

PEARSON  
COMMON CORE  
**Literature**

# Close Reading Notebook

GRADE 7

PEARSON

HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY • BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
CHANDLER, ARIZONA • GLENVIEW, ILLINOIS

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**PEARSON**

ISBN-13: 978-0-13-327566-7  
ISBN-10: 0-13-327566-3  
4 5 6 7 8 9 10 V011 18 17 16 15 14



## Marking the Text: Strategies and Tips for Annotation

When you close read a text, you read for comprehension and then reread to unlock layers of meaning and to analyze a writer’s style and techniques. Marking a text as you read it enables you to participate more fully in the close-reading process.

Following are some strategies for text mark-ups, along with samples of how the strategies can be applied. These mark-ups are suggestions; you and your teacher may opt to use other mark-up strategies.

### Suggested Mark-up Notations

What I notice	How to mark up	Questions to ask
Key Ideas and Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle key ideas or claims.</li> <li>• Underline supporting details or evidence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the text say? What does it leave unsaid?</li> <li>• What inferences do you need to make?</li> <li>• What details lead you to make your inferences?</li> </ul>
Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put a question mark next to unfamiliar words.</li> <li>• Circle any familiar word parts within an unknown word.</li> <li>• Underline context clues, if any exist.</li> <li>• Highlight especially rich or poetic passages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What inferences about word meaning can you make?</li> <li>• What tone and mood are created by word choice?</li> <li>• What alternate word choices might the author have made?</li> </ul>
Text Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bracket passages that show character growth or development.</li> <li>• Use arrows to indicate how sentences and paragraphs work together to build ideas.</li> <li>• Use a right-facing arrow to indicate foreshadowing.</li> <li>• Use a left-facing arrow to indicate flashback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the text logically structured?</li> <li>• What emotional impact do the structural choices create?</li> </ul>
Author’s Craft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle or highlight instances of repetition, either of words, phrases, consonants, or vowel sounds.</li> <li>• Mark rhythmic beats in poetry using checkmarks and slashes.</li> <li>• Underline instances of symbolism or figurative language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the author’s style enrich or detract from the reading experience?</li> <li>• What levels of meaning are created by the author’s techniques?</li> </ul>

TAKE NOTES

L'Amour starts with "I" perspective but from this point on switches to "we" and "our." Doing so makes it seem as if the writer and reader were of one mind.

From the context clues and the prefix *pre-*, I can infer that *preliminary* means "start-up" or "something that goes before."

This list of facts supports L'Amour's claim about the rapidity with which we can develop the world.

This comment alerts me to the fact that not everyone agrees with L'Amour's ideas. His description of them as nay-sayers (and not as critics) suggests that he belittles their ideas.

At this point in the text, L'Amour defines *frontier* and explains how the notion of a frontier propels exploration.

# The Eternal Frontier

Louis L'Amour

The question I am most often asked is, "Where is the frontier now?"

The answer should be obvious. Our frontier lies in outer space. The moon, the asteroids, the planets, these are mere stepping stones, where we will test ourselves, learn needful lessons, and grow in knowledge before we attempt those frontiers beyond our solar system. Outer space is a frontier without end, the eternal frontier, an everlasting challenge to explorers not [only] of other planets and other solar systems but also of the mind of man.

All that has gone before was preliminary. We have been preparing ourselves mentally for what lies ahead. Many problems remain, but if we can avoid a devastating war we shall move with a rapidity scarcely to be believed. In the past seventy years we have developed the automobile, radio, television, transcontinental and transoceanic flight, and the electrification of the country, among a multitude of other such developments. In 1900 there were 144 miles of surfaced road in the United States. Now there are over 3,000,000. Paved roads and the development of the automobile have gone hand in hand, the automobile being civilized man's antidote to overpopulation.

What is needed now is leaders with perspective; we need leadership on a thousand fronts, but they must be men and women who can take the long view and help to shape the outlines of our future. There will always be the nay-sayers, those who cling to our lovely green planet as a baby clings to its mother, but there will be others like those who have taken us this far along the path to a limitless future.

We are a people born to the frontier. It has been a part of our thinking, waking, and sleeping since men first landed on this continent. The frontier is the line that separates the known from the unknown wherever

it may be, and we have a driving need to see what lies beyond . . .

A few years ago we moved into outer space. We landed men on the moon; we sent a vehicle beyond the limits of the solar system, a vehicle still moving farther and farther into that limitless distance. If our world were to die tomorrow, that tiny vehicle would go on and on forever, carrying its mighty message to the stars. Out there, someone, sometime, would know that once we existed, that we had the vision and we made the effort. Mankind is not bound by its atmospheric envelope or by its gravitational field, nor is the mind of man bound by any limits at all.

One might ask—why outer space, when so much remains to be done here? If that had been the spirit of man we would still be hunters and food gatherers, growling over the bones of carrion in a cave somewhere. It is our destiny to move out, to accept the challenge, to dare the unknown. It is our destiny to achieve.

Yet we must not forget that along the way to outer space whole industries are springing into being that did not exist before. The computer age has arisen in part from the space effort, which gave great impetus? to the development of computing devices. Transistors, chips, integrated circuits, Teflon, new medicines, new ways of treating diseases, new ways of performing operations, all these and a multitude of other developments that enable man to live and to live better are linked to the space effort. Most of these developments have been so incorporated into our day-to-day life that they are taken for granted, their origin not considered.

If we are content to live in the past, we have no future. And today is the past.

### TAKE NOTES

L'Amour uses repetition to stress his points.

This claim is interesting. Just as we are not bound by the physical limits of Earth, our minds should also be free.

Here, L'Amour addresses a possible counterargument.

The word *destiny* is poetic and has more positive connotations than its synonym *fate*. The repeated use of the word emphasizes L'Amour's main claim.

The word *impetus* means "forward motion" or "motivation." By using this technical word along with some other technical words, L'Amour conveys authority.

The final paragraph is short and mysterious. Is L'Amour saying that because we live in the present we have no future?

## TAKE NOTES

The author begins the story with a fairy-tale structure. Based on this, I can infer that this story might involve a moral or lesson.

Context clues help me figure out that a drake is a male duck.

The narrator is a story character, and he knows all the characters' inner thoughts and feelings.

I'm not quite sure what *adorn* means. The context clues "beautiful things" and "manor house and garden" seem to indicate that *adorn* might mean "decorate."

Shozo's comment that the drake will die in captivity might foreshadow the drake's fate.

## from The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks

Katherine Paterson

Long ago and far away in the Land of the Rising Sun, there lived together a pair of mandarin ducks. Now, the drake was a magnificent bird with plumage of colors so rich that the emperor himself would have envied it. But his mate, the duck, wore the quiet tones of the wood, blending exactly with the hole in the tree where the two had made their nest.

One day while the duck was sitting on her eggs, the drake flew down to a nearby pond to search for food. While he was there, a hunting party entered the woods. The hunters were led by the lord of the district, a proud and cruel man who believed that everything in the district belonged to him to do with as he chose. The lord was always looking for beautiful things to adorn his manor house and garden. And when he saw the drake swimming gracefully on the surface of the pond, he determined to capture him.

The lord's chief steward, a man named Shozo, tried to discourage his master. "The drake is a wild spirit, my lord," he said. "Surely he will die in captivity." But the lord pretended not to hear Shozo. Secretly he despised Shozo, because although Shozo had once been his mightiest samurai, the warrior had lost an eye in battle and was no longer handsome to look upon.

The lord ordered his servants to clear a narrow way through the undergrowth and place acorns along the path. When the drake came out of the water he saw the acorns. How pleased he was! He forgot to be cautious, thinking only of what a feast they would be to take home to his mate.

Just as he was bending to pick up an acorn in his scarlet beak, a net fell over him, and the frightened bird was carried back to the lord's manor and placed in a small bamboo cage.

The lord was delighted with his new pet. He ordered a feast to be prepared and invited all the wealthy landowners from miles around, so that he could show off the drake and brag about his wonderful plumage, which was indeed more beautiful than the finest brocade.?

But the drake could think only of his mate sitting alone on her eggs, not knowing what had happened to her husband.

As the days wore on, his crested head began to droop. His lovely feathers lost their luster. His proud, wild cry became first a weary *crank* and then he fell silent. No matter what delicacies the kitchen maid brought him, he refused to eat. He is grieving for his mate, the girl thought, for she was wise in the customs of wild creatures.

[The lord, who liked things only so long as they were beautiful and brought him honor, grew angry when he saw that the drake was ailing. “Perhaps we should let him go,” Shozo suggested, “since he no longer pleases you, my lord.” But the lord did not like anyone to tell him what to do, much less a one-eyed servant.] He refused to release the drake, ordering instead that the cage be put out of sight so that he would no longer be annoyed by the bird’s sad appearance. . . .

### TAKE NOTES

I’m not sure what *brocade* means.

It must be something very fancy and colorful. According to a dictionary, it means “rich cloth with a raised design.”

This short paragraph sets up the next one. Because the drake is grieving, he begins to fade.

These bracketed sentences help illustrate the contrasts between the lord and Shozo. The lord doesn’t care about anyone or anything other than himself. He has no sympathy or respect for the dying bird or for his wounded servant.

In contrast, Shozo cares about the drake and tries to figure out a way to free him.

## TAKE NOTES

The first line is in iambic pentameter and establishes a rhythmic quality.

The first, fifth, and last stanzas have exact end rhyme. This use of rhyme gives the poem a playful quality.

Line 6 is interesting because it has an inverted structure. Normally, someone would say, "whose five languid rays were fingers." Maybe Cummings structured the line this way because "were" sort of rhymes with "star" in the line above.

This simile in line 10 compares a stone with a world, which we usually think of as large, and with alone, which is an abstract feeling. It seems like the speaker is saying that a world can be a small place at times, and the feeling of being alone can seem large and all-encompassing.

# maggie and milly and molly and may

E. E. Cummings

maggie/ and mil/ly and/ molly/ and may  
went down to the beach (to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang  
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles, and

5 milly befriended a stranded star  
whose rays five languid fingers were;

and molly was chased by a horrible thing  
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles: and

may came home with a smooth round stone  
10 as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose (like a you or a me)  
it's always ourselves we find in the sea



# Close Reading Notebook



The following texts are provided in this book for you to mark up as you close read. These texts are also available in the Close Reading Tool (🔍), where you can practice marking the texts digitally.

## UNIT 1

---

### PART 1

🔍 **The Treasure of Lemon Brown** by *Walter Dean Myers* ..... 1

### PART 2

🔍 **Rikki-tikki-tavi** by *Rudyard Kipling* ..... 11

🔍 **The Third Wish** by *Joan Aiken* ..... 26

### PART 3

🔍 **ANCHOR TEXT Amigo Brothers** by *Piri Thomas* ..... 32

🔍 **Win Some, Lose Some** by *Charles Osgood* ..... 42

## UNIT 2

---

### PART 1

🔍 *from* **What Makes a Rembrandt a Rembrandt?** by *Richard Mühlberger* ..... 46

### PART 2

🔍 **Life Without Gravity** by *Robert Zimmerman* ..... 50

🔍 **I Am a Native of North America** by *Chief Dan George* ..... 54

### PART 3

🔍 **ANCHOR TEXT No Gumption** by *Russell Baker* ..... 58

🔍 **A Special Gift—The Legacy of “Snowflake” Bentley** by *Barbara Eaglesham* ..... 66

## UNIT 3

---

### PART 1

🔍 **Maestro** by *Pat Mora* ..... 69

🔍 **The Desert Is My Mother** by *Pat Mora* ..... 70

🔍 **Bailando** by *Pat Mora* ..... 71

### PART 2

🔍 **Winter** by *Nikki Giovanni* ..... 72

🔍 **The Rider** by *Naomi Shihab Nye* ..... 73

🔍 **Seal** by *William Jay Smith* ..... 74








🔍 **Haiku** by *Matsuo Bashō* ..... 75

🔍 **Life** by *Naomi Long Madgett* ..... 76

🔍 **The Courage That My Mother Had** by *Edna St. Vincent Millay* ..... 77

🔍 **Mother to Son** by *Langston Hughes* ..... 78

🔍 **Fog** by *Carl Sandburg* ..... 79

 <b>Train Tune</b> by Louise Bogan .....	80
 <b>Full Fathom Five</b> by William Shakespeare .....	81
 <b>Onomatopoeia</b> by Eve Merriam .....	82
 <b>Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening</b> by Robert Frost .....	83
 <b>Annabel Lee</b> by Edgar Allan Poe .....	84
 <b>Father William</b> by Lewis Carroll .....	86
 <b>Jim</b> by Gwendolyn Brooks .....	88

### PART 3

 <b>ANCHOR TEXT</b> <b>The Highwayman</b> by Alfred Noyes .....	89
 <b>The Real Story of a Cowboy's Life</b> by Geoffrey C. Ward .....	94

## UNIT 4

---

### PART 1

 <b>EXEMPLAR TEXT</b> from the novel <b>Dragonwings</b> by Laurence Yep .....	98
 from the dramatization of <b>Dragonwings</b> by Laurence Yep .....	100

### PART 2

 <b>A Christmas Carol: Scrooge and Marley</b> by Israel Horovitz from <b>A Christmas Carol</b> by Charles Dickens .....	105
---	-----


### PART 3

 <b>ANCHOR TEXT</b> <b>The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street</b> by Rod Serling .....	132
 <b>Joseph R. McCarthy</b> from <i>Prentice Hall United States History</i> .....	152



## UNIT 5

---

### PART 1

 <b>Grasshopper Logic</b> from <b>Squids Will Be Squids</b> by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith ....	155
--	-----

### PART 2

 <b>Demeter and Persephone</b> by Anne Terry White .....	156
 <b>Sun and Moon in a Box</b> by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz .....	160

### PART 3

 <b>ANCHOR TEXT</b> <b>My First Free Summer</b> by Julia Alvarez .....	163
 <b>mk</b> by Jean Fritz .....	167

# The Treasure of Lemon Brown

by Walter Dean Myers

The dark sky, filled with angry, swirling clouds, reflected Greg Ridley's mood as he sat on the stoop of his building. His father's voice came to him again, first reading the letter the principal had sent to the house, then lecturing endlessly about his poor efforts in math.

"I had to leave school when I was thirteen," his father had said, "that's a year younger than you are now. If I'd had half the chances that you have, I'd . . ."

Greg had sat in the small, pale green kitchen listening, knowing the lecture would end with his father saying he couldn't play ball with the Scorpions. He had asked his father the week before, and his father had said it depended on his next report card. It wasn't often the Scorpions took on new players, especially fourteen-year-olds, and this was a chance of a lifetime for Greg. He hadn't been allowed to play high school ball, which he had really wanted to do, but playing for the Community Center team was the next best thing. Report cards were due in a week, and Greg had been hoping for the best. But the principal had ended the suspense early when she sent that letter saying Greg would probably fail math if he didn't spend more time studying.

"And you want to play *basketball*?" His father's brows knitted over deep brown eyes. "That must be some kind of a joke. Now you just get into your room and hit those books."

That had been two nights before. His father's words, like the distant thunder that now echoed through the streets of Harlem, still rumbled softly in his ears.

It was beginning to cool. Gusts of wind made bits of paper dance between the parked cars. There was a flash of nearby lightning, and soon large drops of rain splashed onto his jeans. He stood to go upstairs, thought of the lecture that probably awaited him if he did anything except shut himself in his room with

## TAKE NOTES

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his math book, and started walking down the street instead. Down the block there was an old tenement that had been abandoned for some months. Some of the guys had held an impromptu checker tournament there the week before, and Greg had noticed that the door, once boarded over, had been slightly ajar.

Pulling his collar up as high as he could, he checked for traffic and made a dash across the street. He reached the house just as another flash of lightning changed the night to day for an instant, then returned the graffiti-scarred building to the grim shadows. He vaulted over the outer stairs and pushed tentatively on the door. It was open, and he let himself in.

The inside of the building was dark except for the dim light that filtered through the dirty windows from the streetlamps. There was a room a few feet from the door, and from where he stood at the entrance, Greg could see a squarish patch of light on the floor. He entered the room, frowning at the musty smell. It was a large room that might have been someone’s parlor at one time. Squinting, Greg could see an old table on its side against one wall, what looked like a pile of rags or a torn mattress in the corner, and a couch, with one side broken, in front of the window.

He went to the couch. The side that wasn’t broken was comfortable enough, though a little creaky. From the spot he could see the blinking neon sign over the bodega on the corner. He sat awhile, watching the sign blink first green then red, allowing his mind to drift to the Scorpions, then to his father. His father had been a postal worker for all Greg’s life, and was proud of it, often telling Greg how hard he had worked to pass the test. Greg had heard the story too many times to be interested now.

For a moment Greg thought he heard something that sounded like a scraping against the wall. He listened carefully, but it was gone.

Outside the wind had picked up, sending the rain against the window with a force that shook the glass in its frame. A car passed, its tires hissing over the wet street and its red taillights glowing in the darkness.

Greg thought he heard the noise again. His stomach tightened as he held himself still and listened intently.

There weren't any more scraping noises, but he was sure he had heard something in the darkness—something breathing!

He tried to figure out just where the breathing was coming from; he knew it was in the room with him. Slowly he stood, tensing. As he turned, a flash of lightning lit up the room, frightening him with its sudden brilliance. He saw nothing, just the overturned table, the pile of rags and an old newspaper on the floor. Could he have been imagining the sounds? He continued listening, but heard nothing and thought that it might have just been rats. Still, he thought, as soon as the rain let up he would leave. He went to the window and was about to look when he heard a voice behind him.

“Don't try nothin' 'cause I got a razor here sharp enough to cut a week into nine days!”

Greg, except for an involuntary tremor in his knees, stood stock still. The voice was high and brittle, like dry twigs being broken, surely not one he had ever heard before. There was a shuffling sound as the person who had been speaking moved a step closer. Greg turned, holding his breath, his eyes straining to see in the dark room.

The upper part of the figure before him was still in darkness. The lower half was in the dim rectangle of light that fell unevenly from the window. There were two feet, in cracked, dirty shoes from which rose legs that were wrapped in rags.

“Who are you?” Greg hardly recognized his own voice.

“I'm Lemon Brown,” came the answer. “Who're you?”

“Greg Ridley.”

“What you doing here?” The figure shuffled forward again, and Greg took a small step backward.

“It's raining,” Greg said.

“I can see that,” the figure said.

The person who called himself Lemon Brown peered forward, and Greg could see him clearly. He was an old man.

His black, heavily wrinkled face was surrounded by a halo of crinkly white hair and whiskers that seemed to separate his head from the layers of dirty coats piled

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on his smallish frame. His pants were bagged to the knee, where they were met with rags that went down to the old shoes. The rags were held on with strings, and there was a rope around his middle. Greg relaxed. He had seen the man before, picking through the trash on the corner and pulling clothes out of a Salvation Army box. There was no sign of the razor that could “cut a week into nine days.”

“What are you doing here?” Greg asked.

“This is where I’m staying,” Lemon Brown said.

“What you here for?”

“Told you it was raining out,” Greg said, leaning against the back of the couch until he felt it give slightly.

“Ain’t you got no home?”

“I got a home,” Greg answered.

“You ain’t one of them bad boys looking for my treasure, is you?” Lemon Brown cocked his head to one side and squinted one eye. “Because I told you I got me a razor.”

“I’m not looking for your treasure,” Greg answered, smiling. “If you have one.”

“What you mean, if I have one,” Lemon Brown said. “Every man got a treasure. You don’t know that, you must be a fool!”

“Sure,” Greg said as he sat on the sofa and put one leg over the back. “What do you have, gold coins?”

“Don’t worry none about what I got,” Lemon Brown said. “You know who I am?”

“You told me your name was orange or lemon or something like that.”

“Lemon Brown,” the old man said, pulling back his shoulders as he did so, “they used to call me Sweet Lemon Brown.”

“Sweet Lemon?” Greg asked.

“Yessir. Sweet Lemon Brown. They used to say I sung the blues so sweet that if I sang at a funeral, the dead would commence to rocking with the beat. Used to travel all over Mississippi and as far as Monroe, Louisiana, and east on over to Macon, Georgia. You mean you ain’t never heard of Sweet Lemon Brown?”

"Afraid not," Greg said. "What . . . what happened to you?"

"Hard times, boy. Hard times always after a poor man. One day I got tired, sat down to rest a spell and felt a tap on my shoulder. Hard times caught up with me."

"Sorry about that."

"What you doing here? How come you didn't go on home when the rain come? Rain don't bother you young folks none."

"Just didn't." Greg looked away.

"I used to have a knotty-headed boy just like you." Lemon Brown had half walked, half shuffled back to the corner and sat down against the wall. "Had them big eyes like you got, I used to call them moon eyes. Look into them moon eyes and see anything you want."

"How come you gave up singing the blues?" Greg asked.

"Didn't give it up," Lemon Brown said. "You don't give up the blues; they give you up. After a while you do good for yourself, and it ain't nothing but foolishness singing about how hard you got it. Ain't that right?"

"I guess so."

"What's that noise?" Lemon Brown asked, suddenly sitting upright.

Greg listened, and he heard a noise outside. He looked at Lemon Brown and saw the old man pointing toward the window.

Greg went to the window and saw three men, neighborhood thugs, on the stoop. One was carrying a length of pipe. Greg looked back toward Lemon Brown, who moved quietly across the room to the window. The old man looked out, then beckoned frantically for Greg to follow him. For a moment Greg couldn't move. Then he found himself following Lemon Brown into the hallway and up darkened stairs. Greg followed as closely as he could. They reached the top of the stairs, and Greg felt Lemon Brown's hand first lying on his shoulder, then probing down his arm until he finally took Greg's hand into his own as they crouched in the darkness.

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“They’s bad men,” Lemon Brown whispered. His breath was warm against Greg’s skin.

“Hey! Rag man!” A voice called. “We know you in here. What you got up under them rags? You got any money?”

Silence.

“We don’t want to have to come in and hurt you, old man, but we don’t mind if we have to.”

Lemon Brown squeezed Greg’s hand in his own hard, gnarled fist.

There was a banging downstairs and a light as the men entered. They banged around noisily, calling for the rag man.

“We heard you talking about your treasure.” The voice was slurred.

“We just want to see it, that’s all.”

“You sure he’s here?” One voice seemed to come from the room with the sofa.

“Yeah, he stays here every night.”

“There’s another room over there; I’m going to take a look. You got that flashlight?”

“Yeah, here, take the pipe too.”

Greg opened his mouth to quiet the sound of his breath as he sucked it in uneasily. A beam of light hit the wall a few feet opposite him, then went out.

“Ain’t nobody in that room,” a voice said. “You think he gone or something?”

“I don’t know,” came the answer. “All I know is that I heard him talking about some kind of treasure. You know they found that shopping bag lady with that money in her bags.”

“Yeah. You think he’s upstairs?”

“Hey, old man, are you up there?”

Silence.

“Watch my back, I’m going up.”

There was a footstep on the stairs, and the beam from the flashlight danced crazily along the peeling wallpaper. Greg held his breath. There was another step and a loud crashing noise as the man banged the pipe against the wooden banister. Greg could feel his temples throb as the man slowly neared them. Greg thought about the pipe, wondering what he would do when the man reached them—what he *could* do.

Then Lemon Brown released his hand and moved toward the top of the stairs. Greg looked around and saw stairs going up to the next floor. He tried waving to Lemon Brown, hoping the old man would see him in the dim light and follow him to the next floor. Maybe, Greg thought, the man wouldn't follow them up there. Suddenly, though, Lemon Brown stood at the top of the stairs, both arms raised high above his head.

"There he is!" A voice cried from below.

"Throw down your money, old man, so I won't have to bash your head in!"

Lemon Brown didn't move. Greg felt himself near panic. The steps came closer, and still Lemon Brown didn't move. He was an eerie sight, a bundle of rags standing at the top of the stairs, his shadow on the wall looming over him. Maybe, the thought came to Greg, the scene could be even eerier.

Greg wet his lips, put his hands to his mouth and tried to make a sound. Nothing came out. He swallowed hard, wet his lips once more and howled as evenly as he could.

"What's that?"

As Greg howled, the light moved away from Lemon Brown, but not before Greg saw him hurl his body down the stairs at the men who had come to take his treasure. There was a crashing noise, and then footsteps. A rush of warm air came in as the downstairs door opened, then there was only an ominous silence.

Greg stood on the landing. He listened, and after a while there was another sound on the staircase.

"Mr. Brown?" he called.

"Yeah, it's me," came the answer. "I got their flashlight."

Greg exhaled in relief as Lemon Brown made his way slowly back up the stairs.

"You OK?"

"Few bumps and bruises," Lemon Brown said.

"I think I'd better be going," Greg said, his breath returning to normal. "You'd better leave, too, before they come back."

"They may hang around outside for a while," Lemon Brown said, "but they ain't getting their nerve up to

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## TAKE NOTES

come in here again. Not with crazy old rag men and howling spooks. Best you stay a while till the coast is clear. I'm heading out west tomorrow, out to East St. Louis."

"They were talking about treasures," Greg said. "You *really* have a treasure?"

"What I tell you? Didn't I tell you every man got a treasure?" Lemon Brown said. "You want to see mine?"

"If you want to show it to me," Greg shrugged.

"Let's look out the window first, see what them scoundrels be doing," Lemon Brown said.

They followed the oval beam of the flashlight into one of the rooms and looked out the window. They saw the men who had tried to take the treasure sitting on the curb near the corner. One of them had his pants leg up, looking at his knee.

"You sure you're not hurt?" Greg asked Lemon Brown.

"Nothing that ain't been hurt before," Lemon Brown said.

"When you get as old as me all you say when something hurts is, 'Howdy, Mr. Pain, sees you back again.' Then when Mr. Pain see he can't worry you none, he go on mess with somebody else."

Greg smiled.

"Here, you hold this." Lemon Brown gave Greg the flashlight.

He sat on the floor near Greg and carefully untied the strings that held the rags on his right leg. When he took the rags away, Greg saw a piece of plastic. The old man carefully took off the plastic and unfolded it. He revealed some yellowed newspaper clippings and a battered harmonica.

"There it be," he said, nodding his head. "There it be."

Greg looked at the old man, saw the distant look in his eye, then turned to the clippings. They told of Sweet Lemon Brown, a blues singer and harmonica player who was appearing at different theaters in the South. One of the clippings said he had been the hit of the show, although not the headliner. All of the clippings were reviews of shows Lemon Brown had been in more

than 50 years ago. Greg looked at the harmonica. It was dented badly on one side, with the reed holes on one end nearly closed.

“I used to travel around and make money for to feed my wife and Jesse—that’s my boy’s name. Used to feed them good, too. Then his mama died, and he stayed with his mama’s sister. He grewed up to be a man, and when the war come he saw fit to go off and fight in it. I didn’t have nothing to give him except these things that told him who I was, and what he come from. If you know your pappy did something, you know you can do something too.

“Anyway, he went off to war, and I went off still playing and singing. ‘Course by then I wasn’t as much as I used to be, not without somebody to make it worth the while. You know what I mean?”

“Yeah,” Greg nodded, not quite really knowing.

“I traveled around, and one time I come home, and there was this letter saying Jesse got killed in the war. Broke my heart, it truly did.

“They sent back what he had with him over there, and what it was is this old mouth fiddle and these clippings. Him carrying it around with him like that told me it meant something to him. That was my treasure, and when I give it to him he treated it just like that, a treasure. Ain’t that something?”

“Yeah, I guess so,” Greg said.

“You *guess* so?” Lemon Brown’s voice rose an octave as he started to put his treasure back into the plastic. “Well, you got to guess ‘cause you sure don’t know nothing. Don’t know enough to get home when it’s raining.”

“I guess . . . I mean, you’re right.”

“You OK for a youngster,” the old man said as he tied the strings around his leg, “better than those scalawags what come here looking for my treasure. That’s for sure.”

“You really think that treasure of yours was worth fighting for?” Greg asked. “Against a pipe?”

“What else a man got ‘cepting what he can pass on to his son, or his daughter, if she be his oldest?” Lemon Brown said. “For a big-headed boy you sure do ask the foolishhest questions.”

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Lemon Brown got up after patting his rags in place and looked out the window again.

“Looks like they’re gone. You get on out of here and get yourself home. I’ll be watching from the window so you’ll be all right.”

Lemon Brown went down the stairs behind Greg. When they reached the front door the old man looked out first, saw the street was clear and told Greg to scoot on home.

“You sure you’ll be OK?” Greg asked.

“Now didn’t I tell you I was going to East St. Louis in the morning?” Lemon Brown asked. “Don’t that sound OK to you?”

“Sure it does,” Greg said. “Sure it does. And you take care of that treasure of yours.”

“That I’ll do,” Lemon said, the wrinkles about his eyes suggesting a smile. “That I’ll do.”

The night had warmed and the rain had stopped, leaving puddles at the curbs. Greg didn’t even want to think how late it was. He thought ahead of what his father would say and wondered if he should tell him about Lemon Brown. He thought about it until he reached his stoop, and decided against it. Lemon Brown would be OK, Greg thought, with his memories and his treasure.

Greg pushed the button over the bell marked Ridley, thought of the lecture he knew his father would give him, and smiled.

# Rikki-tikki-tavi

by Rudyard Kipling

## TAKE NOTES

**T**his is the story of the great war that Rikki-tikki-tavi fought, single-handed, through the bathrooms of the big bungalow in Segowlee cantonment.<sup>1</sup> Darzee, the tailorbird bird, helped him, and Chuchundra (*chōō chun' drə*) the muskrat, who never comes out into the middle of the floor, but always creeps round by the wall, gave him advice; but Rikki-tikki did the real fighting.

He was a mongoose, rather like a little cat in his fur and his tail, but quite like a weasel in his head and his habits. His eyes and the end of his restless nose were pink; he could scratch himself anywhere he pleased, with any leg, front or back, that he chose to use; he could fluff up his tail till it looked like a bottle brush, and his war cry as he scuttled through the long grass, was: “*Rikk-tikk-tikki-tikki-tchk!*”

One day, a high summer flood washed him out of the burrow where he lived with his father and mother, and carried him, kicking and clucking, down a roadside ditch. He found a little wisp of grass floating there, and clung to it till he lost his senses. When he revived, he was lying in the hot sun on the middle of a garden path, very draggled<sup>2</sup> indeed, and a small boy was saying: “Here’s a dead mongoose. Let’s have a funeral.”

“No,” said his mother; “let’s take him in and dry him. Perhaps he isn’t really dead.”

They took him into the house, and a big man picked him up between his finger and thumb and said he was not dead but half choked; so they wrapped him in cotton wool, and warmed him, and he opened his eyes and sneezed.

“Now,” said the big man (he was an Englishman who had just moved into the bungalow); “don’t frighten him, and we’ll see what he’ll do.”

1. **Segowlee cantonment** (*sē gou' lē kan tăn' mēnt*) *n.* living quarters for British troops in Segowlee, India.

2. **draggled** (*drag' əld*) *adj.* wet and dirty.

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It is the hardest thing in the world to frighten a mongoose, because he is eaten up from nose to tail with curiosity. The motto of all the mongoose family is, “Run and find out”; and Rikki-tikki was a true mongoose. He looked at the cotton wool, decided that it was not good to eat, ran all round the table, sat up and put his fur in order, scratched himself, and jumped on the small boy’s shoulder.

“Don’t be frightened, Teddy,” said his father. “That’s his way of making friends.”

“Ouch! He’s tickling under my chin,” said Teddy. Rikki-tikki looked down between the boy’s collar and neck, snuffed at his ear, and climbed down to the floor, where he sat rubbing his nose.

“Good gracious,” said Teddy’s mother, “and that’s a wild creature! I suppose he’s so tame because we’ve been kind to him.”

“All mongooses are like that,” said her husband. “If Teddy doesn’t pick him up by the tail, or try to put him in a cage, he’ll run in and out of the house all day long. Let’s give him something to eat.”

They gave him a little piece of raw meat. Rikki-tikki liked it immensely, and when it was finished he went out into the veranda and sat in the sunshine and fluffed up his fur to make it dry to the roots. Then he felt better.

“There are more things to find out about in this house,” he said to himself, “than all my family could find out in all their lives. I shall certainly stay and find out.”

He spent all that day roaming over the house. He nearly drowned himself in the bathtubs, put his nose into the ink on a writing table, and burned it on the end of the big man’s cigar, for he climbed up in the big man’s lap to see how writing was done. At nightfall he ran into Teddy’s nursery to watch how kerosene lamps were lighted, and when Teddy went to bed Rikki-tikki climbed up too; but he was a restless companion, because he had to get up and attend to every noise all through the night, and find out what made it. Teddy’s mother and father came in, the last thing, to look at their boy, and Rikki-tikki was awake on the pillow.

“I don’t like that,” said Teddy’s mother; “he may bite the

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child.” “He’ll do no such thing,” said the father. “Teddy’s safer with that little beast than if he had a bloodhound to watch him. If a snake came into the nursery now—”

But Teddy’s mother wouldn’t think of anything so awful.

Early in the morning Rikki-tikki came to early breakfast in the veranda riding on Teddy’s shoulder, and they gave him banana and some boiled egg; and he sat on all their laps one after the other, because every well-brought-up mongoose always hopes to be a house mongoose some day and have rooms to run about in, and Rikki-tikki’s mother (she used to live in the General’s house at Segowlee) had carefully told Rikki what to do if ever he came across Englishmen.

Then Rikki-tikki went out into the garden to see what was to be seen. It was a large garden, only half cultivated, with bushes as big as summer houses of Marshal Niel roses, lime and orange trees, clumps of bamboos, and thickets of high grass. Rikki-tikki licked his lips. “This is a splendid hunting ground,” he said, and his tail grew bottlebrushy at the thought of it, and he scuttled up and down the garden, snuffing here and there till he heard very sorrowful voices in a thornbush.

It was Darzee, the tailorbird, and his wife. They had made a beautiful nest by pulling two big leaves together and stitching them up the edges with fibers, and had filled the hollow with cotton and downy fluff. The nest swayed to and fro, as they sat on the rim and cried.

“What is the matter?” asked Rikki-tikki.

“We are very miserable,” said Darzee. “One of our babies fell out of the nest yesterday and Nag ate him.”

“H’m!” said Rikki-tikki, “that is very sad—but I am a stranger here. Who is Nag?”

Darzee and his wife only cowered down in the nest without answering, for from the thick grass at the foot of the bush there came a low hiss—a horrid cold sound that made Rikki-tikki jump back two clear feet. Then inch by inch out of the grass rose up the head and spread hood of Nag, the big black cobra, and he was five feet long from tongue to tail. When

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he had lifted one third of himself clear of the ground, he stayed balancing to and fro exactly as a dandelion tuft balances in the wind, and he looked at Rikki-tikki with the wicked snake's eyes that never change their expression, whatever the snake may be thinking of. ●

"Who is Nag?" he said. "I am Nag. The great god Brahm<sup>3</sup> put his mark upon all our people when the first cobra spread his hood to keep the sun off Brahm . . . as he slept. Look, and be afraid!"

He spread out his hood more than ever, and Rikki-tikki saw the spectacle mark on the back of it that looks exactly like the eye part of a hook-and-eye fastening. He was afraid for the minute; but it is impossible for a mongoose to stay frightened for any length of time, and though Rikki-tikki had never met a live cobra before, his mother had fed him on dead ones, and he knew that all a grown mongoose's business in life was to fight and eat snakes. Nag knew that too, and at the bottom of his cold heart he was afraid.

"Well," said Rikki-tikki, and his tail began to fluff up again, "marks or no marks, do you think it is right for you to eat fledglings out of a nest?"

Nag was thinking to himself, and watching the least little movement in the grass behind Rikki-tikki. He knew that mongooses in the garden meant death sooner or later for him and his family; but he wanted to get Rikki-tikki off his guard. So he dropped his head a little, and put it on one side.

"Let us talk," he said. "You eat eggs. Why should not I eat birds?"

"Behind you! Look behind you!" sang Darzee.

Rikki-tikki knew better than to waste time in staring. He jumped up in the air as high as he could go, and just under him whizzed by the head of Nagaina (nə ɡɪˈnə), Nag's wicked wife. She had crept up behind him as he was talking, to make an end of him; and he heard her savage hiss as the stroke missed. He came down almost across her back, and if he had been an old mongoose he would have known that then was the time to break her back with one bite; but he was afraid of the terrible lashing return stroke of the cobra. He bit, indeed, but did not bite long enough, and he

3. **Brahm** (bräm) short for Brahma, the name of the chief god in the Hindu religion.

jumped clear of the whisking tail, leaving Nagaina torn and angry.

“Wicked, wicked Darzee!” said Nag, lashing up high as he could reach toward the nest in the thornbush; but Darzee had built it out of reach of snakes; and it only swayed to and fro. Rikki-tikki felt his eyes growing red and hot (when a mongoose’s eyes grow red, he is angry), and he sat back on his tail and hind legs like a little kangaroo, and looked all around him, and chattered with rage. But Nag and Nagaina had disappeared into the grass. When a snake misses its stroke, it never says anything or gives any sign of what it means to do next. Rikki-tikki did not care to follow them, for he did not feel sure that he could manage two snakes at once. So he trotted off to the gravel path near the house, and sat down to think. It was a serious matter for him. ●

If you read the old books of natural history, you will find they say that when the mongoose fights the snake and happens to get bitten, he runs off and eats some herb that cures him. That is not true. The victory is only a matter of quickness of eye and quickness of foot—snake’s blow against mongoose’s jump—and as no eye can follow the motion of a snake’s head when it strikes, that makes things much more wonderful than any magic herb. Rikki-tikki knew he was a young mongoose, and it made him all the more pleased to think that he had managed to escape a blow from behind. It gave him confidence in himself, and when Teddy came running down the path, Rikki-tikki was ready to be petted.

But just as Teddy was stooping, something flinched a little in the dust, and a tiny voice said: “Be careful. I am death!” It was Karait (kə rīt’), the dusty brown snakeling that lies for choice on the dusty earth; and his bite is as dangerous as the cobra’s. But he is so small that nobody thinks of him, and so he does the more harm to people. ●

Rikki-tikki’s eyes grew red again, and he danced up to Karait with the peculiar rocking, swaying motion that he had inherited from his family. It looks very funny, but it is so perfectly balanced a gait that you can fly off from it at any angle you please; and in

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dealing with snakes this is an advantage. If Rikki-tikki had only known, he was doing a much more dangerous thing than fighting Nag, for Karait is so small, and can turn so quickly, that unless Rikki bit him close to the back of the head, he would get the return stroke in his eye or lip. But Rikki did not know: his eyes were all red, and he rocked back and forth, looking for a good place to hold. Karait struck out. Rikki jumped sideways and tried to run in, but the wicked little dusty gray head lashed within a fraction of his shoulder, and he had to jump over the body, and the head followed his heels close.

Teddy shouted to the house: “Oh, look here! Our mongoose is killing a snake”; and Rikki-tikki heard a scream from Teddy’s mother. His father ran out with a stick, but by the time he came up, Karait had lunged out once too far, and Rikki-tikki had sprung, jumped on the snake’s back, dropped his head far between his fore legs, bitten as high up the back as he could get hold, and rolled away. That bite paralyzed Karait, and Rikki-tikki was just going to eat him up from the tail, after the custom of his family at dinner, when he remembered that a full meal makes a slow mongoose, and if he wanted all his strength and quickness ready, he must keep himself thin.

He went away for a dust bath under the castor-oil bushes, while Teddy’s father beat the dead Karait. “What is the use of that?” thought Rikki-tikki. “I have settled it all”; and then Teddy’s mother picked him up from the dust and hugged him, crying that he had saved Teddy from death, and Teddy’s father said that he was a providence,<sup>4</sup> and Teddy looked on with big scared eyes. Rikki-tikki was rather amused at all the fuss, which, of course, he did not understand. Teddy’s mother might just as well have petted Teddy for playing in the dust. Rikki was thoroughly enjoying himself.

That night, at dinner, walking to and fro among the wineglasses on the table, he could have stuffed himself three times over with nice things; but he remembered Nag and Nagaina, and though it was very pleasant to be patted and petted by Teddy’s mother, and to sit on Teddy’s shoulder, his eyes would get red from time

4. a **providence** (prəv' ə dɛns) *n.* a godsend; a valuable gift.

to time, and he would go off into his long war cry of “Rikk-tikk-tikki-tikki-tchk!”

Teddy carried him off to bed, and insisted on Rikki-tikki sleeping under his chin. Rikki-tikki was too well bred to bite or scratch, but as soon as Teddy was asleep he went off for his nightly walk round the house, and in the dark he ran up against Chuchundra the muskrat, creeping round by the wall. Chuchundra is a brokenhearted little beast. He whimpers and cheeps all the night, trying to make up his mind to run into the middle of the room, but he never gets there.

“Don’t kill me,” said Chuchundra, almost weeping. “Rikki-tikki don’t kill me.”

“Do you think a snake-killer kills muskrats?” said Rikki-tikki scornfully.

“Those who kill snakes get killed by snakes,” said Chuchundra, more sorrowfully than ever. “And how am I to be sure that Nag won’t mistake me for you some dark night?”

“There’s not the least danger,” said Rikki-tikki; “but Nag is in the garden, and I know you don’t go there.”

“My cousin Chua, the rat, told me—” said Chuchundra, and then he stopped.

“Told you what?”

“H’sh! Nag is everywhere, Rikki-tikki. You should have talked to Chua in the garden.”

“I didn’t—so you must tell me. Quick, Chuchundra, or I’ll bite you!”

Chuchundra sat down and cried till the tears rolled off his whiskers. “I am a very poor man,” he sobbed. “I never had spirit enough to run out into the middle of the room. H’sh! I mustn’t tell you anything. Can’t you hear, Rikki-tikki?”

Rikki-tikki listened. The house was as still as still, but he thought he could just catch the faintest *scratch-scratch* in the world—a noise as faint as that of a wasp walking on a windowpane—the dry scratch of a snake’s scales on brickwork.

“That’s Nag or Nagaina,” he said to himself; “and he is crawling into the bathroom sluice.<sup>5</sup> You’re right, Chuchundra; I should have talked to Chua.”

TAKE NOTES

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

5. sluice (slōōs) n. drain.

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He stole off to Teddy's bathroom, but there was nothing there, and then to Teddy's mother's bathroom. At the bottom of the smooth plaster wall there was a brick pulled out to make a sluice for the bath water, and as Rikki-tikki stole in by the masonry curb where the bath is put, he heard Nag and Nagaina whispering together outside in the moonlight.

"When the house is emptied of people," said Nagaina to her husband, "*he* will have to go away, and then the garden will be our own again. Go in quietly, and remember that the big man who killed Karait is the first one to bite. Then come out and tell me, and we will hunt for Rikki-tikki together."

"But are you sure that there is anything to be gained by killing the people?" said Nag.

"Everything. When there were no people in the bungalow, did we have any mongoose in the garden? So long as the bungalow is empty, we are king and queen of the garden; and remember that as soon as our eggs in the melon bed hatch (as they may tomorrow), our children will need room and quiet."

"I had not thought of that," said Nag. "I will go, but there is no need that we should hunt for Rikki-tikki afterward. I will kill the big man and his wife, and the child if I can, and come away quietly. Then the bungalow will be empty, and Rikki-tikki will go."

Rikki-tikki tingled all over with rage and hatred at this, and then Nag's head came through the sluice, and his five feet of cold body followed it. Angry as he was, Rikki-tikki was very frightened as he saw the size of the big cobra. Nag coiled himself up, raised his head, and looked into the bathroom in the dark, and Rikki could see his eyes glitter.

"Now, if I kill him here, Nagaina will know;—and if I fight him on the open floor, the odds are in his favor. What am I to do?" said Rikki-tikki-tavi.

Nag waved to and fro, and then Rikki-tikki heard him drinking from the biggest water jar that was used to fill the bath. "That is good," said the snake. "Now, when Karait was killed, the big man had a stick. He may have that stick still, but when he comes in to bathe in the morning he will not have a stick. I shall wait here till he comes. Nagaina—do you hear me?—I shall wait here in the cool till daytime."

There was no answer from outside, so Rikki-tikki knew Nagaina had gone away. Nag coiled himself down, coil by coil, round the bulge at the bottom of the water jar, and Rikki-tikki stayed still as death. After an hour he began to move, muscle by muscle, toward the jar. Nag was asleep, and Rikki-tikki looked at his big back, wondering which would be the best place for a good hold. “If I don’t break his back at the first jump,” said Rikki, “he can still fight; and if he fights—O Rikki!” He looked at the thickness of the neck below the hood, but that was too much for him; and a bite near the tail would only make Nag savage.

“It must be the head,” he said at last; “the head above the hood; and, when I am once there, I must not let go.”

Then he jumped. The head was lying a little clear of the water jar, under the curve of it; and, as his teeth met, Rikki braced his back against the bulge of the red earthenware to hold down the head. This gave him just one second’s purchase,<sup>6</sup> and he made the most of it. Then he was battered to and fro as a rat is shaken by a dog—to and fro on the floor, up and down, and round in great circles: but his eyes were red, and he held on as the body cart-whipped over the floor, upsetting the tin dipper and the soap dish and the fleshbrush, and banged against the tin side of the bath. As he held he closed his jaws tighter and tighter, for he made sure he would be banged to death, and, for the honor of his family, he preferred to be found with his teeth locked. He was dizzy, aching, and felt shaken to pieces when something went off like a thunderclap just behind him; a hot wind knocked him senseless and red fire singed his fur. The big man had been wakened by the noise, and had fired both barrels of a shotgun into Nag just behind the hood.

Rikki-tikki held on with his eyes shut, for now he was quite sure he was dead; but the head did not move, and the big man picked him up and said: “It’s the mongoose again, Alice; the little chap has saved *our* lives now.” Then Teddy’s mother came in with a very white face, and saw what was left of Nag, and Rikki-tikki dragged himself to Teddy’s bedroom

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6. **purchase** (pər' chəs) *n.* firm hold.

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and spent half the rest of the night shaking himself tenderly to find out whether he really was broken into forty pieces, as he fancied. ●

When morning came he was very stiff, but well pleased with his doings. "Now I have Nagaina to settle with, and she will be worse than five Nags, and there's no knowing when the eggs she spoke of will hatch. Goodness! I must go and see Darzee," he said.

Without waiting for breakfast, Rikki-tikki ran to the thornbush where Darzee was singing a song of triumph at the top of his voice. The news of Nag's death was all over the garden, for the sweeper had thrown the body on the rubbish heap.

"Oh, you stupid tuft of feathers!" said Rikki-tikki, angrily. "Is this the time to sing?"

"Nag is dead—is dead—is dead!" sang Darzee. "The valiant Rikki-tikki caught him by the head and held fast. The big man brought the bang-stick and Nag fell in two pieces! He will never eat my babies again."

"All that's true enough; but where's Nagaina?" said Rikki-tikki, looking carefully round him.

"Nagaina came to the bathroom sluice and called for Nag," Darzee went on; "and Nag came out on the end of a stick—the sweeper picked him up on the end of a stick and threw him upon the rubbish heap. Let us sing about the great, the red-eyed Rikki-tikki!" and Darzee filled his throat and sang.

"If I could get up to your nest, I'd roll all your babies out!" said Rikki-tikki. "You don't know when to do the right thing at the right time. You're safe enough in your nest there, but it's war for me down here. Stop singing a minute, Darzee."

"For the great, the beautiful Rikki-tikki's sake, I will stop," said Darzee. "What is it, O Killer of the terrible Nag!"

"Where is Nagaina, for the third time?"

"On the rubbish heap by the stables, mourning for Nag. Great is Rikki-tikki with the white teeth."

"Bother my white teeth! Have you ever heard where she keeps her eggs?"

"In the melon bed, on the end nearest the wall, where the sun strikes nearly all day. She had them there weeks ago."

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TAKE NOTES

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

melons, very cunningly hidden, he found twenty-five eggs, about the size of a bantam’s eggs,<sup>7</sup> but with whitish skin instead of shell.

“I was not a day too soon,” he said; for he could see the baby cobras curled up inside the skin, and he knew that the minute they were hatched they could each kill a man or a mongoose. He bit off the tops of the eggs as fast as he could, taking care to crush the young cobras, and turned over the litter from time to time to see whether he had missed any. At last there were only three eggs left, and Rikki-tikki began to chuckle to himself, when he heard Darzee’s wife screaming:

“Rikki-tikki, I led Nagaina toward the house, and she has gone into the veranda, and—oh, come quickly—she means killing!”

Rikki-tikki smashed two eggs, and tumbled backward down the melon bed with the third egg in his mouth, and scuttled to the veranda as hard as he could put foot to the ground. Teddy and his mother and father were there at early breakfast; but Rikki-tikki saw that they were not eating anything. They sat stone-still, and their faces were white. Nagaina was coiled up on the matting by Teddy’s chair, within easy striking distance of Teddy’s bare leg, and she was swaying to and fro singing a song of triumph.

“Son of the big man that killed Nag,” she hissed, “stay still. I am not ready yet. Wait a little. Keep very still, all you three. If you move I strike, and if you do not move I strike, Oh, foolish people, who killed my Nag!”

Teddy’s eyes were fixed on his father, and all his father could do was to whisper, “Sit still, Teddy. You mustn’t move. Teddy, keep still.”

Then Rikki-tikki came up and cried: “Turn round, Nagaina; turn and fight!”

“All in good time,” said she, without moving her eyes. “I will settle my account with *you* presently. Look at your friends, Rikki-tikki. They are still and white; they are afraid. They dare not move, and if you come a step nearer I strike.”

“Look at your eggs,” said Rikki-tikki, “in the melon bed near the wall. Go and look, Nagaina.”

7. bantam’s (ban´ tэмz) eggs n. eggs of a small chicken.

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The big snake turned half round, and saw the egg on the veranda. "Ah-h! Give it to me," she said.

Rikki-tikki put his paws one on each side of the egg, and his eyes were blood-red. "What price for a snake's egg? For a young cobra? For a young king cobra? For the last—the very last of the brood? The ants are eating all the others down by the melon bed."

Nagaina spun clear round, forgetting everything for the sake of the one egg; and Rikki-tikki saw Teddy's father shoot out a big hand, catch Teddy by the shoulder, and drag him across the little table with the teacups, safe and out of reach of Nagaina.

"Tricked! Tricked! Tricked! *Rikk-tck-tck!*" chuckled Rikki-tikki. "The boy is safe, and it was I—I—I that caught Nag by the hood last night in the bathroom." Then he began to jump up and down, all four feet together, his head close to the floor. "He threw me to and fro, but he could not shake me off. He was dead before the big man blew him in two. I did it. *Rikki-tikki-tck-tck!* Come then, Nagaina. Come and fight with me. You shall not be a widow long."

Nagaina saw that she had lost her chance of killing Teddy, and the egg lay between Rikki-tikki's paws. "Give me the egg, Rikki-tikki. Give me the last of my eggs, and I will go away and never come back," she said, lowering her hood.

"Yes, you will go away, and you will never come back; for you will go to the rubbish heap with Nag. Fight, widow! The big man has gone for his gun! Fight!"

Rikki-tikki was bounding all round Nagaina, keeping just out of reach of her stroke, his little eyes like hot coals. Nagaina gathered herself together, and flung out at him. Rikki-tikki jumped up and backward. Again and again and again she struck, and each time her head came with a whack on the matting of the veranda and she gathered herself together like a watchspring. Then Rikki-tikki danced in a circle to get behind her, and Nagaina spun round to keep her head to his head, so that the rustle of her tail on the matting sounded like dry leaves blown along by the wind. •

He had forgotten the egg. It still lay on the veranda, and Nagaina came nearer and nearer to it, till at last, while Rikki-tikki was drawing breath, she caught it

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in her mouth, turned to the veranda steps, and flew like an arrow down the path, with Rikki-tikki behind her. When the cobra runs for her life, she goes like a whiplash flicked across a horse's neck.

Rikki-tikki knew that he must catch her, or all the trouble would begin again. She headed straight for the long grass by the thornbush, and as he was running Rikki-tikki heard Darzee still singing his foolish little song of triumph. But Darzee's wife was wiser. She flew off her nest as Nagaina came along, and flapped her wings about Nagaina's head. If Darzee had helped they might have turned her; but Nagaina only lowered her hood and went on. Still, the instant's delay brought Rikki-tikki up to her, and as she plunged into the rat hole where she and Nag used to live, his little white teeth were clenched on her tail, and he went down with her—and very few mongooses, however wise and old they may be, care to follow a cobra into its hole. It was dark in the hole; and Rikki-tikki never knew when it might open out and give Nagaina room to turn and strike at him. He held on savagely, and struck out his feet to act as brakes on the dark slope of the hot, moist earth.

Then the grass by the mouth of the hole stopped waving, and Darzee said: "It is all over with Rikki-tikki! We must sing his death song. Valiant Rikki-tikki is dead! For Nagaina will surely kill him underground."

So he sang a very mournful song that he made up all on the spur of the minute, and just as he got to the most touching part the grass quivered again, and Rikki-tikki, covered with dirt, dragged himself out of the hole leg by leg, licking his whiskers. Darzee stopped with a little shout. Rikki-tikki shook some of the dust out of his fur and sneezed. "It is all over," he said. "The widow will never come out again." And the red ants that live between the grass stems heard him, and began to troop down one after another to see if he had spoken the truth.

Rikki-tikki curled himself up in the grass and slept where he was—slept and slept till it was late in the afternoon, for he had done a hard day's work.

“Now,” he said, when he awoke, “I will go back to the house. Tell the Coppersmith, Darzee, and he will tell the garden that Nagaina is dead.”

The Coppersmith is a bird who makes a noise exactly like the beating of a little hammer on a copper pot; and the reason he is always making it is because he is the town crier to every Indian garden, and tells all the news to everybody who cares to listen. As Rikki-tikki went up the path, he heard his “attention” notes like a tiny dinner gong; and then the steady “*Ding-dong-tock!* Nag is dead—*dong!* Nagaina is dead! *Ding-dong-tock!*” That set all the birds in the garden singing, and the frogs croaking; for Nag and Nagaina used to eat frogs as well as little birds.

When Rikki got to the house, Teddy and Teddy’s mother and Teddy’s father came out and almost cried over him; and that night he ate all that was given him till he could eat no more, and went to bed on Teddy’s shoulder, where Teddy’s mother saw him when she came to look late at night.

“He saved our lives and Teddy’s life,” she said to her husband. “Just think, he saved all our lives.”

Rikki-tikki woke up with a jump, for all the mongooses are light sleepers.

“Oh, it’s you,” said he. “What are you bothering for? All the cobras are dead; and if they weren’t, I’m here.”

Rikki-tikki had a right to be proud of himself; but he did not grow too proud, and he kept that garden as a mongoose should keep it, with tooth and jump and spring and bite, till never a cobra dared show its head inside the walls.

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# The Third Wish

by Joan Aiken

Once there was a man who was driving in his car at dusk on a spring evening through part of the forest of Savernake. His name was Mr. Peters. The primroses were just beginning but the trees were still bare, and it was cold; the birds had stopped singing an hour ago.

As Mr. Peters entered a straight, empty stretch of road he seemed to hear a faint crying, and a struggling and thrashing, as if somebody was in trouble far away in the trees. He left his car and climbed the mossy bank beside the road. Beyond the bank was an open slope of beech trees leading down to thorn bushes through which he saw the gleam of water. He stood a moment waiting to try and discover where the noise was coming from, and presently heard a rustling and some strange cries in a voice which was almost human—and yet there was something too hoarse about it at one time and too clear and sweet at another. Mr. Peters ran down the hill and as he neared the bushes he saw something white among them which was trying to extricate<sup>1</sup> itself; coming closer he found that it was a swan that had become entangled in the thorns growing on the bank of the canal.

The bird struggled all the more frantically as he approached, looking at him with hate in its yellow eyes, and when he took hold of it to free it, it hissed at him, pecked him, and thrashed dangerously with its wings which were powerful enough to break his arm. Nevertheless he managed to release it from the thorns, and carrying it tightly with one arm, holding the snaky head well away with the other hand (for he did not wish his eyes pecked out), he took it to the verge of the canal and dropped it in.

The swan instantly assumed great dignity and sailed out to the middle of the water, where it put itself to rights with much dabbling and preening, smoothing its

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1. **extricate** (eks' tri kāt') v. set free.

feathers with little showers of drops. Mr. Peters waited, to make sure that it was all right and had suffered no damage in its struggles. Presently the swan, when it was satisfied with its appearance, floated in to the bank once more, and in a moment, instead of the great white bird, there was a little man all in green with a golden crown and long beard, standing by the water. He had fierce glittering eyes and looked by no means friendly.

“Well, Sir,” he said threateningly, “I see you are presumptuous enough to know some of the laws of magic. You think that because you have rescued—by pure good fortune—the King of the Forest from a difficulty, you should have some fabulous reward.”

“I expect three wishes, no more and no less,” answered Mr. Peters, looking at him steadily and with composure.<sup>2</sup>

“Three wishes, he wants, the clever man! Well, I have yet to hear of the human being who made any good use of his three wishes—they mostly end up worse off than they started. Take your three wishes then”—he flung three dead leaves in the air—“don’t blame me if you spend the last wish in undoing the work of the other two.”

Mr. Peters caught the leaves and put two of them carefully in his briefcase. When he looked up, the swan was sailing about in the middle of the water again, flicking the drops angrily down its long neck.

Mr. Peters stood for some minutes reflecting on how he should use his reward. He knew very well that the gift of three magic wishes was one which brought trouble more often than not, and he had no intention of being like the forester who first wished by mistake for a sausage, and then in a rage wished it on the end of his wife’s nose, and then had to use his last wish in getting it off again. Mr. Peters had most of the things which he wanted and was very content with his life. The only thing that troubled him was that he was a little lonely, and had no companion for his old age. He decided to use his first wish and to keep the other two in case of an emergency. Taking a thorn he pricked his tongue with it, to remind himself not to utter rash

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2. **composure** (kəm pōˈ zher) *n.* calmness of mind.

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wishes aloud. Then holding the third leaf and gazing round him at the dusky undergrowth, the primroses, great beeches and the blue-green water of the canal, he said:

"I wish I had a wife as beautiful as the forest."

A tremendous quacking and splashing broke out on the surface of the water. He thought that it was the swan laughing at him. Taking no notice he made his way through the darkening woods to his car, wrapped himself up in the rug and went to sleep.

When he awoke it was morning and the birds were beginning to call. Coming along the track towards him was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen, with eyes as blue-green as the canal, hair as dusky as the bushes, and skin as white as the feathers of swans.

"Are you the wife that I wished for?" asked Mr. Peters.

"Yes, I am," she replied. "My name is Leita."

She stepped into the car beside him and they drove off to the church on the outskirts of the forest, where they were married. Then he took her to his house in a remote and lovely valley and showed her all his treasures—the bees in their white hives, the Jersey cows, the hyacinths, the silver candlesticks, the blue cups and the luster bowl for putting primroses in. She admired everything, but what pleased her most was the river which ran by the foot of his garden.

"Do swans come up there?" she asked.

"Yes, I have often seen swans there on the river," he told her, and she smiled.

Leita made him a good wife. But as time went by Mr. Peters began to feel that she was not happy. She seemed restless, wandered much in the garden, and sometimes when he came back from the fields he would find the house empty and she would return after half an hour or so with no explanation of where she had been. On these occasions she was always especially tender and would put out his slippers to warm and cook his favorite dish—Welsh rarebit<sup>3</sup> with wild strawberries—for supper.

One evening he was returning home along the river path when he saw Leita in front of him, down by the water. A swan had sailed up to the verge and she had

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3. **Welsh rarebit** a dish of melted cheese served on crackers or toast.

her arms round its neck and the swan’s head rested against her cheek. She was weeping, and as he came nearer he saw that tears were rolling, too, from the swan’s eyes.

“Leita, what is it?” he asked, very troubled.

“This is my sister,” she answered. “I can’t bear being separated from her.”

Now he understood that Leita was really a swan from the forest, and this made him very sad because when a human being marries a bird it always leads to sorrow.

“I could use my second wish to give your sister human shape, so that she could be a companion to you,” he suggested.

“No, no,” she cried, “I couldn’t ask that of her.”

“Is it so very hard to be a human being?” asked Mr. Peters sadly.

“Very, very hard,” she answered.

“Don’t you love me at all, Leita?”

“Yes, I do, I do love you,” she said, and there were tears in her eyes again. “But I miss the old life in the forest, the cool grass and the mist rising off the river at sunrise and the feel of the water sliding over my feathers as my sister and I drifted along the stream.”

“Then shall I use my second wish to turn you back into a swan again?” he asked, and his tongue pricked to remind him of the old King’s words, and his heart swelled with grief inside him.

“Who will take care of you?”

“I’d do it myself as I did before I married you,” he said, trying to sound cheerful.

She shook her head. “No, I could not be as unkind to you as that. I am partly a swan, but I am also partly a human being now. I will stay with you.”

Poor Mr. Peters was very distressed on his wife’s account and did his best to make her life happier, taking her for drives in the car, finding beautiful music for her to listen to on the radio, buying clothes for her and even suggesting a trip round the world. But she said no to that; she would prefer to stay in their own house near the river.

He noticed that she spent more and more time baking wonderful cakes—jam puffs, petits fours, éclairs and meringues. One day he saw her take a

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basketful down to the river and he guessed that she was giving them to her sister.

He built a seat for her by the river, and the two sisters spent hours together there, communicating in some wordless manner. For a time he thought that all would be well, but then he saw how thin and pale she was growing.

One night when he had been late doing the accounts he came up to bed and found her weeping in her sleep and calling:

“Rhea! Rhea! I can’t understand what you say! Oh, wait for me, take me with you!”

Then he knew that it was hopeless and she would never be happy as a human. He stooped down and kissed her goodbye, then took another leaf from his notecase, blew it out of the window, and used up his second wish.

Next moment instead of Leita there was a sleeping swan lying across the bed with its head under its wing. He carried it out of the house and down to the brink of the river, and then he said, “Leita! Leita!” to waken her, and gently put her into the water. She gazed round her in astonishment for a moment, and then came up to him and rested her head lightly against his hand; next instant she was flying away over the trees towards the heart of the forest.

He heard a harsh laugh behind him, and turning round saw the old King looking at him with a malicious expression.

“Well, my friend! You don’t seem to have managed so wonderfully with your first two wishes, do you? What will you do with the last? Turn yourself into a swan? Or turn Leita back into a girl?”

“I shall do neither,” said Mr. Peters calmly. “Human beings and swans are better in their own shapes.”

But for all that he looked sadly over towards the forest where Leita had flown, and walked slowly back to his house.

Next day he saw two swans swimming at the bottom of the garden, and one of them wore the gold chain he had given Leita after their marriage; she came up and rubbed her head against his hand.

Mr. Peters and his two swans came to be well known in that part of the country; people used to say that he talked to swans and they understood him as well as his neighbors. Many people were a little frightened of him. There was a story that once when thieves tried to break into his house they were set upon by two huge white birds which carried them off bodily and dropped them in the river.

As Mr. Peters grew old everyone wondered at his contentment. Even when he was bent with rheumatism<sup>4</sup> he would not think of moving to a drier spot, but went slowly about his work, with the two swans always somewhere close at hand.

Sometimes people who knew his story would say to him:

“Mr. Peters, why don’t you wish for another wife?”

“Not likely,” he would answer serenely. “Two wishes were enough for me, I reckon. I’ve learned that even if your wishes are granted they don’t always better you. I’ll stay faithful to Leita.”

One autumn night, passers-by along the road heard the mournful sound of two swans singing. All night the song went on, sweet and harsh, sharp and clear. In the morning Mr. Peters was found peacefully dead in his bed with a smile of great happiness on his face. In his hands, which lay clasped on his breast, were a withered leaf and a white feather.

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4. **rheumatism** (roo’ mə tiz’ əm) *n.* pain and stiffness of the joints and muscles.

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# Amigo Brothers

by Piri Thomas

**A**ntonio Cruz and Felix Vargas were both seventeen years old. They were so together in friendship that they felt themselves to be brothers. They had known each other since childhood, growing up on the lower east side of Manhattan in the same tenement building on Fifth Street between Avenue A and Avenue B.

Antonio was fair, lean, and lanky, while Felix was dark, short, and husky. Antonio's hair was always falling over his eyes, while Felix wore his black hair in a natural Afro style.

Each youngster had a dream of someday becoming lightweight champion of the world. Every chance they had the boys worked out, sometimes at the Boys Club on 10th Street and Avenue A and sometimes at the pro's gym on 14th Street. Early morning sunrises would find them running along the East River Drive, wrapped in sweat shirts, short towels around their necks, and handkerchiefs Apache style around their foreheads.

While some youngsters were into street negatives, Antonio and Felix slept, ate, rapped, and dreamt positive. Between them, they had a collection of *Fight* magazines second to none, plus a scrapbook filled with torn tickets to every boxing match they had ever attended, and some clippings of their own. If asked a question about any given fighter, they would immediately zip out from their memory banks divisions, weights, records of fights, knock-outs, technical knock-outs, and draws or losses.

Each had fought many bouts representing their community and had won two gold-plated medals plus a silver and bronze medallion. The difference was in their style. Antonio's lean form and long reach made him the better boxer, while Felix's short and muscular frame made him the better slugger. Whenever they had

met in the ring for sparring sessions, it had always been hot and heavy.

Now, after a series of elimination bouts, they had been informed that they were to meet each other in the division finals that were scheduled for the seventh of August, two weeks away—the winner to represent the Boys Club in the Golden Gloves Championship Tournament.

The two boys continued to run together along the East River Drive. But even when joking with each other, they both sensed a wall rising between them.

One morning less than a week before their bout, they met as usual for their daily work-out. They fooled around with a few jabs at the air, slapped skin, and then took off, running lightly along the dirty East River’s edge.

Antonio glanced at Felix who kept his eyes purposely straight ahead, pausing from time to time to do some fancy leg work while throwing one-twos followed by upper cuts to an imaginary jaw. Antonio then beat the air with a barrage of body blows and short devastating lefts with an overhand jaw-breaking right. After a mile or so, Felix puffed and said, “Let’s stop a while, bro. I think we both got something to say to each other.”

Antonio nodded. It was not natural to be acting as though nothing unusual was happening when two ace-boon buddies were going to be blasting each other within a few short days.

They rested their elbows on the railing separating them from the river. Antonio wiped his face with his short towel. The sunrise was now creating day.

Felix leaned heavily on the river’s railing and stared across to the shores of Brooklyn. Finally, he broke the silence.

“Man, I don’t know how to come out with it.”

Antonio helped. “It’s about our fight, right?”

“Yeah, right.” Felix’s eyes squinted at the rising orange sun.

“I’ve been thinking about it too, *panín*. In fact, since we found out it was going to be me and you, I’ve been awake at night, pulling punches on you, trying not to hurt you.”

“Same here. It ain’t natural not to think about the fight. I mean, we both are *cheverote* fighters and we

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both want to win. But only one of us can win. There ain't no draws in the eliminations."

Felix tapped Antonio gently on the shoulder. "I don't mean to sound like I'm bragging, bro. But I wanna win, fair and square."

Antonio nodded quietly. "Yeah. We both know that in the ring the better man wins. Friend or no friend, brother or no . . ."

Felix finished it for him. "Brother. Tony, let's promise something right here. Okay?"

"If it's fair, *hermano*, I'm for it." Antonio admired the courage of a tugboat pulling a barge five times its welterweight size.

"It's fair, Tony. When we get into the ring, it's gotta be like we never met. We gotta be like two heavy strangers that want the same thing and only one can have it. You understand, don'tcha?"

"Sí, I know." Tony smiled. "No pulling punches. We go all the way."

"Yeah, that's right. Listen, Tony. Don't you think it's a good idea if we don't see each other until the day of the fight? I'm going to stay with my Aunt Lucy in the Bronx. I can use Gleason's Gym for working out. My manager says he got some sparring partners with more or less your style."

Tony scratched his nose pensively. "Yeah, it would be better for our heads." He held out his hand, palm upward. "Deal?"

"Deal." Felix lightly slapped open skin.

"Ready for some more running?" Tony asked lamely.

"Naw, bro. Let's cut it here. You go on. I kinda like to get things together in my head."

"You ain't worried, are you?" Tony asked.

"No way, man." Felix laughed out loud. "I got too much smarts for that. I just think it's cooler if we split right here. After the fight, we can get it together again like nothing ever happened."

The amigo brothers were not ashamed to hug each other tightly.

"Guess you're right. Watch yourself, Felix. I hear there's some pretty heavy dudes up in the Bronx. *Suavecito*, okay?"

“Okay. You watch yourself too, *sabe?*”

Tony jogged away. Felix watched his friend disappear from view, throwing rights and lefts. Both fighters had a lot of psyching up to do before the big fight.

The days in training passed much too slowly. Although they kept out of each other’s way, they were aware of each other’s progress via the ghetto grapevine.

The evening before the big fight, Tony made his way to the roof of his tenement. In the quiet early dark, he peered over the ledge. Six stories below the lights of the city blinked and the sounds of cars mingled with the curses and the laughter of children in the street. He tried not to think of Felix, feeling he had succeeded in psyching his mind. But only in the ring would he really know. To spare Felix hurt, he would have to knock him out, early and quick.

Up in the South Bronx, Felix decided to take in a movie in an effort to keep Antonio’s face away from his fists. The flick was *The Champion* with Kirk Douglas, the third time Felix was seeing it.

The champion was getting hit hard. He was saved only by the sound of the bell.

Felix became the champ and Tony the challenger.

The movie audience was going out of its head. The challenger, confident that he had the championship in the bag, threw a left. The champ countered with a dynamite right.

Felix’s right arm felt the shock. Antonio’s face, superimposed<sup>1</sup> on the screen, was hit by the awesome blow. Felix saw himself in the ring, blasting Antonio against the ropes. The champ had to be forcibly restrained. The challenger was allowed to crumble slowly to the canvas.

When Felix finally left the theatre, he had figured out how to psyche himself for tomorrow’s fight. It was Felix the Champion vs. Antonio the Challenger.

He walked up some dark streets, deserted except for small pockets of wary-looking kids wearing gang colors. Despite the fact that he was Puerto Rican like them, they eyed him as a stranger to their turf. Felix did a fast shuffle, bobbing and weaving, while letting loose a torrent of blows that would demolish whatever got in

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1. **superimposed** (sōō per im pōzd’) *adj.* put or stacked on top of something else.

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its way. It seemed to impress the brothers, who went about their own business.

Finding no takers, Felix decided to split to his aunt's. Walking the streets had not relaxed him, neither had the fight flick. All it had done was to stir him up. He let himself quietly into his Aunt Lucy's apartment and went straight to bed, falling into a fitful sleep with sounds of the gong for Round One.

Antonio was passing some heavy time on his rooftop. How would the fight tomorrow affect his relationship with Felix? After all, fighting was like any other profession. Friendship had nothing to do with it. A gnawing doubt crept in. He cut negative thinking real quick by doing some speedy fancy dance steps, bobbing and weaving like mercury.<sup>2</sup> The night air was blurred with perpetual motions of left hooks and right crosses. Felix, his *amigo* brother, was not going to be Felix at all in the ring. Just an opponent with another face. Antonio went to sleep, hearing the opening bell for the first round. Like his friend in the South Bronx, he prayed for victory, via a quick clean knock-out in the first round.

Large posters plastered all over the walls of local shops announced the fight between Antonio Cruz and Felix Vargas as the main bout.

The fight had created great interest in the neighborhood. Antonio and Felix were well liked and respected. Each had his own loyal following. Antonio's fans counted on his boxing skills. On the other side, Felix's admirers trusted in his dynamite-packed fists.

Felix had returned to his apartment early in the morning of August 7th and stayed there, hoping to avoid seeing Antonio. He turned the radio on to salsa music sounds and then tried to read while waiting for word from his manager.

The fight was scheduled to take place in Tompkins Square Park. It had been decided that the gymnasium of the Boys Club was not large enough to hold all the people who were sure to attend. In Tompkins Square Park, everyone who wanted could view the fight, whether from ringside or window fire escapes or tenement rooftops.

2. *mercury* (məŕ' kyōōr ē) *n.* the element mercury, also known as quicksilver because it is so quick and fluid.

The morning of the fight Tompkins Square was a beehive of activity with numerous workers setting up the ring, the seats, and the guest speakers' stand. The scheduled bouts began shortly after noon and the park had begun filling up even earlier.

The local junior high school across from Tompkins Square Park served as the dressing room for all the fighters. Each was given a separate classroom with desk tops, covered with mats, serving as resting tables. Antonio thought he caught a glimpse of Felix waving to him from a room at the far end of the corridor. He waved back just in case it had been him.

The fighters changed from their street clothes into fighting gear. Antonio wore white trunks, black socks, and black shoes. Felix wore sky blue trunks, red socks, and white boxing shoes. Each had dressing gowns to match their fighting trunks with their names neatly stitched on the back.

The loudspeakers blared into the open windows of the school. There were speeches by dignitaries, community leaders, and great boxers of yesteryear. Some were well prepared, some improvised on the spot. They all carried the same message of great pleasure and honor at being part of such a historic event. This great day was in the tradition of champions emerging from the streets of the lower east side.

Interwoven with the speeches were the sounds of the other boxing events. After the sixth bout, Felix was much relieved when his trainer Charlie said, "Time change. Quick knock-out. This is it. We're on."

Waiting time was over. Felix was escorted from the classroom by a dozen fans in white T-shirts with the word FELIX across their fronts.

Antonio was escorted down a different stairwell and guided through a roped-off path.

As the two climbed into the ring, the crowd exploded with a roar. Antonio and Felix both bowed gracefully and then raised their arms in acknowledgment.

Antonio tried to be cool, but even as the roar was in its first birth, he turned slowly to meet Felix's eyes looking directly into his. Felix nodded his head and Antonio responded. And both as one, just as quickly, turned away to face his own corner.

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Bong—bong—bong. The roar turned to stillness.

“Ladies and Gentlemen. *Señores y Señoras.*”

The announcer spoke slowly, pleased at his bilingual efforts.

“Now the moment we have all been waiting for—the main event between two fine young Puerto Rican fighters, products of our lower east side. In this corner, weighing 134 pounds, Felix Vargas. And in this corner, weighing 133 pounds, Antonio Cruz. The winner will represent the Boys Club in the tournament of champions, the Golden Gloves. There will be no draw. May the best man win.”

The cheering of the crowd shook the window panes of the old buildings surrounding Tompkins Square Park. At the center of the ring, the referee was giving instructions to the youngsters.

“Keep your punches up. No low blows. No punching on the back of the head. Keep your heads up. Understand. Let’s have a clean fight. Now shake hands and come out fighting.”

Both youngsters touched gloves and nodded. They turned and danced quickly to their corners. Their head towels and dressing gowns were lifted neatly from their shoulders by their trainers’ nimble fingers. Antonio crossed himself. Felix did the same.

BONG! BONG! ROUND ONE. Felix and Antonio turned and faced each other squarely in a fighting pose. Felix wasted no time. He came in fast, head low, half hunched toward his right shoulder, and lashed out with a straight left. He missed a right cross as Antonio slipped the punch and countered with one-two-three lefts that snapped Felix’s head back, sending a mild shock coursing through him. If Felix had any small doubt about their friendship affecting their fight, it was being neatly dispelled.

Antonio danced, a joy to behold. His left hand was like a piston pumping jabs one right after another with seeming ease. Felix bobbed and weaved and never stopped boring in. He knew that at long range he was at a disadvantage. Antonio had too much reach on him. Only by coming in close could Felix hope to achieve the dreamed-of knockout.

Antonio knew the dynamite that was stored in his *amigo* brother's fist. He ducked a short right and missed a left hook. Felix trapped him against the ropes just long enough to pour some punishing rights and lefts to Antonio's hard midsection. Antonio slipped away from Felix, crashing two lefts to his head, which set Felix's right ear to ringing.

*Bong!* Both *amigos* froze a punch well on its way, sending up a roar of approval for good sportsmanship.

Felix walked briskly back to his corner. His right ear had not stopped ringing. Antonio gracefully danced his way toward his stool none the worse, except for glowing glove burns, showing angry red against the whiteness of his midribs.

"Watch that right, Tony." His trainer talked into his ear. "Remember Felix always goes to the body. He'll want you to drop your hands for his overhand left or right. Got it?"

Antonio nodded, spraying water out between his teeth. He felt better as his sore midsection was being firmly rubbed.

Felix's corner was also busy.

"You gotta get in there, fella." Felix's trainer poured water over his curly Afro locks. "Get in there or he's gonna chop you up from way back."

*Bong! Bong!* Round two. Felix was off his stool and rushed Antonio like a bull, sending a hard right to his head. Beads of water exploded from Antonio's long hair.

Antonio, hurt, sent back a blurring barrage of lefts and rights that only meant pain to Felix, who returned with a short left to the head followed by a looping right to the body. Antonio countered with his own flurry, forcing Felix to give ground. But not for long.

Felix bobbed and weaved, bobbed and weaved, occasionally punching his two gloves together.

Antonio waited for the rush that was sure to come. Felix closed in and feinted<sup>3</sup> with his left shoulder and threw his right instead. Lights suddenly exploded inside Felix's head as Antonio slipped the blow and hit him with a pistonlike left catching him flush on the point of his chin.

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**3. feinted** (fānt' ed) *v.* pretended to make a blow.

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Bedlam<sup>4</sup> broke loose as Felix's legs momentarily buckled. He fought off a series of rights and lefts and came back with a strong right that taught Antonio respect.

Antonio danced in carefully. He knew Felix had the habit of playing possum when hurt, to sucker an opponent within reach of the powerful bombs he carried in each fist.

A right to the head slowed Antonio's pretty dancing. He answered with his own left at Felix's right eye that began puffing up within three seconds.

Antonio, a bit too eager, moved in too close and Felix had him entangled into a rip-roaring, punching toe-to-toe slugfest that brought the whole Tompkins Square Park screaming to its feet.

Rights to the body. Lefts to the head. Neither fighter was giving an inch. Suddenly a short right caught Antonio squarely on the chin. His long legs turned to jelly and his arms flailed out desperately. Felix, grunting like a bull, threw wild punches from every direction. Antonio, groggy, bobbed and weaved, evading most of the blows. Suddenly his head cleared. His left flashed out hard and straight catching Felix on the bridge of his nose.

Felix lashed back with a haymaker,<sup>5</sup> right off the ghetto streets. At the same instant, his eye caught another left hook from Antonio. Felix swung out trying to clear the pain. Only the frenzied screaming of those along ringside let him know that he had dropped Antonio. Fighting off the growing haze, Antonio struggled to his feet, got up, ducked, and threw a smashing right that dropped Felix flat on his back.

Felix got up as fast as he could in his own corner, groggy but still game. He didn't even hear the count. In a fog, he heard the roaring of the crowd, who seemed to have gone insane. His head cleared to hear the bell sound at the end of the round. He was very glad. His trainer sat him down on the stool.

In his corner, Antonio was doing what all fighters do when they are hurt. They sit and smile at everyone.

The referee signaled the ring doctor to check the fighters out. He did so and then gave his okay.

4. **Bedlam** (bed' lem) *n.* condition of noise and confusion.

5. **haymaker** punch thrown with full force.

The cold water sponges brought clarity to both *amigo* brothers. They were rubbed until their circulation ran free.

*Bong!* Round three—the final round. Up to now it had been tic-tac-toe, pretty much even. But everyone knew there could be no draw and this round would decide the winner.

This time, to Felix's surprise, it was Antonio who came out fast, charging across the ring. Felix braced himself but couldn't ward off the barrage of punches. Antonio drove Felix hard against the ropes.

The crowd ate it up. Thus far the two had fought with *mucho corazón*. Felix tapped his gloves and commenced his attack anew. Antonio, throwing boxer's caution to the winds, jumped in to meet him.

Both pounded away. Neither gave an inch and neither fell to the canvas. Felix's left eye was tightly closed. Claret red blood poured from Antonio's nose. They fought toe-to-toe.

The sounds of their blows were loud in contrast to the silence of a crowd gone completely mute. The referee was stunned by their savagery.

*Bong! Bong! Bong!* The bell sounded over and over again. Felix and Antonio were past hearing. Their blows continued to pound on each other like hailstones.

Finally the referee and the two trainers pried Felix and Antonio apart. Cold water was poured over them to bring them back to their senses.

They looked around and then rushed toward each other. A cry of alarm surged through Tompkins Square Park. Was this a fight to the death instead of a boxing match?

The fear soon gave way to wave upon wave of cheering as the two *amigos* embraced.

No matter what the decision, they knew they would always be champions to each other.

BONG! BONG! BONG! "Ladies and Gentlemen. *Señores* and *Señoras*. The winner and representative to the Golden Gloves Tournament of Champions is . . ."

The announcer turned to point to the winner and found himself alone. Arm in arm the champions had already left the ring.

#### TAKE NOTES

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# Win Some, Lose Some

by Charles Osgood

The victor may get the spoils,<sup>1</sup> but the true rewards go to those who are good sports. We all have little victories and defeats in our lives, and some big ones too. Rare is the day that we don't add to both our "Win" and "Loss" columns. Obviously we would like the Ws to outweigh the Ls, but our appetite for victory and our aversion to defeat seem to have sharpened in recent years. We don't handle either one very well anymore.

The role models we get from the worlds of entertainment, sports and politics have not been terribly helpful. You'd think that these public individuals, who must deal with winning and losing on a regular basis, would set a sportsmanlike example for the rest of us.

Whatever happened to the old gladiator mantra<sup>2</sup> "We who are about to die salute you"? It gets me to thinking about that Joe Raposo song "(Here's to the) Winners." Is it any surprise that he never bothered to write a song called "Here's to the Losers"? (Truth be told, someone else did.)

It feels wonderful to win, but how should winners express their satisfaction in the moment of victory? How should they comport themselves in the presence of those they've vanquished? As if they had just conquered Nazi Germany or found a cure for cancer? Conversely, how should the losers express their frustration and disappointment in moments of defeat? A sense of perspective is difficult to come by in hard-fought contests.

For their part, today's sports fans haven't come that far from the days of the gladiator. They know that their teams can't win 'em all, but they do want to see the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat acted out. And so the players, who are also players in the theatrical

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1. **the victor may get the spoils** person who wins not only has the pleasure of winning but gets additional benefits.  
 2. **mantra** (man'tra) *n.* statement repeated often, much like or as a chant or song refrain.

sense, celebrate not only game victories but completely routine plays as well. You'll see some NFL players doing a little dance to taunt the opposition every time they catch a pass or make a tackle. It's a far cry from the days when Tom Landry of the Dallas Cowboys would tell Hollywood Henderson to try to look as if he'd done it before. Landry himself used to stand stoically on the sidelines like a man waiting for a bus. You could not tell from his facial expression or bearing whether his team was ahead or behind.

In the poem "If," his famous litany<sup>3</sup> of what it takes to "be a man, my son," Rudyard Kipling observes, "If you can meet with triumph and disaster,/And treat those two impostors just the same...." They are impostors, you know. A musician friend of mine has a sign on his studio wall that reads "Show Me a Good Loser and I'll Show You a Loser!" Do musicians think in terms of winners and losers too? Are they that competitive? Many of them are. For in the arts, as in virtually every kind of human endeavor, there is an element of competition.

There's a story, apocryphal<sup>4</sup> perhaps, about Fritz Kreisler, the virtuoso violinist, sitting in the audience at a Berlin Philharmonic concert next to pianist Josef Hofmann. The twelve-year-old prodigy Jascha Heifetz was performing a solo in Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D Major.

"It's very hot in here, isn't it?" Kreisler is supposed to have whispered to Hofmann between movements.

Without a moment's hesitation, Hofmann is said to have whispered back, "Not for pianists."

Artists may not like to admit it, but in the arts, as in virtually every endeavor, there is an element of competition. It's human nature to want to do better than somebody else. Victory is better than defeat, just as surely as health, wealth and wisdom are better than sickness, poverty and ignorance. With winning comes not only the thrill of victory but also the gold medal, the job, the Oscar, the Nobel, the presidency or the Lombardi Trophy—the prize that goes to the winner of the Super Bowl.

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3. **litany** (lit' 'n ē) *n.* list.

4. **apocryphal** (ə pāk' rə fəl) *adj.* most likely not true but repeated as if true nevertheless.

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That coveted award is named for Vince Lombardi, the legendary football coach often credited (if “credit” is the appropriate word here) with saying “Winning isn’t everything. It’s the only thing!” In fact, he never said it. It may have been another coach, UCLA’s Red Sanders, who uttered those words.

While he was in college, Lombardi was one of Fordham University’s “Seven Blocks of Granite.” (Fordham is my alma mater.<sup>5</sup>) After graduation, he taught Latin and chemistry and coached at St. Cecilia High School (also my alma mater) in Englewood, New Jersey. What he said, according to people there who knew him well, was “Winning isn’t everything, but wanting to win is.”

Later, as a coach for the Green Bay Packers, he pushed his players to work hard. And you bet he wanted to imbue<sup>6</sup> them with a strong desire to win—but not at all costs. That would have been inconsistent with character. And to Lombardi, character was what counted most—on the field and in life.

In the end, we do seem to save our respect for the individuals who show the most character when faced with situations of triumph or loss. We admire people like Joe DiMaggio, Jacqueline Kennedy, Billie Jean King, Michael Jordan and Christopher Reeve<sup>7</sup>—a partial list, but you get the idea.

For all of its melodrama and legal wrangling, even our drawn-out presidential election last fall may have taught us some valuable lessons. When he ultimately conceded the contest, Vice-President Gore<sup>8</sup> made a statement that was sportsmanlike and unequivocal. He called on those who had voted for him to join him in supporting President Bush and wishing him well.

At his inauguration a month later, Bush publicly thanked President Clinton for his years of service and acknowledged Gore as a worthy opponent. It was an election campaign “conducted with spirit and ended with grace,” Bush said. That was graceful on his part.

5. **alma mater** (al’mə măt’ər) school, university, or college that someone attended.

6. **imbue** (im byōō’) *v.* to convey in a way that causes someone or something to become filled with or saturated by what is conveyed.

7. **Christopher Reeve** actor who became paralyzed but went on to become a spokesperson for those with spinal cord injuries.

8. **Vice-President Gore** candidate who lost to George W. Bush in the presidential election of 2000.

I recently took my seventeen-year-old son, Jamie, a high school senior, to the campus of a college to which he was applying on an early decision basis. I waited with other parents as our children went in for their interviews. In most cases, as each one emerged, you could tell right away whether the outcome was a W or an L. Some of the kids came running out grinning and with thumbs up. Others came out looking crushed or in tears. A few parents of the latter seemed angry and berated their offspring for not having done well enough. When Jamie came through the door, I caught his eye across the room, and he smiled. I swear there was no way to tell from his face or manner how things had gone. I could not have been more proud.

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# *from* What Makes a Rembrandt a Rembrandt?

by Richard Mühlberger

## **Citizen Soldiers**

A Dutch poet of Rembrandt's day wrote, "When the country is in danger, every citizen is a soldier." That was the idea behind the militia, or civic guard companies, which trained citizens how to fight and shoot in case their city was attacked. Each company drilled in archery, the crossbow, or the musket. By Rembrandt's time, militia companies were as much social clubs as military organizations.

Captain Frans Banning Cocq, out to impress everyone, chose Rembrandt to paint his militia company, with members of the company paying the artist to have their portraits included in the painting. The huge canvas was to be hung in the new hall of the militia headquarters, where it would be seen at receptions and celebrations along with other militia paintings.

By the mid-seventeenth century, there were more than one hundred big militia paintings hanging in public halls in the important cities of the Netherlands. In all of these group portraits, the men were evenly lined up so that each face got equal attention, just as they had been in traditional anatomy lesson paintings. Rembrandt did not like this way of presenting the scene. He had seen militia companies in action, and there were always people milling about who were not militiamen but who took part in their exercises and parades. To add realism to the piece, he decided to include some of these people, as well as a dog. There was room on the wall for a canvas about sixteen feet wide, large enough for Rembrandt to do what no other painter had ever done before. His idea was to show the exciting commotion before a parade began.

## Two Handsome Officers

Everywhere in the painting, Rembrandt used sharp contrasts of dark and light. Everything that honors the citizen soldiers and their work is illuminated; everything else is in shadow. Captain Frans Banning Cocq is the man dressed in black with a red sash under his arm, striding forward in the center. Standing next to him is the most brightly lighted man in the painting, Lieutenant Willem van Ruytenburgh, attired in a glorious gold and yellow uniform, silk sash, soft leather cavalry boots, and a high hat with white ostrich plumes. His lancelike weapon, called a partisan, and the steel gorget<sup>1</sup> around his neck—a leftover from the days when soldiers wore full suits of armor—are the only hints that he is a military man. Rembrandt links him to Banning Cocq by contrasting the colors of their clothing and by painting the shadow of Banning Cocq's hand on the front of van Ruytenburgh's coat. The captain is giving orders to his lieutenant for the militia company to march off.

Banning Cocq is dressed in a black suit against a dark background, yet he does not disappear. Rembrandt made him the most important person in the composition. Van Ruytenburgh turns to listen to him, which shows his respect for his commander. Banning Cocq's face stands out above his bright red sash and white collar. How well Rembrandt knew that darkness makes faces shine! The captain's self-assured pace, the movement of the tassels at his knees, and the angle of his walking staff are proof of the energy and dignity of his stride.

## Muskets and Mascots

On either side of these two handsome officers, broad paths lead back into the painting

Rembrandt knew that when the huge group scene was placed above eye level on the wall of the militia headquarters, these empty areas would be the first to be seen. He wanted them to lead the eyes of viewers to figures in the painting who did not have the advantage of being placed in the foreground. In the middle of one of these paths is a man in red pouring

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1. **gorget** (gôr' jit) *n.* a piece of armor for the throat.

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gunpowder into the barrel of his musket. Behind the captain, only partially seen, another man shoots his gun into the air, and a third militiaman, to the right of van Ruytenburgh, blows on his weapon to clean it. Loading, shooting, and cleaning were part of the standard drill for musketeers, and so they were included in the painting to demonstrate the men’s mastery of their weapons.

Walking in a stream of bright light down the path on the left is a blond girl dressed in yellow with a dead chicken tied to her waist. She has a friend in blue behind her. In their public shows, the militia would choose two young girls to carry the emblems<sup>2</sup> of their company, here the claws of a bird. The yellow and blue of the girls’ costumes are the militia’s colors. In the parade that is being organized, these mascots will take a prominent place, the fair-haired girl holding aloft the chicken’s claws.

Many of the background figures stand on stairs so that their faces can be seen. The man above the girl in yellow is Jan Corneliszoon Visscher, after Banning Cocq and van Ruytenburgh the highest-ranking person in the militia company. He waves a flag that combines the colors of the militia company with the three black crosses of Amsterdam. While Rembrandt did not pose him in bright light, he made him important by placing him high up on the stairs, by showing the sheen in his costume, and by giving him the large flag to unfurl.

**A Red Ribbon and Fine Old Clothes**

In spite of his partial appearance, the drummer on the right seems ready to come forward to lead a march with his staccato beat. The sound seems to bother the dusty dog below. Behind the drummer, two men appear to be figuring out their places in the formation. The one in the white collar and black hat outranks many of the others in the scene. His prestige is signaled in an unusual way: A red ribbon dangles over his head, tied to the lance of the man in armor behind van Ruytenburgh. Additional lances can be counted in the darkness, some leaning against the wall, others carried by militiamen. Their crisscross patterns add to

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2. **emblems** *n.* objects that stand for something else; symbols.

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the feeling of commotion that Rembrandt has captured everywhere on the huge canvas.

The costumes worn in this group portrait are much more ornate and colorful than what Dutchmen ordinarily wore every day. Some, like the breeches and helmet of the man shooting his musket behind Banning Cocq, go back a hundred years to the beginnings of the militia company. In the eyes of many Dutchmen, clothing associated with a glorious past brought special dignity to the company. What an opportunity for Rembrandt, perhaps the greatest lover of old clothes in Amsterdam!

## Not a Night Watch

*Night Watch* is a mistaken title that was given to the painting over a hundred years after Rembrandt died, but it has stuck, and is what the painting is almost universally called. Although the exaggerated chiaroscuro<sup>3</sup> does give an impression of night-time, there is daylight in the scene. It comes from the left, as the shadows under Banning Cocq’s feet prove. And it is clear that no one in the painting is on watch, alert to the approach of an enemy. The official title of the painting is *Officers and Men of the Company of Captain Frans Banning Cocq and Lieutenant Willem van Ruytenburgh*.

Rembrandt completed the painting in 1642, when he was thirty-six years old. He probably had no idea that it would be the most famous Dutch painting of all time. In 1678, one of his former students wrote that it would “outlive all its rivals,” and within another century the painting was considered one of the wonders of the world.

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3. **chiaroscuro** (kē är ə skoor’ ō) *n.* a dramatic style of light and shade in a painting or drawing.

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which swells up. The extra liquid in your head also makes you feel like you're hanging upside down or have a stuffed-up nose.

The lack of gravity causes astronauts to routinely “grow” between one and three inches taller. Their spines straighten out. The bones in the spine and the disks between them spread apart and relax.

But their bones also get thin and spongy. The body decides that if the muscles aren't going to push and pull on the bones, it doesn't need to lay down as much bone as it normally does. Astronauts who have been in space for several months can lose 10 percent or more of their bone tissue. If their bones got much weaker, they would snap once the astronauts returned to Earth.

And their muscles get weak and flabby. Floating about in space is too easy. If astronauts don't force themselves to exercise, their muscles become so feeble that when they return to Earth they can't even walk.

Worst of all is how their stomachs feel. During the first few days in space, the inner ear—which gives people their sense of balance—gets confused. Many astronauts become nauseous. They lose their appetites. Many throw up. Many throw up a lot! •

Weightlessness isn't all bad, however. After about a week people usually get used to it. Their stomachs settle down. Appetites return (though astronauts always say that food tastes blander in space). The heart and spine adjust.

Then, flying around like a bird becomes fun! Rooms suddenly seem much bigger. Look around you: The space above your head is pretty useless on Earth. You can't get up there to work, and anything you attach to the ceiling is simply something you'll bump your head on.

In space, however, that area is useful. In fact, equipment can be installed on every inch of every wall. In weightlessness you choose to move up or down and left or right simply by pointing your head. If you turn yourself upside down, the ceiling becomes the floor.

And you can't drop anything! As you work you can let your tools float around you. But you'd better be organized and neat. If you don't put things back where

## TAKE NOTES

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they belong when you are finished, tying them down securely, they will float away. Air currents will then blow them into nooks and crannies, and it might take you days to find them again.

In microgravity, you have to learn new ways to eat. Don't try pouring a bowl of cornflakes. Not only will the flakes float all over the place, the milk won't pour. Instead, big balls of milk will form. You can drink these by taking big bites out of them, but you'd better finish them before they slam into a wall, splattering apart and covering everything with little tiny milk globules.

Some meals on the space station are eaten with forks and knives, but scooping food with a spoon doesn't work. If the food isn't gooey enough to stick to the spoon, it will float away.

Everyone in space drinks through a straw, since liquid simply refuses to stay in a glass. The straw has to have a clamp at one end, or else when you stop drinking, the liquid will continue to flow out, spilling everywhere.

To prevent their muscles and bones from becoming too weak for life on Earth, astronauts have to follow a boring two-hour exercise routine every single day. Imagine having to run on a treadmill for one hour in the morning and then ride an exercise bicycle another hour before dinner. As Russian astronaut Valeri Ryumin once said, "Ye-ech!"

Even after all this exercise, astronauts who spend more than two months in space are usually weak and uncomfortable when they get back to Earth. Jerry Linenger, who spent more than four months on the Russian space station, *Mir*, struggled to walk after he returned. "My body felt like a 500 pound barbell," he said. He even had trouble lifting and holding his fifteen-month-old son, John.

When Linenger went to bed that first night, his body felt like it was being smashed into the mattress. He was constantly afraid that if he moved too much, he would float away and out of control.

And yet, Linenger recovered quickly. In fact, almost two dozen astronauts have lived in space for more







And I shall never forget his disappointment when once he caught me gaffing for fish<sup>3</sup> “just for the fun of it.” “My Son,” he said, “the Great Spirit gave you those fish to be your brothers, to feed you when you are hungry. You must respect them. You must not kill them just for the fun of it.”

This then was the culture I was born into and for some years the only one I really knew or tasted. This is why I find it hard to accept many of the things I see around me.

I see people living in smoke houses hundreds of times bigger than the one I knew. But the people in one apartment do not even know the people in the next and care less about them.

It is also difficult for me to understand the deep hate that exists among people. It is hard to understand a culture that justifies the killing of millions in past wars, and is at this very moment preparing bombs to kill even greater numbers. It is hard for me to understand a culture that spends more on wars and weapons to kill, than it does on education and welfare to help and develop.

It is hard for me to understand a culture that not only hates and fights its brothers but even attacks nature and abuses her. I see my white brother going about blotting out nature from his cities. I see him strip the hills bare, leaving ugly wounds on the face of mountains. I see him tearing things from the bosom of mother earth as though she were a monster, who refused to share her treasures with him. I see him throw poison in the waters, indifferent to the life he kills there; and he chokes the air with deadly fumes.

My white brother does many things well for he is more clever than my people but I wonder if he knows how to love well. I wonder if he has ever really learned to love at all. Perhaps he only loves the things that are his own but never learned to love the things that are outside and beyond him. And this is, of course, not love at all, for man must love all creation or he will love none of it. Man must love fully or he will become the lowest of the animals. It is the power to love that makes him the greatest of them all . . . for he alone of all animals is capable of love.

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3. **gaffing for fish** using a barbed spear to catch river fish.



The only thing that can truly help us is genuine love. You must truly love us, be patient with us and share with us. And we must love you—with a genuine love that forgives and forgets . . . a love that forgives the terrible sufferings your culture brought ours when it swept over us like a wave crashing along a beach . . . with a love that forgets and lifts up its head and sees in your eyes an answering love of trust and acceptance.

This is brotherhood . . . anything less is not worthy of the name.

I have spoken.

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# No Gumption

by Russell Baker

I began working in journalism when I was eight years old. It was my mother’s idea. She wanted me to “make something” of myself and, after a level-headed appraisal<sup>1</sup> of my strengths, decided I had better start young if I was to have any chance of keeping up with the competition.

The flaw in my character which she had already spotted was lack of “gumption.” My idea of a perfect afternoon was lying in front of the radio rereading my favorite Big Little Book,<sup>2</sup> *Dick Tracy Meets Stooze Viller*. My mother despised inactivity. Seeing me having a good time in repose, she was powerless to hide her disgust. “You’ve got no more gumption than a bump on a log,” she said. “Get out in the kitchen and help Doris do those dirty dishes.”

My sister Doris, though two years younger than I, had enough gumption for a dozen people. She positively enjoyed washing dishes, making beds, and cleaning the house. When she was only seven she could carry a piece of short-weighted cheese back to the A&P, threaten the manager with legal action, and come back triumphantly with the full quarter-pound we’d paid for and a few ounces extra thrown in for forgiveness. Doris could have made something of herself if she hadn’t been a girl. Because of this defect, however, the best she could hope for was a career as a nurse or schoolteacher, the only work that capable females were considered up to in those days.

This must have saddened my mother, this twist of fate that had allocated all the gumption to the daughter and left her with a son who was content with Dick Tracy and Stooze Viller. If disappointed, though, she wasted no energy on self-pity. She would make me

1. **appraisal** (ə prāz’ əl) *n.* judgment; evaluation.

2. **Big Little Book** a small, inexpensive picture book that often portrayed the adventures of comic-strip heroes like Dick Tracy.

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make something of myself whether I wanted to or not. “The Lord helps those who help themselves,” she said. That was the way her mind worked.

She was realistic about the difficulty. Having sized up the material the Lord had given her to mold, she didn’t overestimate what she could do with it. She didn’t insist that I grow up to be President of the United States.

Fifty years ago parents still asked boys if they wanted to grow up to be President, and asked it not jokingly but seriously. Many parents who were hardly more than paupers still believed their sons could do it. Abraham Lincoln had done it. We were only sixty-five years from Lincoln. Many a grandfather who walked among us could remember Lincoln’s time. Men of grandfatherly age were the worst for asking if you wanted to grow up to be President. A surprising number of little boys said yes and meant it.

I was asked many times myself. No, I would say, I didn’t want to grow up to be President. My mother was present during one of these interrogations.<sup>3</sup> An elderly uncle, having posed the usual question and exposed my lack of interest in the Presidency, asked, “Well, what do you want to be when you grow up?”

I loved to pick through trash piles and collect empty bottles, tin cans with pretty labels, and discarded magazines. The most desirable job on earth sprang instantly to mind. “I want to be a garbage man,” I said.

My uncle smiled, but my mother had seen the first distressing evidence of a bump budding on a log. “Have a little gumption, Russell,” she said. Her calling me Russell was a signal of unhappiness. When she approved of me I was always “Buddy.”

When I turned eight years old she decided that the job of starting me on the road toward making something of myself could no longer be safely delayed. “Buddy,” she said one day, “I want you to come home right after school this afternoon. Somebody’s coming and I want you to meet him.”

When I burst in that afternoon she was in conference in the parlor with an executive of the Curtis Publishing Company. She introduced me. He bent low from

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**3. interrogations** (in ter ə' gā' shenz) *n.* situations in which a person is formally questioned.

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the waist and shook my hand. Was it true as my mother had told him, he asked, that I longed for the opportunity to conquer the world of business?

My mother replied that I was blessed with a rare determination to make something of myself.

“That’s right,” I whispered.

“But have you got the grit, the character, the never-say-quit spirit it takes to succeed in business?”

My mother said I certainly did.

“That’s right,” I said.

He eyed me silently for a long pause, as though weighing whether I could be trusted to keep his confidence, then spoke man-to-man. Before taking a crucial step, he said, he wanted to advise me that working for the Curtis Publishing Company placed enormous responsibility on a young man. It was one of the great companies of America. Perhaps the greatest publishing house in the world. I had heard, no doubt, of the *Saturday Evening Post*?

Heard of it? My mother said that everyone in our house had heard of the *Saturday Post* and that I, in fact, read it with religious devotion.

Then doubtless, he said, we were also familiar with those two monthly pillars of the magazine world, the *Ladies Home Journal* and the *Country Gentleman*.

Indeed we were familiar with them, said my mother.

Representing the *Saturday Evening Post* was one of the weightiest honors that could be bestowed in the world of business, he said. He was personally proud of being a part of that great corporation.

My mother said he had every right to be.

Again he studied me as though debating whether I was worthy of a knighthood. Finally: “Are you trustworthy?”

My mother said I was the soul of honesty.

“That’s right,” I said.

The caller smiled for the first time. He told me I was a lucky young man. He admired my spunk. Too many young men thought life was all play. Those young men would not go far in this world. Only a young man willing to work and save and keep his face washed and his hair neatly combed could hope to come out on top in a world such as ours. Did I truly and sincerely believe that I was such a young man?

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“He certainly does,” said my mother.

“That’s right,” I said.

He said he had been so impressed by what he had seen of me that he was going to make me a representative of the Curtis Publishing Company. On the following Tuesday, he said, thirty freshly printed copies of the *Saturday Evening Post* would be delivered at our door. I would place these magazines, still damp with the ink of the presses, in a handsome canvas bag, sling it over my shoulder, and set forth through the streets to bring the best in journalism, fiction, and cartoons to the American public.

He had brought the canvas bag with him. He presented it with reverence fit for a chasuble.<sup>4</sup> He showed me how to drape the sling over my left shoulder and across the chest so that the pouch lay easily accessible<sup>5</sup> to my right hand, allowing the best in journalism, fiction, and cartoons to be swiftly extracted and sold to a citizenry whose happiness and security depended upon us soldiers of the free press.

The following Tuesday I raced home from school, put the canvas bag over my shoulder, dumped the magazines in, and, tilting to the left to balance their weight on my right hip, embarked on the highway of journalism.

We lived in Belleville, New Jersey, a commuter town at the northern fringe of Newark. It was 1932, the bleakest year of the Depression. My father had died two years before, leaving us with a few pieces of Sears, Roebuck furniture and not much else, and my mother had taken Doris and me to live with one of her younger brothers. This was my Uncle Allen. Uncle Allen had made something of himself by 1932. As salesman for a soft-drink bottler in Newark, he had an income of \$30 a week; wore pearl-gray spats,<sup>6</sup> detachable collars, and a three-piece suit; was happily married; and took in threadbare relatives.

With my load of magazines I headed toward Belleville Avenue. That’s where the people were. There were two filling stations at the intersection with Union Avenue,

TAKE NOTES

Ruled lines for taking notes.

4. chasuble (chaz’ ə bəl) n. sleeveless outer garment worn by priests.  
5. accessible (ək ses’ ə bəl) adj. available.  
6. spats (spats) n. cloth or leather material that covers the upper part of shoes or ankles.



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as well as an A&P, a fruit stand, a bakery, a barber shop, Zuccarelli's drugstore, and a diner shaped like a railroad car. For several hours I made myself highly visible, shifting position now and then from corner to corner, from shop window to shop window, to make sure everyone could see the heavy black lettering on the canvas bag that said *The Saturday Evening Post*. When the angle of the light indicated it was suppertime, I walked back to the house.

"How many did you sell, Buddy?" my mother asked.

"None."

"Where did you go?"

"The corner of Belleville and Union Avenues."

"What did you do?"

"Stood on the corner waiting for somebody to buy a *Saturday Evening Post*."

"You just stood there?"

"Didn't sell a single one."

"For God's sake, Russell!"

Uncle Allen intervened. "I've been thinking about it for some time," he said, "and I've about decided to take the *Post* regularly. Put me down as a regular customer." I handed him a magazine and he paid me a nickel. It was the first nickel I earned.

Afterwards my mother instructed me in salesmanship. I would have to ring doorbells, address adults with charming self-confidence, and break down resistance with a sales talk pointing out that no one, no matter how poor, could afford to be without the *Saturday Evening Post* in the home.

I told my mother I'd changed my mind about wanting to succeed in the magazine business.

"If you think I'm going to raise a good-for-nothing," she replied, "you've got another think coming." She told me to hit the streets with the canvas bag and start ringing doorbells the instant school was out next day. When I objected that I didn't feel any aptitude for salesmanship, she asked how I'd like to lend her my leather belt so she could whack some sense into me. I bowed to superior will and entered journalism with a heavy heart.

My mother and I had fought this battle almost as long as I could remember. It probably started even before memory began, when I was a country child in

northern Virginia and my mother, dissatisfied with my father's plain workman's life, determined that I would not grow up like him and his people, with calluses on their hands, overalls on their backs, and fourth-grade educations in their heads. She had fancier ideas of life's possibilities. Introducing me to the *Saturday Evening Post*, she was trying to wean me as early as possible from my father's world where men left with lunch pails at sunup, worked with their hands until the grime ate into the pores, and died with a few sticks of mail-order furniture as their legacy. In my mother's vision of the better life there were desks and white collars, well-pressed suits, evenings of reading and lively talk, and perhaps—if a man were very, very lucky and hit the jackpot, really made something important of himself—perhaps there might be a fantastic salary of \$5,000 a year to support a big house and a Buick with a rumble seat<sup>7</sup> and a vacation in Atlantic City.

And so I set forth with my sack of magazines. I was afraid of the dogs that snarled behind the doors of potential buyers. I was timid about ringing the doorbells of strangers, relieved when no one came to the door, and scared when someone did. Despite my mother's instructions, I could not deliver an engaging sales pitch. When a door opened I simply asked, "Want to buy a *Saturday Evening Post*?" In Belleville few persons did. It was a town of 30,000 people, and most weeks I rang a fair majority of its doorbells. But I rarely sold my thirty copies. Some weeks I canvassed the entire town for six days and still had four or five unsold magazines on Monday evening; then I dreaded the coming of Tuesday morning, when a batch of thirty fresh *Saturday Evening Posts* was due at the front door.

"Better get out there and sell the rest of those magazines tonight," my mother would say.

I usually posted myself then at a busy intersection where a traffic light controlled commuter flow from Newark. When the light turned red I stood on the curb and shouted my sales pitch at the motorists.

"Want to buy a *Saturday Evening Post*?"

One rainy night when car windows were sealed against me I came back soaked and with not a single sale to report. My mother beckoned to Doris.

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7. **rumble seat** in the rear of early automobiles, a seat that could be folded shut.

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“Go back down there with Buddy and show him how to sell these magazines,” she said.

Brimming with zest, Doris, who was then seven years old, returned with me to the corner. She took a magazine from the bag, and when the light turned red she strode to the nearest car and banged her small fist against the closed window. The driver, probably startled at what he took to be a midget assaulting his car, lowered the window to stare, and Doris thrust a *Saturday Evening Post* at him.

“You need this magazine,” she piped, “and it only costs a nickel.”

Her salesmanship was irresistible. Before the light changed half a dozen times she disposed of the entire batch. I didn’t feel humiliated. To the contrary. I was so happy I decided to give her a treat. Leading her to the vegetable store on Belleville Avenue, I bought three apples, which cost a nickel, and gave her one.

“You shouldn’t waste money,” she said.

“Eat your apple.” I bit into mine.

“You shouldn’t eat before supper,” she said. “It’ll spoil your appetite.”

Back at the house that evening, she dutifully reported me for wasting a nickel. Instead of a scolding, I was rewarded with a pat on the back for having the good sense to buy fruit instead of candy. My mother reached into her bottomless supply of maxims<sup>8</sup> and told Doris, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.”

By the time I was ten I had learned all my mother’s maxims by heart. Asking to stay up past normal bedtime, I knew that a refusal would be explained with, “Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.” If I whimpered about having to get up early in the morning, I could depend on her to say, “The early bird gets the worm.”

The one I most despised was, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.” This was the battle cry with which she constantly sent me back into the hopeless struggle whenever I moaned that I had rung every doorbell in town and knew there wasn’t a single potential buyer left in Belleville that week. After listening to my explanation, she handed me the canvas bag and said, “If at first you don’t succeed . . .”

8. **maxims** (mak’ simz) *n.* wise sayings.

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Three years in that job, which I would gladly have quit after the first day except for her insistence, produced at least one valuable result. My mother finally concluded that I would never make something of myself by pursuing a life in business and started considering careers that demanded less competitive zeal.

One evening when I was eleven I brought home a short “composition” on my summer vacation which the teacher had graded with an A. Reading it with her own schoolteacher’s eye, my mother agreed that it was top-drawer seventh grade prose and complimented me. Nothing more was said about it immediately, but a new idea had taken life in her mind. Halfway through supper she suddenly interrupted the conversation.

“Buddy,” she said, “maybe you could be a writer.”

I clasped the idea to my heart. I had never met a writer, had shown no previous urge to write, and hadn’t a notion how to become a writer, but I loved stories and thought that making up stories must surely be almost as much fun as reading them. Best of all, though, and what really gladdened my heart, was the ease of the writer’s life. Writers did not have to trudge through the town peddling from canvas bags, defending themselves against angry dogs, being rejected by surly strangers. Writers did not have to ring doorbells. So far as I could make out, what writers did couldn’t even be classified as work.

I was enchanted. Writers didn’t have to have any gumption at all. I did not dare tell anybody for fear of being laughed at in the schoolyard, but secretly I decided that what I’d like to be when I grew up was a writer.

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# A Special Gift— The Legacy of “Snowflake” Bentley

by Barbara Eaglesham

Wilson Bentley received a gift on his 15th birthday that was to change his life—an old microscope his mother had once used in teaching. As birthday gifts go, it might not have seemed like much, but to this 1880s Vermont farm boy it was special indeed.

“When the other boys of my age were playing with popguns and sling-shots, I was absorbed in studying things under this microscope,” he later wrote.

And nothing fascinated him more than snowflakes. It would become a passion that would last a lifetime, earn him the nickname “Snowflake Bentley,” and make him known around the world.

## Focused on Beauty

If you have ever seen a snowflake design on a mug, or on jewelry, or maybe on a tote bag, chances are it was based on one of Bentley’s more than 5,000 photomicrographs<sup>1</sup> of snow crystals (snow crystals are the building blocks of snowflakes).

At first, though, Bentley did not own a camera. He had only his eyes and his microscope, and no way to share his enjoyment of the delicate hexagons other than to draw them. As soon as the snow started to fly (and if his chores were done), he would collect some snow crystals on a board painted black. He’d spend hours inside his woodshed, where he had his microscope, picking up the most perfect ones on the end of a piece of straw from a broom and transferring them to a microscope slide. There, he would flatten them with a bird feather. Then, holding his breath, he would observe the crystal and hurry to draw what

1. **photomicrographs** photographs made through a microscope.

he saw before it evaporated into thin air. It was a frustrating business to try to capture all the details in a drawing while simultaneously being in a race against time.

Eventually, a few years later, Bentley noticed an advertisement for a microscope and camera that he knew was the answer to his dreams. The problem was, the equipment cost \$100—equal to a whopping \$2,000 today. His father, being a serious, hardworking farmer, felt that looking through a microscope was a waste of time. “Somehow my mother got him to spend the money,” Bentley wrote, “but he never came to believe it had been worthwhile.” That was probably a feeling shared by the locals of Jericho, who nicknamed him “Snowflake” Bentley.

Undeterred, he began his quest to photograph a snow crystal. Once he attached the microscope to the camera and rigged up a way to focus it without running back and forth (he couldn't reach the focus knob from behind the camera), he began experimenting with photography. In the 1880s, few people owned a camera, so Bentley had no one to ask for help. Time after frustrating time, his negatives appeared blank. Not until the following winter did he figure out that too much light was reaching the camera lens. His solution was to place a metal plate with a pinhole in the center beneath the stage of the microscope, to cut down the stray light and allow only the light waves carrying the image to reach the camera.

This was the key, and on January 15, 1885, at the age of 19, Bentley finally photographed a snowflake! Many hours over the next 45 years were spent in his tiny darkroom beneath the stairs developing negatives that he then carried, often by lantern-light, to the brook for washing. In all that time, he never saw two snow crystals that were exactly alike, although he realized that if he were able to collect two crystals side-by-side from the same cloud, there was a good chance that they might look the same. (Scientist Nancy Knight did just that in 1988, and indeed found two identical snow crystals!)

An artist as well as a scientist, Bentley wanted to find a way to make the shape of the crystal stand out more from the white background of the photo paper.

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He couldn't bring himself to alter his original glass plate negatives, so he began making copies of them and scraping the photographic emulsion away from the edges of the images with a knife, a time-consuming trick that allowed sunlight through, turning the background black when printed by sunlight.

Bentley's book, *Snow Crystals*, containing 2,453 of his photographs, was finally published and delivered to his house just weeks before his death in 1931. Bentley was pleased. He never made more than a few thousand dollars from his work, but it had been a labor of love and he was satisfied to know that he would finally be able to share the beauty of his snow crystals with the world.

He is remembered primarily for this accomplishment, but to his friends and family, he was kind, gentle, and funny "Willie." He was the man who would sometimes tie an insect to a blade of grass to photograph it covered with dew the next morning, and who always chewed every bite 36 times. He was a gifted pianist who also played the violin and clarinet. He was the bachelor farmer who lived in the same farmhouse all his life. To scientists, he was the untrained researcher who not only photographed snow crystals, but also kept a detailed daily log of local weather conditions throughout his life and developed a method to measure the size of raindrops. To the people of Jericho, he is remembered as the not-so-flaky-after-all "Snowflake" Bentley.

# Maestro

by Pat Mora

TAKE NOTES

He hears her  
 when he bows.  
 Rows of hands clap  
 again and again he bows  
 5 to stage lights and upturned faces  
 but he hears only his mother’s voice  
  
 years ago in their small home  
 singing Mexican songs  
 one phrase at a time  
 10 while his father strummed the guitar  
 or picked the melody with quick fingertips.  
 Both cast their music in the air  
 for him to snare with his strings,  
 songs of *lunas*<sup>1</sup> and *amor*<sup>2</sup>  
 15 learned bit by bit.  
 She’d nod, smile, as his bow slid  
 note to note, then the trio  
         *voz*,<sup>3</sup> *guitarra*,<sup>4</sup> *violín*<sup>5</sup>  
 would blend again and again  
 20 to the last pure note  
 sweet on the tongue.

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**1. lunas** (lōō' nás) n. Spanish for "moons."  
**2. amor** (ă' mōr') n. Spanish for "love."  
**3. voz** (vōs) n. Spanish for "voice."  
**4. guitarra** (gē tār' rā) n. Spanish for "guitar."  
**5. violín** (vē ō lēn') n. Spanish for "violin."





# Bailando<sup>1</sup>

by Pat Mora

TAKE NOTES

I will remember you dancing,  
spinning round and round  
a young girl in Mexico,  
your long, black hair free in the wind,  
5 spinning round and round  
a young woman at village dances  
your long, blue dress swaying  
to the beat of *La Varsoviana*,<sup>2</sup>  
smiling into the eyes of your partners,  
10 years later smiling into my eyes  
when I'd reach up to dance with you,  
my dear aunt, who years later  
danced with my children,  
you, white-haired but still young  
15 waltzing on your ninetieth birthday,  
more beautiful than the orchid  
pinned on your shoulder,  
tottering now when you walk  
but saying to me, "*Estoy*<sup>3</sup> *bailando*,"  
20 and laughing.

- 
- 1. **Bailando** (bā lán' dō) *v.* Spanish for "dancing."
  - 2. **La Varsoviana** (lä bär' sō byä' nä) *n.* a lively folk dance.
  - 3. **Estoy** (es toí) *v.* Spanish for "I am."



# The Rider

by Naomi Shihab Nye

A boy told me  
if he rollerskated fast enough  
his loneliness couldn't catch up to him,

5 the best reason I ever heard  
for trying to be a champion.

What I wonder tonight  
pedaling hard down King William Street  
is if it translates to bicycles.

10 A victory! To leave your loneliness  
panting behind you on some street corner  
while you float free into a cloud of sudden azaleas,  
luminous pink petals that have  
never felt loneliness,  
no matter how slowly they fell.

## TAKE NOTES

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TAKE NOTES

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

# Seal

by William Jay Smith

See how he dives  
 From the rocks with a zoom!  
 See how he darts  
 Through his watery room  
 5 Past crabs and eels  
 And green seaweed,  
 Past fluffs of sandy  
 Minnow feed!<sup>1</sup>  
 See how he swims  
 10 With a swerve and a twist,  
 A flip of the flipper,  
 A flick of the wrist!  
 Quicksilver-quick,  
 Softer than spray,  
 15 Down he plunges  
 And sweeps away;  
 Before you can think,  
 Before you can utter  
 Words like “Dill pickle”  
 20 Or “Apple butter,”  
 Back up he swims  
 Past Sting Ray and Shark,  
 Out with a zoom,  
 A whoop, a bark;  
 25 Before you can say  
 Whatever you wish,  
 He plops at your side  
 With a mouthful of fish!

---

1. feed (fēd) n. tiny particles that minnows feed on.

# Haiku

by Matsuo Bashō

On sweet plum blossoms  
The sun rises suddenly.  
Look, a mountain path!

Has spring come indeed?  
On that nameless mountain lie  
Thin layers of mist.

Temple bells die out.  
The fragrant blossoms remain.  
A perfect evening!

## TAKE NOTES

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# Life

by Naomi Long Madgett

Life is but a toy that swings on a bright gold chain  
 Ticking for a little while  
 To amuse a fascinated infant,  
 Until the keeper, a very old man,  
 5 Becomes tired of the game  
 And lets the watch run down.

# The Courage That My Mother Had

by Edna St. Vincent Millay

The courage that my mother had  
Went with her, and is with her still:  
Rock from New England quarried;<sup>1</sup>  
Now granite in a granite hill.

5 The golden brooch<sup>2</sup> my mother wore  
She left behind for me to wear;  
I have no thing I treasure more:  
Yet, it is something I could spare.

Oh, if instead she'd left to me  
10 The thing she took into the grave!—  
That courage like a rock, which she  
Has no more need of, and I have.

- 
1. **quarried** (kwôr' ēd) adj. carved out of the ground.
  2. **brooch** (bröch) n. large ornamental pin.

## TAKE NOTES

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# Mother to Son

by Langston Hughes

Well, son, I'll tell you:  
 Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.  
 It's had tacks in it,  
 And splinters,  
 5 And boards torn up,  
 And places with no carpet on the floor—  
 Bare.  
 But all the time  
 I've been a-climbin' on,  
 10 And reachin' landin's,  
 And turnin' corners,  
 And sometimes goin' in the dark  
 Where there ain't been no light.  
 So boy, don't you turn back.  
 15 Don't you set down on the steps  
 'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
 Don't you fall now—  
 For I've still goin', honey,  
 I've still climbin',  
 20 And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

# Fog

by Carl Sandburg

The fog comes  
on little cat feet.  
It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
5 on silent haunches  
and then moves on.

## TAKE NOTES

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TAKE NOTES

# Train Tune

by Louise Bogan

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Back through clouds  
 Back through clearing  
 Back through distance  
 Back through silence

- 5 Back through groves  
 Back through garlands  
 Back by rivers  
 Back below mountains

- 10 Back through lightning  
 Back through cities  
 Back through stars  
 Back through hours

- 15 Back through plains  
 Back through flowers  
 Back through birds  
 Back through rain

- 20 Back through smoke  
 Back through noon  
 Back along love  
 Back through midnight

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TAKE NOTES

Horizontal lines for taking notes.

# Onomatopoeia

by Eve Merriam

The rusty spigot  
sputters,  
utters  
a splutter,  
5 spatters a smattering of drops,  
gashes wider;  
slash,  
splatters,  
scatters,  
10 spurts,  
finally stops sputtering  
and plash!  
gushes rushes splashes  
clear water dashes.

# Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

by Robert Frost

## TAKE NOTES

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Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village, though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

5 My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake  
10 To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
15 And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

TAKE NOTES

# Annabel Lee

by Edgar Allan Poe

It was many and many a year ago,  
In a kingdom by the sea,  
That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
By the name of Annabel Lee;  
And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,  
In this kingdom by the sea.  
5 But we loved with a love that was more than love—  
I and my Annabel Lee—  
With a love that the wingèd seraphs<sup>1</sup> of Heaven  
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
In this kingdom by the sea,  
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling  
My beautiful Annabel Lee;  
So that her highborn kinsmen came  
And bore her away from me,  
10 To shut her up in a sepulcher<sup>2</sup>  
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,  
Went envying her and me:—  
Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,  
In this kingdom by the sea)  
That the wind came out of a cloud by night,  
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

- 
1. **wingèd seraphs** (ser' efs) *n.* angels.
  2. **sepulcher** (sep' əl kər) *n.* vault or chamber for burial; tomb.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love  
 Of those who were older than we—  
 Of many far wiser than we—  
 15 And neither the angels in Heaven above  
 Nor the demons down under the sea,  
 Can ever dissever<sup>3</sup> my soul from the soul  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

For the moon never beams, without bringing  
 me dreams  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 20 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side  
 Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,  
 In her sepulcher there by the sea—  
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

**TAKE NOTES**

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3. **dissever** (di sev ' er) v. separate; divide.



TAKE NOTES

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# Father William

by Lewis Carroll

“You are old, Father William,” the young man said,  
 “And your hair has become very white;  
 And yet you incessantly stand on your head—  
 Do you think, at your age, it is right?”

5 “In my youth,” Father William replied to his son,  
 “I feared it might injure the brain;  
 But, now that I’m perfectly sure I have none,  
 Why, I do it again and again.”

“You are old,” said the youth, “as I mentioned  
 before.

10 And have grown most uncommonly fat;  
 Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door—  
 Pray, what is the reason of that?”

“In my youth,” said the sage, as he shook his gray  
 locks,

15 “I kept all my limbs very supple  
 By the use of this ointment—one shilling<sup>1</sup> the box—  
 Allow me to sell you a couple?”

“You are old,” said the youth, “and your jaws are  
 too weak

For anything tougher than suet;<sup>2</sup>  
 Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the  
 beak—

20 Pray, how did you manage to do it?”

“In my youth,” said his father, “I took to the law,  
 And argued each case with my wife;  
 And the muscular strength, which it gave to my jaw  
 Has lasted the rest of my life.”

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1. **shilling** (shil'ing) *n.* British coin.  
 2. **suet** (soo'it) *n.* fat used in cooking.

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25 “You are old,” said the youth, “one would hardly  
suppose  
That your eye was as steady as ever;  
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose—  
What made you so awfully clever?”

“I have answered three questions, and that is  
enough,”

30 Said his father; “don’t give yourself airs!  
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?  
Be off, or I’ll kick you downstairs!”

**TAKE NOTES**

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## TAKE NOTES

# Jim

by Gwendolyn Brooks

There never was a nicer boy  
 Than Mrs. Jackson's Jim.  
 The sun should drop its greatest gold  
 On him.

5   Because, when Mother-dear was sick,  
 He brought her cocoa in.  
 And brought her broth, and brought her bread.  
 And brought her medicine.

And, tipping,<sup>1</sup> tidied up her room.  
 10   And would not let her see  
 He missed his game of baseball  
 Terribly.

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1. **tipping** (tip´ in) v. tiptoeing.

# The Highwayman

by Alfred Noyes

TAKE NOTES

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## Part One

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the  
gusty trees.  
The moon was a ghostly galleon<sup>1</sup> tossed upon  
cloudy seas.  
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple  
moor,<sup>2</sup>  
And the highwayman came riding—  
5                   Riding—riding—  
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn door.  
  
He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch  
of lace at his chin,  
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown  
doeskin.  
They fitted with never a wrinkle. His boots were up  
to the thigh.  
10 And he rode with a jeweled twinkle,  
                  His pistol butts a-twinkle,  
His rapier hilt<sup>3</sup> a-twinkle, under the jeweled sky.  
  
Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the  
dark innyard.  
He tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all  
was locked and barred.  
15 He whistled a tune to the window, and who should  
be waiting there  
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
                  Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
Plaiting a dark red love knot into her long black  
hair.

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1. **galleon** (gal' ē ən) *n.* large Spanish sailing ship.  
2. **moor** (mōər) *n.* open, rolling land with swamps.  
3. **rapier** (rā' pē ər) *n.* hilt large cup-shaped handle of a rapier, which is a type of sword.



## Part Two

## TAKE NOTES

He did not come in the dawning. He did not come at  
noon;  
And out of the tawny sunset, before the rise of the  
moon,  
When the road was a gypsy's ribbon, looping the  
purple moor,  
40 A redcoat troop came marching—  
                    Marching—marching—  
King George's men<sup>8</sup> came marching, up to the old  
inn door.

They said no word to the landlord. They drank his  
ale instead  
But they gagged his daughter, and bound her, to  
the foot of her narrow bed.  
45 Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets  
at their side!  
There was death at every window;  
                    And hell at one dark window;  
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road  
that *he* would ride.

They had tied her up to attention, with many a  
sniggering jest.<sup>9</sup>  
50 They had bound a musket beside her, with the  
muzzle beneath her breast!  
“Now, keep good watch!” and they kissed her. She  
heard the doomed man say—  
*Look for me by moonlight;*  
                    *Watch for me by moonlight;*  
*I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should*  
*bar the way!*

55 She twisted her hands behind her; but all the  
knots held good!  
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with  
sweat or blood!  
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and  
the hours crawled by like years,  
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,  
                    Cold, on the stroke of midnight,  
60 The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least  
was hers!

8. **King George's men** soldiers serving King George of Great Britain.

9. **sniggering** (snig' er in) jest sly joke.

## TAKE NOTES

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The tip of one finger touched it. She strove no more  
for the rest.

Up, she stood up to attention, with the muzzle  
beneath her breast.

She would not risk their hearing; she would not  
strive again;

For the road lay bare in the moonlight;

65                         Blank and bare in the moonlight;  
And the blood of her veins, in the moonlight,  
throbbed to her love's refrain.

*Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot!* Had they heard it? The  
horsehoofs ringing clear;

*Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot,* in the distance? Were they deaf  
that they did not hear?

Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the  
hill,

70 The highwayman came riding—

Riding—riding—

The redcoats looked to their priming!<sup>10</sup> She stood  
up, straight and still.

*Tlot-tlot,* in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the  
echoing night!

Nearer he came and nearer. Her face was like a  
light.

75 Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one  
last deep breath,

Then her finger moved in the moonlight,

Her musket shattered the moonlight,  
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned  
him—with her death.

He turned. He spurred to the west; he did not know  
who stood

80 Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched  
with her own blood!

Not till the dawn he heard it, and his face grew gray  
to hear

How Bess, the landlord's daughter,

The landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died  
in the darkness there.

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10. **priming** (prīm' mīn) *n.* explosive used to set off the charge in a gun.

85 Back, he spurred like a madman, shouting a curse  
to the sky,  
With the white road smoking behind him and his  
rapier brandished<sup>11</sup> high.  
Blood-red were his spurs in the golden noon; wine-  
red was his velvet coat;  
When they shot him down on the highway,  
                        Down like a dog on the highway,  
90 And he lay in his blood on the highway, with a  
bunch of lace at his throat.

*And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind  
is in the trees,  
When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon  
cloudy seas,  
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the  
purple moor,  
A highwayman comes riding—  
95                     Riding—riding—  
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn door.*

*Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark  
innyard.  
He taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is  
locked and barred.  
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should  
be waiting there  
100 But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,  
                        Bess, the landlord's daughter,  
Plaiting a dark red love knot into her long black hair.*

**TAKE NOTES**

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11. **brandished** (bran´ dishd) *adj.* waved in a threatening way.



## TAKE NOTES

# The Real Story of a Cowboy's Life

by Geoffrey C. Ward

A drive's success depended on discipline and planning. According to Teddy Blue,<sup>1</sup> most Texas herds numbered about 2,000 head with a trail boss and about a dozen men in charge—though herds as large as 15,000 were also driven north with far larger escorts. The most experienced men rode “point” and “swing,” at the head and sides of the long herd; the least experienced brought up the rear, riding “drag” and eating dust. At the end of the day, Teddy Blue remembered, they “would go to the water barrel . . . and rinse their mouths and cough and spit up . . . black stuff. But you couldn't get it up out of your lungs.”

They had to learn to work as a team, keeping the herd moving during the day, resting peacefully at night. Twelve to fifteen miles a day was a good pace. But such steady progress could be interrupted at any time. A cowboy had to know how to gauge the temperament of his cattle, how to chase down a stray without alarming the rest of the herd, how to lasso a steer using the horn of his saddle as a tying post. His saddle was his most prized possession; it served as his chair, his workbench, his pillow at night. Being dragged to death was the most common death for a cowboy, and so the most feared occurrence on the trail was the nighttime stampede. As Teddy Blue recalled, a sound, a smell, or simply the sudden movement of a jittery cow could set off a whole herd.

If . . . the cattle started running—you'd hear that low rumbling noise along the ground and the men on herd wouldn't need to come in and tell you, you'd know—then you'd jump for your horse and get out there in the lead, trying to head them and

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1. **Teddy Blue** Edward C. Abbot, a cowboy who rode in a successful trail drive in the 1880s.

get them into a mill<sup>2</sup> before they scattered. It was riding at a dead run in the dark, with cut banks and prairie dog holes all around you, not knowing if the next jump would land you in a shallow grave.

Most cowboys had guns, but rarely used them on the trail. Some outfits made them keep their weapons in the chuck wagon to eliminate any chance of gunplay. Charles Goodnight<sup>3</sup> was still more emphatic: “Before starting on a trail drive, I made it a rule to draw up an article of agreement, setting forth what each man was to do. The main clause stipulated<sup>4</sup> that if one shot another he was to be tried by the outfit and hanged on the spot, if found guilty. I never had a man shot on the trail.”

Regardless of its ultimate destination, every herd had to ford<sup>5</sup> a series of rivers—the Nueces, the Guadalupe, the Brazos, the Wichita, the Red.

A big herd of longhorns swimming across a river, Goodnight remembered, “looked like a million floating rocking chairs,” and crossing those rivers one after another, a cowboy recalled, was like climbing the rungs of a long ladder reaching north.

“After you crossed the Red River and got out on the open plains,” Teddy Blue remembered, “it was sure a pretty sight to see them strung out for almost a mile, the sun shining on their horns.” Initially, the land immediately north of the Red River was Indian territory, and some tribes charged tolls for herds crossing their land—payable in money or beef. But Teddy Blue remembered that the homesteaders, now pouring onto the Plains by railroad, were far more nettlesome:

There was no love lost between settlers and cowboys on the trail. Those jay-hawkers would take up a claim right where the herds watered and charge us for water. They would plant a crop alongside the trail and plow a furrow around it for a fence, and then when the cattle got into their wheat or their garden patch, they would

#### TAKE NOTES

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2. **mill** (mil) *n.* slow movement in a circle.  
3. **Charles Goodnight** cowboy who rode successful trail drives beginning in the 1860s.  
4. **stipulated** (stip' yə lāt' əd) *v.* stated as a rule.  
5. **ford** (fôrd) *v.* cross a river at a shallow point.

TAKE NOTES

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come cussing and waving a shotgun and yelling for damages. And the cattle had been coming through there when they were still raising punkins in Illinois.

The settlers' hostility was entirely understandable. The big herds ruined their crops, and they carried with them a disease, spread by ticks and called "Texas fever," that devastated domestic livestock. Kansas and other territories along the route soon established quarantine lines,<sup>6</sup> called "deadlines," at the western fringe of settlement, and insisted that trail drives not cross them. Each year, as settlers continued to move in, those deadlines moved farther west.

Sometimes, farmers tried to enforce their own, as John Rumans, one of Charles Goodnight's hands, recalled:

Some men met us at the trail near Canyon City, and said we couldn't come in. There were fifteen or twenty of them, and they were not going to let us cross the Arkansas River. We didn't even stop. . . . Old man [Goodnight] had a shotgun loaded with buckshot and led the way, saying: "John, get over on that point with your Winchester and point these cattle in behind me." He slid his shotgun across the saddle in front of him and we did the same with our Winchesters. He rode right across, and as he rode up to them, he said: "I've monkeyed as long as I want to with you," and they fell back to the sides, and went home after we had passed.

There were few diversions on the trail. Most trail bosses banned liquor. Goodnight prohibited gambling, too. Even the songs for which cowboys became famous grew directly out of doing a job, remembered Teddy Blue:

The singing was supposed to soothe [the cattle] and it did; I don't know why, unless it was that a sound they was used to would keep them from spooking at other noises. I know that if you wasn't singing, any little sound in the night—it might be just a horse shaking himself—could make them

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6. **quarantine** (kwŏr' ən tēn) **lines** *n.* boundaries created to prevent the spread of disease.

leave the country; but if you were singing, they wouldn't notice it.

The two men on guard would circle around with their horses on a walk, if it was a clear night and the cattle was bedded down and quiet, and one man would sing a verse of song, and his partner on the other side of the herd would sing another verse; and you'd go through a whole song that way. . . .

“Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie” was a great song for awhile, but . . . they sung it to death. It was a saying on the range that even the horses nickered it and the coyotes howled it; it got so they'd throw you in the creek if you sang it.

The number of cattle on the move was sometimes staggering: once, Teddy Blue rode to the top of a rise from which he could see seven herds strung out behind him; eight more up ahead; and the dust from an additional thirteen moving parallel to his. “All the cattle in the world,” he remembered, “seemed to be coming up from Texas.”

At last, the herds neared their destinations. After months in the saddle—often wearing the same clothes every day, eating nothing but biscuits and beef stew at the chuck wagon, drinking only water and coffee, his sole companions his fellow cowboys, his herd, and his horse—the cowboy was about to be paid for his work, and turned loose in town.

**TAKE NOTES**

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## TAKE NOTES

*from the novel* **Dragonwings**

by Laurence Yep

I do not know when I fell asleep, but it was already way past sunrise when I woke up. The light crept through the cracks in the walls and under the shutters and seemed to delight especially in dancing on my eyes. Father lay huddled, rolled up in his blanket. He did not move when the knock came at our door. I was still in my clothes because it was cold. I crawled out of the blankets and opened the side door.

The fog lay low on the hill. Tendrils drifted in through the open doorway. At first I could not see anything but shadows, and then a sudden breeze whipped the fog away from the front of our barn. Hand Clap stood there as if he had appeared by magic. He bowed.

“There you are.” He turned and called over his shoulder. “Hey, everybody, they’re here.”

I heard the clink of harness and the rattle of an old wagon trying to follow the ruts in the road. Toiling up the hill out of the fog was Red Rabbit, and behind him I saw Uncle on the wagon seat. The rest of the wagon was empty—I suppose to give Red Rabbit less of a load to pull. Behind the wagon came the Company, with coils of ropes over their shoulders and baskets of food. I ran down the hill, my feet pounding against the hard, damp earth. I got up on the seat and almost bowled Uncle over. For once Uncle did not worry about his dignity but caught me up and returned my hug.

“Ouch,” he said, and pushed me away. He patted himself lightly on his chest. “I’m not as young as I used to be.”

Then Hand Clap, Lefty, and White Deer crowded around.

“Am I ever glad you’re here,” I said. “Poor Father—”

Uncle held up his hands. “We know. That’s why we came.”

"But how? Why?" I was bursting with a dozen questions all at once.

"Why, to help you get that thing up to the top of the hill," Uncle said. "Why else would we close up our shop and take a boat and climb this abominable hill, all on the coldest, wettest day ever known since creation?"

"But you don't believe in flying machines."

"I still don't," Uncle said sternly. "But I still feel as if I owe you something for what was done to you by that man who once was my son.<sup>1</sup> I'll be there to haul your machine up the hill, and I'll be there to haul it back down when it doesn't fly."

"We were all getting fat anyway," White Deer said, "especially Uncle."

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1. **man who once was my son** Black Dog, who robbed the narrator and his father.

**TAKE NOTES**

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# from the dramatization of **Dragonwings**

by Laurence Yep

<b>RED RABBIT</b> a horse that pulls the company’s laundry wagon	<b>MOON SHADOW</b> the narrator of the story
<b>UNCLE BRIGHT STAR</b> another laundry owner	<b>MISS WHITLAW</b> owner of a stable in San Francisco where the narrator and his father live
<b>WHITE DEER</b> the third laundry owner	<b>WINDRIDER</b> Moon Shadow’s father

**Scene 9** *Piedmont, later that day outside the stable.*

**MOON SHADOW:** September twenty-second, Nineteen-ought-nine. Dear Mother. I have bad news. We are going to lose Dragonwings before father can fly it. Black Dog stole all we have, and the landlord will not give us an extension on our rent. So we’ll have to move and leave Dragonwings behind. We have asked Miss Whitlaw for help, but her new house has taken up all of her money. And even if Uncle would speak to us, he has probably spent all he has on rebuilding his laundry.

[**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR** and **MISS WHITLAW** enter from L.]

**MISS WHITLAW:** I could have gotten down from the wagon by myself.

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** Watch gopher hole.

**MISS WHITLAW:** I’m younger than you.

**MOON SHADOW:** Uncle, Miss Whitlaw!

**MISS WHITLAW:** How are you?

[*Shaking MOON SHADOW’s hand. WINDRIDER enters from U. He now wears a cap.*]

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**WINDRIDER:** Come to laugh, Uncle?

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** I came to help you fly your contraption.

**MOON SHADOW:** But you don't believe in flying machines.

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** And I'll haul that thing back down when it doesn't fly. Red Rabbit and me were getting fat anyway. But look at how tall you've grown. And how thin. And ragged. *[Pause.]* But you haven't broken your neck which was more than I ever expected.

**MISS WHITLAW:** As soon as I told your uncle, we hatched the plot together. You ought to get a chance to fly your aeroplane.

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** Flat purse, strong backs.

**WINDRIDER:** We need to pull Dragonwings to the very top.

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** That hill is a very steep hill.

**WINDRIDER:** It has to be that one. The winds are right.

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** Ah, well, it's the winds.

**WINDRIDER:** Take the ropes. *[Pantomimes taking a rope over his shoulder as he faces the audience.]* Got a good grip?

**OTHERS:** *[Pantomiming taking the ropes.]* Yes, right, etc.

**WINDRIDER:** Then pull.

*[They strain. MOON SHADOW stumbles but gets right up. Stamping his feet to get better footing, he keeps tugging.]*

**MOON SHADOW:** *[Giving up.]* It's no good.

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** Pull in rhythm. As we did on the railroad.<sup>1</sup> *[In demonstration, UNCLE BRIGHT STAR stamps his feet in a slow rhythm to set the beat and the others repeat. The rhythm picks up as they move.]*  
Ngúng, ngúng.  
Dew gùng

1. **railroad** Uncle Bright Star had helped dig tunnels through the mountains for the railroad.

**TAKE NOTES**

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**OTHERS:** Ngúng, ngúng.  
Dew gúng

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** [*Imitating the intonation of the Cantonese.*]  
Púsh, púsh.  
Wòrk, wòrk.

**OTHERS:** Púsh, púsh.  
Wòrk, wòrk.

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** Seen gà,  
Gee gá.  
  
[*High rising tone on the last syllable.*]

**OTHERS:** Seen gà,  
Gee gá.  
  
[*High rising tone on the last syllable.*]

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** Get rich,  
Go hóme.

**OTHERS:** Get rich,  
Go hóme.

[*MOON SHADOW, WINDRIDER, UNCLE BRIGHT STAR and MISS WHITLAW arrive D.*]

**MOON SHADOW:** [*Panting.*] We made it. Tramp the grass down in front.

[*WINDRIDER stands C as the others stamp the grass. They can't help smiling and laughing a little.*]

**WINDRIDER:** That's enough.

**MOON SHADOW:** [To *MISS WHITLAW.*] Take that propeller.

[*MISS WHITLAW takes her place before the right propeller with her hands resting on the blade. MOON SHADOW takes his place beside the left propeller. WINDRIDER faces U., his back to the audience.*]

**MISS WHITLAW:** Listen to the wind on the wings.

**UNCLE BRIGHT STAR:** It's alive.

**WINDRIDER:** All right.

[*MOON SHADOW and MISS WHITLAW pull down at the propellers and back away quickly. We hear a motor*



TAKE NOTES

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**WINDRIDER:** When I was up in the air, I tried to find you. You were so small. And getting smaller. Just disappearing from sight. [*Handing his cap to **MOON SHADOW**.*] Like you were disappearing from my life. [He begins his ballet again.] I knew it wasn't the time. The Dragon King<sup>3</sup> said there would be all sorts of lessons.

[**MOON SHADOW** turns to audience as an adult.]

**MOON SHADOW:** We always talked about flying again. Only we never did. [*Putting on cap.*] But dreams stay with you, and we never forgot.

[**WINDRIDER** takes his final pose. A gong sounds.]

3. **Dragon King** In Chinese legends, most dragons are not evil creatures. Earlier in the story, Windrider relates a dream sequence in which he was given his name by the Dragon King and learned he had once been a flying dragon.

# A Christmas Carol: Scrooge and Marley

by Israel Horovitz  
*from A Christmas Carol*  
 by Charles Dickens

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- JACOB MARLEY**, a specter
- EBENEZER SCROOGE**, not yet dead, which is to say still alive
- BOB CRATCHIT**, Scrooge's clerk
- FRED**, Scrooge's nephew
- THIN DO-GOODER**
- PORTLY DO-GOODER**
- SPECTERS (VARIOUS)**, carrying money-boxes
- THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST**
- FOUR JOCUND TRAVELERS**
- A BAND OF SINGERS**
- A BAND OF DANCERS**
- LITTLE BOY SCROOGE**
- YOUNG MAN SCROOGE**
- FAN**, Scrooge's little sister
- THE SCHOOLMASTER**
- SCHOOLMATES**
- FEZZIWIG**, a fine and fair employer
- DICK**, young Scrooge's co-worker
- YOUNG SCROOGE**
- A FIDDLER**
- MORE DANCERS**
- SCROOGE'S LOST LOVE**
- SCROOGE'S LOST LOVE'S DAUGHTER**

- SCROOGE'S LOST LOVE'S HUSBAND**
- THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT**
- SOME BAKERS**
- MRS. CRATCHIT**, Bob Cratchit's wife
- BELINDA CRATCHIT**, a daughter
- MARTHA CRATCHIT**, another daughter
- PETER CRATCHIT**, a son
- TINY TIM CRATCHIT**, another son
- SCROOGE'S NIECE**, Fred's wife
- THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE**, a mute Phantom
- THREE MEN OF BUSINESS**
- DRUNKS, SCOUNDRELS, WOMEN OF THE STREETS**
- A CHARWOMAN**
- MRS. DILBER**
- JOE**, an old second-hand goods dealer
- A CORPSE**, very like Scrooge
- AN INDEBTED FAMILY**
- ADAM**, a young boy
- A POULTERER**
- A GENTLEWOMAN**
- SOME MORE MEN OF BUSINESS**

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**TAKE NOTES**

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**ACT I**

*THE PLACE OF THE PLAY* Various locations in and around the City of London, including Scrooge’s Chambers and Offices; the Cratchit Home; Fred’s Home; Scrooge’s School; Fezziwig’s Offices; Old Joe’s Hide-a-Way.

*THE TIME OF THE PLAY* The entire action of the play takes place on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the morning after Christmas, 1843.

**SCENE 1**

*[Ghostly music in auditorium. A single spotlight on JACOB MARLEY, D.C. He is ancient; awful, dead-eyed. He speaks straight out to auditorium.]*

**MARLEY.** *[Cackle-voiced]* My name is Jacob Marley and I am dead. *[He laughs.]* Oh, no, there’s no doubt that I am dead. The register of my burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker . . . and by my chief mourner . . . Ebenezer Scrooge . . . *[Pause; remembers]* I am dead as a doornail.

*[A spotlight fades up, Stage Right, on SCROOGE, in his counting-house,<sup>1</sup> counting. Lettering on the window behind SCROOGE reads: “SCROOGE AND MARLEY, LTD.” The spotlight is tight on SCROOGE’s head and shoulders. We shall not yet see into the offices and setting. Ghostly music continues, under. MARLEY looks across at SCROOGE; pitifully. After a moment’s pause]* I present him to you: Ebenezer Scrooge . . . England’s most tightfisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner! secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster. The cold within him freezes his old features, nips his pointed nose, shrivels his cheek, stiffens his gait; makes his eyes red, his thin lips blue; and speaks out shrewdly in his grating voice. Look at him. Look at him . . .

*[SCROOGE counts and mumbles.]*

**SCROOGE.** They owe me money and I will collect. I will have them jailed, if I have to. They owe me money and I will collect what is due me.

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1. **counting-house** office for keeping financial records and writing business letters.

[MARLEY moves towards SCROOGE; two steps. The spotlight stays with him.]

**MARLEY.** [*Disgusted*] He and I were partners for I don't know how many years. Scrooge was my sole executor, my sole administrator, my sole assign, my sole residuary legatee,<sup>2</sup> my sole friend and my sole mourner. But Scrooge was not so cut up by the sad event of my death, but that he was an excellent man of business on the very day of my funeral, and solemnized<sup>3</sup> it with an undoubted bargain. [*Pauses again in disgust*] He never painted out my name from the window. There it stands, on the window and above the warehouse door: Scrooge and Marley. Sometimes people new to our business call him Scrooge and sometimes they call him Marley. He answers to both names. It's all the same to him. And it's cheaper than painting in a new sign, isn't it? [*Pauses; moves closer to SCROOGE*] Nobody has ever stopped him in the street to say, with gladsome looks, "My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?" No beggars implored him to bestow a trifle, no children ever ask him what it is o'clock, no man or woman now, or ever in his life, not once, inquire the way to such and such a place. [*MARLEY stands next to SCROOGE now. They share, so it seems, a spotlight.*] But what does Scrooge care of any of this? It is the very thing he likes! To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance.

[*A ghostly bell rings in the distance. MARLEY moves away from SCROOGE, now, heading D. again. As he does, he "takes" the light: SCROOGE has disappeared into the black void beyond. MARLEY walks D.C., talking directly to the audience. Pauses*]

The bell tolls and I must take my leave. You must stay a while with Scrooge and watch him play out his scroogey life. It is now the story: the once-upon-a-time. Scrooge is busy in his counting house. Where else? Christmas eve and Scrooge is busy in

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- 2. my sole executor** (eg zek' yōō tər), **my sole administrator**, **my sole assign** (ə sɪn'), **my sole residuary legatee** (ri zɪj' ōō er' ē leg' ə tē') legal terms giving one person responsibility to carry out the wishes of another who has died.
- 3. solemnized** (sāl' əm nɪz'd) v. honored or remembered. Marley is being sarcastic.

**TAKE NOTES**

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his counting-house. It is cold, bleak, biting weather outside: foggy withal: and, if you listen closely, you can hear the people in the court go wheezing up and down, beating their hands upon their breasts, and stamping their feet upon the pavement stones to warm them . . .

*[The clocks outside strike three.]*

Only three! and quite dark outside already: it has not been light all day this day.

*[This ghostly bell rings in the distance again. MARLEY looks about him. Music in. MARLEY flies away.]*

*[N.B. MARLEY's comings and goings should, from time to time, induce the explosion of the odd flash-pot. I.H.]*

**SCENE 2**

*[Christmas music in, sung by a live chorus, full. At conclusion of song, sound fades under and into the distance. Lights up in set: offices of Scrooge and Marley, Ltd. SCROOGE sits at his desk, at work. Near him is a tiny fire. His door is open and in his line of vision, we see SCROOGE's clerk, BOB CRATCHIT, who sits in a dismal tank of a cubicle, copying letters. Near CRATCHIT is a fire so tiny as to barely cast a light: perhaps it is one pitifully glowing coal? CRATCHIT rubs his hands together, puts on a white comforter<sup>4</sup> and tries to heat his hands around his candle. SCROOGE's NEPHEW enters, unseen.]*

**SCROOGE.** What are you doing, Cratchit? Acting cold, are you? Next, you'll be asking to replenish your coal from my coal-box, won't you? Well, save your breath, Cratchit! Unless you're prepared to find employ elsewhere!

**NEPHEW.** *[Cheerfully; surprising SCROOGE]* A merry Christmas to you, Uncle! God save you!

**SCROOGE.** Bah! Humbug!<sup>5</sup>

**NEPHEW.** Christmas a "humbug," Uncle? I'm sure you don't mean that.

**SCROOGE.** I do! Merry Christmas? What right do you have to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough!

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4. **comforter** (kum' fer ter) *n.* long, woolen scarf.  
 5. **Humbug** (hum' bug') *interj.* nonsense.

**NEPHEW.** Come, then. What right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

**SCROOGE.** Bah! Humbug!

**NEPHEW.** Don't be cross, Uncle.

**SCROOGE.** What else can I be? Eh? When I live in a world of fools such as this? Merry Christmas? What's Christmastime to you but a time of paying bills without any money; a time for finding yourself a year older, but not an hour richer. If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!

**NEPHEW.** Uncle!

**SCROOGE.** Nephew! You keep Christmas in your own way and let me keep it in mine.

**NEPHEW.** Keep it! But you don't keep it, Uncle.

**SCROOGE.** Let me leave it alone, then. Much good it has ever done you!

**NEPHEW.** There are many things from which I have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say. Christmas among the rest. But I am sure that I always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round—as a good time: the only time I know of, when men and women seem to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And therefore, Uncle, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and that it *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it!

[*The CLERK in the tank applauds, looks at the furious SCROOGE and pokes out his tiny fire, as if in exchange for the moment of impropriety. SCROOGE yells at him.*]

**SCROOGE.** [*To the clerk*] Let me hear another sound from *you* and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your

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situation. [To the nephew] You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.<sup>6</sup>

**NEPHEW.** Don't be angry, Uncle. Come! Dine with us tomorrow.

**SCROOGE.** I'd rather see myself dead than see myself with your family!

**NEPHEW.** But, why? Why?

**SCROOGE.** Why did you get married?

**NEPHEW.** Because I fell in love.

**SCROOGE.** That, sir, is the only thing that you have said to me in your entire lifetime which is even more ridiculous than "Merry Christmas"! [Turns from NEPHEW] Good afternoon.

**NEPHEW.** Nay, Uncle, you never came to see me before I married either. Why give it as a reason for not coming now?

**SCROOGE.** Good afternoon, Nephew!

**NEPHEW.** I want nothing from you; I ask nothing of you; why cannot we be friends?

**SCROOGE.** Good afternoon!

**NEPHEW.** I am sorry with all my heart, to find you so resolute. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So A Merry Christmas, Uncle!

**SCROOGE.** Good afternoon!

**NEPHEW.** And A Happy New Year!

**SCROOGE.** Good afternoon!

**NEPHEW.** [He stands facing SCROOGE.] Uncle, you are the most . . . [Pauses] No, I shan't. My Christmas humor is intact . . . [Pause] God bless you, Uncle . . . [NEPHEW turns and starts for the door; he stops at CRATCHIT'S cage.] Merry Christmas, Bob Cratchit . . .

**CRATCHIT.** Merry Christmas to you sir, and a very, very happy New Year . . .

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**6. Parliament** (pär' le mēnt) national legislative body of Great Britain, in some ways like the United States Congress.

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**SCROOGE.** [Calling across to them] Oh, fine, a perfection, just fine . . . to see the perfect pair of you: husbands, with wives and children to support . . . my clerk there earning fifteen shillings a week . . . and the perfect pair of you, talking about a Merry Christmas! [Pauses] I'll retire to Bedlam!<sup>7</sup>

**NEPHEW.** [To CRATCHIT] He's impossible!

**CRATCHIT.** Oh, mind him not, sir. He's getting on in years, and he's alone. He's noticed your visit. I'll wager your visit has warmed him.

**NEPHEW.** Him? Uncle Ebenezer Scrooge? *Warmed?* You are a better Christian than I am, sir.

**CRATCHIT.** [Opening the door for NEPHEW; two DO-GOODERS will enter, as NEPHEW exits] Good day to you, sir, and God bless.

**NEPHEW.** God bless . . . [One man who enters is portly, the other is thin. Both are pleasant.]

**CRATCHIT.** Can I help you, gentlemen?

**THIN MAN.** [Carrying papers and books; looks around CRATCHIT to SCROOGE] Scrooge and Marley's, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?

**SCROOGE.** Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago this very night.

**PORTLY MAN.** We have no doubt his liberality<sup>8</sup> is well represented by his surviving partner . . . [Offers his calling card]

**SCROOGE.** [Handing back the card; unlooked at] . . . Good afternoon.

**THIN MAN.** This will take but a moment, sir . . .

**PORTLY MAN.** At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge, it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

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7. **Bedlam** (bed' ləm) hospital in London for the mentally ill.

8. **liberality** (lib' er əl' i tē) generosity.

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**SCROOGE.** Are there no prisons?

**PORTLY MAN.** Plenty of prisons.

**SCROOGE.** And aren't the Union workhouses still in operation?

**THIN MAN.** They are. Still. I wish that I could say that they are not.

**SCROOGE.** The Treadmill<sup>9</sup> and the Poor Law<sup>10</sup> are in full vigor, then?

**THIN MAN.** Both very busy, sir.

**SCROOGE.** Ohhh, I see. I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them from their useful course. [*Pauses*] I'm glad to hear it.

**PORTLY MAN.** Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the Poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. [*Pen in hand; as well as notepad*] What shall I put you down for, sir?

**SCROOGE.** Nothing!

**PORTLY MAN.** You wish to be left anonymous?

**SCROOGE.** I wish to be left alone! [*Pauses; turns away; turns back to them*] Since you ask me what I wish, gentlemen, that is my answer. I help to support the establishments that I have mentioned: they cost enough: and those who are badly off must go there.

**THIN MAN.** Many can't go there; and many would rather die.

**SCROOGE.** If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides—excuse me—I don't know that.

**THIN MAN.** But you might know it!

9. **the Treadmill** (tred' mil') kind of mill wheel turned by the weight of people treading steps arranged around it; this device was used to punish prisoners.

10. **the Poor Law** the original 16<sup>th</sup>-century Poor Laws called for overseers of the poor in each neighborhood to provide relief for the needy. The New Poor Law of 1834 made the workhouses in which the poor sometimes lived and worked extremely hard and unattractive.

**SCROOGE.** It's not my business. It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, gentlemen!  
[SCROOGE turns his back on the gentlemen and returns to his desk.]

**PORTLY MAN.** But, sir, Mr. Scrooge . . . think of the poor.

**SCROOGE.** [Turns suddenly to them. Pauses] Take your leave of my offices, sirs, while I am still smiling.

[The THIN MAN looks at the PORTLY MAN. They are undone. They shrug. They move to the door. CRATCHIT hops up to open it for them.]

**THIN MAN.** Good day, sir . . . [To CRATCHIT] A merry Christmas to you, sir . . .

**CRATCHIT.** Yes. A Merry Christmas to both of you . . .

**PORTLY MAN.** Merry Christmas . . .

[CRATCHIT silently squeezes something into the hand of the thin man.]

**THIN MAN.** What's this?

**CRATCHIT.** Shhhh . . .

[CRATCHIT opens the door; wind and snow whistle into the room.]

**THIN MAN.** Thank you, sir, thank you.

[CRATCHIT closes the door and returns to his workplace. SCROOGE is at his own counting table. He talks to CRATCHIT without looking up.]

**SCROOGE.** It's less of a time of year for being merry, and more a time of year for being loony . . . if you ask me.

**CRATCHIT.** Well, I don't know, sir . . . [The clock's bell strikes six o'clock.] Well, there it is, eh, six?

**SCROOGE.** Saved by six bells, are you?

**CRATCHIT.** I must be going home . . . [He snuffs out his candle and puts on his hat.] I hope you have a . . . very very lovely day tomorrow, sir . . .

**TAKE NOTES**

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**SCROOGE.** Hmmm. Oh, you’ll be wanting the whole day tomorrow, I suppose?

**CRATCHIT.** If quite convenient, sir.

**SCROOGE.** It’s not convenient, and it’s not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you’d think yourself ill-used, I’ll be bound?

[CRATCHIT *smiles faintly.*]

**CRATCHIT.** I don’t know, sir . . .

**SCROOGE.** And yet, you don’t think me ill-used when I pay a day’s wages for no work . . .

**CRATCHIT.** It’s only but once a year . . .

**SCROOGE.** A poor excuse for picking a man’s pocket every 25th of December! But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier the next morning!

**CRATCHIT.** Oh, I will, sir. I will. I promise you. And, sir . . .

**SCROOGE.** Don’t say it, Cratchit.

**CRATCHIT.** But let me wish you a . . .

**SCROOGE.** Don’t say it, Cratchit. I warn you . . .

**CRATCHIT.** Sir!

**SCROOGE.** Cratchit!

[CRATCHIT *opens the door.*]

**CRATCHIT.** All right, then, sir . . . well . . . [*Suddenly*]  
Merry Christmas, Mr. Scrooge!

[*And he runs out the door, shutting same behind him.*  
SCROOGE *moves to his desk; gathering his coat, hat, etc.*  
A BOY *appears at his window.* . . . ]

**BOY.** [*Singing*] “Away in a manger . . .”

[SCROOGE *seizes his ruler and whacks at the image of the Boy outside. The Boy leaves.*]

**SCROOGE.** Bah! Humbug! Christmas! Bah! Humbug! [*He shuts out the light.*]

*A note on the crossover, following Scene 2:*

*[SCROOGE will walk alone to his rooms from his offices. As he makes a long slow cross of the stage, the scenery should change. Christmas music will be heard, various people will cross by SCROOGE, often smiling happily.*

*There will be occasional pleasant greetings tossed at him.*

*SCROOGE, in contrast to all, will grump and mumble. He will snap at passing boys, as might a horrid old hound.*

*In short, SCROOGE’S sounds and movements will define him in contrast from all other people who cross the stage: he is the misanthrope,<sup>11</sup> the malcontent, the miser. He is SCROOGE.*

*This statement of SCROOGE’S character, by contrast to all other characters, should seem comical to the audience.*

*During SCROOGE’S crossover to his rooms, snow should begin to fall. All passers-by will hold their faces to the sky, smiling, allowing snow to shower them lightly. SCROOGE, by contrast, will bat at the flakes with his walking-stick, as might an insomniac swat at a sleep-stopping, middle-of-the-night swarm of mosquitoes. He will comment on the blackness of the night, and, finally, reach his rooms and his encounter with the magical specter:<sup>12</sup> MARLEY, his eternal mate.]*

### SCENE 3

**SCROOGE.** *No light at all . . . no moon . . . that is what is at the center of a Christmas Eve: dead black: void . . .*

*[SCROOGE puts his key in the door’s keyhole. He has reached his rooms now. The door knocker changes and is now MARLEY’S face. A musical sound; quickly: ghostly. MARLEY’S image is not at all angry, but looks at SCROOGE as did the old MARLEY look at SCROOGE. The hair is curiously stirred; eyes wide open, dead: absent of focus. SCROOGE stares wordlessly here. The face, before his very eyes, does deliquesce.<sup>13</sup> It is a knocker again. SCROOGE opens the door and checks the back of same, probably for MARLEY’S*

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**11. misanthrope** (mis’ ən thrōp’) *n.* person who hates or distrusts everyone.  
**12. specter** (spek’ tər) *n.* ghost.  
**13. deliquesce** (del’ i kwes’) *v.* melt away.

**TAKE NOTES**

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*pigtail. Seeing nothing but screws and nuts, SCROOGE refuses the memory.]*

Pooh, pooh!

*[The sound of the door closing resounds throughout the house as thunder. Every room echoes the sound. SCROOGE fastens the door and walks across the hall to the stairs, trimming his candle as he goes; and then he goes slowly up the staircase. He checks each room: sitting room, bedrooms, lumber-room. He looks under the sofa, under the table: nobody there. He fixes his evening gruel on the hob,<sup>14</sup> changes his jacket. SCROOGE sits near the tiny low-flamed fire, sipping his gruel. There are various pictures on the walls: all of them now show likenesses of MARLEY. SCROOGE blinks his eyes.]*

Bah! Humbug!

*[SCROOGE walks in a circle about the room. The pictures change back into their natural images. He sits down at the table in front of the fire. A bell hangs overhead. It begins to ring, of its own accord. Slowly, surely, begins the ringing of every bell in the house. They continue ringing for nearly half a minute. SCROOGE is stunned by the phenomenon. The bells cease their ringing all at once. Deep below SCROOGE, in the basement of the house, there is the sound of clanking, of some enormous chain being dragged across the floors; and now up the stairs. We hear doors flying open.]*

Bah still! Humbug still! This is not happening! I won't believe it!

*[MARLEY'S GHOST enters the room. He is horrible to look at: pigtail, vest, suit as usual, but he drags an enormous chain now, to which is fastened cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses fashioned of steel. He is transparent. MARLEY stands opposite the stricken SCROOGE.]*

How now! What do you want of me?

**MARLEY.** Much!

**SCROOGE.** Who are you?

14. **gruel** (grōō' əl) **on the hob** (hăb) thin broth warming on a ledge at the back or side of the fireplace.

**MARLEY.** Ask me who I was.

**SCROOGE.** Who were you then?

**MARLEY.** In life, I was your business partner: Jacob Marley.

**SCROOGE.** I see . . . can you sit down?

**MARLEY.** I can.

**SCROOGE.** Do it then.

**MARLEY.** I shall. [*MARLEY sits opposite SCROOGE, in the chair across the table, at the front of the fireplace.*] You don't believe in me.

**SCROOGE.** I don't.

**MARLEY.** Why do you doubt your senses?

**SCROOGE.** Because every little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheat. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are!

[*There is a silence between them. SCROOGE is made nervous by it. He picks up a toothpick.*]

Humbug! I tell you: humbug!

[*MARLEY opens his mouth and screams a ghostly, fearful scream. The scream echoes about each room of the house. Bats fly, cats screech, lightning flashes. SCROOGE stands and walks backwards against the wall. MARLEY stands and screams again. This time, he takes his head and lifts it from his shoulders. His head continues to scream. MARLEY's face again appears on every picture in the room: all screaming. SCROOGE, on his knees before MARLEY.*]

Mercy! Dreadful apparition,<sup>15</sup> mercy! Why, O! why do you trouble me so?

**MARLEY.** Man of the worldly mind, do you believe in me, or not?

**SCROOGE.** I do. I must. But why do spirits such as you walk the earth? And why do they come to me?

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15. apparition (ap' ē rish' ən) n. ghost.





part of my penance. I am here tonight to warn you that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

**SCROOGE.** You were always a good friend to me. Thank'ee!

**MARLEY.** You will be haunted by Three Spirits.

**SCROOGE.** Would that be the chance and hope you mentioned, Jacob?

**MARLEY.** It is.

**SCROOGE.** I think I'd rather not.

**MARLEY.** Without their visits, you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first one tomorrow, when the bell tolls one.

**SCROOGE.** Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and get it over, Jacob?

**MARLEY.** Expect the second on the next night at the same hour. The third upon the next night when the last stroke of twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more. Others may, but you may not. And look that, for your own sake, you remember what has passed between us!

*[MARLEY places his head back upon his shoulders. He approaches the window and beckons to SCROOGE to watch. Outside the window, specters fly by, carrying money-boxes and chains. They make a confused sound of lamentation. MARLEY, after listening a moment, joins into their mournful dirge. He leans to the window and floats out into the bleak, dark night. He is gone.]*

**SCROOGE.** *[Rushing to the window]* Jacob! No, Jacob! Don't leave me! I'm frightened! *[He sees that MARLEY has gone. He looks outside. He pulls the shutter closed, so that the scene is blocked from his view. All sound stops. After a pause, he re-opens the shutter and all is quiet, as it should be on Christmas Eve. Carolers carol out of doors, in the distance. SCROOGE closes the shutter and walks down the stairs. He examines the door by which MARLEY first entered.]* No one here at all! Did I imagine all that? Humbug! *[He looks about the room.]* I did imagine it. It only

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happened in my foulest dream-mind, didn't it? An undigested bit of . . . [Thunder and lightning in the room; suddenly]

Sorry! Sorry!

[There is silence again. The lights fade out.]

**SCENE 4**

[Christmas music, choral, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," sung by an onstage choir of children, spotlighted, D.C. Above, SCROOGE in his bed, dead to the world, asleep, in his darkened room. It should appear that the choir is singing somewhere outside of the house, of course, and a use of scrim<sup>16</sup> is thus suggested. When the singing is ended, the choir should fade out of view and MARLEY should fade into view, in their place.]

**MARLEY.** [Directly to audience] From this point forth . . . I shall be quite visible to you, but invisible to him. [Smiles] He will feel my presence, nevertheless, for, unless my senses fail me completely, we are—you and I—witness to the changing of a miser: that one, my partner in life, in business, and in eternity: that one: Scrooge. [Moves to staircase, below SCROOGE] See him now. He endeavors to pierce the darkness with his ferret eyes.<sup>17</sup> [To audience] See him, now. He listens for the hour.

[The bells toll. SCROOGE is awakened and quakes as the hour approaches one o'clock, but the bells stop their sound at the hour of twelve.]

**SCROOGE.** [Astonished] Midnight! Why this isn't possible. It was past two when I went to bed. An icicle must have gotten into the clock's works! I couldn't have slept through the whole day and far into another night. It isn't possible that anything has happened to the sun, and this is twelve at noon! [He runs to window; unshutters same; it is night.] Night, still. Quiet, normal for the season, cold. It is certainly not noon. I cannot in any way afford to lose my days. Securities come due, promissory notes,<sup>18</sup> interest on investments: these are things that

16. **scrim** (skrim) *n.* see-through fabric used to create special effects in the theater.  
 17. **ferret eyes** a ferret is a small, weasel-like animal used for hunting rabbits; this expression means to stare continuously, the way a ferret hunts.  
 18. **promissory** (pram' i sôr' ê) **notes** written promises to pay someone a certain sum of money.

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happen in the daylight! [*He returns to his bed.*] Was this a dream?

TAKE NOTES

[MARLEY appears in his room. He speaks to the audience.]

MARLEY. You see? He does not, with faith, believe in me fully, even still! Whatever will it take to turn the faith of a miser from money to men?

SCROOGE. Another quarter and it'll be one and Marley's ghostly friends will come. [*Pauses; listens*] Where's the chime for one? [*Ding, dong*] A quarter past [*Repeats*] Half-past! [*Repeats*] A quarter to it! But where's the heavy bell of the hour one? This is a game in which I lose my senses! Perhaps, if I allowed myself another short doze . . .

MARLEY. . . . Doze, Ebenezer, doze.

[*A heavy bell thuds its one ring; dull and definitely one o'clock. There is a flash of light. SCROOGE sits up, in a sudden. A hand draws back the curtains by his bed. He sees it.*]

SCROOGE. A hand! Who owns it! Hello! [*Ghostly music again, but of a new nature to the play. A strange figure stands before SCROOGE—like a child, yet at the same time like an old man: white hair, but unwrinkled skin, long, muscular arms, but delicate legs and feet. Wears white tunic; lustrous belt cinches waist. Branch of fresh green holly in its hand, but has its dress trimmed with fresh summer flowers. Clear jets of light spring from the crown of its head. Holds cap in hand. The Spirit is called PAST.*]

Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?

PAST. I am.

MARLEY. Does he take this to be a vision of his green grocer?

SCROOGE. Who, and what are you?

PAST. I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

SCROOGE. Long past?

Series of horizontal lines for taking notes.

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**PAST.** Your past.

**SCROOGE.** May I ask, please, sir, what business you have here with me?

**PAST.** Your welfare.

**SCROOGE.** Not to sound ungrateful, sir, and really, please do understand that I am plenty obliged for your concern, but, really, kind spirit, it would have done all the better for my welfare to have been left alone altogether, to have slept peacefully through this night.

**PAST.** Your reclamation, then. Take heed!

**SCROOGE.** My what?

**PAST.** [*Motioning to SCROOGE and taking his arm*] Rise! Fly with me! [*He leads SCROOGE to the window.*]

**SCROOGE.** [*Panicked*] Fly, but I am a mortal and cannot fly!

**PAST.** [*Pointing to his heart*] Bear but a touch of my hand here and you shall be upheld in more than this!

[*SCROOGE touches the spirit’s heart and the lights dissolve into sparkly flickers. Lovely crystals of music are heard. The scene dissolves into another. Christmas music again*]

SCENE 5

[*SCROOGE and the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST walk together across an open stage. In the background, we see a field that is open; covered by a soft, downy snow: a country road.*]

**SCROOGE.** Good Heaven! I was bred in this place. I was a boy here!

[*SCROOGE freezes, staring at the field beyond. MARLEY’S ghost appears beside him; takes SCROOGE’S face in his hands, and turns his face to the audience.*]

**MARLEY.** You see this Scrooge: stricken by feeling. Conscious of a thousand odors floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and care long, long forgotten. [*Pause*] This one—this Scrooge—before your very

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eyes, returns to life, among the living. *[To audience, sternly]* You'd best pay your most careful attention. I would suggest rapt.<sup>19</sup>

*[There is a small flash and puff of smoke and MARLEY is gone again.]*

**PAST.** Your lip is trembling, Mr. Scrooge. And what is that upon your cheek?

**SCROOGE.** Upon my cheek? Nothing . . . a blemish on the skin from the eating of overmuch grease . . . nothing . . . *[Suddenly]* Kind Spirit of Christmas Past, lead me where you will, but quickly! To be stagnant in this place is, for me, unbearable!

**PAST.** You recollect the way?

**SCROOGE.** Remember it! I would know it blindfolded! My bridge, my church, my winding river! *[Staggers about, trying to see it all at once. He weeps again.]*

**PAST.** These are but shadows of things that have been. They have no consciousness of us.

*[Four jocund travelers enter, singing a Christmas song in four-part harmony—"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen."]*

**SCROOGE.** Listen! I know these men! I know them! I remember the beauty of their song!

**PAST.** But, why do you remember it so happily? It is Merry Christmas that they say to one another! What is Merry Christmas to you, Mr. Scrooge? Out upon Merry Christmas, right? What good has Merry Christmas ever done you, Mr. Scrooge? . . .

**SCROOGE.** *[After a long pause]* None. No good. None . . . *[He bows his head.]*

**PAST.** Look, you, sir, a school ahead. The schoolroom is not quite deserted. A solitary child, neglected by his friends, is left there still.

*[SCROOGE falls to the ground; sobbing as he sees, and we see, a small boy, the young SCROOGE, sitting and weeping, bravely, alone at his desk: alone in a vast space, a void.]*

**SCROOGE.** I cannot look on him!

**TAKE NOTES**

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19. **rapt** (rapt) *adj.* giving complete attention; totally carried away by something.

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**PAST.** You must, Mr. Scrooge, you must.

**SCROOGE.** It's me. [*Pauses; weeps*] Poor boy. He lived inside his head . . . alone . . . [*Pauses; weeps*] poor boy. [*Pauses; stops his weeping*] I wish . . . [*Dries his eyes on his cuff*] ah! it's too late!

**PAST.** What is the matter?

**SCROOGE.** There was a boy singing a Christmas Carol outside my door last night. I should like to have given him something; that's all.

**PAST.** [*Smiles; waves his hand to SCROOGE*] Come. Let us see another Christmas.

[*Lights out on little boy. A flash of light. A puff of smoke. Lights up on older boy*]

**SCROOGE.** Look! Me, again! Older now! [*Realizes*] Oh, yes . . . still alone.

[*The boy—a slightly older SCROOGE—sits alone in a chair, reading. The door to the room opens and a young girl enters. She is much, much younger than this slightly older SCROOGE. She is, say, six, and he is, say, twelve. Elder SCROOGE and the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST stand watching the scene, unseen.*]

**FAN.** Dear, dear brother, I have come to bring you home.

**BOY.** Home, little Fan?

**FAN.** Yes! Home, for good and all! Father is so much kinder than he ever used to be, and home's like heaven! He spoke so gently to me one dear night when I was going to bed that I was not afraid to ask him once more if you might come home; and he said "yes" . . . you should; and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man and are never to come back here, but first, we're to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in the world.

**BOY.** You are quite a woman, little Fan!

[*Laughing; she drags at boy, causing him to stumble to the door with her. Suddenly we hear a mean and terrible voice in the hallway, Off. It is the SCHOOLMASTER.*]

**SCHOOLMASTER.** Bring down Master Scrooge's travel box at once! He is to travel!

**FAN.** Who is that, Ebenezer?

**BOY.** O! Quiet, Fan. It is the Schoolmaster, himself!

*[The door bursts open and into the room bursts with it the SCHOOLMASTER.]*

**SCHOOLMASTER.** Master Scrooge?

**BOY.** Oh, Schoolmaster. I'd like you to meet my little sister, Fan, sir . . .

*[Two boys struggle on with SCROOGE's trunk.]*

**FAN.** Pleased, sir . . . *[She curtsies.]*

**SCHOOLMASTER.** You are to travel, Master Scrooge.

**SCROOGE.** Yes, sir. I know sir . . .

*[All start to exit, but fan grabs the coattail of the mean old SCHOOLMASTER.]*

**BOY.** Fan!

**SCHOOLMASTER.** What's this?

**FAN.** Pardon, sir, but I believe that you've forgotten to say your goodbye to my brother, Ebenezer, who stands still now awaiting it . . . *[She smiles, curtsies, lowers her eyes.]* pardon, sir.

**SCHOOLMASTER.** *[Amazed]* I . . . uh . . . harumph . . . uhh . . . well, then . . . *[Outstretches hand]* Goodbye, Scrooge.

**BOY.** Uh, well, goodbye, Schoolmaster . . .

*[Lights fade out on all but BOY looking at FAN; and SCROOGE and PAST looking at them.]*

**SCROOGE.** Oh, my dear, dear little sister, Fan . . . how I loved her.

**PAST.** Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered, but she had a large heart . . .

**SCROOGE.** So she had.

**PAST.** She died a woman, and had, as I think, children.

**SCROOGE.** One child.

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**PAST.** True. Your nephew.

**SCROOGE.** Yes.

**PAST.** Fine, then. We move on, Mr. Scrooge. That warehouse, there? Do you know it?

**SCROOGE.** Know it? Wasn't I apprenticed<sup>20</sup> there?

**PAST.** We'll have a look.

*[They enter the warehouse. The lights crossfade with them, coming up on an old man in Welsh wig: FEZZIWIG.]*

**SCROOGE.** Why, it's old Fezziwig! Bless his heart; it's Fezziwig, alive again!

*[FEZZIWIG sits behind a large, high desk, counting. He lays down his pen; looks at the clock: seven bells sound.]*

Quittin' time . . .

**FEZZIWIG.** Quittin' time . . . *[He takes off his waistcoat and laughs; calls off]* Yo ho, Ebenezer! Dick!

*[DICK WILKINS and EBENEZER SCROOGE—a young man version—enter the room. DICK and EBENEZER are FEZZIWIG's apprentices.]*

**SCROOGE.** Dick Wilkins, to be sure! My fellow-'prentice! Bless my soul, yes. There he is. He was very much attached to me, was Dick. Poor Dick! Dear, dear!

**FEZZIWIG.** Yo ho, my boys. No more work tonight. Christmas Eve, Dick. Christmas, Ebenezer! *[They stand at attention in front of FEZZIWIG; laughing]* Hilli-ho! Clear away, and let's have lots of room here! Hilli-ho, Dick! Chirrup, Ebenezer! *[The young men clear the room, sweep the floor, straighten the pictures, trim the lamps, etc. The space is clear now. A fiddler enters, fiddling.]* Hi-ho, Matthew! Fiddle away . . . where are my daughters?

*[The fiddler plays. Three young daughters of FEZZIWIG enter followed by six young male suitors. They are dancing to the music. All employees come in: workers, clerks, housemaids, cousins, the baker, etc. All dance. Full number wanted here. Throughout the dance,*

**20. apprenticed** (ə prent' tist) v. receiving instruction in a trade as well as food and housing or wages in return for work.

food is brought into the feast. It is “eaten” in dance, by the dancers. EBENEZER dances with all three of the daughters, as does DICK. They compete for the daughters, happily, in the dance. FEZZIWIG dances with his daughters. FEZZIWIG dances with DICK and EBENEZER. The music changes: MRS. FEZZIWIG enters. She lovingly scolds her husband. They dance. She dances with EBENEZER, lifting him and throwing him about. She is enormously fat. When the dance is ended, they all dance off, floating away, as does the music. SCROOGE and the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST stand alone now. The music is gone.]

## TAKE NOTES

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**PAST.** It was a small matter, that Fezziwig made those silly folks so full of gratitude.

**SCROOGE.** Small!

**PAST.** Shhh!

[Lights up on DICK and EBENEZER]

**DICK.** We are blessed, Ebenezer, truly, to have such a master as Mr. Fezziwig!

**YOUNG SCROOGE.** He is the best, best, the very and absolute best! If ever I own a firm of my own, I shall treat my apprentices with the same dignity and the same grace. We have learned a wonderful lesson from the master, Dick!

**DICK.** Ah, that’s a fact, Ebenezer. That’s a fact!

**PAST.** Was it not a small matter, really? He spent but a few pounds<sup>21</sup> of his mortal money on your small party. Three or four pounds, perhaps. Is that so much that he deserves such praise as you and Dick so lavish now?

**SCROOGE.** It isn’t that! It isn’t that, Spirit. Fezziwig had the power to make us happy or unhappy; to make our service light or burdensome; a pleasure or a toil. The happiness he gave is quite as great as if it cost him a fortune.

**PAST.** What is the matter?

**SCROOGE.** Nothing particular.

**PAST.** Something, I think.

21. **pounds** (poundz) *n.* common type of money used in Great Britain.

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**SCROOGE.** No, no. I should like to be able to say a word or two to my clerk just now! That's all!

[**EBENEZER** enters the room and shuts down all the lamps. He stretches and yawns. The **GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST** turns to **SCROOGE** all of a sudden.]

**PAST.** My time grows short! Quick!

[In a flash of light, **EBENEZER** is gone, and in his place stands an **OLDER SCROOGE**, this one a man in the prime of his life. Beside him stands a young woman in a mourning dress. She is crying. She speaks to the man, with hostility.]

**WOMAN.** It matters little . . . to you, very little. Another idol has displaced me.

**MAN.** What idol has displaced you?

**WOMAN.** A golden one.

**MAN.** This is an even-handed dealing of the world. There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth!

**WOMAN.** You fear the world too much. Have I not seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you? Have I not?

**SCROOGE.** No!

**MAN.** What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser, what then? Have I changed towards you?

**WOMAN.** No . . .

**MAN.** Am I?

**WOMAN.** Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor and content to be so. You are changed. When it was made, you were another man.

**MAN.** I was not another man: I was a boy.

**WOMAN.** Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. I am. That which promised happiness when we were one in heart is fraught with misery now that we are two . . .

TAKE NOTES

**SCROOGE.** No!

**WOMAN.** How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you . . .

**SCROOGE.** [*Quietly*] Don't release me, madame . . .

**MAN.** Have I ever sought release?

**WOMAN.** In words. No. Never.

**MAN.** In what then?

**WOMAN.** In a changed nature; in an altered spirit. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this has never been between us, tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!

**SCROOGE.** Ah, yes!

**MAN.** You think not?

**WOMAN.** I would gladly think otherwise if I could, heaven knows! But if you were free today, tomorrow, yesterday, can even I believe that you would choose a dowerless girl<sup>22</sup>—you who in your very confidence with her weigh everything by Gain; or, choosing her, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do; and I release you. With a full heart, for the love of him you once were.

**SCROOGE.** Please, I . . . I . . .

**MAN.** Please, I . . . I . . .

**WOMAN.** Please. You may—the memory of what is past half makes me hope you will—have pain in this. A very, very brief time, and you will dismiss the memory of it, as an unprofitable dream, from which it happened well that you awoke. May you be happy in the life that you have chosen for yourself . . .

**SCROOGE.** No!

**WOMAN.** Yourself . . . alone . . .

**SCROOGE.** No!

**WOMAN.** Goodbye, Ebenezer . . .

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22. a dowerless (dəu' er les) girl a girl without a dowry, the property or wealth a woman brought to her husband in marriage.

**TAKE NOTES**

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**SCROOGE.** Don't let her go!

**MAN.** Goodbye.

**SCROOGE.** No!

[*She exits. SCROOGE goes to younger man: himself.*]

You fool! Mindless loon! You fool!

**MAN.** [*To exited woman*] Fool. Mindless loon. Fool . . .

**SCROOGE.** Don't say that! Spirit, remove me from this place.

**PAST.** I have told you these were shadows of the things that have been. They are what they are. Do not blame me, Mr. Scrooge.

**SCROOGE.** Remove me! I cannot bear it!

[*The faces of all who appeared in this scene are now projected for a moment around the stage: enormous, flimsy, silent.*]

Leave me! Take me back! Haunt me no longer!

[*There is a sudden flash of light: a flare. The GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST is gone. SCROOGE is, for the moment, alone onstage. His bed is turned down, across the stage. A small candle burns now in SCROOGE's hand. There is a child's cap in his other hand. He slowly crosses the stage to his bed, to sleep. MARLEY appears behind SCROOGE, who continues his long, elderly cross to bed. MARLEY speaks directly to the audience.*]

**MARLEY.** Scrooge must sleep now. He must surrender to the irresistible drowsiness caused by the recognition of what was. [*Pauses*] The cap he carries is from ten lives past: his boyhood cap . . . donned atop a hopeful hairy head . . . askew, perhaps, or at a rakish angle. Doffed now in honor of regret.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps even too heavy to carry in his present state of weak remorse . . .

[*SCROOGE drops the cap. He lies atop his bed. He sleeps. To audience*]

**23. donned . . . regret** To *don* and *doff* a hat means to put it on and take it off, *askew* means "crooked," and at a *rakish angle* means "having a dashing or jaunty look."

He sleeps. For him, there's even more trouble ahead. *[Smiles]* For you? The play house tells me there's hot cider, as should be your anticipation for the specter Christmas Present and Future, for I promise you both. *[Smiles again]* So, I pray you hurry back to your seats refreshed and ready for a miser—to turn his coat of gray into a blazen Christmas holly-red. *[A flash of lightning. A clap of thunder. Bats fly. Ghostly music. MARLEY is gone.]*

**TAKE NOTES**

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# The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street

by Rod Serling

## CHARACTERS

NARRATOR	FIGURE ONE	FIGURE TWO
RESIDENTS OF MAPLE STREET		
STEVE BRAND	DON MARTIN	PETE VAN HORN
CHARLIE'S WIFE	SALLY ( <i>TOMMY'S MOTHER</i> )	CHARLIE
MRS. GOODMAN	LES GOODMAN	TOMMY
MRS. BRAND	MAN ONE	
WOMAN	MAN TWO	

## ACT I

*[Fade in on a shot of the night sky. The various nebulae and planet bodies stand out in sharp, sparkling relief, and the camera begins a slow pan across the Heavens.]*

**NARRATOR'S VOICE.** There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space, and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow—between science and superstition. And it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call The Twilight Zone.

*[The camera has begun to pan down until it passes the horizon and is on a sign which reads "Maple Street." Pan down until we are shooting down at an angle toward the street below. It's a tree-lined, quiet residential American street, very typical of the small town. The houses have front porches on which people sit and swing on gliders, conversing across from house to house. STEVE BRAND polishes his car parked in front of his house. His neighbor, DON MARTIN, leans against the fender watching him. A Good Humor man rides a bicycle and is just in the process of stopping to sell some ice cream to a couple of kids. Two women gossip on the front lawn. Another man waters his lawn.]*

**NARRATOR'S VOICE.** Maple Street, U.S.A., late summer.

A tree-lined little world of front porch gliders, hop scotch, the laughter of children, and the bell of an ice cream vendor.

*[There is a pause and the camera moves over to a shot of the Good Humor man and two small boys who are standing alongside, just buying ice cream.]*

**NARRATOR'S VOICE.** At the sound of the roar and the flash of light it will be precisely 6:43 P.M. on Maple Street.

*[At this moment one of the little boys, TOMMY, looks up to listen to a sound of a tremendous screeching roar from overhead. A flash of light plays on both their faces and then it moves down the street past lawns and porches and rooftops and then disappears.]*

*Various people leave their porches and stop what they're doing to stare up at the sky. STEVE BRAND, the man who's been polishing his car, now stands there transfixed, staring upwards. He looks at DON MARTIN, his neighbor from across the street]*

**STEVE.** What was that? A meteor?

**DON.** *[Nods]* That's what it looked like. I didn't hear any crash though, did you?

**STEVE.** *[Shakes his head]* Nope. I didn't hear anything except a roar.

**MRS. BRAND.** *[From her porch]* Steve? What was that?

**STEVE.** *[Raising his voice and looking toward porch]* Guess it was a meteor, honey. Came awful close, didn't it?

**MRS. BRAND.** Too close for my money! Much too close.

*[The camera pans across the various porches to people who stand there watching and talking in low tones.]*

**NARRATOR'S VOICE.** Maple Street. Six-forty-four P.M. on a late September evening. *[A pause]* Maple Street in the last calm and reflective moment . . . before the monsters came!

*[The camera slowly pans across the porches again. We see a man screwing a light bulb on a front porch, then*

**TAKE NOTES**

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## TAKE NOTES

*getting down off the stool to flick the switch and finding that nothing happens.*

*Another man is working on an electric power mower. He plugs in the plug, flicks on the switch of the power mower, off and on, with nothing happening.*

*Through the window of a front porch, we see a woman pushing her finger back and forth on the dial hook. Her voice is indistinct and distant, but intelligible and repetitive.]*

**WOMAN.** Operator, operator, something's wrong on the phone, operator!

*[MRS. BRAND comes out on the porch and calls to STEVE.]*

**MRS. BRAND.** *[Calling]* Steve, the power's off. I had the soup on the stove and the stove just stopped working.

**WOMAN.** Same thing over here. I can't get anybody on the phone either. The phone seems to be dead.

*[We look down on the street as we hear the voices creep up from below, small, mildly disturbed voices highlighting these kinds of phrases:]*

**VOICES.**

Electricity's off.

Phone won't work.

Can't get a thing on the radio.

My power mower won't move, won't work at all.

Radio's gone dead!

*[PETE VAN HORN, a tall, thin man, is seen standing in front of his house.]*

**VAN HORN.** I'll cut through the back yard . . . See if the power's still on on Floral Street. I'll be right back!

*[He walks past the side of his house and disappears into the back yard.]*

*The camera pans down slowly until we're looking at ten or eleven people standing around the street and overflowing to the curb and sidewalk. In the background is STEVE BRAND'S car.]*

**STEVE.** Doesn't make sense. Why should the power go off all of a sudden, and the phone line?

**DON.** Maybe some sort of an electrical storm or something.

**CHARLIE.** That don't seem likely. Sky's just as blue as anything. Not a cloud. No lightning. No thunder. No nothing. How could it be a storm?

**WOMAN.** I can't get a thing on the radio. Not even the portable.

*[The people again murmur softly in wonderment and question.]*

**CHARLIE.** Well, why don't you go downtown and check with the police, though they'll probably think we're crazy or something. A little power failure and right away we get all flustered and everything.

**STEVE.** It isn't just the power failure, Charlie. If it was, we'd still be able to get a broadcast on the portable.

*[There's a murmur of reaction to this. STEVE looks from face to face and then over to his car.]*

**STEVE.** I'll run downtown. We'll get this all straightened out.

*[He walks over to the car, gets in it, turns the key. Looking through the open car door, we see the crowd watching him from the other side. STEVE starts the engine. It turns over sluggishly and then just stops dead. He tries it again and this time he can't get it to turn over. Then, very slowly and reflectively, he turns the key back to "off" and slowly gets out of the car.]*

*The people stare at STEVE. He stands for a moment by the car, then walks toward the group.]*

**STEVE.** I don't understand it. It was working fine before . . .

**DON.** Out of gas?

**STEVE.** *[Shakes his head]* I just had it filled up.

**WOMAN.** What's it mean?

**CHARLIE.** It's just as if . . . as if everything had stopped.  
*[Then he turns toward STEVE.]* We'd better walk downtown.

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## TAKE NOTES

[Another murmur of assent at this.]

**STEVE.** The two of us can go, Charlie. [*He turns to look back at the car.*] It couldn't be the meteor. A meteor couldn't do *this*.

[*He and CHARLIE exchange a look, then they start to walk away from the group.*

We see TOMMY, a serious-faced fourteen-year-old in spectacles who stands a few feet away from the group. He is halfway between them and the two men, who start to walk down the sidewalk.]

**TOMMY.** Mr. Brand . . . you better not!

**STEVE.** Why not?

**TOMMY.** They don't want you to.

[*STEVE and CHARLIE exchange a grin, and STEVE looks back toward the boy.*]

**STEVE.** Who doesn't want us to?

**TOMMY.** [*Jerks his head in the general direction of the distant horizon*] Them!

**STEVE.** Them?

**CHARLIE.** Who are them?

**TOMMY.** [*Very intently*] Whoever was in that thing that came by overhead.

[*STEVE knits his brows for a moment, cocking his head questioningly. His voice is intense.*]

**STEVE.** What?

**TOMMY.** Whoever was in that thing that came over. I don't think they want us to leave here.

[*STEVE leaves CHARLIE and walks over to the boy. He kneels down in front of him. He forces his voice to remain gentle. He reaches out and holds the boy.*]

**STEVE.** What do you mean? What are you talking about?

**TOMMY.** They don't want us to leave. That's why they shut everything off.

**STEVE.** What makes you say that? Whatever gave you that idea?

**WOMAN.** [*From the crowd*] Now isn't that the craziest thing you ever heard?

**TOMMY.** [*Persistently but a little intimidated by the crowd*] It's always that way, in every story I ever read about a ship landing from outer space.

**WOMAN.** [*To the boy's mother, SALLY, who stands on the fringe of the crowd*] From outer space, yet! Sally, you better get that boy of yours up to bed. He's been reading too many comic books or seeing too many movies or something.

**SALLY.** Tommy, come over here and stop that kind of talk.

**STEVE.** Go ahead, Tommy. We'll be right back. And you'll see. That wasn't any ship or anything like it. That was just a . . . a meteor or something. Likely as not—[*He turns to the group, now trying to weight his words with an optimism he obviously doesn't feel but is desperately trying to instill in himself as well as the others.*] No doubt it did have something to do with all this power failure and the rest of it. Meteors can do some crazy things. Like sunspots.

**DON.** [*Picking up the cue*] Sure. That's the kind of thing—like sunspots. They raise Cain<sup>1</sup> with radio reception all over the world. And this thing being so close—why, there's no telling the sort of stuff it can do. [*He wets his lips, smiles nervously.*] Go ahead, Charlie. You and Steve go into town and see if that isn't what's causing it all.

[*STEVE and CHARLIE again walk away from the group down the sidewalk. The people watch silently.*

*TOMMY stares at them, biting his lips, and finally calling out again.*]

**TOMMY.** Mr. Brand!

[*The two men stop again. TOMMY takes a step toward them.*]

**TOMMY.** Mr. Brand . . . please don't leave here.

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1. raise Cain badly disturb.

## TAKE NOTES

[STEVE and CHARLIE stop once again and turn toward the boy. There's a murmur in the crowd, a murmur of irritation and concern as if the boy were bringing up fears that shouldn't be brought up; words which carried with them a strange kind of validity that came without logic but nonetheless registered and had meaning and effect. Again we hear a murmur of reaction from the crowd.]

TOMMY is partly frightened and partly defiant as well.]

**TOMMY.** You might not even be able to get to town. It was that way in the story. Nobody could leave. Nobody except—

**STEVE.** Except who?

**TOMMY.** Except the people they'd sent down ahead of them. They looked just like humans. And it wasn't until the ship landed that—

[The boy suddenly stops again, conscious of the parents staring at them and of the sudden hush of the crowd.]

**SALLY.** [In a whisper, sensing the antagonism of the crowd] Tommy, please son . . . honey, don't talk that way—

**MAN ONE.** That kid shouldn't talk that way . . . and we shouldn't stand here listening to him. Why this is the craziest thing I ever heard of. The kid tells us a comic book plot and here we stand listening—

[STEVE walks toward the camera, stops by the boy.]

**STEVE.** Go ahead, Tommy. What kind of story was this? What about the people that they sent out ahead?

**TOMMY.** That was the way they prepared things for the landing. They sent four people. A mother and a father and two kids who looked just like humans . . . but they weren't.

[There's another silence as STEVE looks toward the crowd and then toward TOMMY. He wears a tight grin.]

**STEVE.** Well, I guess what we'd better do then is to run a check on the neighborhood and see which ones of us are really human.

*[There's laughter at this, but it's a laughter that comes from a desperate attempt to lighten the atmosphere. It's a release kind of laugh. The people look at one another in the middle of their laughter.]*

**CHARLIE.** There must be somethin' better to do than stand around makin' bum jokes about it.

*[Rubs his jaw nervously]* I wonder if Floral Street's got the same deal we got. *[He looks past the houses.]* Where is Pete Van Horn anyway? Didn't he get back yet?

*[Suddenly there's the sound of a car's engine starting to turn over.]*

*We look across the street toward the driveway of LES GOODMAN's house. He's at the wheel trying to start the car.]*

**SALLY.** Can you get it started, Les? *[He gets out of the car, shaking his head.]*

**GOODMAN.** No dice.

*[He walks toward the group. He stops suddenly as behind him, inexplicably and with a noise that inserts itself into the silence, the car engine starts up all by itself.]* GOODMAN whirls around to stare toward it.

*The car idles roughly, smoke coming from the exhaust, the frame shaking gently.*

*GOODMAN's eyes go wide, and he runs over to his car. The people stare toward the car.]*

**MAN ONE.** He got the car started somehow. He got his car started!

*[The camera pans along the faces of the people as they stare, somehow caught up by this revelation and somehow, illogically, wildly, frightened.]*

**WOMAN.** How come his car just up and started like that?

**SALLY.** All by itself. He wasn't anywheres near it. It started all by itself.

*[DON approaches the group, stops a few feet away to look toward GOODMAN's car and then back toward the group.]*

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**DON.** And he never did come out to look at that thing that flew overhead. He wasn't even interested. [*He turns to the faces in the group, his face taut and serious.*] Why? Why didn't he come out with the rest of us to look?

**CHARLIE.** He always was an oddball. Him and his whole family. Real oddball.

**DON.** What do you say we ask him?

[*The group suddenly starts toward the house. In this brief fraction of a moment they take the first step toward performing a metamorphosis that changes people from a group into a mob. They begin to head purposefully across the street toward the house at the end. STEVE stands in front of them. For a moment their fear almost turns their walk into a wild stampede, but STEVE's voice, loud, incisive, and commanding, makes them stop.*]

**STEVE.** Wait a minute . . . wait a minute! Let's not be a mob!

[*The people stop as a group, seem to pause for a moment, and then much more quietly and slowly start to walk across the street. GOODMAN stands alone facing the people.*]

**GOODMAN.** I just don't understand it. I tried to start it and it wouldn't start. You saw me. All of you saw me.

[*And now, just as suddenly as the engine started, it stops and there's a long silence that is gradually intruded upon by the frightened murmuring of the people.*]

**GOODMAN.** I don't understand. I swear . . . I don't understand. What's happening?

**DON.** Maybe you better tell us. Nothing's working on this street. Nothing. No lights, no power, no radio. [*And then meaningfully*] Nothing except one car—yours!

[*The people pick this up and now their murmuring becomes a loud chant filling the air with accusations and demands for action. Two of the men pass DON and head toward GOODMAN, who backs away, backing into his car and now at bay.*]

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**GOODMAN.** Wait a minute now. You keep your distance—all of you. So I've got a car that starts by itself—well, that's a freak thing, I admit it. But does that make me some kind of a criminal or something? I don't know why the car works—it just does!

*[This stops the crowd momentarily and now GOODMAN, still backing away, goes toward his front porch. He goes up the steps and then stops to stand facing the mob.]*

*We see a long shot of STEVE as he comes through the crowd.]*

**STEVE.** *[Quietly]* We're all on a monster kick, Les. Seems that the general impression holds that maybe one family isn't what we think they are. Monsters from outer space or something. Different than us. Fifth columnists<sup>2</sup> from the vast beyond. *[He chuckles.]* You know anybody that might fit that description around here on Maple Street?

**GOODMAN.** What is this, a gag or something? This a practical joke or something?

*[We see a close-up of the porch light as it suddenly goes out. There's a murmur from the group.]*

**GOODMAN.** Now I suppose that's supposed to incriminate me! The light goes on and off. That really does it, doesn't it? *[He looks around the faces of the people.]* I just don't understand this— *[He wets his lips, looking from face to face.]* Look, you all know me. We've lived here five years. Right in this house. We're no different from any of the rest of you! We're no different at all. Really . . . this whole thing is just . . . just weird—

**WOMAN.** Well, if that's the case, Les Goodman, explain why—

*[She stops suddenly, clamping her mouth shut.]*

**GOODMAN.** *[Softly]* Explain what?

**STEVE.** *[Interjecting]* Look, let's forget this—

**CHARLIE.** *[Overlapping him]* Go ahead, let her talk. What about it? Explain what?

**2. Fifth columnists** people who help an invading enemy from within their own country.



TAKE NOTES

Multiple horizontal lines for taking notes.

**WOMAN.** *[A little reluctantly]* Well . . . sometimes I go to bed late at night. A couple of times . . . a couple of times I'd come out on the porch and I'd see Mr. Goodman here in the wee hours of the morning standing out in front of his house . . . looking up at the sky. *[She looks around the circle of faces.]* That's right, looking up at the sky as if . . . as if he were waiting for something. *[A pause]* As if he were looking for something.

*[There's a murmur of reaction from the crowd again.*

*We cut suddenly to a group shot. As GOODMAN starts toward them, they back away frightened.]*

**GOODMAN.** You know really . . . this is for laughs. You know what I'm guilty of? *[He laughs.]* I'm guilty of insomnia. Now what's the penalty for insomnia? *[At this point the laugh, the humor, leaves his voice.]* Did you hear what I said? I said it was insomnia. *[A pause as he looks around, then shouts.]* I said it was insomnia! You fools. You scared, frightened rabbits, you. You're sick people, do you know that? You're sick people—all of you! And you don't even know what you're starting because let me tell you . . . let me tell you—this thing you're starting—that should frighten you. As God is my witness . . . you're letting something begin here that's a nightmare!

**ACT II**

*[We see a medium shot of the GOODMAN entry hall at night. On the side table rests an unlit candle.*

*MRS. GOODMAN walks into the scene, a glass of milk in hand. She sets the milk down on the table, lights the candle with a match from a box on the table, picks up the glass of milk, and starts out of scene.*

*MRS. GOODMAN comes through her porch door, glass of milk in hand. The entry hall, with table and lit candle, can be seen behind her.*

*Outside, the camera slowly pans down the sidewalk, taking in little knots of people who stand around talking in low voices. At the end of each conversation they look toward LES GOODMAN'S house. From the various houses we can see candlelight but no electricity, and there's*

an all-pervading quiet that blankets the whole area, disturbed only by the almost whispered voices of the people as they stand around. The camera pans over to one group where CHARLIE stands. He stares across at GOODMAN'S house.

We see a long shot of the house. Two men stand across the street in almost sentry-like poses. Then we see a medium shot of a group of people.]

**SALLY.** [A little timorously] It just doesn't seem right, though, keeping watch on them. Why . . . he was right when he said he was one of our neighbors. Why, I've known Ethel Goodman ever since they moved in. We've been good friends—

**CHARLIE.** That don't prove a thing. Any guy who'd spend his time lookin' up at the sky early in the morning—well, there's something wrong with that kind of person. There's something that ain't legitimate. Maybe under normal circumstances we could let it go by, but these aren't normal circumstances. Why, look at this street! Nothin' but candles. Why, it's like goin' back into the dark ages or somethin'!

[STEVE walks down the steps of his porch, walks down the street over to LES GOODMAN'S house, and then stops at the foot of the steps. GOODMAN stands there, his wife behind him, very frightened.]

**GOODMAN.** Just stay right where you are, Steve. We don't want any trouble, but this time if anybody sets foot on my porch, that's what they're going to get—trouble!

**STEVE.** Look, Les—

**GOODMAN.** I've already explained to you people. I don't sleep very well at night sometimes. I get up and I take a walk and I look up at the sky. I look at the stars!

**MRS. GOODMAN.** That's exactly what he does. Why this whole thing, it's . . . it's some kind of madness or something.

**STEVE.** [Nods grimly] That's exactly what it is—some kind of madness.

**TAKE NOTES**

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## TAKE NOTES

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**CHARLIE'S VOICE.** [*Shrill, from across the street*] You best watch who you're seen with, Steve! Until we get this all straightened out, you ain't exactly above suspicion yourself.

**STEVE.** [*Whirling around toward him*] Or you, Charlie. Or any of us, it seems. From age eight on up!

**WOMAN.** What I'd like to know is—what are we gonna do? Just stand around here all night?

**CHARLIE.** There's nothin' else we can do! [*He turns back looking toward STEVE and GOODMAN again.*] One of 'em'll tip their hand. They got to.

**STEVE.** [*Raising his voice*] There's something you can do, Charlie. You could go home and keep your mouth shut. You could quit strutting around like a self-appointed hanging judge and just climb into bed and forget it.

**CHARLIE.** You sound real anxious to have that happen, Steve. I think we better keep our eye on you too!

**DON.** [*As if he were taking the bit in his teeth, takes a hesitant step to the front*] I think everything might as well come out now. [*He turns toward STEVE.*] Your wife's done plenty of talking, Steve, about how odd you are!

**CHARLIE.** [*Picking this up, his eyes widening*] Go ahead, tell us what she's said.

[*We see a long shot of STEVE as he walks toward them from across the street.*]

**STEVE.** Go ahead, what's my wife said? Let's get it all out. Let's pick out every idiosyncrasy of every single man, woman, and child on the street. And then we might as well set up some kind of kangaroo court.<sup>3</sup> How about a firing squad at dawn, Charlie, so we can get rid of all the suspects? Narrow them down. Make it easier for you.

**DON.** There's no need gettin' so upset, Steve. It's just that . . . well . . . Myra's talked about how there's been plenty of nights you spent hours down in your

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3. kangaroo court unofficial court that does not follow normal rules.

basement workin' on some kind of radio or something. Well, none of us have ever seen that radio—

[By this time STEVE has reached the group. He stands there defiantly close to them.]

**CHARLIE.** Go ahead, Steve. What kind of “radio set” you workin’ on? I never seen it. Neither has anyone else. Who you talk to on that radio set? And who talks to you?

**STEVE.** I’m surprised at you, Charlie. How come you’re so dense all of a sudden? [A pause] Who do I talk to? I talk to monsters from outer space. I talk to three-headed green men who fly over here in what look like meteors.

[STEVE’S wife steps down from the porch, bites her lip, calls out.]

**MRS. BRAND.** Steve! Steve, please. [Then looking around, frightened, she walks toward the group.] It’s just a ham radio set, that’s all. I bought him a book on it myself. It’s just a ham radio set. A lot of people have them. I can show it to you. It’s right down in the basement.

**STEVE.** [Whirls around toward her] Show them nothing! If they want to look inside our house—let them get a search warrant.

**CHARLIE.** Look, buddy, you can’t afford to—

**STEVE.** [Interrupting] Charlie, don’t tell me what I can afford! And stop telling me who’s dangerous and who isn’t and who’s safe and who’s a menace. [He turns to the group and shouts.] And you’re with him, too—all of you! You’re standing here all set to crucify—all set to find a scapegoat<sup>4</sup>—all desperate to point some kind of a finger at a neighbor! Well now look, friends, the only thing that’s gonna happen is that we’ll eat each other up alive—

[He stops abruptly as CHARLIE suddenly grabs his arm.]

**CHARLIE.** [In a hushed voice] That’s not the only thing that can happen to us.

## TAKE NOTES

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4. **scapegoat** person or group blamed for the mistakes or crimes of others.

## TAKE NOTES

[Cut to a long shot looking down the street. A figure has suddenly materialized in the gloom and in the silence we can hear the clickety-clack of slow, measured footsteps on concrete as the figure walks slowly toward them. One of the women lets out a stifled cry. The young mother grabs her boy as do a couple of others.]

**TOMMY.** [Shouting, frightened] It's the monster! It's the monster!

[Another woman lets out a wail and the people fall back in a group, staring toward the darkness and the approaching figure.

We see a medium group shot of the people as they stand in the shadows watching. DON MARTIN joins them, carrying a shotgun. He holds it up.]

**DON.** We may need this.

**STEVE.** A shotgun? [He pulls it out of DON's hand.] Good Lord—will anybody think a thought around here? Will you people wise up? What good would a shotgun do against—

[Now CHARLIE pulls the gun from STEVE's hand.]

**CHARLIE.** No more talk, Steve. You're going to talk us into a grave! You'd let whatever's out there walk right over us, wouldn't yuh? Well, some of us won't!

[He swings the gun around to point it toward the sidewalk. The dark figure continues to walk toward them.

The group stands there, fearful, apprehensive, mothers clutching children, men standing in front of wives. CHARLIE slowly raises the gun. As the figure gets closer and closer he suddenly pulls the trigger. The sound of it explodes in the stillness. There is a long angle shot looking down at the figure, who suddenly lets out a small cry, stumbles forward onto his knees and then falls forward on his face. DON, CHARLIE, and STEVE race forward over to him. STEVE is there first and turns the man over. Now the crowd gathers around them.]

**STEVE.** [Slowly looks up] It's Pete Van Horn.

**DON.** [In a hushed voice] Pete Van Horn! He was just

gonna go over to the next block to see if the power was on—

### TAKE NOTES

**WOMAN.** You killed him, Charlie. You shot him dead!

**CHARLIE.** [*Looks around at the circle of faces, his eyes frightened, his face contorted*] But . . . but I didn't know who he was. I certainly didn't know who he was. He comes walkin' out of the darkness—how am I supposed to know who he was? [*He grabs STEVE.*] Steve—you know why I shot! How was I supposed to know he wasn't a monster or something? [*He grabs DON now.*] We're all scared of the same thing. I was just tryin' to . . . tryin' to protect my home, that's all! Look, all of you, that's all I was tryin' to do. [*He looks down wildly at the body.*] I didn't know it was somebody we knew! I didn't know—

[*There's a sudden hush and then an intake of breath. We see a medium shot of the living room window of CHARLIE'S house. The window is not lit, but suddenly the house lights come on behind it.*]

**WOMAN.** [*In a very hushed voice*] Charlie . . . Charlie . . . the lights just went on in your house. Why did the lights just go on?

**DON.** What about it, Charlie? How come you're the only one with lights now?

**GOODMAN.** That's what I'd like to know.

[*A pause as they all stare toward CHARLIE.*]

**GOODMAN.** You were so quick to kill, Charlie, and you were so quick to tell us who we had to be careful of. Well, maybe you had to kill. Maybe Peter there was trying to tell us something. Maybe he'd found out something and came back to tell us who there was amongst us we should watch out for—

[*CHARLIE backs away from the group, his eyes wide with fright.*]

**CHARLIE.** No . . . no . . . it's nothing of the sort! I don't know why the lights are on. I swear I don't. Somebody's pulling a gag or something.

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## TAKE NOTES

[He bumps against STEVE, who grabs him and whirls him around.]

**STEVE.** A gag? A gag? Charlie, there's a dead man on the sidewalk and you killed him! Does this thing look like a gag to you?

[CHARLIE breaks away and screams as he runs toward his house.]

**CHARLIE.** No! No! Please!

[A man breaks away from the crowd to chase CHARLIE.

We see a long angle shot looking down as the man tackles CHARLIE and lands on top of him. The other people start to run toward them. CHARLIE is up on his feet, breaks away from the other man's grasp, lands a couple of desperate punches that push the man aside. Then he forces his way, fighting, through the crowd to once again break free, jumps up on his front porch. A rock thrown from the group smashes a window alongside of him, the broken glass flying past him. A couple of pieces cut him. He stands there perspiring, ruffled, blood running down from a cut on the cheek. His wife breaks away from the group to throw herself into his arms. He buries his face against her. We can see the crowd converging on the porch now.]

**VOICES.**

It must have been him.

He's the one.

We got to get Charlie.

[Another rock lands on the porch. Now CHARLIE pushes his wife behind him, facing the group.]

**CHARLIE.** Look, look I swear to you . . . it isn't me . . . but I do know who it is . . . I swear to you, I do know who it is. I know who the monster is here. I know who it is that doesn't belong. I swear to you I know.

**GOODMAN.** [Shouting] What are you waiting for?

**WOMAN.** [Shouting] Come on, Charlie, come on.

**MAN ONE.** [Shouting] Who is it, Charlie, tell us!

**DON.** *[Pushing his way to the front of the crowd]* All right, Charlie, let's hear it!

*[CHARLIE'S eyes dart around wildly.]*

**CHARLIE.** It's . . . it's . . .

**MAN TWO.** *[Screaming]* Go ahead, Charlie, tell us.

**CHARLIE.** It's . . . it's the kid. It's Tommy. He's the one!

*[There's a gasp from the crowd as we cut to a shot of SALLY holding her son TOMMY. The boy at first doesn't understand and then, realizing the eyes are all on him, buries his face against his mother.]*

**SALLY.** *[Backs away]* That's crazy! That's crazy! He's a little boy.

**WOMAN.** But he knew! He was the only one who knew! He told us all about it. Well, how did he know? How could he have known?

*[The various people take this up and repeat the question aloud.]*

**VOICES.**

How could he know?

Who told him?

Make the kid answer.

**DON.** It was Charlie who killed old man Van Horn.

**WOMAN.** But it was the kid here who knew what was going to happen all the time. He was the one who knew!

*[We see a close-up of STEVE.]*

**STEVE.** Are you all gone crazy? *[Pause as he looks about]* Stop.

*[A fist crashes at STEVE'S face, staggering him back out of the frame of the picture.]*

*There are several close camera shots suggesting the coming of violence. A hand fires a rifle. A fist clenches. A hand grabs the hammer from VAN HORN'S body, etc. Meanwhile, we hear the following lines.]*

**DON.** Charlie has to be the one—Where's my rifle—

**TAKE NOTES**

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**TAKE NOTES**

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**WOMAN.** Les Goodman’s the one. His car started! Let’s wreck it.

**MRS. GOODMAN.** What about Steve’s radio—He’s the one that called them—

**MRS. GOODMAN.** Smash the radio. Get me a hammer. Get me something.

**STEVE.** Stop—Stop—

**CHARLIE.** Where’s that kid—Let’s get him.

**MAN ONE.** Get Steve—Get Charlie—They’re working together.

*[The crowd starts to converge around the mother, who grabs the child and starts to run with him. The crowd starts to follow, at first walking fast, and then running after him.]*

*We see a full shot of the street as suddenly CHARLIE’S lights go off and the lights in another house go on. They stay on for a moment, then from across the street other lights go on and then off again.]*

**MAN ONE.** *[Shouting]* It isn’t the kid . . . it’s Bob Weaver’s house.

**WOMAN.** It isn’t Bob Weaver’s house. It’s Don Martin’s place.

**CHARLIE.** I tell you it’s the kid.

**DON.** It’s Charlie. He’s the one.

*[We move into a series of close-ups of various people as they shout, accuse, scream, interspersing these shots with shots of houses as the lights go on and off, and then slowly in the middle of this nightmarish morass of sight and sound the camera starts to pull away, until once again we’ve reached the opening shot looking at the Maple Street sign from high above.]*

*The camera continues to move away until we dissolve to a shot looking toward the metal side of a space craft, which sits shrouded in darkness. An open door throws out a beam of light from the illuminated interior. Two figures silhouetted against the bright lights appear. We get only a vague feeling of form, but nothing more explicit than that.]*

**FIGURE ONE.** Understand the procedure now? Just stop a few of their machines and radios and telephones and lawn mowers . . . throw them into darkness for a few hours, and then you just sit back and watch the pattern.

**FIGURE TWO.** And this pattern is always the same?

**FIGURE ONE.** With few variations. They pick the most dangerous enemy they can find . . . and it's themselves. And all we need do is sit back . . . and watch.

**FIGURE TWO.** Then I take it this place . . . this Maple Street . . . is not unique.

**FIGURE ONE.** [*Shaking his head*] By no means. Their world is full of Maple Streets. And we'll go from one to the other and let them destroy themselves. One to the other . . . one to the other . . . one to the other—

[*Now the camera pans up for a shot of the starry sky and over this we hear the narrator's voice.*]

**NARRATOR'S VOICE.** The tools of conquest do not necessarily come with bombs and explosions and fallout. There are weapons that are simply thoughts, attitudes, prejudices—to be found only in the minds of men. For the record, prejudices can kill and suspicion can destroy and a thoughtless frightened search for a scapegoat has a fallout all its own for the children . . . and the children yet unborn. [*A pause*] And the pity of it is . . . that these things cannot be confined to . . . The Twilight Zone!

**TAKE NOTES**

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## TAKE NOTES

# Joseph R. McCarthy

*from* Prentice Hall United States History

The early Cold War<sup>1</sup> years saw one ominous event after another. The fall of China, Soviet nuclear bombs, and the exposure of Soviet agents in the United States all undermined American confidence. At that time, as Americans worried about the nation's security, a clever and unscrupulous man began to take advantage of this sense of fear and helplessness. He suggested that these setbacks were really caused by the work of traitors inside the United States.

## **McCarthy Makes Accusations**

In February 1950, a little-known senator from Wisconsin made a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia. The senator, Joseph R. McCarthy, charged that the State Department was infested with communist agents. He waved a piece of paper, which, he said, contained the names of State Department employees who were secretly communists.

The charge provoked a furor. When challenged to give specific names, McCarthy said he had meant that there were "205 bad security risks" in the department. Then, he claimed that 57 employees were communists. Over the next months, the numbers on his list changed. McCarthy never did produce the list of communists. Still, with the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, McCarthy's accusations grabbed the attention of the American public.

At the time of the above speech, McCarthy was finishing his first term in the Senate. He had accomplished very little in that term and was looking for a popular issue on which to focus his 1952 reelection campaign. Anticommunism seemed to be just the issue. McCarthy was easily reelected to a second term.

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1. **Cold War** a period of conflict, without physical war, between the U.S. and the communist Soviet Union (1945–1991).

## McCarthy's Power Increases

In the following four years, McCarthy put forward his own brand of anticommunism—so much so that the term McCarthyism became a catchword for extreme, reckless charges. By making irresponsible allegations, McCarthy did more to discredit legitimate concerns about domestic communism than any other single American.

Between 1950 and 1954, McCarthy was perhaps the most powerful politician in the United States. Piling baseless accusations on top of charges that could not be proved, McCarthy became chairman of an investigations subcommittee. Merely being accused by McCarthy caused people to lose their jobs and destroyed their reputations. He attacked ruthlessly. When caught in a lie, he told another. When one case faded, he introduced a new one.

Confident because of his increasing power, McCarthy took on larger targets. He attacked former Secretary of State George Marshall, a national hero and author of the Marshall Plan.<sup>2</sup> Even other senators came to fear McCarthy. They worried that he would brand them as communist sympathizers.

## McCarthy Falls From Power

In 1954, McCarthy went after the United States Army, claiming that it, too, was full of communists. Army leaders responded that McCarthy's attacks were personally motivated. Finally, the Senate decided to hold televised hearings to sort out the allegations. For weeks, Americans were riveted to their television sets. Most were horrified by McCarthy's bullying tactics. For the first time, the public saw McCarthy badger witnesses, twist the truth, and snicker at the suffering of others. It was an upsetting sight for many Americans.

By the time the hearings ended in mid-June, the senator had lost many of his strongest supporters. The Senate formally censured, or condemned, him for his reckless accusations. Although McCarthy continued to serve in the Senate, he had lost virtually all of his power and influence.

## TAKE NOTES

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**2. Marshall Plan** (officially known as the European Recovery Program, ERP) a U.S. program that provided financial aid for rebuilding European economies after World War II in an effort to prevent the spread of Soviet communism.

## TAKE NOTES

The end of the Korean War in 1953 and McCarthy's downfall in 1954 signaled the decline of the Red Scare.<sup>3</sup> The nation had been damaged by the suppression of free speech and by the lack of open, honest debate. However, Americans had come to realize how important their democratic institutions were and how critical it was to preserve them.

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**3. Red Scare** a term that refers to the promotion of widespread public fear of the possible rise of communism.

# Grasshopper Logic *from* Squids Will Be Squids

by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith

## TAKE NOTES

One bright and sunny day, Grasshopper came home from school, dropped his backpack, and was just about to run outside to meet his friends.

“Where are you going?” asked his mom.

“Out to meet some friends,” said Grasshopper.

“Do you have any homework due tomorrow?” asked his mom.

“Just one small thing for History. I did the rest in class.”

“Okay” said Mom Grasshopper. “Be back at six for dinner.”

Grasshopper hung out with his friends, came home promptly at six, ate his dinner, then took out his History homework.

His mom read the assignment and freaked out.

“Rewrite twelve Greek myths as Broadway musicals. Write music for songs. Design and build all sets. Sew original costumes for each production.”

“How long have you known about this assignment?” asked Mom Grasshopper, trying not to scream.

“I don’t know,” said Grasshopper.

### **Moral**

*There are plenty of things to say to calm a hopping mad Grasshopper mom. “I don’t know” is not one.*

## TAKE NOTES

# Demeter and Persephone

by Anne Terry White

**D**eep under Mt. Aetna, the gods had buried alive a number of fearful, fire-breathing giants. The monsters heaved and struggled to get free. And so mightily did they shake the earth that Pluto, the king of the underworld, was alarmed.

“They may tear the rocks asunder and leave the realm of the dead open to the light of day,” he thought. And mounting his golden chariot, he went up to see what damage had been done.

Now the goddess of love and beauty, fair Aphrodite (af rə dīf ē), was sitting on a mountainside playing with her son, Eros.<sup>1</sup> She saw Pluto as he drove around with his coal-black horses and she said:

“My son, there is one who defies your power and mine. Quick! Take up your darts! Send an arrow into the breast of that dark monarch. Let him, too, feel the pangs of love. Why should he alone escape them?”

At his mother’s words, Eros leaped lightly to his feet. He chose from his quiver<sup>2</sup> his sharpest and truest arrow, fitted it to his bow, drew the string, and shot straight into Pluto’s heart.

The grim King had seen fair maids enough in the gloomy underworld over which he ruled. But never had his heart been touched. Now an unaccustomed warmth stole through his veins. His stern eyes softened. Before him was a blossoming valley, and along its edge a charming girl was gathering flowers. She was Persephone (pər sef ə nē), daughter of Demeter (dī mēt’ ər), goddess of the harvest. She had strayed from her companions, and now that her basket overflowed with blossoms, she was filling her apron with lilies and violets. The god looked at Persephone and loved her at once. With one sweep of his arm he caught her up and drove swiftly away.

“Mother!” she screamed, while the flowers fell from her apron and strewed the ground. “Mother!”

1. **Eros** (er’ äs) in Greek mythology, the god of love; identified by the Romans as Cupid.

2. **quiver** (kwiv’ ər) case for arrows.

**TAKE NOTES**

And she called on her companions by name. But already they were out of sight, so fast did Pluto urge the horses on. In a few moments they were at the River Cyane.<sup>3</sup> Persephone struggled, her loosened girdle<sup>4</sup> fell to the ground, but the god held her tight. He struck the bank with his trident.<sup>5</sup> The earth opened, and darkness swallowed them all—horses, chariot, Pluto, and weeping Persephone.

From end to end of the earth Demeter sought her daughter. But none could tell her where Persephone was. At last, worn out and despairing, the goddess returned to Sicily. She stood by the River Cyane, where Pluto had cleft the earth and gone down into his own dominions.

Now a river nymph<sup>6</sup> had seen him carry off his prize. She wanted to tell Demeter where her daughter was, but fear of Pluto kept her dumb. Yet she had picked up the girdle Persephone had dropped, and this the nymph wafted<sup>7</sup> on the waves to the feet of Demeter.

The goddess knew then that her daughter was gone indeed, but she did not suspect Pluto of carrying her off. She laid the blame on the innocent land.

“Ungrateful soil!” she said. “I made you fertile. I clothed you in grass and nourishing grain, and this is how you reward me. No more shall you enjoy my favors!”

That year was the most cruel mankind had ever known. Nothing prospered, nothing grew. The cattle died, the seed would not come up, men and oxen toiled in vain. There was too much sun. There was too much rain. Thistles<sup>8</sup> and weeds were the only things that grew. It seemed that all mankind would die of hunger.

“This cannot go on,” said mighty Zeus. “I see that I must intervene.” And one by one he sent the gods and goddesses to plead with Demeter.

But she had the same answer for all: “Not till I see my daughter shall the earth bear fruit again.”

Zeus, of course, knew well where Persephone was. He did not like to take from his brother the one joyful

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**3. River Cyane** (sī an) a river in Sicily, an island just south of Italy.  
**4. girdle** (gurd' əl) *n.* belt or sash for the waist.  
**5. trident** (trid' ənt) *n.* spear with three points.  
**6. river nymph** (nimf) *n.* goddess living in a river.  
**7. wafted** (wäft' əd) *n.* carried.  
**8. thistles** (this' əlz) *n.* stubborn, weedy plants with sharp leaves and usually purplish flowers.



## TAKE NOTES

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thing in his life, but he saw that he must if the race of man was to be preserved. So he called Hermes<sup>9</sup> to him and said:

“Descend to the underworld, my son. Bid Pluto release his bride. Provided she has not tasted food in the realm of the dead, she may return to her mother forever.”

Down sped Hermes on his winged feet, and there in the dim palace of the king, he found Persephone by Pluto’s side. She was pale and joyless. Not all the glittering treasures of the underworld could bring a smile to her lips.

“You have no flowers here,” she would say to her husband when he pressed gems upon her. “Jewels have no fragrance. I do not want them.”

When she saw Hermes and heard his message, her heart leaped within her. Her cheeks grew rosy and her eyes sparkled, for she knew that Pluto would not dare to disobey his brother’s command. She sprang up, ready to go at once. Only one thing troubled her—that she could not leave the underworld forever. For she had accepted a pomegranate<sup>10</sup> from Pluto and sucked the sweet pulp from four of the seeds.

With a heavy heart Pluto made ready his golden car.<sup>11</sup> He helped Persephone in while Hermes took up the reins.

“Dear wife,” said the King, and his voice trembled as he spoke, “think kindly of me, I pray you. For indeed I love you truly. It will be lonely here these eight months you are away. And if you think mine is a gloomy palace to return to, at least remember that your husband is great among the immortals. So fare you well—and get your fill of flowers!”

Straight to the temple of Demeter at Eleusis, Hermes drove the black horses. The goddess heard the chariot wheels and, as a deer bounds over the hills, she ran out swiftly to meet her daughter. Persephone flew to her mother’s arms. And the sad tale of each turned into joy in the telling.

9. **Hermes** (hər’ mēz) a god who served as a messenger.

10. **pomegranate** (pə’m’ ə gran’ it) *n.* round fruit with a red leathery rind and many seeds.

11. **car** (kār) *n.* chariot.



## TAKE NOTES

# Sun and Moon in a Box

by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz

Coyote and Eagle were hunting. Eagle caught rabbits. Coyote caught nothing but grasshoppers. Coyote said: "Friend Eagle, my chief, we make a great hunting pair."

"Good, let us stay together," said Eagle.

They went toward the west. They came to a deep canyon. "Let us fly over it," said Eagle.

"My chief, I cannot fly," said Coyote. "You must carry me across."

"Yes, I see that I have to," said Eagle. He took Coyote on his back and flew across the canyon. They came to a river. "Well," said Eagle, "you cannot fly, but you certainly can swim. This time I do not have to carry you."

Eagle flew over the stream, and Coyote swam across. He was a bad swimmer. He almost drowned. He coughed up a lot of water. "My chief," he said, "when we come to another river, you must carry me." Eagle regretted to have Coyote for a companion.

They came to Kachina Pueblo.<sup>1</sup> The Kachinas were dancing. Now, at this time, the earth was still soft and new. There was as yet no sun and no moon. Eagle and Coyote sat down and watched the dance. They saw that the Kachinas had a square box. In it they kept the sun and the moon. Whenever they wanted light they opened the lid and let the sun peek out. Then it was day. When they wanted less light, they opened the box just a little for the moon to look out.

"This is something wonderful," Coyote whispered to Eagle.

"This must be the sun and the moon they are keeping in that box," said Eagle. "I have heard about these two wonderful beings."

"Let us steal the box," said Coyote.

"No, that would be wrong," said Eagle. "Let us just borrow it."

1. **Kachina Pueblo** (kə chē' nə pweb' lō) Native American village.

When the Kachinas were not looking, Eagle grabbed the box and flew off. Coyote ran after him on the ground. After a while Coyote called Eagle: “My chief, let me have the box. I am ashamed to let you do all the carrying.”

“No,” said Eagle, “you are not reliable. You might be curious and open the box and then we could lose the wonderful things we borrowed.”

For some time they went on as before—Eagle flying above with the box, Coyote running below, trying to keep up. Then once again Coyote called Eagle: “My chief, I am ashamed to let you carry the box. I should do this for you. People will talk badly about me, letting you carry this burden.”

“No, I don’t trust you,” Eagle repeated. “You won’t be able to refrain from opening the box. Curiosity will get the better of you.”

“No,” cried Coyote, “do not fear, my chief, I won’t even think of opening the box.” Still, Eagle would not give it to him, continuing to fly above, holding the box in his talons. But Coyote went on pestering Eagle: “My chief, I am really embarrassed. People will say: ‘That lazy, disrespectful Coyote lets his chief do all the carrying.’”

“No, I won’t give this box to you,” Eagle objected. “It is too precious to entrust to somebody like you.”

They continued as before, Eagle flying, Coyote running. Then Coyote begged for the fourth time: “My chief, let me carry the box for a while. My wife will scold me, and my children will no longer respect me, when they find out that I did not help you carry this load.”

Then Eagle relented, saying: “Will you promise not to drop the box and under no circumstances to open it?”

“I promise, my chief, I promise,” cried Coyote. “You can rely upon me. I shall not betray your trust.”

Then Eagle allowed Coyote to carry the box. They went on as before, Eagle flying, Coyote running, carrying the box in his mouth. They came to a wooded area, full of trees and bushes. Coyote pretended to lag behind, hiding himself behind some bushes where Eagle could not see him. He could not curb his

## TAKE NOTES

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curiosity. Quickly he sat down and opened the box. In a flash, Sun came out of the box and flew away, to the very edge of the sky, and at once the world grew cold, the leaves fell from the tree branches, the grass turned brown, and icy winds made all living things shiver.

Then, before Coyote could put the lid back on the box, Moon jumped out and flew away to the outer rim of the sky, and at once snow fell down from heaven and covered the plains and the mountains.

Eagle said: "I should have known better. I should not have let you persuade me. I knew what kind of low, cunning, stupid creature you are. I should have remembered that you never keep a promise. Now we have winter. If you had not opened the box, then we could have kept Sun and Moon always close to us. Then there would be no winter. Then we would have summer all the time."

# My First Free Summer

by Julia Alvarez

## TAKE NOTES

Lined area for taking notes, consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

I never had summer—I had summer school. First grade, summer school. Second grade, summer school. Thirdgradesummerschoolfourthgrade-summerschool. In fifth grade, I vowed I would get interested in fractions, the presidents of the United States, Mesopotamia; I would learn my English.

That was the problem. English. My mother had decided to send her children to the American school so we could learn the language of the nation that would soon be liberating us. For thirty years, the Dominican Republic had endured a bloody and repressive dictatorship. From my father, who was involved in an underground plot, my mother knew that los americanos<sup>1</sup> had promised to help bring democracy to the island.

“You have to learn your English!” Mami kept scolding me.

“But why?” I’d ask. I didn’t know about my father’s activities. I didn’t know the dictator was bad. All I knew was that my friends who were attending Dominican schools were often on holiday to honor the dictator’s birthday, the dictator’s saint day, the day the dictator became the dictator, the day the dictator’s oldest son was born, and so on. They marched in parades and visited the palace and had their picture in the paper.

Meanwhile, I had to learn about the pilgrims with their funny witch hats, about the 50 states and where they were on the map, about Dick and Jane<sup>2</sup> and their tame little pets, Puff and Spot, about freedom and liberty and justice for all—while being imprisoned in a hot classroom with a picture of a man wearing a silly wig hanging above the blackboard. And all of this learning I had to do in that impossibly difficult, rocks-in-your-mouth language of English!

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1. **los americanos** (lōs ä me’ rē kä’ nōs) n. Spanish for “the Americans.”  
2. **Dick and Jane** characters in a reading book commonly used by students in the 1950s.

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Somehow, I managed to scrape by. Every June, when my prospects looked iffy, Mami and I met with the principal. I squirmed in my seat while they arranged for my special summer lessons.

“She is going to work extra hard. Aren’t you, young lady?” the principal would quiz me at the end of our session.

My mother’s eye on me, I’d murmur, “Yeah.”

“Yes, what?” Mami coached.

“Yes.” I sighed. “Sir.”

It’s a wonder that I just wasn’t thrown out, which was what I secretly hoped for. But there were extenuating circumstances, the grounds on which the American school stood had been donated by my grandfather. In fact, it had been my grandmother who had encouraged Carol Morgan to start her school. The bulk of the student body was made up of the sons and daughters of American diplomats and business people, but a few Dominicans—most of them friends or members of my family—were allowed to attend.

“You should be grateful!” Mami scolded on the way home from our meeting. “Not every girl is lucky enough to go to the Carol Morgan School!”

In fifth grade, I straightened out. “Yes, ma’am!” I learned to say brightly. “Yes, sir!” To wave my hand in sword-wielding swoops so I could get called on with the right answer. What had changed me? Gratitude? A realization of my luckiness? No, sir! The thought of a fun summer? Yes, ma’am! I wanted to run with the pack of cousins and friends in the common yard that connected all our properties. To play on the trampoline and go off to *la playa*<sup>3</sup> and get brown as a berry. I wanted to be free. Maybe American principles had finally sunk in!

The summer of 1960 began in bliss: I did not have to go to summer school! *Attitude much improved. Her English progressing nicely. Attentive and cooperative in classroom.* I grinned as Mami read off the note that accompanied my report card of Bs.

But the yard replete with cousins and friends that I had dreamed about all year was deserted. Family members were leaving for the United States, using

3. *la playa* (là plǎ' yä) *n.* Spanish for “the beach.”

whatever connections they could drum up. The plot had unraveled. Every day there were massive arrests. The United States had closed its embassy and was advising Americans to return home.

My own parents were terrified. Every night black Volkswagens blocked our driveway and stayed there until morning. "Secret police," my older sister whispered.

"Why are they secret if they're the police?" I asked.

"Shut up!" my sister hissed. "Do you want to get us all killed?"

Day after day, I kicked a deflated beach ball around the empty yard, feeling as if I'd been tricked into good behavior by whomever God put in charge of the lives of 10-year-olds. I was bored. Even summer school would have been better than this!

One day toward the end of the summer, my mother summoned my sisters and me. She wore that too-bright smile she sometimes pasted on her terrified face.

"Good news, girls! Our papers and tickets came! We're leaving for the United States!"

Our mouths dropped. We hadn't been told we were going on a trip anywhere, no less to some place so far away.

I was the first to speak up, "But why?"

My mother flashed me the same look she used to give me when I'd ask why I had to learn English.

I was about to tell her that I didn't want to go to the United States, where summer school had been invented and everyone spoke English. But my mother lifted a hand for silence. "We're leaving in a few hours. I want you all to go get ready! I'll be in to pack soon." The desperate look in her eyes did not allow for contradiction. We raced off, wondering how to fit the contents of our Dominican lives into four small suitcases.

Our flight was scheduled for that afternoon, but the airplane did not appear. The terminal lined with soldiers wielding machine guns, checking papers, escorting passengers into a small interrogation room. Not everyone returned.

"It's a trap," I heard my mother whisper to my father.

This had happened before, a cat-and-mouse game the dictator liked to play. Pretend that he was letting

**TAKE NOTES**

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