost

#### Summary

This is one of the finest poems by Robert Frost. It's a poem with deep implications. It deals with the problem of making a right choice. Many times in our life, we are confounded with different choices and such a choice is often difficult to make.

The poet stands in the woods, considering a fork in the road. Both ways are equally worn and equally overlaid with untrodden leaves. The speaker chooses one, telling himself that he will take the other on some another day. Yet, he knows it is unlikely that he will have the opportunity to do so. And he admits that someday in the future, he will recreate the scene with a slight twist. He will claim that he took the less-travelled road. *The Road Not Taken* consists of four stanzas of five lines each. The rhyme scheme is abaab.

### CHAPTER-2

### WIND

—Subramania Bharati

#### Summary

In this poem, the poet has very beautifully expressed his ideas about both the constructive and destructive aspects of the wind. The wind is often satirical of weak men. Wind symbolizes the difficulties that are faced in life. When we have the endurance to bear the difficulties of life, we can overcome each challenge but, if we are weak and unstable, we succumb to the difficulties of life.

## CHAPTER-3

### RAIN ON THE ROOF

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—Coates Kinney

#### Summary

It is a poem that tells us about the poet's sweet memories of his childhood. At night, when dark clouds cover the sky and it rains gently, then the poet lies in his cosy bed listening to the sound of the gentle rain droplets on the rooftop of his house. He remembers that his mother used to tell him stories which gave him immense solace and pleasure.

## CHAPTER-4

### THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

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—William Butler Yeats

#### Summary

The poet dreams of escaping the busy streets of London. He remembers Innisfree, as a perfect little island that fulfilled all his needs. The poet declares that he will arise and go to Innisfree, where he will build a small cabin out of 'clay and wattles'. He will have nine bean-rows and a beehive there, and live alone in the glade with the loud sound of bees ('the bee-loud glade'). He says that he will have peace there, for peace drops from 'the veils of morning to where the cricket sings'. At midnight there is a glimmer, and noon is a purple glow, and evening is full of linnet's wings. He declares again that he will arise and go, for always, night and day, he hears the lake water lapping 'with low sounds by the shore'. While he stands in the city, 'on the roadway, or on the pavements grey', he hears the sound within himself, 'in the deep heart's core'.

## CHAPTER-5

### A LEGEND OF THE NORTHLAND

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—Phoebe Cary

#### Summary

The poem is a legend about an old lady who angered Saint Peter because of her greed. In Northland, lived a lady who was very selfish and greedy. Saint Peter, while preaching the world, reached her door one day. She was making cakes and baking them on a hearth. St. Peter was fainting with hunger. He asked the lady to give him a piece of cake. The cake that she was baking then appeared to be too big so she did not give him a piece from that and baked another small one. That also appeared too big so she did not give him that also. Now, she took an extremely little scrap of dough and rolled it flat. She made it as thin as a wafer but was unable to part with that also. This angered St. Peter a lot. He said that she was not fit to live in human form and enjoy food and warmth. He cursed her and transformed her into a woodpecker who has to bore into hard and dry wood to get its scanty food. She can be seen in the trees all day boring and boring for food.

## CHAPTER-6

### NO MEN ARE FOREIGN

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—James Kirkup

#### Summary

It is a beautiful poem written by James Kirkup to spread the message of peace and harmony by telling us that all men are same and there is no difference between them. Therefore, we should not hate and fight with one another.

The poem tells us that all the divisions which are based on nation, caste, creed, colour or religion have no base because all the human beings are equal before God and humanity. Since, we are all same, we must shun violence of all kinds and unite to make our lives better.

## CHAPTER-7

### ON KILLING A TREE

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—Gieve Patel

#### Summary

This is a very touching poem about how trees are cut down. It gives a *touching* description of how a tree is uprooted and killed. The poet wants to tell us that just by hacking and chopping it wouldn't be killed.

*On killing a tree* is a poem about the cruel indiscrimination of man about the destruction of trees. Here, the poet has presented tree as an enemy of man and man as a professional killer. When the poem begins, there is an ironical description of the crime committed by the tree. The tree has consumed earth's crust for years and years. It has absorbed sunlight, air and water like a thief and in this process, it has grown like a giant. This is the reason why a tree must be killed. But it is not an easy task. It cannot be done through only a simple jab and knife because it will grow again. So, the tree should be tied with a rope and pulled out entirely. In this way, its bleeding roots will be exposed. After that, it should be browned, hardened and withered to destroy or kill it completely.

## CHAPTER-8

### A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

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—William Wordsworth

#### Summary

The poem is an expression of William Wordsworth's feelings on the death of a loved one. The poet expresses his feelings and also imagines his beloved after death.

The poem consists of two stanzas of 4 lines each. In this poem, the narrator says that he was in a state of unconsciousness, as if he were sleeping. He was in such a trance that he did not want to acknowledge the fear that any human being has, especially the fear of death — so is with Lucy. Lucy's presence in the narrator's life has always been eternal, though her body does not move anymore now. Her eternal presence has become an eternal absence. He thinks it to be the rotation of the earth. Just as the rocks and the trees of the earth are liable to grow, develop, die and decompose, in the same way it was with Lucy also and the poet will have to accept it.

**SUPPLEMENTARY READER : MOMENTS****CHAPTER-1****THE LOST CHILD**

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—Mulk Raj Anand

**Summary**

It was spring time and the people in colourful attire were going to the fair. A child, along with his parents, was going to the fair and was very excited and happy. The child was fascinated by the stalls of toys and sweets. Though, his father got angry but his mother pacified him and diverted his attention towards other things. The child moved forward but once again, lagged behind because his eyes were caught by one thing or the other every now and then.

As they moved forward, the child got demurred by the decorative items on the stalls. His mouth watered seeing sweets, decorated with gold and silver leaves. "I want *burfi*" but he did not wait for his parent's reply as he knew very well that his parents would never agree to buy *burfi* for him. They would say he was greedy. Therefore, he kept moving. Then, he witnessed beautiful garlands but didn't ask for them. Then, he saw balloons, but he knew very well that his parents would say he was too old to play with balloons so he walked away.

Then, he saw a snake charmer, a round about swing. Now, he stopped to ask his parents for the permission to enjoy the swing but to his utter surprise, there was no reply. Neither his father nor his mother was there. Now, the child realised that he was lost. He ran here and there but with no fruitful result. The place was too overcrowded. He got terrified but suddenly a kind hearted man took him up in his arms and consoled the bitterly weeping child. He asked if he would like to have a joyride but the child sobbed "I want my father, I want my mother." The man offered him sweets, balloons and garland but the child kept sobbing "I want my father, I want my mother."

**CHAPTER-2****THE ADVENTURES OF TOTO**

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—Ruskin Bond

**Summary**

This story is about the admiration of the grandfather of the narrator and his liking for animals. He bought a baby monkey from a *tonga*-driver and named it Toto.

He wanted Toto because he already possessed a tortoise, a pair of rabbits, a tame squirrel, a goat but no monkey. With the coming of Toto, his mini zoo transformed into a real zoo.

Toto's presence was kept top secret as grandmother abhorred animals. Toto was kept in a little closet which opened into the narrator's room. Toto tore off narrator's school blazer. Toto, when kept in the zoo, started troubling other animals.

One day, grandfather had to go to Saharanpur to collect his pension. He took Toto along with him because he was a great menace to be left in the zoo troubling other animals. Toto, was ultimately accepted by the family. He was left in the stable to stay along with Nana, the family donkey. Even Nana got fed up with Toto.

One day, Toto nearly boiled himself alive by jumping into the large kitchen kettle that had been left on the fire to boil for tea. It was grandmother who came to his rescue and saved him. As days passed by, Toto's pernicious activities did not lessen. Therefore, ultimately grandfather sold back Toto to the *tonga*-driver and heaved a sigh of relief.

## CHAPTER-3

### ISWARAN - THE STORY TELLER

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—R.K. Laxman

#### Summary

This is a story about Mahendra, a junior supervisor and his cook, Iswaran. The former had to keep moving from place to place as ordered by the head office. But, he had fortunately an expert caretaker, Iswaran, who cooked his meals, washed his clothes and chatted with him at night.

Iswaran was very fond of reading Tamil thrillers during his spare time. As a result, he innovated his own thrillers and would tell about it to Mahendra. The latter used to hear patiently without finding any loopholes in the story.

Iswaran often in his stories narrated about elephants. *For example*, he told a story about how he paralysed a mad elephant that had gone berserk. He told that there were timber logs loaded on trucks. But if an elephant went mad, no Mahaut could control it. The elephant now entered a school ground breaking through the brick wall where children were playing. Children and teachers ran helter and skelter to save their lives. The elephant was stunned when Iswaran, then only a little boy, took a rod and hit at the elephant's third toe nail. The secret was if the elephant is hit there, his nervous system gets paralysed.

Finally, one day, talking about spirits of the ancestors, Iswaran began to talk of ghosts. He said that the place where they had their shed was, once a burial ground. He also had come across ghosts but he was not scared of them. He told Mahendra about a woman ghost seen only on a full moon night. She moaned and carried a foetus in her arms. This terrified Mahendra so much that he finally thought of that woman ghost on a full moon night. He could hear a low moan outside his window. He peeped from his window and there stood the ghost of the woman. He flung himself down and found that he was often dreaming of that woman ghost. Iswaran used to ask grinning at Mahendra, "Sir, you were angry with me the other day when I told you about the ghost but didn't you see her yourself last night?" Mahendra never used to listen to Iswaran's questions and finally decided to resign his job and leave that haunted place.

## CHAPTER-4

### IN THE KINGDOM OF FOOLS

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—Kannada Folktale (ed.) A.K. Ramanujan

#### Summary

This is an interesting story about a Kingdom of Fools. The king and his minister did not have any brain. Once, they ordered that night should be considered day and vice-versa. They ordered that the people should keep awake at night and sleep during the day.

One day, a *guru* and his disciple visited the kingdom. To their utter surprise, the city looked deserted during the day time and by evening the shops opened and they purchased food to eat. The disciple felt happy at the cheap rate of eatable commodities and decided to stay back, while the *guru* rejected the idea.

An incident almost saved the kingdom. One day, a thief entered the house of a merchant but before he could steal anything, the wall fell on him and he died. The brother of the thief complained to the king against the merchant whose weak wall had taken the life of his poor brother. Ultimately the merchant blamed the mason, the mason blamed the dancing girl, the dancing girl blamed the goldsmith and the goldsmith blamed the family of the merchant. It was decided that merchant should be executed as he had inherited all his father's wealth as well as his sins. The merchant was fat and the stake was meant to execute very thin people.

As a result, a new stake was built to execute the merchant but it was too big, therefore, the king ordered that a fat man should be executed first. The king's men brought the disciple to be executed. Seeing in his vision, the *guru* came to rescue his disciple. He said to the king that this stake is new, therefore, he wants that he himself should be executed first. The king asked the reason. The *guru* said that the person who is executed first on this



holy stake, will be reborn as the king of this kingdom. Now, the king wished to die first in order to become the king again. Therefore, the foolish king was executed and the *guru* with his wisdom saved his disciple.

## CHAPTER-5

### THE HAPPY PRINCE

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—Oscar Wilde

#### Summary

The Happy Prince was a beautiful statue. One day, a little swallow stayed between the feet of the Happy Prince. A large drop of water fell on the swallow. The swallow learnt that these were the tears, falling from the Happy Prince's eyes. The Happy Prince told him about the misery around him. The swallow made up his mind to stay there.

The Happy Prince gave a ruby for a poor seamstress. He gave a sapphire for a playwright and another sapphire for a match girl. The swallow carried out the prince's wishes. He also plucked out the gold leaves from the statue and gave it to the poor. He decided to go to Egypt as desired by the Happy Prince. The bird said that he was leaving for the House of Death. And he fell down dead at the Prince's feet. Just then Prince's leaden heart cracked into two parts because of the hard frost. The next morning, the Mayor ordered it to be taken down and melted in a furnace. The broken lead heart, however, did not melt. So, it was thrown on a heap of dust. The dead bird was also lying there. In Heaven, God asked one of the Angels, to bring him two most precious things from the city. The Angel carried away the broken heart and the dead bird.

## CHAPTER-6

### THE LAST LEAF

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—O. Henry

#### Summary

Sue and Johnsy were two young artists. They lived together in a small flat situated on the third storey of an old house. Johnsy fell seriously ill with pneumonia in November. Sue was worried and sent for the doctor. He told Sue that Johnsy had lost the will to live. Medicines would not help her.

Sue tried her best to make Johnsy take interest in things around her. She talked about clothes, fashion and brought her drawing board into Johnsy's room and started painting. She also whistled while painting.

Johnsy looked at an ivy creeper outside on the wall shedding its leaves. She started counting backwards from twelve. Sue asked what it was all about. Johnsy said that she would die with the falling of the last leaf. Sue told her that was all nonsense. But it had no effect on Johnsy.

Behrman, an old painter, lived on the ground floor. He had a dream that he would one day paint a masterpiece. Sue told Behrman about Johnsy's strange fancy. Both he and Sue went to Johnsy's room while she was sleeping. They saw the ivy creeper had only one leaf left on it. It was raining and seemed that the last leaf would fall anytime.

Johnsy awoke from her sleep and saw the last leaf. It was green and healthy. Johnsy looked at it every hour but it didn't fall even in the stormy evening. This revived Johnsy's will to live.

Next morning Sue told Johnsy about Behrman. He had been ill for only two days. The guard found him on his bed. His clothes and shoes were wet. He had been shivering in the stormy night. He had painted that last leaf on the wall that night. He caught pneumonia and died. The last leaf was his masterpiece. He painted it the night the last leaf fell.



## CHAPTER-7

### A HOUSE IS NOT A HOME

—Zan Gaudio

#### Summary

The author says that his first year in school was not pleasant. It was twice as big as his old school. His old friends had gone to different high schools. So, he felt very lonely.

One Sunday afternoon, the author was sitting at home doing his homework by the fireplace. He had his cat nearby. His mother stoked the fire. Suddenly, he noticed smoke from the ceiling. They came in the front yard but the fire had surrounded the place and was spreading. His mother ran back into the house and the author ran to the neighbours to call the fire department.

The author's mother ran out of the house with important documents then ran back again to get pictures and letters of her husband. He ran after her but the fireman caught him. The author told the fireman that his mother was inside. The fireman seated him wrapped in a blanket in the car. Soon, another fireman brought the author's mother. He put her in the truck with an oxygen mask over her mouth. She had inhaled a lot of smoke.

After five hours, the fire was finally put out. The house was completely burned down.

It struck the author that he had not seen the cat. He started crying. The firemen did not let him go inside. The author and his mother went to the author's grandparents for the night.

The next day the author went to school in his old dress, no shoes and no books as his backpack had also gone. He felt sad, he wanted to die but he walked to school.

He crossed his house on his way to school. Everything was destroyed. Only the photo albums, documents, etc., were saved. His heart ached for the cat. His mother took him away from there. They would have to find a place to live and buy clothes for school also.

Soon, the rubble was being cleared up. The author kept thinking about the cat. He kept thinking how the cat would climb on him and fall asleep in his pocket.

Soon, everyone came to know about the author's plight. People collected around him to take him to the gymnasium. The author was surprised to see the table inside had a collection of things. These were : notebooks, clothes, jeans, tops, sweater, shirts. He grew emotional. He felt great relief as people came to see him. They were those who had not visited him earlier. He made friends that day.

A month later, the author was at his house. It was being rebuilt. His two friends from school were with him. The fire was responsible for all the wonderful people around him. His life was getting back to normal.

Soon, a woman came to him. She had a cat with her. The author took the cat from her. The cat had run away from the fire and the woman had found it. She telephoned as the author's telephone number was written on its collar. The feeling of loss had vanished and the author felt a sense of gratitude for his life and friends.

## CHAPTER-8

### THE BEGGAR

—Anton Chekhov

#### Summary

Advocate Sergei was detained by a beggar one day. The beggar was crying for pity and told him he had been a school teacher but had lost his position.

The beggar was in rags. He had dull, sunken cheeks and red spots on either cheek. He wore one high shoe and one low shoe.

Sergei recognised the beggar and told him he had met him in Sadovaya Street. Then he had called himself a student. Sergei warned that he would inform the police.

The beggar admitted the truth and asked for work. Sergei asked him to chop wood. The beggar agreed, though unwillingly. The beggar was taken by Sergei's servant Olga to the shed where he had to chop the wood.

Olga gave the beggar the axe. Sergei seeing a drunken and a spoiled man at work in the cold, felt sorry for him and went away.

The beggar would cut wood on the first of every month. He would also shovel snow, beat the dust out of the rugs and mattresses and put the wood-shed in order. When Sergei moved into another house, the beggar packed and carried the furniture.

Lushkoff, the beggar was now offered other work. Sergei asked him to go to his friends. They gave him some copying work as he could write. Sergei was happy he had put the man on the right track.

Two years went by. One evening standing at a ticket window of a theatre, Sergei saw the man again. Lushkoff told him that he was a notary and was paid thirty-five roubles a month. He thanked Sergei for what he had done for him. He said that if he had not helped him, he would still have been telling lies.

He asked Sergei that he'd like to thank Olga, the cook. Lushkoff told Sergei that Olga would rebuke, called him names then she would sit opposite him and weep. Then she would chop the wood for him. Due to Olga's actions, he had a change of heart. He was set right by Olga and would never forget her.

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