Prime Pupil

CLASS 10

ENGLISH FL

Summary

First Flight

Prose & Poetry

Footprints without Feet

Supplementary Reader



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Class 10 :: English FL :: Summary

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First Flight – Prose

1. A Letter to God

A Letter to God is a story by **G.L. Fuentes** about **Lencho**, a poor but hardworking farmer whose crop is destroyed by a hailstorm. The story shows his strong faith in God, his simple nature and his complete trust in divine help. It also presents an ironic contrast between Lencho's faith and his misunderstanding of the people who actually help him.

Lencho lived with his family in a lonely house on the top of a low hill. He was a hardworking farmer who depended completely on his **field of corn**. The crop was growing well, and he eagerly waited for rain because the plants needed water.

One evening, Lencho saw clouds gathering and felt happy. Soon, large raindrops began to fall. He was delighted and compared the raindrops to **new coins**, believing that the rain would bring him a good harvest and money.

His happiness, however, did not last long. The rain suddenly turned into a terrible **hailstorm**. Hailstones fell heavily for about an hour and completely destroyed the cornfield. The plants were badly damaged, and the entire crop was ruined. Lencho became deeply sad because his family would have nothing to eat and he would have no money to support them.

Despite the disaster, Lencho did not lose his faith in God. He believed that God could see everything and would surely help him. He decided to write to God asking for **one hundred pesos** so that he could sow his field again and support his family until the next crop.

Lencho went to the post office, addressed his letter to **"God"** and posted it. The postman was amused but deeply impressed by Lencho's faith. He showed the letter to the postmaster, who decided not to disappoint him. The postmaster collected money from his employees and contributed part of his own salary. Together, they collected **seventy pesos**, put the money in an envelope and sent it to Lencho, signing the letter simply as **"God."**

When Lencho received the money, he was not surprised because he had complete faith that God would answer his prayer. However, he found only seventy pesos instead of the hundred he had requested. He immediately wrote another letter to God asking for the remaining thirty pesos. He also requested that the money should not be sent through the post office because, according to him, the employees were a **"bunch of crooks"** who had stolen the rest.

The story ends with an ironic contrast. The very people whom Lencho suspected of stealing his money were the ones who had collected it and sent it to him. Lencho's faith in God remained unshaken, but he failed to recognise the kindness of the people who had actually helped him.

The story presents **faith, hope, kindness and irony** in a simple but powerful way. Lencho's unquestioning faith is admirable, while his suspicion of the post office workers creates humour and irony. It also shows that people can become instruments of kindness and help even when their efforts are not recognised.

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2. Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom

Nelson Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom is an extract from the autobiography of **Nelson Mandela**, the great South African leader. It describes his historic inauguration as the **first black President of South Africa** and reflects on the long struggle against **apartheid**, racial discrimination and injustice.

The chapter begins on **10 May 1994**, a bright autumn day in Pretoria. Many important leaders and dignitaries from different countries gathered at the **Union Buildings** to witness the historic inauguration. For many years, South Africa had been ruled by apartheid, a system of racial discrimination that denied black people basic rights and freedom.

Nelson Mandela took the oath as the **first black President of South Africa**, marking the beginning of a new era of freedom and equality. Along with his first deputy president, **Thabo Mbeki**, and second deputy president, **F.W. de Klerk**, he formed a government representing all South Africans. The presence of international leaders showed the importance of this historic moment.

During the ceremony, **two national anthems** were sung. People who had once been divided by race now stood together, symbolising **unity and reconciliation**. Mandela remembered the countless men and women who had sacrificed their lives in the struggle against apartheid. He felt that their sacrifices had finally brought a new democratic South Africa.

Mandela reflects on the meaning of **courage**. He says that courage is not the absence of fear but the **triumph over fear**. A brave person may feel afraid but conquers that fear and continues to do what is right.

He also explains that every person has two obligations: one towards the **family** and another towards the **people and country**. Under apartheid, he could not fulfil both easily because his struggle for freedom required him to sacrifice his personal life. He realised that his responsibility towards his people was greater than his personal desires.

Mandela further explains that **freedom is indivisible**. The freedom of one person is connected with the freedom of others. When one group is oppressed, no one can truly be free. Therefore, both the oppressed and the oppressor need liberation. The oppressed need freedom from injustice, while the oppressor needs freedom from **hatred, prejudice and narrow-mindedness**.

As a child, Mandela thought freedom meant being able to run freely and live without restrictions. As he grew older, he understood that true freedom meant **living with dignity, equality and the right to determine one's own life**. His struggle taught him that neither he nor his people could be truly free until apartheid was defeated.

The chapter presents **freedom, courage, equality, sacrifice and reconciliation** as its central ideas. Mandela's life shows that courage, determination and unity can help people overcome even deeply rooted injustice.

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3.1 His First Flight

His First Flight is a story by **Liam O'Flaherty** about a young seagull who is afraid to fly. While his brothers and sister have already learned to fly, he lacks the courage to leave the ledge. The story shows how **fear can prevent us from discovering our abilities**, and how encouragement and necessity can help us overcome it.

The young seagull lived with his parents, two brothers and his sister on a **high ledge of a cliff**. His brothers and sister had already learnt to fly. They had flown over the sea and enjoyed themselves, but the young seagull was afraid to take his first flight.

Whenever he tried to move towards the edge of the ledge, he became frightened by the vast sea below. He thought that his wings would not support him and that he would fall into the sea. Because of this fear, he refused to fly.

His parents tried to encourage him. They called him and scolded him for being afraid. His brothers and sister also flew around him and made fun of him. However, he could not gather enough courage to leave the ledge. Finally, his parents left him alone and flew away with the other birds.

The young seagull spent the night alone on the ledge. The next morning, he felt very hungry. He saw his brothers and sister flying and searching for food. His mother came near him with a piece of **fish**, but she stopped just beyond his reach.

The young seagull was desperate for food. He leaned forward to get the fish. When he tried to reach it, he suddenly fell from the ledge. For a moment, he was terrified and thought he would drown. But then his wings spread out automatically, and he discovered that he could fly.

His mother flew alongside him, calling to him. The young seagull flapped his wings and gradually gained confidence. Soon, he was flying happily over the sea. His brothers and sister flew around him, and his parents praised him.

After overcoming his fear, the young seagull realised that **he had always been capable of flying**. His fear had prevented him from discovering his own ability. His first flight filled him with joy and confidence.

The story shows that **fear often exists more in our minds than in reality**. We may underestimate our own abilities because we are afraid of failure. Sometimes, encouragement, determination and a little push are enough to help us overcome fear and discover our true potential.

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3.2 The Black Aeroplane

The Black Aeroplane is a mysterious story by **Frederick Forsyth**. It is about a pilot who is flying his old Dakota aeroplane towards England when he suddenly encounters a dangerous storm. The story combines **adventure, mystery and the supernatural** and leaves the reader wondering about the identity of the mysterious pilot.

The narrator was flying his old **Dakota aeroplane** from Paris to England. It was a clear night, and he was looking forward to reaching home and having breakfast with his family. As he flew over France, he could see the lights of Paris below him.

After some time, he noticed a huge mass of **dark clouds** ahead of him. The clouds looked like a storm. The narrator wanted to reach England quickly, so he considered flying around the storm. However, he saw that it would take too much time and decided to fly directly into the clouds.

As soon as he entered the storm, everything changed. The sky became completely dark, and the aeroplane was surrounded by clouds. The narrator could not see anything outside. His compass stopped working, and so did the other instruments. He became frightened because he no longer knew which direction he was flying in.

Then, suddenly, he saw **another aeroplane** flying near him. It was completely black and had no lights. The pilot of this mysterious black aeroplane waved to him and signalled that he should follow.

The narrator followed the black aeroplane through the storm. Although he was still frightened, he trusted the mysterious pilot. The black aeroplane led him safely through the clouds and finally disappeared.

When the narrator reached England, he saw the runway below him and landed safely. He was extremely relieved. After landing, he went to the control centre and asked the woman there about the other aeroplane that had helped him.

The woman at the control centre was surprised. She told him that **there was no other aeroplane in the sky**. She also explained that the radar had not detected any other aircraft. When the narrator asked about the black aeroplane, she simply looked at him strangely and said that his Dakota was the only plane she could see on the radar.

The story ends with a mystery. The narrator does not know who the pilot of the black aeroplane was, where the aeroplane came from or how it disappeared. The reader is also left without a clear explanation.

The story highlights the **mystery of the unknown and the importance of hope and guidance in moments of danger**. The mysterious black aeroplane may be understood in different ways, and the story deliberately leaves its true identity unexplained.

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4. From the Diary of Anne Frank

From the Diary of Anne Frank is an extract from the diary of **Anne Frank**, a young Jewish girl who lived during the Second World War. In her diary, Anne shares her thoughts, feelings, experiences and observations about her life. The chapter gives us a glimpse of her personality, her relationships and her desire for a true friend.

Anne Frank received a **diary** as a birthday present on 12 June 1942, when she was thirteen years old. She named her diary **"Kitty"** and decided to write in it as if she were writing letters to a close friend. She felt that paper had more patience than people and wanted to record her thoughts and feelings honestly.

Anne explained that she did not have a true friend with whom she could share her deepest feelings. Although she had loving parents, a sister and many people around her, she still felt lonely. She therefore decided to make her diary her friend and began writing to it regularly.

In her first diary entry, Anne introduced herself and described her family. She mentioned that her father, **Otto Frank**, was a loving and understanding man. Her mother was **Edith Frank**, and her elder sister was **Margot**. Anne also described her school life and some of her classmates.

Anne was a lively and talkative student. Her teachers often considered her too talkative. Her mathematics teacher, **Mr Keesing**, was particularly annoyed by her habit of talking in class. As a punishment, he asked her to write an essay on the topic **"A Chatterbox."**

Anne accepted the punishment and wrote the essay. She explained that talking was a student's characteristic and that she would try to control it, but she could not completely change her nature. She also argued that talking was a habit she had inherited from her mother. Mr Keesing found her arguments amusing but still gave her another essay, **"An Incorrigible Chatterbox."** Anne wrote another essay and continued to defend her habit of talking.

For her third punishment, Mr Keesing asked her to write an essay in the form of a poem titled **"Quack, Quack, Quack, Said Mistress Chatterbox."** Anne decided to respond creatively. She wrote a humorous poem about a mother duck and her ducklings who were punished because they quacked too much.

The poem was so amusing that Mr Keesing laughed when he read it. He understood Anne's clever way of responding to his punishment and stopped giving her extra homework for talking in class. Anne was pleased that her writing had finally changed his attitude. The diary entries show Anne as an **intelligent, honest, humorous and thoughtful girl** who could express her feelings openly through writing. Her diary became a trusted companion with whom she could share her private thoughts.

The chapter shows the importance of **friendship, self-expression and writing**. Anne's diary gave her a sense of companionship and allowed her to express feelings that she could not easily share with others. Her intelligence, humour and maturity make her diary a memorable record of a young girl's life.

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5.1 A Baker from Goa

A Baker from Goa is a nostalgic account by **Lucio Rodrigues** about the traditional bakers of Goa and the important place they once held in Goan life. The author recalls his childhood memories of the village baker and describes how the Portuguese influence can still be seen in Goa's food and traditions.

The author begins by recalling the **Portuguese** and their love for bread. Although the Portuguese rulers left Goa long ago, their tradition of bread-making continued. The bakers, known as **pader**, remained an important part of Goan society. Even today, the author says, one can still find traditional bakers in some parts of Goa.

During the author's childhood, the baker's arrival was an important event. He would come early in the morning with a **basket of bread** and announce his arrival by making the sound of his bamboo staff. The children would run to him because they were especially fond of the sweet bread called **bread-bangles**.

The baker's bread was an essential part of Goan life. Bread was used at **marriages and other important occasions**. Cakes and bolinhas were also important during celebrations. A marriage ceremony was considered incomplete without the traditional sweet bread known as **bol**.

The baker also had a special place in the daily life of families. He would usually collect his payment at the end of the month. The monthly account was recorded by the baker's servant or family member, and the amount was paid regularly.

The baker's traditional dress was also distinctive. During the author's childhood, the baker wore a **kabai**, a long frock-like dress reaching up to the knees. Later, bakers began wearing shirts and trousers that were shorter than the traditional dress.

Baking was a profitable profession. The baker and his family generally lived comfortably, and the baker's plump body was seen as a sign of his prosperity. The author recalls the familiar sound of the baker's arrival and the excitement it created among the children.

The chapter is a **nostalgic picture of old Goan life**. Through his memories of bread, bakers and childhood, the author shows how food traditions become an important part of a community's culture and daily life. It also preserves a glimpse of the Portuguese influence that continues to be associated with Goa.

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5.2 Coorg

Coorg is a travel account by **Lokesh Abrol** that describes the natural beauty, culture and people of **Coorg**, also known as **Kodagu**, in Karnataka. The chapter presents Coorg as a beautiful region of coffee plantations, forests, rivers and wildlife, while also describing the bravery and traditions of its people.

Coorg is situated in **Karnataka**, midway between **Mysore and Mangalore**. It is famous for its evergreen forests, coffee plantations, spices, orange orchards and pleasant weather. The best time to visit Coorg is from **September to March**, when the weather is pleasant and the region is especially beautiful.

The people of Coorg, known as **Kodavus**, are known for their **bravery and martial traditions**. There are different theories about their ancestry. Some believe that they are of Greek origin, while others connect them with Arab descent. Their traditional dress and customs also show influences that are different from those of the surrounding regions.

The Kodavus are well known for their courage and hospitality. They have a strong tradition of joining the **Indian Army**. The famous General **Cariappa**, the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, belonged to Coorg. The people of Coorg are also permitted to carry firearms without a licence under special provisions, reflecting their traditional martial culture.

The **River Kaveri**, one of the major rivers of southern India, gets its water from the hills and forests of Coorg. The region is rich in wildlife and natural beauty. Visitors can see elephants, macaques, Malabar squirrels and other animals. The forests and coffee plantations make the landscape particularly attractive.

Coorg also offers many opportunities for **adventure activities**. Visitors can enjoy river rafting, canoeing, rappelling, rock climbing, mountain biking and trekking. The **Brahmagiri hills**, **Nisargadhama** and **island of Nisargadhama** are among the places that attract tourists.

The chapter presents Coorg as a place where **natural beauty, adventure, culture and bravery come together**. Through its description of the landscape and the people, the author shows why Coorg is one of the most attractive tourist destinations in Karnataka.

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5.3 Tea from Assam

Tea from Assam is a travel account by **Arup Kumar Datta**. It describes a train journey through Assam taken by **Pranjol and Rajvir**, two school friends, and introduces the reader to the beautiful tea gardens of Assam. The chapter also presents some interesting legends about the origin of tea.

Pranjol and **Rajvir** were classmates at school in Delhi. Pranjol belonged to Assam and invited Rajvir to spend his summer vacation with his family there. They travelled by train towards Assam. As they entered Assam, Rajvir was amazed by the vast stretches of **green tea plantations** on both sides of the railway track.

Rajvir was very interested in tea and had read a great deal about it. He told Pranjol that **more than eighty crore cups of tea are drunk every day throughout the world**. He also mentioned that tea was first drunk in **China** and that there were several legends about its discovery.

According to one Chinese legend, a Chinese emperor was drinking boiled water when some **tea leaves accidentally fell into it**. The leaves gave the water a pleasant flavour, and tea was discovered. Another legend from India says that **Bodhidharma**, a Buddhist ascetic, cut off his eyelids because he felt sleepy during meditation. Tea plants grew from the eyelids, and their leaves helped him stay awake.

As the train travelled through Assam, Rajvir saw the beautiful tea gardens covering the hills and valleys. He was fascinated by the sight of **tea bushes stretching as far as the eye could see**. The tea plants were carefully arranged in rows, and women workers were busy plucking the fresh tea leaves.

When they reached **Mariani junction**, Pranjol's father, who managed a tea garden, came to receive them. They travelled to the tea estate, where Rajvir continued to admire the vast green plantations.

The tea garden was a busy place. Groups of women were carrying bamboo baskets on their backs and carefully plucking the **two tender leaves and a bud** from the tea plants. Rajvir learned more about the cultivation and processing of tea.

The chapter gives a vivid picture of the **beauty of Assam and its famous tea gardens**. Through Rajvir's curiosity and Pranjol's connection with Assam, the story introduces us to the history, legends and cultivation of tea while showing why Assam is one of the world's major tea-producing regions.

The chapter combines **travel, history, culture and nature**. It also shows how something as ordinary as a cup of tea has an interesting history and a long tradition behind it.

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6. Mijbil the Otter

Mijbil the Otter is a story by **Gavin Maxwell** about the author's experience of keeping an otter as a pet. The story describes the author's affection for **Mijbil**, the otter's playful nature and the difficulties he faced while taking Mijbil from Iraq to England.

The author lived in **Iraq** and wanted to keep an otter as a pet. His friend suggested that he get one from the **marshes of southern Iraq**. One day, an otter was brought to him by two Arabs. The author named him **Mijbil**, or **Mij** for short.

At first, Mij was shy and uncomfortable in his new surroundings. Gradually, he became friendly and began to explore the author's home. He loved playing with objects and soon showed himself to be an intelligent and playful animal.

Mij especially enjoyed **water**. When the author filled the bathtub, Mij would jump into it and play happily. He would splash water everywhere and enjoy himself for a long time. He also loved playing with small objects and developed many amusing games of his own.

The author had to take Mij with him when he travelled to **England**. Because airlines did not normally allow animals to travel freely in the passenger cabin, the author had to arrange a special box for Mij. Before the journey, Mij was placed inside a small box with air holes.

During the journey, Mij managed to escape from the box. When the author opened it, he found that Mij had injured himself while trying to get out. The author was worried about him, but Mij soon recovered. The journey was difficult, but eventually they reached England.

In England, the author took Mij for walks. People were often curious about the strange animal and sometimes could not identify him. Many people thought Mij was a **seal, a squirrel or some other unfamiliar creature**. The author found these reactions amusing.

Mij became a loving companion to the author. His playful behaviour, intelligence and affection made him a special part of the author's life. Through his experience with Mij, the author developed a deep understanding of the animal's personality and habits.

The story shows the **bond between human beings and animals**. It also presents Mij as an intelligent, curious and playful creature with his own personality. The author's affection for Mij makes the story both **humorous and touching**.

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7. Madam Rides the Bus

Madam Rides the Bus is a story by **Vallikkannan** about **Valli**, an eight-year-old girl who is curious, independent and determined. The story describes her first bus journey to the nearby town and shows how the experience changes her understanding of the world.

Valli was an **eight-year-old girl** who lived in a village. She had no playmates of her age, so she spent much of her time standing in the doorway of her house and watching the world outside. She was especially fascinated by the bus that travelled between her village and the nearby town.

The bus passed her house regularly. Valli watched the passengers getting on and off and became very curious about the journey. She wanted to ride the bus herself. By listening carefully to conversations and observing the passengers, she learned that the journey to the town took about **forty-five minutes** and that the fare was **thirty paise one way**.

Valli carefully saved money for the journey. She resisted the temptation to buy toys, sweets and other things so that she could save enough for the bus ticket. She also planned her journey carefully so that she could travel to the town and return home without anyone noticing.

One afternoon, when her mother was taking a nap, Valli boarded the bus. She confidently bought a ticket from the **conductor**, who jokingly called her **"madam."** Valli was excited and proud to be travelling alone. She enjoyed looking through the window at the passing countryside.

The conductor was friendly and amused by Valli's confidence. Other passengers also noticed the little girl travelling alone. Valli, however, did not want anyone to treat her like a small child. She behaved confidently and insisted on paying her own fare.

When the bus reached the town, the conductor asked Valli to get down and explore the town. However, she refused because she had planned only to ride the bus and return home. She did not want to spend any money in the town.

During the return journey, Valli saw something that deeply affected her. On her way to the town, she had seen a **young cow running happily in front of the bus**. On the way back, she saw the same cow lying dead by the roadside. The sight made her sad and destroyed some of the joy she had felt during her journey.

When Valli reached home, her mother was talking to an elderly neighbour. Valli quietly listened to their conversation and realised that her mother knew nothing about her secret bus journey. She smiled to herself when her mother remarked that the world contained many things they did not know about.

Valli's bus ride was a small adventure, but it gave her a glimpse of the wider world beyond her village. The story shows **curiosity, independence, confidence and the natural desire of a child to explore the world**. At the same time, Valli's experience with the dead cow gives her a first encounter with the realities of life and death.

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8. Sermon at Benares

Sermon at Benares is based on the life and teachings of **Gautama Buddha**. The chapter tells the story of a woman named **Kisa Gotami**, who loses her only son and finds it difficult to accept his death. Through Buddha's teaching, she gradually understands the universal truth that **death is a natural part of life**.

Gautama Buddha was born in **Lumbini** in northern India. He belonged to a royal family and lived a comfortable life. However, when he saw an old man, a sick man, a dead man and a monk, he realised that suffering and death were unavoidable parts of human life. He left his luxurious life in search of truth and eventually attained enlightenment.

After attaining enlightenment, Buddha began teaching people about the causes of suffering and the way to overcome it. One of his important teachings was that **human life is temporary and death is unavoidable**.

The chapter tells the story of **Kisa Gotami**, a young woman whose only son died. She was so deeply attached to her child that she could not accept his death. Carrying his dead body, she went from house to house asking people for medicine that could bring him back to life.

Finally, someone directed her to **Gautama Buddha**. She went to him and asked him to cure her son. Buddha listened to her patiently and told her that he could help her if she brought him a handful of **mustard seeds** from a house where no one had ever died.

Kisa Gotami went from house to house asking for the mustard seeds. People were willing to give her the seeds, but when she asked whether anyone in the family had ever died, she discovered that **every household had experienced death**. She gradually understood that death was not something that had happened only to her family. It was a universal truth.

She returned to Buddha and realised the meaning of his teaching. She understood that human beings cannot escape death and that excessive attachment to the dead only increases suffering. She accepted her son's death and became a follower of Buddha.

Buddha explained that **all living beings are subject to death**. Just as ripe fruits are likely to fall from trees, human beings who are born must eventually die. No one can save another person from death. Therefore, wise people understand the temporary nature of life and do not remain trapped in endless grief.

The story teaches that **death is unavoidable and universal**. Accepting this truth helps a person overcome grief and develop wisdom. Kisa Gotami's experience shows that understanding the nature of life and death can help human beings move from sorrow towards peace and acceptance.

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9. The Proposal

The Proposal is a one-act farce by **Anton Chekhov**. The play is a humorous story about **Lomov**, who visits his neighbour Chubukov to ask for his daughter Natalya's hand in marriage. Instead of discussing love and marriage peacefully, the three characters repeatedly quarrel over trivial matters. The play makes fun of the selfishness, pride and foolish behaviour often seen in human relationships.

Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov is a wealthy landowner who decides to marry **Natalya Stepanovna**, the daughter of his neighbour **Stepan Stepanovitch Chubukov**. Lomov is nervous about making the proposal because he is already worried about his health and tends to become anxious easily. He dresses formally and goes to Chubukov's house.

Chubukov is pleased to see Lomov and initially thinks that he has come to borrow money. When Lomov explains that he has come to ask for Natalya's hand in marriage, Chubukov becomes very happy and encourages him to speak to Natalya himself.

Lomov meets Natalya and tries to tell her why he has come. However, before he can make his proposal, they begin arguing about a piece of land called **Oxen Meadows**. Lomov claims that the meadows belong to him, while Natalya insists that they belong to her family. Their argument becomes increasingly heated, and Lomov forgets the purpose of his visit.

Chubukov joins the argument and supports his daughter. He and Lomov insult each other and continue arguing about the ownership of the meadows. Lomov becomes extremely upset and leaves the house.

After he has gone, Natalya learns that Lomov had actually come to **propose marriage**. She immediately regrets that he has left and asks her father to bring him back. Chubukov calls Lomov back, and Natalya again meets him.

This time, however, another argument begins. Natalya and Lomov start quarrelling about their dogs. Lomov praises his dog **Guess**, while Natalya claims that her dog **Squeezer** is better. They argue about the dogs' qualities, age, breed and value. Chubukov again joins the argument and insults Lomov.

The quarrelling becomes so intense that Lomov becomes physically distressed and collapses. Natalya becomes frightened and thinks that he has died. When Lomov recovers, Chubukov hurriedly tells him to marry Natalya. Lomov and Natalya finally agree to marry, but almost immediately they begin arguing again about their dogs.

The play ends humorously with Chubukov asking them to stop quarrelling and get married. The ending shows that even though Lomov and Natalya are ready to marry, **their arguments and stubbornness have not changed**.

The Proposal is a humorous satire on **marriage, greed, pride, stubbornness and social relationships**. The characters are more concerned with property, status and winning arguments than with love or understanding. Chekhov creates comedy by showing how serious matters such as marriage can be overshadowed by **petty and meaningless quarrels**.

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Poetry

1. Dust of Snow

"Dust of Snow" is a short poem by **Robert Frost**. The poem describes how a simple moment in nature changes the poet's mood and saves part of a day that he had been regretting. It shows that even a small and unexpected experience can bring **joy, hope and a positive change in attitude**.

The poet is sitting under a **hemlock tree** when a **crow** shakes the tree. As a result, some fine particles of snow, described as the **"dust of snow,"** fall upon the poet. Both the crow and the hemlock tree are traditionally associated with unpleasant or negative things, but here they become the means of bringing the poet happiness.

The sudden fall of the snow changes the poet's mood. He had been feeling unhappy and believed that he had wasted or regretted part of the day. However, this simple experience in nature refreshes him and makes him feel better. He realises that there is still enough time to **save the rest of the day** from being wasted.

The poem shows that **nature has the power to change our mood**. A small and unexpected incident can remove sadness and give us a fresh, positive outlook. The poem also suggests that happiness can come from ordinary moments if we are open to experiencing them.

2. Fire and Ice

"Fire and Ice" is a short poem by **Robert Frost**. In the poem, the poet reflects on the possible ways in which the world might end. He uses **fire** and **ice** as symbols of destructive human emotions, especially **desire and hatred**.

The poet begins by saying that some people believe the world will end in **fire**, while others believe it will end in **ice**. Fire represents **desire**, which can grow endlessly and consume everything. The poet says that because he has experienced desire, he believes that fire could be enough to destroy the world.

However, the poet also knows the destructive power of **hatred**. He compares hatred with ice because both hatred and ice are cold and can destroy life. He says that if the world had to perish twice, ice would also be powerful enough to destroy it.

Thus, the poem suggests that **uncontrolled desire and hatred are both dangerous and destructive**. Fire and ice are not merely natural elements; they symbolically represent negative human emotions. The poem warns us that when such emotions become extreme, they can cause destruction on a personal as well as a larger scale.

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3. A Tiger in the Zoo

“A Tiger in the Zoo” is a poem by **Leslie Norris**. The poem presents the contrast between a **tiger living in a cage** and the life it should naturally have in the jungle. It highlights the cruelty of keeping wild animals in captivity and shows the tiger's desire for freedom.

The poet describes a **tiger pacing inside a small cage** in the zoo. The tiger is powerful and beautiful, but his strength is of little use because he is trapped behind bars. He moves quietly and angrily within the limited space of his cage.

The poet imagines how the tiger would behave if he were living freely in the jungle. He would move through the **long grass near the water hole** and hide behind trees, waiting for his prey. He would move through the jungle confidently and naturally, using his strength as a wild animal.

The poet also imagines the tiger hunting a **deer** near the water hole. He would then move through the jungle at night and frighten the people living near the jungle by **growling near their houses**. These actions would be natural for a tiger living in its proper environment.

Instead, the caged tiger can only walk around his enclosure. He is unable to hunt, roam freely or live according to his natural instincts. At night, he hears the sound of **patrolling cars** outside the zoo, while he remains trapped inside his cage.

The poem presents a strong contrast between **freedom and captivity**. The tiger's natural power, instincts and desire for freedom cannot be fully expressed inside a cage. Through the tiger's condition, the poet makes us think about the suffering of wild animals when they are taken away from their natural habitats and kept in captivity.

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4. How to Tell Wild Animals

"How to Tell Wild Animals" is a humorous poem by **Carolyn Wells**. The poem gives funny and exaggerated ways of identifying dangerous wild animals. Instead of presenting wildlife in a serious manner, the poet uses **humour, irony and playful descriptions** to make the poem entertaining.

The poet begins by suggesting that if a person happens to travel in the **eastern region**, he may encounter various wild animals. She then describes different animals and gives humorous clues for identifying them.

The first animal is the **Asian Lion**. According to the poet, if a large animal roars loudly and jumps on the traveller, it is probably a lion. The situation is dangerous, but the poet describes it in a playful way.

Next, she describes the **Bengal Tiger**. If a large yellow animal attacks and eats the traveller, the poet humorously suggests that it must be a tiger. The idea of identifying the animal only after being attacked creates the poem's comic effect.

The poet then describes the **Leopard**. If the animal keeps jumping on the victim and continues to attack him repeatedly, it is a leopard. The poet's exaggerated description makes the dangerous situation sound amusing.

The **Bear** is another animal in the poem. If a large animal hugs the person tightly, the poet says that it is probably a bear. The description turns the bear's dangerous attack into a humorous image of an unwanted hug.

The poet also describes the **Hyena** and the **Crocodile**. The hyena can be recognised by its smile, while the crocodile is identified by the tears it appears to shed. These descriptions are based on popular ideas and create humour through **personification and irony**.

Finally, the poet mentions the **Chameleon**, a small lizard-like creature that can change its colour according to its surroundings. She jokingly suggests that if a person sees nothing on a tree and still notices something moving, it may be a chameleon.

The poem is entertaining because the poet describes **dangerous wild animals in a light-hearted and humorous way**. Its exaggerated situations, wordplay and irony make the poem memorable while giving readers amusing descriptions of different animals.

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5. The Ball Poem

"The Ball Poem" is a thoughtful poem by **John Berryman** that describes a young boy's first experience of losing something that is valuable to him. Through the simple incident of a lost ball, the poet explores the ideas of **loss, attachment, responsibility and growing up**.

The poem begins with a young boy who loses his ball while playing. The ball bounces away and falls into the water. The boy stands watching it disappear and feels deeply sad. The poet understands that the boy is not simply upset about losing a toy. The ball has become emotionally valuable to him because of the memories and feelings connected with it.

The poet watches the boy but does not offer him money to buy another ball. He understands that buying a new ball would not truly solve the problem. A new ball may replace the lost object, but it cannot replace the **emotional attachment** the boy had with the original one. The boy must experience the pain of losing something and learn to deal with it himself.

The loss of the ball becomes an important lesson for the boy. It is perhaps his first experience of understanding that **things can be lost and cannot always be recovered**. As people grow older, they experience many kinds of loss. They may lose possessions, relationships or people they love. Such losses are a natural part of life, and everyone has to learn how to face them.

The poet does not want the boy to escape from his sadness immediately. Instead, the boy must learn to accept the loss and gradually move forward. This experience teaches him a valuable lesson about **responsibility and maturity**. He begins to understand that he cannot keep everything he loves forever.

The lost ball therefore becomes a symbol of the losses that people experience throughout their lives. The poem suggests that growing up is not only about gaining new things but also about learning how to accept what is lost. Through this simple incident, the poet shows that **learning to accept loss and recover from it is an important part of becoming mature and emotionally strong**.

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6. Amanda!

"Amanda!" is a poem by **Robin Klein** that presents the thoughts and feelings of a young girl named **Amanda**. The poem shows how constant instructions, scolding and criticism can make a child feel unhappy and cause her to escape into an imaginary world. It highlights a child's need for **freedom, understanding and personal space**.

The poem begins with an adult giving Amanda a series of instructions. She is told to **sit properly, stop slouching, stop biting her nails and stop moving her hair around**. These repeated instructions show that Amanda is constantly being watched and corrected for her behaviour.

While the adult continues giving instructions, Amanda escapes into her imagination. She imagines herself as a **mermaid**, moving freely and peacefully through the green sea. In this imaginary world, she is alone and does not have to listen to anyone's instructions. This shows her strong desire for freedom and peace.

The adult then reminds Amanda to **finish her homework** and asks whether she has cleaned her room and shoes. Amanda again moves into her imaginary world. This time, she imagines herself as an **orphan**, living freely in a beautiful tower. She enjoys the quietness and feels happy because nobody is there to control or disturb her.

The adult continues to correct Amanda and warns her not to **eat chocolate**, reminding her that she has acne. Amanda once again escapes into her imagination. She imagines herself as **Rapunzel**, living alone in a tower. However, unlike Rapunzel, Amanda says that she would never let anyone enter her tower because she wants to remain completely free and undisturbed.

At the end, the adult asks Amanda not to **sulk** and worries that people might think she is being mistreated. Amanda, however, remains lost in her imaginary world. The repeated use of her name, "Amanda!", shows how the adult keeps trying to bring her attention back to the real world.

The poem presents a clear contrast between **Amanda's desire for freedom and the adult's constant control**. Her imaginary worlds reveal that she wants to escape from the pressure of repeated instructions and criticism. The poem does not suggest that children should have no discipline, but it shows that **too much control and constant scolding can affect a child's happiness and emotional well-being**. Children need love, understanding and reasonable guidance along with discipline.

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7. The Trees

"The Trees" is a poem by **Adrienne Rich** that presents a symbolic picture of trees trying to move out of a closed indoor space and return to the **open forest**. Through this unusual image, the poet explores the ideas of **freedom, nature, confinement and the desire to break free from restrictions**.

The poem begins with the speaker describing trees that are inside a house. Their branches are pressing against the glass windows, while their roots are trying to move out through the cracks in the floor. The trees seem to be struggling to escape from the house and return to their natural surroundings.

The poet describes the **night** as the time when the trees make their escape. The moon shines through the glass and falls on the leaves and branches. The trees move slowly and silently towards the outside. Their movement creates an unusual and almost magical picture of nature coming back to its rightful place.

The speaker then describes the forest that has been empty for a long time. It seems that the trees have been kept away from their natural home, and now they are returning to it. The empty forest is waiting for them. Their movement towards the forest suggests their strong desire to regain their **freedom and natural identity**.

The poet also describes the movement of the trees through different images. Their leaves and branches seem to move towards the open air, while the roots pull themselves away from the confined space. The glass of the windows breaks, and the trees continue their journey towards the forest.

At the end of the poem, the speaker is inside the house while the trees are moving out. She hears the sound of the trees and sees the moonlight through the windows. The trees have finally begun to leave their artificial surroundings and return to nature.

The poem can be understood as a **symbolic representation of freedom from confinement**. The trees may represent living beings who have been restricted and want to return to their natural state. Through the movement of the trees from the house to the forest, the poet suggests that **the desire for freedom is powerful, and nature cannot remain confined forever**.

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8. Fog

"Fog" is a short and beautiful poem by **Carl Sandburg** that describes the arrival and departure of fog in a city. The poet compares the fog to a **cat** to show its quiet, mysterious and graceful movement.

The poem begins with the fog coming silently into the city and the harbour. Instead of describing the fog directly, the poet compares it to a cat. The fog seems to enter the city without making any sound, just as a cat moves quietly and carefully.

The poet then describes the fog as sitting over the city and harbour on its **silent haunches**. This image makes the fog appear like a cat that has stopped for a while and is quietly observing everything around it. The comparison gives the fog a living and mysterious quality.

After remaining over the city and harbour for some time, the fog moves away silently. Like a cat that quietly leaves after sitting and watching for a while, the fog disappears without making any noise.

The poem is very short, but the poet creates a strong picture of the fog through the simple **metaphor of a cat**. The fog's quiet arrival, silent presence and sudden departure make it seem mysterious and graceful. The poem shows how ordinary natural scenes can become beautiful and imaginative when viewed through the eyes of a poet.

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9. The Tale of Custard the Dragon

"The Tale of Custard the Dragon" is a humorous poem by **Ogden Nash** about a dragon named **Custard** and the other animals who live with him. The poem uses **humour, irony and playful rhymes** to show that true courage is proved through actions rather than words.

The poem introduces a girl named **Belinda**, who lives in a little white house with her pets. She has a black kitten named **Ink**, a grey mouse named **Blink**, a yellow dog named **Mustard** and a dragon named **Custard**. Belinda and her other pets often boast about how brave they are, while Custard is considered a coward because he always wants a safe cage.

The other animals make fun of Custard and laugh at him because he appears to be frightened. They proudly claim that they are much braver than Custard. Custard, however, does not boast about his courage. He simply wants to feel safe and secure.

One day, a **pirate carrying a pistol** enters Belinda's house. As soon as the pirate appears, Belinda and all the other animals become frightened. The characters who had always claimed to be brave suddenly run away and hide. Their earlier claims of courage are shown to be empty.

Custard, however, behaves differently. He faces the dangerous pirate and **fights him bravely**. He makes a loud noise and attacks the pirate, who eventually disappears. Custard's actions prove that he is actually the bravest of all of them.

After the danger is over, Belinda and the other animals return and begin boasting again. They claim that they could have defeated the pirate themselves. Custard does not argue with them or boast about his bravery. He remains modest and quietly accepts their claims.

The poem uses humour to show the difference between **boasting about courage and actually being courageous**. Belinda and the other animals talk proudly about their bravery, but they run away when real danger appears. Custard, who is considered a coward, is the only one who faces the danger. The poem therefore suggests that **true courage is shown through actions, not through proud words, and that a genuinely brave person does not need to boast about his bravery**.

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10. For Anne Gregory

"For Anne Gregory" is a thoughtful poem by **W. B. Yeats** that discusses the difference between **physical beauty and inner beauty**. Through a conversation between the poet and a young woman named Anne Gregory, the poem explores whether people are loved for their true qualities or simply for their attractive appearance.

The poem begins with the poet telling Anne Gregory that a young man may love her because of her beautiful **yellow hair**. Her attractive appearance may make people admire her, but the poet suggests that such love may be based only on her physical beauty rather than on her real personality.

Anne Gregory responds that she can change her appearance if she wants to. She says that she can change the colour of her hair and make herself look different. She seems to believe that if a person loves her for herself, rather than for her appearance, then her physical beauty should not be the reason for that love.

The poet, however, suggests that it is difficult for human beings to look beyond physical beauty. People are often attracted to external appearance first. Anne's beautiful hair may therefore become more important to someone than her inner qualities, thoughts or character.

In the final part of the poem, the poet refers to a religious idea. He says that **only God can love a person purely for the person he or she truly is**, without being influenced by physical appearance. Human beings are often attracted by outward beauty, while God's love is deeper and free from such attraction.

The poem therefore contrasts **physical beauty with inner beauty**. It suggests that outward appearance can attract people, but true and unconditional love should be based on a person's inner qualities and character. The poem also reminds us that **physical beauty is temporary, while inner qualities are more meaningful and lasting**.

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Supplementary Reader

1. A Triumph of Surgery

"A Triumph of Surgery" is a humorous story by **James Herriot** about a small dog named **Tricki** and his wealthy owner, **Mrs Pumphrey**. The story shows how excessive love, overfeeding and lack of exercise can be harmful, while a simple and disciplined lifestyle can restore good health.

The story begins with Dr Herriot, a veterinary surgeon, noticing that Tricki has become **very fat and unhealthy**. Tricki has no energy and spends most of his time lying down and sleeping. Mrs Pumphrey is extremely worried about him and believes that he is suffering from a serious health problem.

Dr Herriot understands that Tricki's real problem is not an illness but **overfeeding and lack of exercise**. Mrs Pumphrey gives him rich food, including cream cakes, chocolates and other treats. She also gives him extra food because she feels sorry for him. Although Dr Herriot advises her to reduce his food and make him exercise, she finds it difficult to control herself.

When Tricki's condition becomes worse, Dr Herriot decides that he must take the dog away from home for some time. He tells Mrs Pumphrey that Tricki needs **hospital treatment**. Mrs Pumphrey is extremely upset and sends many of Tricki's favourite foods with him, including eggs, wine and Horlicks.

At the surgery, Dr Herriot does not give Tricki any special medicine. Instead, he keeps him with the other dogs and gives him a simple diet. Tricki is initially inactive, but soon he begins to move around and play with the other dogs. He gets regular exercise and eats only the amount of food that he needs.

Within a short time, Tricki becomes **active, healthy and energetic**. He runs around with the other dogs and enjoys his new routine. Dr Herriot realises that the simple treatment of proper food, exercise and discipline has completely changed Tricki's health.

Mrs Pumphrey is delighted when she hears about Tricki's recovery. When she finally visits him, she is amazed to see how healthy and energetic he has become. She believes that Dr Herriot has performed a great medical treatment and calls it a **"triumph of surgery."** However, the humorous truth is that no complicated surgery was needed. Tricki recovered simply because he was given proper food, exercise and discipline.

The story shows that **excessive love and overindulgence can sometimes be harmful**. Mrs Pumphrey loves Tricki deeply, but her way of caring for him makes him unhealthy. The story humorously reminds us that love should be combined with **proper care, discipline and a healthy lifestyle**.

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2. The Thief's Story

"The Thief's Story" is a story by **Ruskin Bond** about a young thief named **Hari Singh** and a kind and trusting young man named **Anil**. The story shows how **trust, kindness, education and the opportunity to change** can help a person leave a dishonest life.

The story begins with **Hari Singh**, a fifteen-year-old boy who makes a living by stealing. He often changes his name so that the police and his former victims cannot find him. One day, he meets **Anil**, a young writer, and decides to make him his next target. Hari introduces himself and asks Anil if he can work for him.

Anil agrees to employ Hari as a **cook**, although Hari does not really know how to cook. At first, Hari is not good at cooking, but Anil allows him to stay and gradually teaches him how to prepare simple meals. Hari soon begins living with Anil. Although Anil does not earn much money regularly, he is kind and trusting. He also promises to teach Hari how to **read, write, add numbers and write complete sentences**.

Hari gradually becomes comfortable with Anil. He learns that Anil often receives money for his writing. One day, Anil gets **six hundred rupees** and keeps the money under his mattress. Hari notices it and begins thinking about stealing it. He knows that the money could allow him to live comfortably for some time.

Late at night, Hari steals the money and leaves the house. He reaches the railway station and plans to catch a train to **Lucknow**. However, while waiting for the train, he begins thinking about Anil's kindness and the education he is receiving. He realises that if he leaves, he will lose the opportunity to learn how to read and write. He also feels guilty about betraying Anil's trust.

Hari finally decides to return. He goes back to Anil's room and carefully places the stolen money under the mattress. By then, the notes have become wet because of the rain. The next morning, Anil gives Hari a **fifty-rupee note** and tells him that he will pay him regularly. He also tells Hari that they will start writing **sentences** that day.

Hari understands that Anil knows about the theft but has chosen not to punish or expose him. Anil's silence and continued trust make Hari feel ashamed of his actions. His decision to return the money shows that he has begun to change.

The story shows that **kindness, trust and education can transform a person**. Anil does not reform Hari through punishment; instead, his goodness gives Hari a reason to become honest. The story suggests that sometimes **trusting and giving a person an opportunity to improve can be more powerful than punishment**.

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3. The Midnight Visitor

"The Midnight Visitor" is a suspenseful story by **Robert Arthur** about a secret agent named **Ausable** and a dangerous man named **Max**. The story shows that **intelligence, presence of mind and clever planning can be more powerful than physical strength or appearance**.

The story begins with **Ausable**, a secret agent, arriving at a hotel room with a young writer named **Fowler**. Fowler has imagined a secret agent to be a smart, adventurous and physically impressive person. However, Ausable does not look like the kind of secret agent Fowler had expected. He is fat and ordinary-looking, and Fowler is disappointed.

When Ausable enters his room, he discovers **Max**, another secret agent, waiting for him with a pistol. Max has come to steal an important report about **missiles** that Ausable is expecting. Fowler becomes frightened, but Ausable remains calm and does not panic.

Ausable suddenly tells Max that there is a **balcony outside the window** and complains that this is the second time someone has entered his room through it. In reality, there is no balcony. Ausable invents this story to make Max believe that the room has another entrance.

A few moments later, there is a knock at the door. Ausable tells Max that it must be the **police**, whom he had asked to come to the room. Max becomes nervous because he does not want to be caught. Ausable continues to speak calmly and convinces him that the police are about to enter.

Max decides to escape through the window using the imaginary balcony. He jumps out of the window, expecting to land on the balcony. However, there is no balcony. He falls to the ground.

The person knocking at the door is not the police. It is actually a **waiter** bringing Ausable's drinks. Ausable's entire story about the police and the balcony was part of his clever plan. He had used Max's fear and confusion against him and defeated him without using physical force.

Fowler is amazed by what has happened. He finally understands that a real secret agent does not necessarily have to look adventurous or use weapons. Ausable's greatest strength is his **quick thinking and presence of mind**.

The story shows that **intelligence and presence of mind can overcome danger even when a person appears physically weak or ordinary**. Ausable's calm behaviour and clever use of false information allow him to defeat a dangerous opponent. The story also reminds us that appearances can be misleading and that true ability is often hidden behind an ordinary appearance.

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4. A Question of Trust

"A Question of Trust" is a story by **Victor Canning** about a professional burglar named **Horace Danby**. The story is humorous and ironic and shows how a person who considers himself clever and careful can himself be deceived.

Horace Danby is a **fifty-year-old man** who appears to be respectable. He makes locks and lives a quiet life with his housekeeper. However, he has a secret habit. Every year, he commits one carefully planned robbery so that he can buy expensive books for his collection. Although he is a thief, he considers himself honest in every other way.

One day, Horace plans to rob **Shotover Grange**, a large country house. He has studied the house carefully and knows that the owners are away. He enters the house and reaches the room where the safe is kept. He uses his knowledge of locks to open it successfully.

While Horace is taking the jewels from the safe, he suddenly hears a woman's voice. A young woman appears and claims to be the **lady of the house**. She tells Horace that she has forgotten the combination of the safe and wants to take out some jewels. She also says that she will not call the police if he opens the safe for her.

Horace becomes nervous because he does not want to be caught. The woman cleverly convinces him that she is the owner of the house. She tells him to remove his gloves and use the safe's combination. Horace obeys her instructions and opens the safe.

The woman then asks Horace to give her the jewels. She tells him that she needs them for a party and promises that she will not report him. Believing her story, Horace gives her the jewels and leaves the house without taking anything for himself.

A few weeks later, Horace is arrested. The police discover that his **fingerprints** are on the safe because he had removed his gloves as the woman instructed. Horace then learns that the woman was not the owner of the house at all. She was another thief who had tricked him into opening the safe and then escaped with the jewels.

Horace is shocked by the situation. He had considered himself a careful and intelligent thief, but another thief had easily deceived him. His own confidence and willingness to believe the woman's story became the reason for his downfall.

The story uses **irony and humour** to show that appearances can be deceptive and that overconfidence can lead to mistakes. Horace believes he is clever because he plans his robberies carefully, but he fails to recognise another thief. The story also raises the question of **trust among dishonest people**, showing that a person who lives by deception cannot easily expect honesty from others.

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5. Footprints Without Feet

"Footprints Without Feet" is a science-fiction story by **H. G. Wells** about a scientist named **Griffin** who discovers a way to make the human body invisible. The story shows how a scientific discovery can become dangerous when it is used without responsibility or moral control.

The story begins with two boys noticing **fresh muddy footprints** appearing on a London street, even though there is no visible person making them. The invisible person is **Griffin**, a scientist who has discovered how to make the human body transparent. He has used his scientific knowledge to become invisible.

Griffin is highly intelligent but is also **lawless and selfish**. He does not use his discovery for the benefit of society. Instead, he uses invisibility to escape from people, steal things and cause trouble. His actions show that scientific knowledge without responsibility can become harmful.

Griffin first becomes invisible by taking a scientific experiment too far. Once invisible, he has to remove his clothes because they remain visible. This creates practical difficulties because he cannot move around freely in public without being noticed. He eventually enters a large London store after closing time and spends the night there.

During the night, Griffin eats food, wears warm clothes and moves around the store. In the morning, when the assistants arrive, he has to escape quickly. He removes his clothes and becomes invisible again, allowing him to leave without being seen.

Later, Griffin travels to a village called **Iping** and decides to stay at an inn. He wears bandages, dark glasses and a large coat to hide his invisible body. His strange appearance makes the villagers curious. He keeps to himself and becomes increasingly impatient when people disturb him.

Griffin also steals money and other things to support himself. When people begin to suspect him, he becomes violent and uses his invisibility to escape. The villagers are frightened because they cannot see the person attacking them. Eventually, the truth about his invisibility becomes clear, and Griffin runs away.

Although Griffin possesses extraordinary scientific knowledge, he lacks the moral qualities needed to use it wisely. His invisibility does not make him powerful in a positive sense; instead, it makes him lonely, dishonest and dangerous. He uses science mainly for his own selfish purposes.

The story shows that **scientific knowledge must be accompanied by responsibility and good character**. A great discovery can become harmful when it is used for selfish or criminal purposes. Through Griffin's actions, the story reminds us that **science itself is not good or bad; its value depends on how human beings choose to use it**.

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6. The Making of a Scientist

"The Making of a Scientist" is a biographical story by **Robert W. Peterson** about **Richard H. Ebright**, a young boy who develops into a successful scientist through curiosity, hard work, careful observation and continuous learning. The story shows that scientific achievement is built through **interest, determination, guidance and a willingness to learn from failure**.

Richard Ebright was interested in collecting **butterflies** from an early age. His mother encouraged his curiosity and helped him develop the habit of learning. By the time he was in the seventh grade, he had collected all the different species of butterflies found in his area. When he could not find any more butterflies to collect, he looked for another way to continue his study.

Ebright's interest in butterflies led him to conduct scientific experiments. He began studying the **golden caterpillar** and later worked on the **monarch butterfly**. His mother encouraged him to read books, observe carefully and take part in science projects. She also helped him develop the discipline needed to complete his work properly.

At a science fair, Ebright presented a project on the **monarch pupa**. He discovered that the spots on the monarch pupa were not simply decorative but were related to the development of the butterfly. This project won him recognition and encouraged him to continue his scientific studies.

Ebright later became interested in the question of how monarch butterflies develop. He conducted experiments and studied the **hormones** involved in their growth. He eventually discovered an important connection between the hormone produced by the monarch butterfly and the development of its wings. His work became more advanced as he continued to learn from scientific research.

Ebright also learned an important lesson from failure. When one of his early science projects did not win at a competition, he realised that simply collecting butterflies was not enough to make a meaningful scientific contribution. Instead of becoming discouraged, he changed his approach and began doing more serious experiments.

His success was also influenced by the people around him. His **mother played a major role** in his development by encouraging his interests, providing books and materials, and motivating him to work hard. His teachers and other scientists also guided him and helped him develop his scientific abilities.

The story shows that Ebright's success did not come from intelligence alone. His **curiosity, determination, hard work, observation, willingness to experiment and ability to learn from failure** gradually made him a successful scientist. The story reminds us that a child's natural curiosity can develop into great achievement when it is encouraged and supported by proper guidance and sincere effort.

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7. The Necklace

"The Necklace" is a story by **Guy de Maupassant** about **Matilda Loisel**, a beautiful young woman who is unhappy with her simple middle-class life. The story explores the dangers of **vanity, dissatisfaction and pretending to be richer than one really is**.

Matilda lives with her husband, **Monsieur Loisel**, who is a simple clerk. Although they have a comfortable life, Matilda is unhappy because she dreams of wealth, luxury and a high social position. She feels that she deserves a better life with beautiful clothes, expensive jewellery and elegant surroundings.

One day, Monsieur Loisel brings home an invitation to a **grand evening party** at the Ministry. He expects Matilda to be pleased, but she becomes upset because she has no suitable dress to wear. Her husband gives her money that he had saved so that she can buy a beautiful dress.

Even after getting the dress, Matilda is worried because she has **no jewellery** to wear. Her husband suggests that she visit her friend **Madame Forestier** and borrow something. Madame Forestier shows her a box of jewellery, and Matilda chooses a beautiful diamond necklace.

At the party, Matilda is extremely happy. She looks beautiful and attracts everyone's attention. She enjoys the evening and feels that she has finally entered the wealthy social world she has always dreamed of. However, when she returns home, she discovers that the necklace is **missing**.

Matilda and her husband search everywhere but cannot find it. They decide that they must replace it. They borrow a large amount of money and buy a necklace that looks exactly like the lost one. They return it to Madame Forestier without telling her what has happened.

The Loisels then spend the next **ten years** struggling to repay the huge debt. They dismiss their servant, move to a smaller house and live a very difficult life. Matilda does all the household work, while her husband works hard and takes on extra jobs to repay the borrowed money.

After ten years, they finally repay the entire debt. Matilda has changed greatly because of the hardship. One day, she meets Madame Forestier and tells her what happened to the necklace. Madame Forestier is shocked and reveals that the original necklace was **not made of real diamonds**. It was only an imitation worth very little.

The ending creates a powerful **irony**. Matilda and her husband spend ten years suffering and sacrificing everything to replace an expensive-looking necklace that was actually almost worthless. Their suffering could have been avoided if Matilda had simply told Madame Forestier that the necklace was lost.

The story shows the dangers of **vanity, dissatisfaction and false appearances**. Matilda's desire to appear wealthy leads to years of unnecessary suffering. The story also reminds us that we should be honest about our problems and should value what we have instead of constantly longing for what we do not have.

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8. Bholi

"Bholi" is a touching story by **K.A. Abbas** about a simple and neglected village girl who gains confidence through education. The story shows the importance of **education, self-respect, courage and the power of a good teacher**.

Bholi's real name is **Sulekha**. She is the fourth daughter of **Ramlal**, a poor village revenue official. When she is a small child, she suffers from **smallpox**, which leaves marks on her face. She also falls from a cot and later develops a problem with her speech, causing her to stammer. Because of these difficulties, her family considers her simple and helpless.

When a new school opens in the village, the government orders Ramlal to send one of his daughters to school. He chooses Bholi because he thinks that no one will want to marry her anyway. At first, Bholi is frightened about going to school. Her mother dresses her in old clothes and sends her reluctantly.

At school, Bholi meets her **teacher**, who treats her with kindness and encouragement. When Bholi struggles to speak, the teacher does not laugh at her. Instead, she tells Bholi that she can overcome her difficulties through regular practice. She also promises to help her learn and become confident.

Bholi gradually begins to change. Education gives her confidence and helps her understand her own worth. She learns to speak more clearly and becomes able to express her thoughts without fear. The teacher's kindness and encouragement play an important role in transforming her personality.

Years later, Bholi's parents arrange her marriage with **Bishamber**, a wealthy grocer. During the wedding, Bishamber demands five thousand rupees as **dowry** after seeing the pockmarks on Bholi's face. Ramlal is helpless and agrees to pay the money because he wants the marriage to take place.

However, Bholi refuses to marry such a greedy and disrespectful man. She confidently tells her father that she will not marry Bishamber. She returns the dowry money and decides to remain unmarried and look after her parents. She also says that she will serve the school where she received her education.

Bholi's decision shows how far she has changed. The girl who was once frightened and unable to speak confidently now has the courage to stand up for herself. Her education has given her **self-respect, confidence and the ability to make her own decisions**.

The story shows that **education can transform a person's life**. A kind and understanding teacher can bring out confidence and strength in a child who has been neglected or considered weak. Bholi's journey also challenges the evils of **dowry, discrimination and judging people by their appearance**, showing that true worth lies in a person's character and self-respect.

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9. The Book That Saved the Earth

"The Book That Saved the Earth" is a humorous science-fiction play by **Claire Boiko**. It is set in the future and presents a funny story about how a simple book of nursery rhymes accidentally saves the Earth from a Martian invasion. The play uses **humour, misunderstanding and irony** to show how a seemingly ordinary thing can sometimes have an unexpected effect.

The play begins in the **twenty-fifth century**, when a Historian is explaining how Earth was once saved from an attack by the Martians. The important event took place in the twentieth century, when the Martians were planning to invade Earth.

The Martian ruler is **Think-Tank**, who considers himself extremely intelligent. He is surrounded by his assistants, **Noodle, Oop and Omega**. Think-Tank orders them to investigate Earth because he wants to know whether the Earthlings are dangerous and whether Mars can conquer the planet.

The Martians discover a place that appears to be a library. They find several books and become confused because they cannot understand what the books are used for. Think-Tank looks at the pictures and begins making ridiculous guesses about the Earthlings. He believes that the books may be weapons or objects used for communication.

Eventually, the Martians find a book called **Mother Goose**, a collection of nursery rhymes. Think-Tank orders his assistants to read it. They read the rhymes aloud, but Think-Tank completely misunderstands their meaning. He believes that the nursery rhymes contain secret information about the advanced technology and military power of Earth.

When the Martians read the rhyme about **"Humpty Dumpty"**, Think-Tank sees a picture of Humpty Dumpty and becomes frightened because he thinks that the picture looks like him. He believes that the Earthlings know what he looks like and have created a powerful weapon against him.

Think-Tank becomes convinced that Earth is far more advanced and dangerous than Mars. He immediately cancels the planned invasion and orders the Martians to retreat. He decides that they should move to another planet instead of attacking Earth.

The Historian then explains that the Earth was saved because of a simple book of nursery rhymes. The Martians had misunderstood the book completely, but their misunderstanding made Think-Tank believe that the Earthlings were extremely powerful.

The play is humorous because of **Think-Tank's overconfidence, foolish interpretations and exaggerated ideas**. It shows how ignorance and misunderstanding can lead to completely wrong conclusions. At the same time, the story reminds us that **knowledge should be based on proper understanding rather than assumptions, and that intelligence without wisdom can lead to foolish decisions**.

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