

“O.HENRY’S AMERICAN SCENES” AND THE
ACCOMPANYING LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES TO USE IN
THE EFL AND ESL CLASSES

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Abstract:

"O.Henry's American Scenes" is a Ladder Edition book at the 1,000-word level published by the English Language Programs Division in Washington D.C. The Ladder Series of books are specially prepared editions of well-known American books. They have been shortened and simplified to use for ESL and EFL students. Though the stories have been shortened, they remain enjoyable and engaging to read. The author uses these stories in her classes at Baki State University.

This thesis shows how the teachers of ESL and EFL can use these stories as an effective teaching tool in their classes. Included are 7 stories taken from the book "O.Henry's American Scenes" with accompanying exercises.

The introduction gives the readers a detailed procedure for using these activities in the classroom. The last part will acquaint the readers with students' reactions to reading and working with O.Henry's stories.

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ABSTRACT

“O.Henry’s American Scenes” is a Ladder Edition book at the 1,000-word level published by the English Language Programs Division in Washington D.C. The Ladder Series of books are specially prepared editions of well-known American books. They have been shortened and simplified to use for ESL and EFL students. Though the stories have been shortened, they remain enjoyable and engaging to read. The author uses these stories in her classes at Baki State University.

This thesis shows how the teachers of ESL and EFL can use these stories as an effective teaching tool in their classes. Included are 7 stories taken from the book “O.Henry’s American Scenes” with accompanying exercises.

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ERIC Descriptors

1. English (Second Language)
2. Language Fluency
3. Communication Skills
4. Paragraph Composition
5. Vocabulary Development
6. Student Attitudes
7. Reading Comprehension
8. Writing (Composition)

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INTRODUCTION

WHY I CHOSE THIS TOPIC FOR MY THESIS

I teach English at Baki State University. BSU is the first and leading institution of higher education in Azerbaijan. The University has become a recognized scientific and training centre in the Middle East. There are seventeen departments at the university. I work at the Department of International Law and International Relations which was founded in 1991. The main purpose of its formation is training high-qualified specialists in international law and diplomacy for our independent republic. My students' major is International Relations so they need to know English well enough to

participate actively in establishing and maintaining bilateral relations with foreign countries in their future careers. We are supposed to teach students from the pre-intermediate level. However, we can have students at high beginning or even at lower levels. Students have four English lessons a week. Each lesson lasts 80 minutes. These lessons are titled based on their objectives. So I teach them a “Grammar” lesson, a “Newspaper lesson”, a “Listening”, lesson and a “Home Reading” lesson. I’d like to speak in more detailed about the latter, as it is directly related to the topic of this thesis. I must say that it is not the teachers’ choice to group the English lessons this way. It is the traditional way of teaching English at the university level here.

When I was a student at the Institute of Foreign Languages, we used to have “Home Reading” lessons. I’d like to describe those lessons. Our teacher assigned certain books in the English language and asked us to borrow them from our institute’s library. Usually these were simple stories written by non- natives. Beginning with the 3rd year course we had to read books in the original English. As students, we didn’t like these lessons where we were asked to retell very long texts and memorize long lists of unknown words. All the lessons were the same and they were boring. It was really not interesting to listen to the student who was retelling the text in front of the board. Because we all knew what he would retell. The only reason that made us listen was the fear of losing the place in the text he was retelling because the teacher would periodically stop one student and ask another to come up and continue the retelling. She would never ask our opinion about the book we had read. We never worked in pairs or groups during our lessons. There

was no interaction between us students. The only interaction was between the teacher and the student in the form of questions and answers.

All my negative experiences in these “Home Reading” lessons helped me to shape my home reading lessons in my classes. First, I always give choices to my students. Before assigning certain books to read, I bring several books to the class and give brief information about each one. It is interesting for me that the students from different years have asked me to select the book “O.Henry’s American Scenes” as the Home Reading book. I think the reasons they want to work with this book are as follows:

- The students are interested in American culture.
- The name O.Henry is familiar to them.
- These stories represent American life in the 19th century very well.
- The language of the book is simple.
- The stories are interesting and all of them have unexpected endings.
- Some of these stories have been made into films by local film studios.

I have been using this book for eight years for my “Home Reading” lessons. Throughout these years have worked out different activities based on these stories and used them in my classes. I don’t want students to feel bored in the lessons. I have always tried to make my lessons lively. The activities I now use for these short stories are the result of many years of experience.

The main principle of all these activities is the communicative approach to teaching English. Sometimes, our people here call it “western

methodology". It is because the communicative way of teaching differs greatly from our traditional way of teaching which is based on the grammar translation method. Some teachers in our country might believe that there is no need for a new teaching methodology. The point is that there have been many changes in the social, political and economic life in Azerbaijan since the country gained its independence. Education can't be unaffected by these changes. The English language has become more accessible, creating a demand for communication in what many people perceive to be the world's language of democracy, freedom and business. I think we, teachers, should respond to this demand by using new methods in teaching English. Today's students differ greatly from the students of my generation. Now students are eager to learn how to use the language they are taught. When I was a student I needn't use English for communicative purposes. We students used to learn English only for academic purposes. But the direction in English teaching is changing with the developing needs of my country. English is now mostly used to communicate with other people through the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. In the job market of Azerbaijan students are expected to communicate in English after finishing school or graduating from the university.

All these needs made me work on classroom activities that are mainly based on the communicative method. I have not only used these activities in my classes successfully, but I also shared them with my colleagues who have found them useful for their English classes. Here are some comments from my fellow teachers:

- I have used the book “O. Henry’s American Scenes” in the “Home Reading” classes. I used to ask students either to retell the text or to translate it. Now it is easy for me to check students’ understanding by asking students to do “Understanding Main Idea” and “Close Reading” activities.
- I use another book in the “Home Reading” classes. But I think I learned a lot from these activities. They showed me how much a teacher can do by creating activities for the different reading material.
- I use articles from English newspapers to teach my lessons. After getting acquainted with the activities for the book “O. Henry’s American Scenes” I developed similar speaking activities for my “Newspaper Material” classes. I have to say that students became more motivated. They prefer to discuss the issue rather than to retell newspaper article.

Some of my fellow teachers told that they had failed to use writing activities in their classes. They told that their students had difficulties in responding to what the author said in the certain paragraph or in the whole story. I explained to them that they should have prepared students for these activities. First, teachers should get students involved in open discussion asking them questions such as: “What do you think about this paragraph or story?” or “Can you relate yourself to the situation described in the story?”

Only after such preparation can students respond to what the author says either in the paragraph or in the story. Having students listen to each others' writing also helps them to do this task successfully.

These activities are suitable for both university and high school students. I introduced these activities to high school teachers in one of my recent workshops. I recommended them to develop their own activities for the texts included in their school textbooks using my activities as models. After creating activities, some of them responded that the ones they had created provided good opportunities for students to use English in the class. There were no pair or group work activities in their textbooks. The activities they developed in the workshop required a lot of pair work and group work. Ultimately, students became more motivated to express themselves in English participating in the activities their teachers planned for them.

The activities I have included in this thesis are not equally difficult. Some of them are challenging whereas others might seem very simple and easy. The reason for this is that I wanted these activities to be useful to both high school and university teachers.

HOW TO USE THE ACTIVITIES TO THE BOOK “O.HENRY’S AMERICAN SCENES”.

Though there are several types of activities for each story, this doesn't mean the teacher who is going to use the stories activities has to go through all of them. The teacher can use them selectively depending on the aim of the lesson and also depending on the level, interest and size of the class. As I have mentioned, these activities are for the Home Reading lessons so students have to read the stories at home. But it is also possible to have the students read the stories in class.

The procedure for working with each story is as follows:

Before students read:

- Students look up the key words in their dictionary and learn them.
- They write a sentence for each word in their copy-books. The teacher can either check them orally (a student reads the sentences while the teacher and the other students listen and correct the incorrect sentences) or he/she can collect the copy-books and check them depending on the aim of the lesson.
- Students are asked to think about the topic related to the story they are going to read. They will be asked to speak about it either with their partner or in a small group in the class.

After students read:

A+B: Understanding the Main Ideas and Close Reading

Students get ready for these exercises at home. These check-up exercises are a quick method of ascertaining whether students have read and comprehended the story. Teachers can use them in any way that they think will benefit the students.

- Teachers can check students' understanding through a game. The student or group of the students answering the most questions will have a higher score and will win the game.

C. Speaking (Discussion, Role Play)

- Teachers arrange the class into small groups. The time is set for the group work. If there are several discussion questions and role-plays, each group can have a different one.
- When the time is up, each group is called on to present to the rest of the class. Each member should participate in a group presentation.

D+E: Vocabulary Practice and Writing

- Teachers can assign both these exercise as home work or class work.
- It can be interesting for the students to listen to each others' writings so teachers can ask students to read their writings (letters, opinions about stories, compositions, and analyses of the different characters) aloud in front of the class. But they should inform students about it ahead of time.

Once my student refused to read her writing. She said that she didn't know she would have to read it before the students. I understood that it was my mistake. As she was a new student in this group it was difficult for her to read her writing in which she wrote her feelings about the issue before the whole class. She was afraid of being ridiculed. She needed time to feel herself a part of the group. The teacher should remember that a relaxed and friendly atmosphere is essential in using these activities.

What follows are seven stories each followed by the exercises for use with students and then an answer key.

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. She had put it aside, one cent and then another and then another, in her careful buying of meat and other food. Delia counted it three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was nothing to do but fall on the bed and cry. So Delia did it.

While the lady of the home is slowly growing quieter, we can look at the home. **Furnished** rooms at a cost of \$8 a week. There is little more to say about it.

In the hall below was a letter-box too small to hold a letter. There was an electric bell, but it could not make a sound. Also there was a name beside the door: "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

When the name was placed there, Mr. James Dillingham Young was being paid \$30 a week. Now, when he was being paid only \$20 a week, the name seemed too long and important. It should perhaps have been "Mr. James D. Young." But when Mr. James Dillingham Young entered the furnished rooms, his name became very short indeed. Mrs. James Dillingham Young put her arms warmly about him and called him "Jim." You have already met her. She is Delia.

Delia finished her crying and cleaned the marks of it from her face. She stood by the window and looked out with no interest. Tomorrow would be

Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a gift. She had put aside as much as she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week is not much. Everything had cost more than she had expected. It always happened like that.

Only \$1.87 to buy a gift for Jim. Her Jim. She had had many happy hours planning something nice for him. Something nearly good enough. Something almost worth the honor of belonging to Jim.

There was a looking-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen the kind of looking-glass that is placed in \$8 furnished rooms. It was very narrow. A person could see only a little of himself at a time. However, if he was very] thin and moved very quickly, he might be able to get a good view of himself. Delia, being quite thin, had mastered this art.

Suddenly she turned from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brightly, but her face had lost its color. Quickly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its complete length.

The James Dillingham Youngs were very proud of two things which they owned. One thing was Jim's gold watch. It had once belonged to his father. And, long ago, it had belonged to his father's father. The other thing was Delia's hair.

If a queen had lived in the rooms near theirs, Delia would have washed and dried her hair where the queen could see it. Delia knew her hair was more beautiful than any queen's **jewels** and gifts.

If a king had lived in the same house, with all his riches, Jim would have looked at his watch every time they met. Jim knew that no king had anything so valuable.

So now Delia's beautiful hair fell about her, shining like a falling stream of brown water. It reached below her knee. It almost made itself into a dress for her.

And then she put it up on her head again, nervously and quickly. Once she stopped for a moment and stood still while a tear or two ran down her face.

She put on her old brown coat. She put on her old brown hat. With the bright light still in her eyes, she moved quickly out the door and down to the street.

Where she stopped, the sign said: "Mrs. Sofronie. Hair Articles of all Kinds."

Up to the second floor Delia ran, and stopped to get her breath.

Mrs. Sofronie, large, too white, cold-eyed, looked at her.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Delia.

"I buy hair," said Mrs. Sofronie. "Take your hat off and let me look at it."

Down fell the brown **waterfall**.

"Twenty dollars," said Mrs. Sofronie, lifting the hair to feel its **weight**.

"Give it to me quick," said Delia.

Oh, and the next two hours seemed to fly. She was going from one shop to another, to find a gift for Jim.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the shops, and she had looked in every shop in the city.

It was a gold watch chain, very simply made. Its value was in its rich and **pure** material. Because it was so plain and simple, you knew that it was very valuable. All good things are like this.

It was good enough for The Watch.

As soon as she saw it, she knew that Jim must have it. It was like him. Quietness and value—Jim and the chain both had quietness and value. She paid twenty-one dollars for it. And she hurried home with the chain and eighty-seven cents.

With that chain on his watch, Jim could look at his watch and learn the time anywhere he might be. Though the watch was so fine, it had never had a fine chain. He sometimes took it out and looked at it only when no one could see him do it.

When Delia arrived home, her mind quieted a little. She began to think more reasonably. She started to try to cover the sad marks of what she had done. Love and large-hearted giving, when added together, can leave deep marks. It is never easy to cover these marks, dear friends—never easy.

Within forty minutes her head looked a little better. With her short hair, she looked wonderfully like a schoolboy. She stood at the looking-glass for a long time.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he looks at me a second time, he'll say I look like a girl who sings and dances for money. But what could I do—oh! What could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At seven, Jim's dinner was ready for him.

Jim was never late. Delia held the watch chain in her hand and sat near the door where he always entered. Then she heard his step in the hall and her face lost color for a moment. She often said little prayers quietly, about simple everyday things. And now she said: "Please God, make him think I'm still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in. He looked very thin and he was not smiling. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and with a family to take care of! He needed a new coat and he had nothing to cover his cold hands.

Jim stopped inside the door. He was as quiet as a hunting dog when it is near a bird. His eyes looked strangely at Delia, and there was an **expression** in them that she could not understand. It filled her with fear. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor anything she had been ready for. He simply looked at her with that strange expression on his face.

Delia went to him.

"Jim, dear," she cried, "don't look at me like that. I had my hair cut off and sold it. I couldn't live through Christmas without giving you a gift. My hair will grow again. You won't care, will you? My hair grows very fast. It's Christmas, Jim. Let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful nice gift I got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim slowly. He seemed to labor to understand what had happened. He seemed not to feel sure he knew.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Delia. "Don't you like me now? I'm me, Jim. I'm the same without my hair."

Jim looked around the room.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said.

"You don't have to look for it," said Delia. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's the night before Christmas, boy. Be good to me, because I sold it for you. Maybe the hairs of my head could be counted," she said, "but no one could ever count my love for you. Shall we eat dinner, Jim?"

Jim put his arms around his Delia. For ten seconds let us look in another direction. Eight dollars a week or a million dollars a year—how different are they? Someone may give you an answer, but it will be wrong. **The magi** brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. My meaning will be explained soon.

From inside his coat, Jim took something-tied in paper. He threw it upon the table.

"I want you to understand me, Dell," he said. "Nothing like a haircut could make me love you any less. But if you'll open that, you may know what I felt when I came in."

White fingers pulled off the paper. And then a cry of joy; and then a change to tears.

For there lay The Combs—the combs that Delia had seen in a shop window and loved for a long time. Beautiful combs, with jewels, perfect for her

beautiful hair. She had known they cost too much for her to buy them. She had looked at them without the least hope of owning them. And now they were hers, but her hair was gone.

But she held them to her heart, and at last was able to look up and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then she jumped up and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful gift. She held it out to him in her open hand. The gold seemed to shine softly as if with her own warm and loving spirit.

"Isn't it perfect, Jim? I **hunted** all over town to find it. You'll have to look at your watch a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how they look together."

Jim sat down and smiled.

"Delia," said he, "let's put our Christmas gifts away and keep them a while. They're too nice to use now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy the combs. And now I think we should have our dinner."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the newborn Christ-child. They were the first to give Christmas gifts. Being **wise**, their gifts were doubtless wise ones. And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise. Each sold the most valuable thing he owned in order to buy a gift for the other. But let me speak a last word to the wise of these days: Of all who give gifts, these two were the most wise. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones. They are the magi.

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

ACTIVITIES

Before you read:

- A. Look up the words in bold in your dictionary.
- B. Use the new words in your own sentences.

After you read:

A. Understanding the Main Ideas

Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. Why did Della want to buy a gift for Jim?
2. Were Della and Jim rich? How do you know?
3. What were Jim's and Della's greatest treasures?
4. Why did Della decide to go to Mrs. Sofronie?
5. What did Della buy for Jim?
6. How did Jim get enough money for Della's gift?
7. Who were the Magi, and what did they do?
8. Why does the writer think Della and Jim were wise?
9. Do you think like the author? Yes? No? Why?

B. Close Reading

If the sentence is true, write "T" next to it. If it is not true, write "F" for False. If the sentence is false, change it and make it true.

1. ----- Della spent one dollar and eighty-seven cents to buy meat and other food.

2. ----- Jim was being paid \$30 a week.
3. ----- Jim's gold watch had once belonged to his grandfather.
4. ----- Della had her cut because she wanted to look beautiful on Christmas Day.
5. ----- Della had bargained before she sold her hair.
6. ----- Della was going to buy the combs she saw in a shop window.
7. ----- The Magi were wise men who brought gifts to newborn children. .

C. Speaking

Discussion

- 1 The writer, O. Henry, tells us that the Magi were wise. He also says that Jim and Della were wise. Why does he say this? Were they all wise in the same way? Do you agree with O. Henry?
- 2 A gift is one way of showing love. Do you think it is a very important way? Why or why not?
- 3 Do you give gifts to everyone you love? Do you ever give gifts to people you don't love? If so, why? If not why not?

D. Vocabulary Practice

For each space in the sentence below, choose the best word from the following list. You may need to change the form of the word.

furnished

to hunt

waterfall

weight

jewels

expression

pure

valuable

wise

1. From the ----- on her face I understood that she had failed at her exam.
2. The doctor recommended me to drink a glass of ----- natural juice before my meals every day.
3. The couple was looking for a----- room not far from the center.
4. Were Jim and Della ----- to give the gift of love?
5. She wanted to loose ----- so, she stopped eating lunch.
6. Many tourists visit Nigara to see the beautiful -----.
7. I have ----- in all the shops in the city to find O. Henry's short stories.
8. My mother always gives me ----- advice.
9. She wasn't wearing any ----- but she still looked very beautiful in her plain black dress.

E. Writing

Activity 1

What is your greatest treasure? When did you get it?

How did you get it?

Why is it such a treasure to you?

Would you ever sell it?

Would you ever give it away?

Write down your answers to these questions. Then, talk to two other people.

Tell them about your own treasure and ask them about theirs. Write down their answers. Then tell your classmates what you learned from the people you talked with.

Activity 2

Choose the paragraph you liked best. Write the reason you have chosen it.

Explain why you liked this paragraph best. What is your response to what the author says?

Activity 3

Write a few questions addressed to Della, Jim and Mrs.Sophronie.

Ask them to the students who are in the roles of these people.

THE GIFT OF MAGI
ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES

A. Understanding the Main Ideas

1. Della wanted to buy a gift for Jim because it would be Christmas.
2. Della and Jim were not rich. Jim earned \$20 a week which was hardly enough for two of them to live in a furnished room at a cost of \$8.
3. Jim's and Della's greatest treasures were Jim's gold watch and Della's hair.
4. Della decided to go to Mrs. Sofronie to sell her hair to buy a Christmas gift for her husband.
5. Della bought a gold chain for Jim's watch.
6. Jim sold his gold watch to get enough money for Della's gift.
7. The Magi were wise men and they brought gifts to the newborn Christ-child.

B. Close Reading

If the sentence is true, write "T" next to it. If it is not true, write "F" for False. If the sentence is false, change it and make it true.

1. **F** Della had only one dollar and eighty-seven cents.
2. **F** Jim was being paid \$20 a week.
3. **T** Jim's gold watch had once belonged to his grandfather.

4. **F** Della had her hair cut to get money to buy a present for Jim on Christmas Day.
5. **F** Della hadn't bargained, she quickly took money and left the shop.
6. **F** Della had known the combs cost too much for her to buy them.
7. **F** The Magi were wise men who brought gifts to the newborn Christ-child.

D. Vocabulary Practice

1. From the **expression** on her face I understood that she had failed her exam.
2. The doctor recommended me to drink a glass of **pure** natural juice before my meals every day.
3. The couple was looking for **a furnished** room not far from the center
4. Were Jim and Della **wise** to give the gift of love?
5. She wanted to lose **weight**, so she stopped eating lunch.
6. Many tourists visit Nigara to see the beautiful **waterfalls**.
7. I have **hunted** in all the shops in the city to find O. Henry's short stories.
8. My mother always gives me **valuable** advice.
9. She wasn't wearing any **jewels** but she still looked very beautiful in her plain black dress.

TWO THANKSGIVING DAY GENTLEMEN

There is one day that is ours. There is one day when all Americans go back to the old home and eat a big dinner. Bless the day. The President gives it to us every year.

Sometimes he talks about the people who had the first Thanksgiving. They were the Puritans. They were some people who landed on our Atlantic shore. We don't really remember much about them.

But those people ate a large bird called turkey on the first Thanksgiving Day. So we have turkey for Thanksgiving dinner, if we have enough money to buy turkey. That is a **tradition**.

Yes. Thanksgiving Day is the one day of the year that is purely American.

And now here is the story to prove to you that we have old traditions in this new country. They are growing older more quickly than traditions in old countries. That is because we are so young and full of life. We do everything quickly.

Stuffy Pete sat down on a seat in the New York City park named Union Square. It was the third seat to the right as you enter Union Square from the east.

Every Thanksgiving Day for nine years he had sat down there at one in the afternoon. Every time, things had happened to him. They were wonderful things. They made his heart feel full of joy—and they filled another part of him, too. They filled the part below his heart.

On those other Thanksgiving Days he had been hungry. (It is a strange thing. There are rich people who wish to help the poor. But many of them seem to think that the poor are hungry only on Thanksgiving Day.)

But today Pete was not hungry. He had come from a dinner so big that he had almost no **power** to move. His light green eyes looked out from a gray face on which there was still a little food. His breath was short. His body had suddenly become too big for his clothes; it seemed ready to break out of them. They were torn. You could see his skin through a hole in the front of his shirt. But the cold wind, with snow in it, felt pleasantly cool to him.

For Stuffy Pete was overheated with the warmth of all he had had to eat. The dinner had been much too big. It seemed to him that his dinner had included all the turkey and all the other food in the whole world.

So he sat, very, very full. He looked out at the world without interest, as if it could never offer him anything more.

The dinner had not been expected.

He had been passing a large house near the beginning of that great broad street called Fifth Avenue. It was the home of two old ladies of an old family. These two old ladies had a deep love of traditions. There were certain things they always did. On Thanksgiving Day at noon they always sent **a servant** to stand at the door. There he waited for the first hungry person who walked by. The servant had orders to bring that person into the house and feed him until he could eat no more. Stuffy Pete happened to pass by on his way to the park. The servant had gathered him in. Tradition had been followed.

Stuffy Pete sat in the park looking straight before him for ten minutes. Then he felt a desire to look in another direction. With a very great effort, he moved his head slowly to the left.

Then his eyes grew wider and his breath stopped. His feet in their torn shoes at the ends of his short legs moved about on the ground.

For the Old Gentleman was coming across Fourth Avenue toward Stuffy's seat.

Every Thanksgiving Day for nine years the Old Gentleman had come there to find Stuffy Pete on his seat. That was a thing that the Old Gentleman was trying to make into a tradition. Every Thanksgiving Day for nine years he had found Stuffy there. Then he had led Stuffy to a restaurant and watched him eat a big dinner.

They do these things more easily in old countries like England. They do them without thinking about them.

But in this young country, we must think about them. In order to build a tradition, we must do the same thing again and again for a long time. The Old Gentleman loved his country. He believed he was helping to build a great American tradition. And he had been doing very well. Nine years is a long time here.

The Old Gentleman moved, straight and proud, toward the Tradition that he was building. Truly, feeding Stuffy Pete once a year was not a very important tradition. There are greater and more important traditions in England. But it was a beginning. It proved that a tradition was at least possible in America.

The Old Gentleman was thin and tall and sixty. He was dressed all in black. He wore eye-glasses. His hair was whiter and thinner than it had been last year. His legs did not seem as strong as they had seemed the year before.

As this kind Old Gentleman came toward him, Stuffy began to shake and his breath was shorter. He wished he could fly away. But he could not move from his seat.

"Good morning," said the Old Gentleman. "I am glad to see that the **troubles** of another year have not hurt you. You continue to move in health about the beautiful world. For that blessing you and I can give thanks on this day of thanksgiving. If you will come with me, my man, I will give you a dinner that will surely make your body feel as thankful as your mind."

That is what the Old Gentleman said every time. Every Thanksgiving Day for nine years. The words themselves were almost a tradition. Always before, they had been music in Stuffy's ear. But now he looked up at the Old Gentleman's face with tears of suffering in his eyes. The snow turned quickly to water when it fell upon his hot face. But the Old Gentleman was shaking with the cold. He turned away, with his back to the wind, and he did not see Stuffy's eyes.

Stuffy had always wondered why the Old Gentleman seemed sad as he spoke. He did not know that it was because the Old Gentleman was wishing that he had a son. A son would come there after he himself was gone. A son would stand proud and strong before Stuffy, and say: "In remembrance of my father." Then it would really be a tradition.

But the Old Gentleman had no family. He lived in a room in one of the old houses near the park. In the winter he grew a few flowers there. In the spring he walked on Fifth Avenue. In the summer he lived in a farmhouse in the hills outside New York, and he talked of a strange bug he hoped some day to find. In the fall season he gave Stuffy a dinner. These were the things that filled the Old Gentleman's life.

Stuffy Pete looked up at him for a half minute, helpless and very sorry for himself. The Old Gentleman's eyes were bright with the giving-pleasure. His face was getting older every year, but his clothes were very clean and fresh.

And then Stuffy made a strange noise. He was trying to speak. As the Old Gentleman had heard the noise nine times before, he understood it. He knew that Stuffy was accepting.

"Thank you. I'm very hungry".

Stuffy was very full, but he understood that he was part of a tradition. His desire for food on Thanksgiving Day was not his own. It belonged to this kind Old Gentleman. True, America is free. But there are some things that must be done.

The Old Gentleman led Stuffy to the restaurant and to the same table where they had always gone. They were known here.

"Here comes that old man," said a waiter, "that buys that old no-good fellow a dinner every Thanksgiving."

The Old Gentleman sat at the table, watching. The waiters brought food, and more food. And Stuffy began to eat.

No great and famous soldier ever battled more strongly against an enemy. The turkey and all the other food were gone almost as quickly as they appeared. Stuffy saw the look of happiness on the Old Gentleman's face. He continued to eat in order to keep it there.

In an hour the battle was finished.

"Thank you," Stuffy said. "Thank you for my Thanksgiving dinner."

Then he stood up heavily and started to go to the wrong door. A waiter turned him in the right **direction**.

The Old Gentleman carefully counted out \$1.30, and left fifteen cents more for the waiter.

They said good-bye, as they did each year, at the door. The Old Gentleman went south, and Stuffy went north.

Stuffy went around the first corner, and stood for one minute. Then he fell.

There he was found. He was picked up and taken to a hospital. They put him on a bed, and began to try to discover what strange sickness had made him fall.

And an hour later the Old Gentleman was brought to the same hospital. And they put him on another bed, and began to try to **discover** what his **sickness** could be.

After a little time one of the doctors met another doctor, and they talked.

"That nice old gentleman over there," he said. "Do you know what's wrong with him? He is almost dead for need of food. A very proud old man, I think. He told me he has had nothing to eat for three days."

TWO THANKSGIVING DAY GENTLEMEN

ACTIVITIES

Before you read:

- A. Look up the words in bold in your dictionary.
- B. Use the new words in your own sentences.
- C. Tell your partner what you know about holidays in the USA

After you read:

A. Understanding the Main Ideas

Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

- 1. Who were the Puritans?
- 2. Why is Thanksgiving Day considered to be purely American?
- 3. What wonderful things happened to Stuffy Pete every Thanksgiving Day?
- 4. Where did the two old ladies live?
- 5. Why wasn't Pete hungry when the Old Gentleman saw him sitting in the park?
- 6. Why do you think Stuffy Pete accepted the old gentleman's invitation of going to the restaurant?
- 7. What happened to Stuffy Pete after he had left the restaurant?
- 8. What happened to the old gentleman after he had left Stuffy Pete?

B. Close Reading

If the sentence is true, write "T" next to it. If it is not true, write "F" for False. If the sentence is false, change it and make it true.

- 1. ----- The Puritans were the some of the first people who came to North America from England.

2. ----- They ate turkey on the first Thanksgiving day.
3. ----- Thanksgiving Day is a holiday in Great Britain. Old Gentleman
4. ----- Stuffy Pete was hungry and he was waiting for the to invite him to the restaurant.
5. ----- The two old ladies always invited Stuffy Pete to their house to feed him.
6. ----- Every Thanksgiving Day for nine years the Old Gentleman had dinner with Stuffy Pete together in a restaurant.
7. ----- The Old Gentleman's son took Stuffy Pete to the restaurant and said that he had done it in remembrance of his father.
8. ----- The Old Gentleman lived in a house near the park with his family.
9. ----- Stuffy Pete wasn't hungry but he accepted the invitation because he loved eating.
10. ----- The Old Gentleman and Stuffy Pete were brought to the same hospital.

C. Speaking

Discussion

Do you think it is very important to keep traditions. Yes? No? Why?

Do we have new traditions? How are they formed?

Do we have a traditional holiday similar to Thanksgiving Day? What similarities and differences can you name?

Was the Old Gentleman right feeding a person when he himself suffered from hunger

D. Vocabulary Practice

For each space in the sentence below, choose the best word from the following list.

You may need to change the form of the word.

tradition

power

servant

torn

to discover

direction

sickness

trouble

1. He was very tired after working hard so he didn't have the ----- to move.
2. Though his clothes were -----he continued wearing them.
3. First she worked as a-----in a big house in New York City.
4. I think we are going in the wrong ----- . Let us ask someone the name of this street.
5. It is a-----to celebrate the 1st day of spring in Azerbaijan.
6. It was Columbus who-----America first, but he didn't know that it was a new continent.
7. I shan't ----- you with the details.
8. He followed all the recommendation of the doctor and soon recovered from his --
-----.

E. Writing

1. Write your response to the following paragraph. What do you think the reason is that the author wrote it.

On those other Thanksgiving Days he had been hungry. (It is a strange thing. There are rich people who wish to help the poor. But many of them seem to think that the poor are hungry only on Thanksgiving Day.)

2. Do you think it is important to keep traditions? Write why you think so.

Look over the story again. Choose the paragraph you liked best. Write the reason you have chosen it. Explain why you liked this paragraph best. What is your response to what the author says?

TWO THANKSGIVING DAY GENTLEMEN

ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES

After you read:

A. Understanding the Main Idea

1. The Puritans were a group of religious people who escaped persecution in their country and sailed to North America in 1620.
2. The Puritans had the first Thanksgiving in America and it became a tradition to celebrate it every year there.
3. Every Thanksgiving Day Stuffy Pete was fed by the Old Gentleman and it made his heart feel full of joy.
4. The two old ladies lived on the street called Fifth Avenue.
5. Pete wasn't hungry because he was fed in the two ladies' house.
6. Stuffy Pete accepted the old gentleman's invitation because he understood that he was a part of a tradition.
7. Stuffy Pete went around the first corner and fell. He was taken to a hospital.
8. The Old Gentleman was brought to the same hospital.

B. Close Reading

If the sentence is true, write "T" next to it. If it is not true, write "F" for False. If the sentence is false, change it and make it true.

1. **T** Puritans were the people who came to North America from England.
2. **T** They ate turkey on the first Thanksgiving day.
3. **F** Thanksgiving Day is a holiday celebrated in North America and Canada.
4. **F** Stuffy Pete was full.
5. **F** It was the Old Gentleman who always invited Stuffy Pete to the restaurant.
6. **T** Every Thanksgiving Day for nine years the Old Gentleman had dinner with Stuffy Pete together in a restaurant.
7. **F** The Old Gentleman didn't have a son.
8. **F** The Old Gentleman lived alone in the house near the park.

9. **F** Stuffy Pete wasn't hungry but he accepted the invitation because he understood that he was a part of a tradition.
10. **T** The Old Gentleman and Stuffy Pete were brought to the same hospital.

D. Vocabulary Practice

1. He was very tired after working hard and he didn't have any **power** to move.
2. Though his clothes were **torn** he continued wearing them.
3. First she worked as **a servant** in a big house in New York City.
- I think we are in the wrong **direction**. Let us ask someone the name of this street.
4. It is **a tradition** to celebrate the 1st day of spring in Azerbaijan.
5. It was Columbus who **discovered** America first, but he didn't know that it was a new continent.
6. I shan't **trouble** you with the details.
7. He followed all the recommendation of the doctor and soon recovered from his **sickness**.

THE LAST LEAF

In a small part of the city west of Washington Square, the streets have gone wild. They turn in different directions. They are broken into small pieces called "places." One street goes across itself one or two times. A painter once discovered something possible and valuable about this street. Suppose a painter had some painting materials for which he had not paid. Suppose he had no money. Suppose a man came to get the money. The man might walk down that street and suddenly meet himself coming back, without having received a cent!

This part of the city is called Greenwich Village. And to old Greenwich Village the painters soon came. Here they found rooms they liked, with good light and at a low cost.

Sue and Johnsy lived at the top of a building with three floors. One of these young women came from Maine; the other from California. They had met at a restaurant on Eighth Street. There they discovered that they liked the same kind of art, the same kind of food, and the same kind of clothes. So they decided to live and work together.

That was in the spring.

Toward winter a cold stranger entered Greenwich Village. No one could see him. He walked around touching one person here and another there with his icy fingers. He was a bad sickness. Doctors called him **Pneumonia**. On the east side of the city he hurried, touching many people; but in the narrow streets of Greenwich Village he did not move so quickly.

Mr. Pneumonia was not a nice old gentleman. A nice old gentleman would not hurt a weak little woman from California. But Mr. Pneumonia touched Johnsy with his cold

fingers. She lay on her bed almost without moving, and she looked through the window at the wall of the house next to hers.

One morning the busy doctor spoke to Sue alone in the hall, where Johnsy could not hear.

"She has a very small chance," he said. "She has a chance, if she wants to live. If people don't want to live, I can't do much for them. Your little lady has decided that she is not going to get well. Is there something that is troubling her?"

"She always wanted to go to Italy and paint a picture of the Bay of Naples," said Sue.

"Paint! Not paint. Is there anything worth being troubled about? A man?"

"A man?" said Sue. "Is a man worth—No, doctor. There is not a man."

"It is weakness," said the doctor. "I will do all I know how to do. But when a sick person begins to feel that he's going to die, half my work is useless. Talk to her about new winter clothes. If she were interested in the future, her chances would be better."

After the doctor had gone, Sue went into the workroom to cry. Then she walked into Johnsy's room. She carried some of her painting materials, and she was singing.

Johnsy lay there, very thin and very quiet. Her face was turned toward the window. Sue stopped singing, thinking that Johnsy was asleep.

Sue began to work. As she worked she heard a low sound, again and again. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting—counting back.

"Twelve," she said; and a little later, "Eleven"; and then, "Ten," and, "Nine"; and then, "Eight," and, "Seven," almost together.

Sue looked out the window. What was there to count? There was only the side wall of the next house, a short distance away. The wall had no window. An old, old tree grew against the wall. The cold breath of winter had already touched it. Almost all its leaves had fallen from its dark **branches**.

"What is it, dear?" asked Sue.

"Six," said Johnsy, in a voice still lower. "They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It hurt my head to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five now."

"Five what, dear? Tell your Sue."

"Leaves. On the tree. When the last one falls, I must go, too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?"

"Oh, I never heard of such a thing," said Sue. "It doesn't have any sense in it. What does an old tree have to do with you? Or with your getting well? And you used to love that tree so much. Don't be a little fool. The doctor told me your chances for getting well. He told me this morning. He said you had very good chances! Try to eat a little now. And then I'll go back to work. And then I can sell my picture, and then I can buy something more for you to eat to make you strong."

"You don't have to buy anything for me," said Johnsy. She still looked out the window. "There goes another. No, I don't want anything to eat. Now there are four. I want to see the last one fall before night. Then I'll go, too."

"Johnsy, dear," said Sue, "will you promise me to close your eyes and keep them closed? Will you promise not to look out the window until I finish working? I must have this picture ready tomorrow. I need the light; I can't cover the window."

"Couldn't you work in the other room?" asked Johnsy coldly.

"I'd rather be here by you," said Sue. "And I don't want you to look at those leaves."

"Tell me as soon as you have finished," said Johnsy. She closed her eyes and lay white and still. "Because I want to see the last leaf fall. I have done enough waiting. I have done enough thinking. I want to go sailing down, down, like one of those leaves."

"Try to sleep," said Sue. "I must call Behrman to come up here. I want to paint a man in this picture, and I'll make him look like Behrman. I won't be gone a minute. Don't try to move till I come back."

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the first floor of their house. He was past sixty. He had had no success as a painter. For forty years he had painted, without ever painting a good picture. He had always talked of painting a great picture, **a masterpiece**, but he had never yet started it.

He got a little money by letting others paint pictures of him. He drank too much. He still talked of his great masterpiece. And he believed that it was his special **duty** to do everything possible to help Sue and Johnsy.

Sue found him in his dark room, and she knew that he had been drinking. She could **smell** it. She told him about Johnsy and the leaves on the vine. She said that she was afraid that Johnsy would indeed sail down, down like the leaf. Her hold on the world was growing weaker.

Old Behrman **shouted** his anger over such an idea.

"What!" he cried. "Are there such fools? Do people die because leaves drop off a tree? I have not heard of such a thing. No, I will not come up and sit while you make a picture of me. Why do you allow her to think such a thing? That poor little Johnsy!"

"She is very sick and weak," said Sue. "The sickness has put these strange ideas into her mind. Mr. Behrman, if you won't come, you won't. But I don't think you're very nice."

"This is like a woman!" shouted Behrman. "Who said I will not come? Go. I come with you. For half an hour I have been trying to say that I will come. God! This is not any place for someone so good as Johnsy to lie sick. Some day I shall paint my masterpiece, and we shall all go away from here. God! Yes."

Johnsy was sleeping when they went up. Sue covered the window, and took Behrman into the other room. There they looked out the window fearfully at the tree. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A cold rain was falling, with a little snow in it too.

Behrman sat down, and Sue began to paint.

She worked through most of the night.

In the morning, after an hour's sleep, she went to Johnsy's bedside. Johnsy with wide-open eyes was looking toward the window. "I want to see," she told Sue.

Sue took the cover from the window.

But after the beating rain and the wild wind that had not stopped through the whole night, there still was one leaf to be seen against the wall. It was the last on the tree. It was still dark green near the branch. But at the edges it was turning yellow with age. There it was **hanging** from a branch nearly twenty feet above the ground.

"It is the last one," said Johnsy. "I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall today, and I shall die at the same time."

"Dear, dear Johnsy!" said Sue. "Think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?"

But Johnsy did not answer. The most lonely thing in the world is a soul when it is preparing to go on its far journey. The ties that held her to friendship and to earth were breaking, one by one.

The day slowly passed. As it grew dark, they could still see the leaf hanging from its branch against the wall. And then, as the night came, the north wind began again to blow. The rain still beat against the windows.

When it was light enough the next morning, Johnsy again commanded that she be allowed to see.

The leaf was still there.

Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was cooking something for her to eat.

"I've been a bad girl, Sue," said Johnsy. "Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how bad I was. It is wrong to want to die. I'll try to eat now. But first bring me a looking-glass, so that I can see myself. And then I'll sit up and watch you cook."

An hour later she said, "Sue, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples."

The doctor came in the afternoon. Sue followed him into the hall outside Johnsy's room to talk to him.

"The chances are good," said the doctor. He took Sue's thin, shaking hand in his. "Give her good **care**, and she'll get well. And now I must see another sick person in this house. His name is Behrman. A painter, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and he is very ill. There is no hope for him. But we take him to the hospital today. We'll make it as easy for him as we can."

The next day the doctor said to Sue: "She's safe. You have done it. Food and care now—that's all."

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay. She put one arm around her.

"I have something to tell you," she said. "Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in the hospital. He was ill only two days. Someone found him on the morning of the first day, in his room. He was helpless with pain.

"His shoes and his clothes were wet and as cold as ice. Everyone wondered where he had been. The night had been so cold and wild.

"And then they found some things. There was a light that he had taken outside. And there were his materials for painting. There was paint, green paint and yellow paint. And—

"Look out the window, dear, at the last leaf on the wall. Didn't you wonder why it never moved when the wind was blowing? Oh, my dear, it is Behrman's great masterpiece—he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell."

THE LAST LEAF

ACTIVITIES

Before you read:

- D. Look up the words in bold in your dictionary.
- E. Use the new words in your own sentences.
- F. Tell your partner who is your favorite painter and what paintings you like best.

After you read:

A. Understanding the Main

Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. Why did painters come to live to Greenwich Village?
2. Why did Sue and Johnsy live together?
3. What was Johnsy's great wish?
4. Why was Johnsy counting the leaves falling from the tree against her window?
5. What did Behrman love to talk about?

6. What made Johnsy believe that she would live?
7. Why didn't the last leaf on the wall move when the wind was blowing?

B. Close Reading

If the sentence is true, write “**T**” next to it. If it is not true, write “**F**” for False. If the sentence is false, change it and make it true.

1. ----- Painters paid a lot of money for the rooms in Greenwich Village.
2. ----- Sue and Johnsy both were from California.
3. ----- Johnsy caught Pneumonia in early spring.
4. ----- Johnsy was sleeping while Sue was painting.
5. ----- Old Behrman was a painter who was Sue and Johnsy's neighbour.
6. -----The last leaf didn't fell.
7. ----- The last leaf on the wall was Behrman's great masterpiece.

C. Speaking

Discussion

1. Why does the author consider Behrman's last work to be his masterpiece?
2. Rehearse the following dialogues with your partner:

The doctor and Sue

Sue and Johnsy

Behrman and Sue

3. What can you say about Sue's attitude to men regarding her answer to the doctor's question “Is there anything worth being troubled about? A man?”
4. “She has a chance if she wants to live”. Do you agree with the doctor's statement?

Do you know any person who could fight against his serious illness only because he wanted to love?

G. Vocabulary Practice

For each space in the sentence below, choose the best word from the following list.

You may need to change the form of the word.

masterpiece

duty

branch

shout

hang

care

pneumonia

smell

9. I ----- the picture on the wall of my room.
10. Lynn loves going to the museum to watch the ----- of the painters of different times.
11. He still can't forget his younger brother who died of ----- few years ago.
12. Marilyn opened the window and the ----- of the roses filled her room.
13. Pat soon recovered under the ----- both of the physician and the people close to her.
14. Mother ----- shouted at her son who was throwing small stones at the birds.

H. Writing

1. Complete Sue's letter to her mother:

Dear mum, I have already recovered. I am grateful to Johnsy for her care and also to Behrman ...

2. Choose the paragraph in the story that you liked best. What do you think about this paragraph?

3. Give a character sketch of Behrman.
4. Write a story to illustrate the proverb "A friend in need is a friend indeed"

THE LAST LEAF

ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES

After you read:

A. Understanding the Main Ideas

1. Painters came to live to Greenwich Village, because the rooms here were light and at a low cost.
2. They liked the same kind of art, the same kind of food, and the same kind of clothes.
3. Johnsy's great wish was to paint a picture of the Bay of Naples.
4. She thought that when the last leaf fell she would die.
5. Behrman loved to talk of painting a great picture, a masterpiece.
6. When Johnsy saw that not all the leaves fell during the windy night and the last leaf was still in the tree she believed that she would live.
7. The last leaf on the wall couldn't move because it wasn't a real leaf, it was a picture painted by Behrman.

B. Close Reading

If the sentence is true, write “**T**” next to it. If it is not true, write “**F**” for False. If the sentence is false, change it and make it true.

1. **F** Painters paid little money for the rooms in Greenwich Village.
2. **F** One of them was from California, the other from Maine.
3. **F** Johnsy caught Pneumonia in winter.
4. **T** Johnsy was sleeping while Sue was painting.
5. **T** Old Behrman was a painter who was Sue and Johnsy's neighbour.
6. **F** The last leaf fell.
7. **T** The last leaf on the wall was Behrman's great masterpiece.

D. Vocabulary Practice

1. I **hanged** the picture on the wall of my room.

2. Lynn loves going to the museum to watch **the masterpieces** of the painters of different times.
3. He still can't forget his younger brother who died of **pneumonia** few years ago.
4. Marilyn opened the window and the **smell** of the roses filled her room.
5. Pat soon recovered under the **care** both of the physician and the people close to her.
6. Mother **shouted** at her son who was throwing small stones at the birds.

HEATRS AND CROSSES

Baldy Woods reached for a drink, and got it. When Baldy wanted something, he usually got it. But this is not Baldy's story. Now he took his third drink, which was larger than the first and the second. Baldy had been listening to the troubles of a friend. Now Baldy was going to tell his friend what to do. So the friend was buying him the drinks. This was the right thing for the friend to do.

"I would be king if I were you", said Baldy. He said it loudly and strongly. Webb Yeager moved his wide hat back on his head. He put his fingers in his yellow hair and moved it about. It now looked wilder than before. But this did i not help him to think better. And therefore he also got another drink.

"If a man marries a queen, it ought not to make him nothing," said Webb. Here was his real problem.

"Surely not," said Baldy. "You ought to be a king. But you're only the queen's husband. That's what happens to a man in Europe if he marries the king's daughter. His wife beomes a queen. But is he a king? No. His only duty is to appear with the queen in pictures. And be the father of the next king. That's not right. Yes, Webb, you are only the queen's husband. And if I were you, I'd turn everything upside down and I would be king."

Baldy finished his drink. "Baldy," said Webb, "you and I have been **cowboys** together for years. We've been riding the same **roads** since we were very young. I wouldn't talk about my family to anyone but you. You were working on the Nopalito Ranch when I married Santa McAllister. I was foreman then. But what am I now? Nothing."

"When old McAllister was the **cattle** king of West Texas," continued Baldy, "you were important. You told people what to do. Your commands were as strong as his".

"That was true," said Webb, "until he discovered that I wanted to marry I Santa. Then he sent me as far away from the ranch house as he could. When the old man died, they started to call Santa the 'cattle queen.' Now I tell the cattle what to do. That's all. She takes care of all the business. She takes care of all the money. I can't sell any cattle-not one animal. Santa is the queen, and I'm nothing."

"I would be king if I were you", said Baldy Woods again. "When a man marries a queen he ought to be the same as she is. Plenty of people think it's strange, Webb. Your words mean nothing on the Nopalito Ranch. Mrs. Yeager is a fine little lady. But a man ought to be head of his own house."

Webb's brown face grew long with sadness. With that expression, and his wild yellow hair, and his blue eyes, he looked like a schoolboy who had lost his **leadership** to another, strong boy. Yet his tall body looked too strong for such a thing to happen to him.

"I'm riding back to the ranch today," he said. It was easy to see that he did not want to go. "I have to start some cattle on the road to San Antonio tomorrow morning."

"I'll go with you as far as Dry Lake," said Baldy.

The two friends got on their horses and left the little town where they had met that morning.

At Dry Lake, they stopped to say good-bye. They had been riding for miles without talking. But in Texas, talk does not often continue steadily. Many things may happen between words. But when you begin to talk again, you are still talking about the same thing. So now Webb added something to the talk that began ten miles away.

"You remember, Baldy, there was a time when Santa was different. You remember the days when old McAllister kept me away from the ranch house. You remember how she

would send me a sign that she wanted to see me? Old McAllister had said he would kill me if I came near enough. You remember the sign she used to send, Baldy? The picture of a heart with a cross inside it?"

"Me?" cried Baldy. "Sure I remember. Every cowboy on the ranch knew that sign of the heart and the cross. We would see it on things sent out from the ranch. We would see it on anything. It would be on newspapers. On boxes of food. Once I saw it on the back of the shirt of a cook that McAllister sent from the ranch."

"Santa's father made her **promise** that she wouldn't write to me or send me any word. That heart-and-cross sign was her plan. When she wanted to see me, she would put that mark on something that she knew I would see. And when I saw it, I traveled fast to the ranch that same night. I would meet her outside the house."

"We all knew it," said Baldy. "But we never said anything. We wanted you to marry Santa. We knew why you had that fast horse. When we saw the heart and cross on something from the ranch, we always knew your horse was going to go fast that night. "

"The last time Santa sent me the sign," said Webb, "was when she was sick. When I saw it, I got on my horse and started. It was a forty-mile ride. She wasn't at our meeting-place. I went to the house. Old McAllister met me at the door. "Did you come here to get killed?" he said. "I won't kill you this time. I was going to send for you. Santa wants you. Go in that room and see her. And then come out here and see me."

"Santa was lying in bed very sick. But she smiled, and put her hand in mine, and I sat down by the bed-**mud** and riding clothes and all. 'I could hear you coming for hours, Webb,' she said. "I was sure you would come. You saw the sign?" "I saw it," I said. "It's our sign," she said. "Hearts and crosses. To love and to suffer -that's what they mean."

"And old Doctor Musgrove was there. And Santa goes to sleep, and Doctor Musgrove touches her face, and he says to me: "You were good for her. But go away now. The little lady will be all right in the morning"".

"Old McAllister was outside her room. "She's sleeping," I said. "And now you can start killing me. You have plenty of time. I haven't anything to fight with."

"Old McAllister laughs, and he says to me: "Killing the best foreman in West Texas is not good business. I don't know where I could get another good foreman. I don't want you in the family. But I can use you on the Nopalito if you stay away from the ranch house. You go up and sleep, and then we'll talk."

The two men prepared to separate. They took each other's hand. "Good-bye, Baldy," said Webb. "I'm glad I saw you and had this talk."

With a sudden rush, the two riders were on their way.

Then Baldy pulled his horse to a stop and shouted. Webb turned.

"If I were you," came Baldy's loud voice, "I would be king!"

At eight the following morning, Bud Turner got off his horse at the Nopalito ranch house. Bud was the cowboy who was taking the cattle to San Antonio. Mrs. Yeager was outside the house, putting water on some flowers.

In many ways Santa was like her father, "King" McAllister. She was sure about everything. She was afraid of nothing. She was proud. But Santa looked like her mother. She had a strong body and a soft prettiness. Because she was a woman, her manners were womanly. Yet she liked to be queen, as her father had liked to be king.

Webb stood near her, giving orders to two or three cowboys. "Good morning," said Bud. "Where do you want the cattle to go? To Barber's as usual?"

The queen always answered such a question. All the business-buying, selling, and banking-had been held in her hands. Care of the cattle was given to her husband. When

"King" McAllister was alive, Santa was his secretary and his helper. She had continued her work and her work had been successful. But before she could answer, the queen's husband spoke:

"You drive those cattle to Zimmerman and Nesbit's. I spoke to Zimmerman about it."

Bud turned, ready to go.

"Wait!" called Santa quickly. She looked at her husband with surprise in her gray eyes. "What do you mean, Webb?" she asked. "I never deal with Zimmerman and Nesbit. Barber has bought all the cattle from this ranch for five years. I'm not going to change." She said to Bud Turner: "Take those cattle to Barber." Bud did not look at either of them. He stood there waiting.

"I want these cattle to go to Zimmerman and Nesbit," said Webb. There was a cold light in his blue eyes.

"It's time to start," said Santa to Bud. "Tell Barber we'll have more cattle ready in about a month."

Bud allowed his eyes to turn and meet Webb's.

"You take those cattle," said Webb, "to-"

"Barber," said Santa quickly. "Let's say no more about it. What are you waiting for, Bud?"

"Nothing," said Bud. But he did not hurry to move away, for man is man's friend, and he did not like what had happened.

"You heard what she said," cried Webb. "We do what she commands." He took off his hat and made a wide movement with it, touching the floor.

"Webb," said Santa, "what's wrong with you today?"

"I'm fool," said Webb. "What can you expect? Let me tell you. I was a man before I married a cattle queen. What am I now? Something for the cowboys to laugh at. But I'm going to be a man again."

Santa looked at him.

"Be reasonable, Webb," she said quietly. "There is nothing wrong. You take care of the cattle. I take care of the business. You understand the cattle. I understand the business better than you do. I learned it from my father."

"I don't like kings and queens," said Webb, "unless I'm one of them myself. All right. It's your ranch. Barber gets the cattle."

Webb's horse was tied near the house. He walked into the house and brought out the supplies he took on long rides. These he began to tie on his horse. Santa followed him. Her face had lost some of its color.

Webb got on his horse. There was no expression on his face except a strange light burning in his eyes.

"There are some cattle at the Hondo water-hole," he said. "They ought to be moved. Wild animals have killed three of them. I did not remember to tell Simms to do it. You tell him."

Santa put a hand on the horse and looked her husband in the eye. "Are you going to leave me, Webb?" she asked quietly. "I am going to be a man again," he answered.

"I wish you success," she said, with a sudden coldness. She turned and walked into the house.

Webb Yeager went to the southeast as straight as he could ride. And when he came to the place where sky and earth seem to meet, he was gone. Those at the Nopalito knew nothing more about him.

Days passed, then weeks, then months. But Webb Yeager did not return. One day a man named Bartholomew, not an important man, stopped at the Nopalito ranch house. It was noon and he was hungry. He sat down at the dinner table. While he was eating, he talked.

"Mrs. Yeager," he said, "I saw a man on the Seco Ranch with your name. - Webb Yeager. He was foreman there. He was a tall yellow-haired man. Not a talker. Someone of your family?"

"A husband," said Santa. "That is fine for the Seco Ranch. Mr. Yeager is the best foreman in the West."

Everything at the Nopalito Ranch had been going well.

For several years they had been working at the Nopalito with a different kind of cattle. These cattle had been brought from England, and they were better than the usual Texas cattle. They had been successful at the Nopalito Ranch, and men on other ranches were interested in them.

As a result, one day a cowboy arrived at the Nopalito Ranch and gave the queen this letter:

Mrs. Yeager - The Nopalito Ranch:

I have been told by the owners of the Seco Ranch to buy 100 of your English cattle. If you can tell these to the Seco, send them to us in the care of the man who brings this letter. We will then send you the money.

Webb Yeager,

Foreman, Seco Ranch.

Business is business to a queen as it is to others. That night the 100 cattle were moved near the ranch house, ready for an early start the next morning.

When night came and the house was quiet, did Santa Yeager cry alone? Did she hold that letter near to her heart? Did she speak the name that she had been too proud to speak for many weeks? Or did she place the letter with other business letters, in her office?

Ask, if you will, but there is no answer. What a queen does is something we cannot always know. But this you shall be told:

In the middle of the night Santa went quietly out of the ranch house. She was dressed in something dark. She stopped for a moment under a tree. There was moonlight, and a bird was singing, and there was a smell of flowers. Santa turned her faced toward the southeast and threw three kisses in that direction, for there was no one to see her.

Then she hurried quietly to a small building. What she did there, we can only guess. But there was the red light of a fire, and a noise as if Cupid might be making his **arrows**.

Later she came out with some strange iron tool in one hand. In the other hand she carried something that held a small fire. She hurried in the moon- light to the place where the English cattle had been gathered.

Most of the English cattle were a dark red. But among these 100 there was one as white as milk.

And now Santa caught that white animal as cowboys catch cattle. She tried once and failed. Then she tried again, and the animal fell heavily. Santa ran to it, but the animal jumped up.

Again she tried, and this time she was successful. The animal fell to earth, again. Before it could rise, Santa had tied its feet together.

Then she ran to the fire she had carried here. From it she took that strange iron tool. It was white hot.

There was a loud cry from the animal as the white-hot iron burned its skin. But no one seemed to hear. All on the ranch were quiet. And in the deep night quiet, Santa ran

back to the ranch house and there fell onto a bed. She let the tears run from her eyes, as if queens had hearts like the hearts of ranchmen's wives; and as if a queen's husband might become a king, if he would ride back again.

In the morning the young man who had brought the letter started toward the Seco Ranch. He had cowboys with him to help with the English cattle. It was ninety miles, six day's journey.

The animals arrived at Seco Ranch one evening as the daylight was ending. They were received and counted by the foreman of the ranch.

The next morning at eight a horseman came riding to the Nopalito ranch house. He got down painfully from the horse and walked to the house. His horse took a great breath and let his head hang and closed his eyes.

But do not feel sorry for Belshazzar, the horse. Today he lives happily at Nopalito, where he is given the best care and the best food. No other horse there has ever carried a man for such a ride.

The horseman entered the house. Two arms fell around his neck, and some one cried out in the voice of woman and queen together: "Webb, oh, Webb!" "I was wrong," said Webb Yeager. "I was a-"and he named a small animal with a bad smell, an animal no one likes. "Quiet," said Santa. "Did you see it?" "I saw it," said Webb.

What were they speaking of? Perhaps you can guess, if you have read the story carefully.

"Be the cattle queen," said Webb. "Forget what I did, if you can. I was as wrong as--"

"Quiet!" said Santa again, putting her fingers upon his mouth. "There's no queen here. Do you know who I am? I am Santa Yeager, First Lady of the Bedroom. Come here."

She led him into a room. There stood a low baby's bed. And in the bed was a baby, a beautiful, laughing baby, talking in words that no one could understand.

"There is no queen on this ranch," said Santa again. "Look at the king. He has eyes like yours, Webb. Get down on your knees and look at the king."

There was a sound of steps outside and Bud Turner was there at the door. He asked the same question he had asked almost a year ago.

"Good morning. Shall I drive those cattle to Barber's, or-" He saw Webb and stopped, with his mouth open.

"Ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba!" cried the king, waving his arms.

"You hear what he says, Bud," said Webb Yeager. "We do what the king commands."

And that is all, except for one thing. When old man Quinn, owner of the Seco Ranch, went to look at his new English cattle, he asked his new foreman, "What is the Nopalito Ranch's mark?"

"X over Y, " said Wilson.

"I thought so," said Quinn. "But look at that white animal there. She has another mark-a heart with a cross inside. Whose mark is that?"

HEARTS AND CROSSES

ACTIVITIES

Before you read:

- I. Look up the words in bold in your dictionary.
- J. Use the new words in your own sentences.
- K. Tell your partner who he thinks should be the head of the family. Man? Woman? Why?

After you read:

A. Understanding the Main Ideas

Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. Who was Baldy Woods?
2. What was Webb's trouble?
3. Why did Webb tell his trouble to Baldy?
4. What did Baldy advise to Webb?
5. What did Santa do when she wanted to see Webb?
6. What did the sign heart and cross mean?
7. Why did Webb ask Bud to carry the cattle to Zimmerman and Nesbit?
8. Why were the other ranch owners interested in the English cattle?
9. How did Webb know that Santa loved him and wanted him to return to his family?

B. Close Reading

If the sentence is true, write "T" next to it. If it is not true, write "F" for False. If the sentence is false, change it and make it true.

- 1.----- Baldy Woods and Webb have been cowboys together for a long time. .2.-----
Santa's father was a cattle king of West Texas.
- 3.----- When Santa wanted to see Webb she would go out of the house to meet him.
- 4.-----Bud took the catttle to Zimmerman and Nesbit.
- 5.-----Webb understood the business much better than Santa.
- 6.-----Sara asked Webb not to leave her but he didn't listen to her.
- 7.---- Webb became a foreman on the Seco Ranch after he had left the Nopalito Ranch.
- 8.-----Webb Yeager came to Nopalito Ranch to buy English cattle.
- 9.-----Webb returned immediately to Santa when he learned that he had a son.
- 10.--- The Nopalito Ranch's mark was "a heart with a cross inside".

C. Speaking

Discussion

1. Was Santa right not to let her husband to do her business? Yes? No? Why?
2. Was Webb right to leave home? Yes? No? Why?
3. Webb says: "I'm going to be a man". What did he mean by saying it? What do you think the main characteristics of being a man are?

D. Vocabulary Practice

For each space in the sentence below, choose the best word from the following list. You may need to change the form of the word.

cowboy	road	mud	arrow
promise	cattle	leadership	tool

1. The foreman asked them to drive the ----- to the village.
2. She ----- the next dance to the young -----.
3. It was his ----- ability that made him popular among his people.
4. He showed me the road leading to the village.
5. The brave knight shot his ----- right at the heart of his enemy.
6. He opened the bag and looked lovingly at the ----- for breaking open a safe.
- 7 It was raining heavily when his car stuck in the -----.

E. Writing

1. Write a letter to Webb telling him what things you liked and what things you didn't like about the way he behaved with his wife. Add what you would do if you were him.

2. Write a letter to Santa telling her what things you liked and what things you didn't like about the ways she behaved with her husband. Add what you would do if you were her.

HEARTS AND CROSSES

ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES

15. Understanding the Main Ideas

Answer the following questions with complete sentences.

1. Baldy Woods was Webb's old friend.
2. He wanted to do the business alone but it was his wife who decided everything about the cattle business.
- 3 They were old friends and also Baldy knew Santa McAllister.
- 4 He advised Webb to be the king not the husband of the queen.
- 5 Santa would put heart and cross sign on something that she knew Webb would see.
- 6 The sign heart and cross means to love and to suffer.
- 7 Webb asked Bud to carry the cattle to Zimmerman and Nesbit to show that he also could command?
- 8 The English cattle were better and more successful than usual Texas cattle.
- 9 Webb saw her sign, heart and cross, on the animal sent to the Seco Ranch from the Nopalito Ranch and understood that Santa wanted to see him.

16. Close Reading

If the sentence is true, write “T” next to it. If it is not true, write “F” for False. If the sentence is false, change it and make it true.

1. **T** Baldy Woods and Webb have been cowboys together for a long time.
2. **T** Santa’s father was a cattle king of West Texas.
3. **F** When Santa wanted to see Webb she would send her sign, a heart and cross picture, to him.
4. **F** Bud took the cattle to Barber.
5. **F** Santa knew the business much better than Webb.
6. **F** Santa only wished Webb success.
7. **T** Webb became a foreman on the Seco Ranch after he had left the Nopalito Ranch.
8. **F** Webb Yeager sent a letter to Nopalito Ranch to buy English cattle.
9. **F** Webb returned immediately to Santa when he saw her sign on the animal.
- 10 **F** The Nopalito Ranch’s mark was “X over Y”.

D. Vocabulary Practice

1. The foreman asked them to drive the **cattle** to the village.
2. She promised the next dance to the young **cowboy**.
3. It was his **leadership** ability that made him popular among his people.
4. He showed me the road leading to the village.
5. The brave knight shot his **arrow** right at the heart of his enemy.
6. He opened the bag and looked lovingly at the **tools** for breaking open a safe.
7. It was raining heavily when his car stuck in the **mud**.