

the cabman home. "Put on shoes? Certainly, dear," said he, as the cab began to turn. Then suddenly something struck him and he laughed. Then he remarked, "It is very serious, though."

"You see, that man who came to my house to see me is an Anarchist. No – don't faint or I cannot possibly tell you the rest. I did not know that. And I showed him the cultivation of that new species of that Bacterium. It, I think, caused the blue patches upon various monkeys and like a fool, I said it was Asiatic Cholera. And he ran away with it to poison that water of London. And now he has swallowed it. Of course, I cannot say what will happen but you know it turned that kitten blue, and the three puppies in patches and the sparrow – bright blue. But the bother is, I shall have all the trouble and expense of preparing some more."

"Put on my coat on this hot day! Why? Oh! Very well."
He muttered. [simplified]

A. GLOSSARY

<i>shrieked</i>	: made a loud noise
<i>bacillus</i>	: a type of bacterium
<i>celebrated</i>	: famous
<i>peered</i>	: <i>looked</i> at it carefully
<i>shreds</i>	: very small pieces
<i>stained</i>	: changed the colour before looking at it under the microscope
<i>on the contrary</i>	: opposite
<i>obliged</i>	: forced
<i>released</i>	: left free
<i>hoarsely</i>	: harshly
<i>bonnet</i>	: a kind of hat with strings
<i>crouched</i>	: bent low, almost touching the ground
<i>sovereign</i>	: old British gold coin

<i>swayed</i>	: moved from one side to another
<i>conspiracy</i>	: secret plan to harm a person/persons
<i>defiant</i>	: bold disobedience
<i>vive</i>	: long live
<i>jostling</i>	: pushing roughly against people
<i>cultivation</i>	: preparation
<i>species</i>	: a group of birds / insects / bacteria, etc.
<i>muttered</i>	: said something in a quiet voice that is difficult to hear

B. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What was the Bacteriologist experimenting on?
2. Who came to see the Bacteriologist and why?
3. Did the Bacteriologist trust the visitor and why?
4. Had the visitor seen any microbes before? How do you know?
5. Who knocked at the door gently? What did the Bacteriologist do then?
6. What happened when the visitor left?
7. Did the Bacteriologist leave the house in a hurry? Give reasons in support of your answer.
8. Who saw the Bacteriologist running towards the street?
9. What did Bacteriologist's wife do then?
10. Was the visitor nervous? Was he in a hurry? Support your answer with examples.
11. Choose the correct answer :
The visitor stole the microbes because
 - (a) he wanted to do similar experiments.
 - (b) he wanted to cause destruction.
 - (c) he was in the habit of stealing.

12. Why did the tube break? What did the visitor do then?
13. Why did the anarchist leave the cab and look at the Bacteriologist in defiance?
14. What did the anarchist say to the Bacteriologist?
15. What did Minnie ask her husband when she came out of the cab?
16. Why did the bacteriologist look relieved?
17. What did the new species of bacterium cause?
18. What did the Bacteriologist tell his wife?

C. DISCUSSION

1. Never trust a stranger. Discuss.
2. Appearance is often deceptive. Have discussion for and against this statement.

D. SUGGESTED READING

‘The Scientist’ by Rabindra Nath Tagore



7

HOW MUCH LAND DOES A MAN NEED?

Leo Tolstoy

*Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) is one of the best known of Russian writers. He wrote many novels, short stories and an autobiography called **My Confessions**. He is primarily famous for classics like **War and Peace** (1869) and **Anna Karenina** (1877).*

How Much Land Does a Man Need illustrates the emptiness that lies beneath the growing material ambition of man. The ironical and inevitable fate that awaits material pursuit is underscored with the concluding line, ‘Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed.’

I

An elder sister came to visit her younger sister in the country. The elder was married to a tradesman in town, the younger to a peasant in the village. As the sisters sat over their tea talking, the elder began to boast of the advantages of town life : saying how comfortably they lived there, how well they dressed, what fine clothes her children wore, and what good things they ate and drank. The younger sister was piqued.

‘I would not change my way of life for yours,’ said she, ‘We may live roughly, but at least we are free from anxiety. You live in better style than we do, but though you often earn more than you need, you are very likely to lose all you have. You know the proverb, “Loss and gain are brothers twain.” It often happens that people who are wealthy one day, are begging their bread the next. Our way is safer. Though a peasant’s life is not a fat one, it

is a long one. We shall never grow rich, but we shall always have enough to eat.'

Pakhom, the master of the house, was listening to the women's chatter.

'It is perfectly true,' thought he. 'Busy as we are from childhood tilling mother earth, we peasants have no time to let any nonsense settle in our heads. Our only trouble is that we haven't land enough. If I had plenty of land, I shouldn't fear the Devil himself!'

The women finished their tea, chatted a while about dress, and then cleared away the tea-things and lay down to sleep.

But the Devil had been sitting behind the store, and had heard all that was said. He was pleased that the peasant's wife had led her husband into boasting, and that he had said that if he had plenty of land, he would not fear the Devil himself.

'All right,' thought the Devil. 'We will have a tussle. I'll give you land enough; and by means of that land I will get you into my power.'

II

Close to the village there lived a lady, a small landowner who had an estate of about three hundred acres. In the winter the news got about that the lady was going to sell her land. Pakhom heard that a neighbour of his was buying fifty acres, and that the lady had consented to accept one half in cash and to wait a year for the other half. Pakhom felt envious.

'Look at that,' thought he 'the land is all being sold, and I shall get none of it. So he spoke to his wife. 'Other people are buying,' said he, 'and we must also buy twenty acres, or so. Life is becoming impossible.'

So they put their heads together and considered how they could manage to buy it. They had one hundred roubles laid by. They sold a colt, and one half of their bees, hired out one of their sons as a labourer and took his wages in advance; borrowed the

rest from a brother-in-law, and so scraped together half the purchase money.

Having done this, Pakhom chose out a farm of forty acres, some of it wooded, and went to the lady to bargain for it. They came to an agreement, and he shook hands with her upon it and paid her a deposit in advance. Then they went to town and signed the deeds; he paying half the price down, and undertaking to pay the remainder within two years.

So now Pakhom had land of his own. He borrowed seeds, and sowed it on the land he had bought. The harvest was a good one, and within a year he had managed to pay off his debts both to the lady and to his brother-in-law. So he became a landowner, ploughing and sowing his own land, making hay on his own land, cutting his own trees, and feeding his cattle on his own pasture.

III

One day Pakhom was sitting at home when a peasant, passing through the village, happened to call in. He was allowed to stay the night, and supper was given to him. Pakhom had a talk with this peasant and asked him where he came from. The stranger answered that he came from beyond the Volga, where he had been working. One word led to another, and the man went on to say that many people were settling in those parts. The land was so good, he said, that the rye sown on it grew as high as a horse, and so thick that five cuts of a sickle made a sheaf. One peasant, he said, had brought nothing with him but his bare hands, and now he had six horses and two cows of his own.

Pakhom's heart kindled with desire. He thought : 'Why should I suffer in this narrow hole, if one can live so well elsewhere? I will sell my land and my homestead here, and with the money I will start afresh over there and get everything new. In this crowded place one is always having trouble. But I must first go and find out all about it myself.'

Towards summer he got ready and started. He went down the Volga on a steamer to Samara, then walked another three

hundred miles on foot, and at last reached the place. It was just as the stranger had said. The peasants had plenty of land. Anyone who had money could buy land at two shillings an acre as much good freehold land as he wanted.

Having found out all he wished to know, Pakhom returned home. As autumn came on, he began selling off his belongings. He sold his land at a profit, sold his homestead and all his cattle. He only waited till the spring, and then started with his family for the new settlement.

IV

As soon as Pakhom and his family reached their new abode, he put up the buildings he needed, and bought cattle. He now had three times as much as at his former home, and the land was good cornland. He was ten times better off than he had been. He had plenty of land, and could keep as many head of cattle as he liked.

Pakhom was pleased with it all, but when he got used to it he began to think that even here he had not enough land. The first year, he sowed wheat on his land and had a good crop. After a time Pakhom noticed that some peasant-dealers were living on separate farms and were growing wealthy; and he thought: 'If I were to buy some more land it would be different thing altogether.' The question of buying more land recurred to him again and again.

So Pakhom began looking out for land which he could buy; and he came across a peasant who had bought thirteen hundred acres, but having got into difficulties was willing to sell again cheap. Pakhom bargained and haggled with him, and at last they settled the price at 1,500 roubles, part in cash and part to be paid later. They had all but clinched the matter when a passing dealer happened to stop at Pakhom's one day to get a feed for his horses. He drank tea with Pakhom and they had a talk. The dealer said that he was just returning from the land of the Bashkirs, far away, where he had bought thirteen thousand acres of land, all for 1,000 roubles. Pakhom questioned him further, and the tradesman said :

‘All one need do is to make friends with the chiefs. I gave away about one hundred roubles worth of silk robes and carpets, besides a case of tea, and I gave wine to those who would drink it; and I got the land for less than a penny an acre.’ And he showed Pakhom the title-deeds, saying :

‘The land lies near a river, and the whole prairie is virgin soil.’

Pakhom plied him with questions, and the tradesman said:

‘There is more land there than you could cover if you walked a year, and it all belongs to the Bashkirs. They are as simple as sheep, and land can be got almost for nothing.’

‘There is more land,’ thought Pakhom, ‘with my one thousand roubles, why should I get only thirteen hundred acres, and saddle myself with a debt besides? If I take it out there, I can get more than ten times as much for the money.’

V

Pakhom left his wife to look after the homestead, and started on his journey taking the tradesman with him. On and on they went, until they had gone more than three hundred miles, and on the seventh day they came to a place where the Bashkirs had pitched their tents. It was all just as the tradesman had said.

As soon as they saw Pakhom, they came out of their tents and gathered round their visitor. An interpreter was found and Pakhom told them that he had come about to have some land. The bashkirs seemed very glad; they took Pakhom and led him into one of the best tents, where they made him sit on some down cushions placed on a carpet, while they sat around him. They gave him some tea and *kumiss* and had a sheep killed, and gave him mutton to eat. Pakhom took presents out of his cart and distributed them among the Bashkirs, and divided the tea amongst them. The Bashkirs were delighted. They talked a great deal among themselves, and then told the interpreter to translate.

‘They wish to tell you’, said the interpreter, ‘that they like

you, and that it is our custom to do all we can to please a guest and to repay him for his gifts. You have given us presents, now tell us which of the things we possess please you best, that we may present them to you’.

‘What pleases me best, here,’ answered Pakhom, ‘is your land. Our land is crowded and the soil is exhausted; but you have plenty of land and it is good land. I never saw the like of it.’

Pakhom immediately fetched the best dressing-gown and five pounds of tea, and offered these to the chief. The chief accepted them, and seated himself in the place of honour. The Bashkirs at once began telling him something. The chief listened for a while, then made a sign with his head for them to be silent, and addressing himself to Pakhom, said in Russian : ‘Well, let it be so. Choose whatever piece of land you like; we have plenty of it.’

‘And what will be the price?’ asked Pakhom.

‘Our price is always the same: one thousand roubles a day.’

Pakhom did not understand.

‘A day? What measure is that? How many acres would that be?’

‘We do not know how to reckon it out,’ said the chief. ‘We sell it by the day. As much as you can go round on your feet in a day is yours, and the price is one thousand roubles a day.’

Pakhom was surprised.

‘But in a day you can get round a large tract of land,’ he said.

The chief laughed.

‘It will all be yours!’ said he. ‘But there is one condition; if you don’t return on the same day to the spot whence you started, your money is lost.’

Pakhom was delighted. It was decided to start early next morning. They gave Pakhom a feather-bed to sleep on, and the Bashkirs dispersed for the night.

VI

Pakhom lay on the feather-bed, but could not sleep. He kept thinking about the land. 'What a large tract I will mark off!' though he. 'I can easily do thirty-five miles in a day.'

In the morning, he got up, roused his man (who was sleeping in his cart), bade him harness; and went to call the Bashkirs.

'It's time to go to the steppe to measure the land,' he said.

The Bashkirs rose and assembled, and the chief came too. They ascended a hillock (called by the Bashkirs a *shikhan*) and dismounting from their carts and their horses, gathered in one spot. The chief came up to Pakhom and stretching out his arm towards the plain.

'See,' said he, 'all this, as far as your eye can reach, is ours. You may have any part of it you like.'

Pakhom's eyes glistened : it was all virgin soil.

The chief took off his fox-fur cap, placed it on the ground and said : 'This will be the mark. Start from here, and return here again. All the land you go round shall be yours.'

Pakhom took out his money and put it on the cap. Then he took off his outer coat, remaining in his sleeveless undercoat. He unfastened his girdle and tied it tight below his stomach, put a little bag of bread into the breast of his coat, and tying a flask of water to his girdle, he drew up the tops of his boots, took the spade from his man, and stood ready to start. He considered for some moments which way he had better go-it was tempting everywhere.

'No matter,' he concluded, 'I will go towards the rising sun.'

Pakhom started walking neither slowly nor quickly. After having gone a thousand yards he stopped, dug a hole, and placed pieces of turf one on another to make it more visible. Then he went on; and now that he had walked off his stiffness he quickened his pace. After a while he dug another hole.

‘I will go on for another three miles,’ thought he, ‘and then turn to the left. This spot is so fine, that it would be a pity to lose it. The further one goes, the better the land seems.’

He went straight on for a while and when he looked round, the hillock was scarcely visible and the people on it looked like black ants, and he would just see something glistening there in the sun.

‘Ah,’ thought Pakhom, ‘I have gone far enough in this direction, it is time to turn. Besides I am in a regular sweat, and very thirsty.’

He stopped, dug a large hole, and heaped up pieces of turf. Next he untied his flask, had a drink and then turned sharply to the left. He went on and on; the grass was high, and it was very hot.

Pakhom began to grow tired: he looked at the sun and saw that it was noon.

‘Well,’ he thought, ‘I must have a rest.’

It had become terribly hot and he felt sleepy, still he went on and on, thinking : ‘An hour to suffer, a lifetime to live.’

Late in the afternoon, Pakhom thought of turning back. So he hurriedly dug a hole, and turned straight towards the hillock.

VII

Pakhom went straight towards the hillock, but he now walked with difficulty. He was done up with the heat, his bare feet were cut and bruised, and his legs began to fail. He longed to rest, but it was impossible if he meant to get back before sunset. The sun waits for no man, and it was sinking lower and lower.

He looked towards the hillock and at the sun. He was still far from his goal, and the sun was already near the rim.

Pakhom walked on and on; it was very hard walking but he went quicker and quicker. He pressed on, but was still far from the place. He began running, threw away his coat, his boots, his flask and his cap, and kept only the spade which he used as a support.

‘What shall I do?’ he thought again, ‘I have grasped too much and ruined the whole affair. I can’t get there before the sun sets.’

And this fear made him still more breathless. Pakhom went on running, his soaking shirt and trousers stuck to him and his mouth was parched. His breast was working like a blacksmith’s bellows, his heart was beating like hammer, and his legs were giving way as if they did not belong to him. Pakhom was seized with terror lest he should die of the strain.

Though afraid of death, he could not stop. He gathered his last strength and ran on.

The sun was quite low, but he was also quite near his aim. Pakhom could already see the people on the hillock waving their arms to hurry him up.

Pakhom looked at the sun, which had reached the earth: one side of it had already disappeared. With all his remaining strength he rushed on, bending his body forward so that his legs could hardly follow fast enough to keep him from falling. He took a long breath and ran up the hillock. It was still light there. He reached the top and saw the cap. Before it sat the chief laughing and holding his sides. Again Pakhom uttered a cry: his legs gave way beneath him, he fell forward and reached the cap with his hands.

‘Ah, that’s a fine fellow!’ exclaimed the chief. ‘He has gained much land!’

Pakhom’s servant came running up and tried to raise him, but he saw that blood was flowing from his mouth. Pakhom was dead!

The Bashkirs clicked their tongues to show their pity.

His servant picked up the spade and dug a grave long enough for Pakhom to lie in, and buried him in it. *Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed.*

A. GLOSSARY

<i>piqued</i>	: wounded in pride
<i>sneeringly</i>	: with contempt
<i>chatter</i>	: continuous
<i>grumbled</i>	: complained or protested
<i>fallow land</i>	: land left uncultivated to allow it to regain fertility
<i>prairie</i>	: level land overgrown with grass
<i>scramble</i>	: struggle to get
<i>tethered</i>	: fastened with a chain or rope
<i>chuckle</i>	: low, quiet laugh
<i>dozed off</i>	: fell asleep
<i>glistened</i>	: shone brightly; sparkled
<i>prostrate</i>	: (here) lying with front of body towards ground from utter tiredness
<i>quivering</i>	: trembling or vibrating
<i>parched</i>	: made dry by heat

B. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What did the two women discuss? Were they related to each other?
2. What did one woman say in defence of rural life? What was the counter-argument?
3. Pakhom listened to the women's chatter. He started brooding and reached a conclusion. What was the conclusion?
4. When the Devil heard Pakhom's musings, what did he decide?
5. The estate-owner on whose land Pakhom was tenant sold her land. Who bought the land?

6. How did Pakhom manage to put together the money for buying the land?
7. Pakhom met a stranger one day. Who was this stranger? What information did he give to Pakhom?
8. A trader told Pakhom something about the land of Bashkirs. What was it?
9. Who were the Bashkirs? How did Pakhom make friends with them?
10. Bashkirs wanted to repay Pakhom for his gifts. What did Pakhom want from them?
11. 'Our price is always the same : One thousand roubles a day,' the chief said. What did he mean?
12. On what condition did the chief agree to sell land to Pakhom?
13. What is the moral of the story?



8

RETURN TO AIR

Philippa A Pearce

The boy could swim well, but he had never tried duck-diving. His friend wanted him to learn it. What happened when he tried to duck-dive the first time?

The ponds are very big, so that at one end people bathe and at the other end they fish. Old men with bald heads sit on folding stools and fish with rods and lines, and little kids squeeze through the railings and wade up into the water to fish with nets. But the water is much deeper at our end of the pond, and that's where we bathe. You are not allowed to bathe unless you can swim, but I've always been able to swim. They say I could swim because I am fat, and I float. Well, I don't mind. They call me Sausage.

Only I don't dive - not from the diving-board. I have to take my glasses off to go into the water.

Then this summer they all wanted me to learn duck-diving. You are swimming on the surface of water and suddenly you up-end yourself just like a duck and dive down deep into the water and perhaps you swim about a bit underwater, and then come up again. I know ducks can do this soon after they are born. It's different for them.

So I was learning to duck-dive-to swim to the bottom of the pond and pick up a brick they'd thrown in, and bring it up again. You practise this in case you have to rescue anyone from drowning - gone down to the bottom. Of course, they are bigger and heavier than a brick. I suppose you have to work on bricks and then gradually work up to people.

The swimming instructor said, 'Sausage, I'm going to throw the brick.' It was a brick with a bit of old white flannel

round it, to make it show up underwater – “Sausage I’m going to throw it – go after it and get it before it reaches the bottom and settles in the mud, or you’ll never get it.”

He’d made everyone come out of the water to give me a chance and they were standing and watching I had removed my glasses, so I could only see the blurred figures. I could hear them talking and laughing, but there wasn’t a sound in the water except the sound made by me. And then I saw the brick go over my head and there was a splash as it went into the water I thought I can’t do it – my legs won’t move fast – they feel just flabby – it’s different for ducks. But while I was thinking this, I’d taken a deep breath, and then my head really went down and my legs went up in the air. I could feel them there, just air around them, and then there was water around them, because I was going down into the water, after all right down into the water; straight down

At first my eyes were shut, I forced my eyelids up against the water to see. Because, although I can’t see much without my glasses, I don’t believe anyone can see much underwater.

The water was like a thick green – brown lemonade, with some fish moving around. I could see some whitish glimmer that must be the flannel round the brick, it was ahead of me, fading away into the lower water, as I moved after it. Down we went, and the lemonade–look quite went away, and became just a dark blackish–brown, and I couldn’t see much. The brick looked different from here, may be the flannel had come off. It had settled right into the mud. There was only one corner left sticking up. I dug into the mud with my fingers and got hold of the thing, and then I didn’t think of anything except getting up again with it into the air.

Touching the bottom like that had stirred up the mud, so I began to go up through a cloud of it. I felt I would get lost. Perhaps I had swum underwater too far – perhaps I would be drifted towards the place where people were fishing and get a fish-hook caught into the flesh of my cheek or perhaps I just wasn’t going to find the top and the air again...

I was quite afraid, although I was going up quite quickly, and the water was already changing from brown-black to green-brown and then to bright lemonade; I could also see the sun shining through the water, I was getting near the surface. I was moving too slowly; I knew I would never reach the air again in time.

Never the air again....

Then suddenly I was at the surface - I'd exploded back from the water into the air. For a while I couldn't think of anything; and I couldn't do anything except let out the old breath I'd been holding and take a couple of fresh, quick ones, and hold the brick.

Pond water was trickling down inside my nose and into my mouth, which I hate, but there was air all around and above for me to breathe and to live. I might live to be hundred now, and keep a sweet-shop of my own and walk on the Moon and breed mastiffs, and rescue someone from drowning and be awarded a medal for it and be interviewed on TV.

And then I noticed they were shouting from the bank. They were cheering and shouting, "Sausage, Sausage!" The instructor was saying with his hands round his mouth, 'What on earth have you got there, Sausage?'

So then I realised I had come almost at the other end of the pond.

I turned round and swam to the bank. They gave me my glasses to see what I had brought up from the bottom. Because it wasn't a brick; same size but a tin - an old tin - box with no paint left on it and all brown-black slime from the bottom of the pond. It was as heavy as brick, because it was full of mud - nothing but mud. It must have been there for years.

I've cleaned the tin up and kept on the mantelpiece at home with my coin-collection in it. I had to duck-dive later for another brick, and I got it all right, without being frightened at all. I shall keep the tin as long as I live, and I might live to be hundred.

A. GLOSSARY

<i>squeeze</i>	: to pass forcefully through a small space
<i>sausage</i>	: a meat preparation made into a long round shape
<i>dividing</i>	: jumping into the water with head or arms first
<i>work on</i>	: do a job/work
<i>flannel</i>	: a type of soft woollen cloth
<i>blurred</i>	: became less clear
<i>splash</i>	: sound of water hitting something
<i>flabby</i>	: fat
<i>lemonade</i>	: a sweet drink made of lemon
<i>glimmer</i>	: a weak, unsteady light
<i>fading away</i>	: disappearing slowly
<i>sticking up</i>	: pointing upwards
<i>stirred</i>	: moved slightly
<i>drifted</i>	: carried along by water/wind
<i>exploded</i>	: came up fast with a loud noise
<i>trickling</i>	: flowing down in a thin line
<i>mastiff</i>	: a big dog with short hair
<i>what on earth</i>	: an expression used to make a statement more forceful
<i>slime</i>	: mud which gives foul smell

B. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was the boy called 'Sausage' ?
2. Why did he not like diving?
3. Choose the correct answer :
They all wanted me to learn duck-diving. Who were 'they'?

- (a) his friends
 - (b) his friends and the instructor
 - (c) his parents
4. What is duck-diving? How is it taught ?
 5. What happened to Sausage when he tried duck-diving the first time?
 6. Why couldn't Sausage see inside the water?
 7. Why did the water change colours? How did it change colours?
 8. Was Sausage sure that he would not come out alive? Give examples to support your answer.
 9. What did Sausage dig out? Did he know what he had caught hold of when he was inside the water? Why?
 10. Where did Sausage reach while swimming ?
 11. What did Sausage do with the tin?

C. DISCUSSION

1. Swimming is a good exercise. Discuss
2. Why is it not possible for every school to have a swimming pool? Discuss what amenities should every school have?

D. SUGGESTED READING

1. 'A High Dive' by L.P. Hartley
2. 'Out of the Blue, by Bethany Hamilton; Reader's Digest Sep. 2005.



9

TERRY'S TREE

Ursula Moray Williams

Terry was a special child - a spastic. His sister, brother and his friends doted on him. Terry had not seen a Christmas tree growing. So his brother and his friends decided to show him one. What happened then?

A few weeks before Christmas our kid brother said he didn't believe that Christmas trees grew anywhere but in Woolworth's and of course we all laughed at him. Our kid, aged four, is a spastic therefore so slow. My friends, especially Mick, are crazy about Terry, so he told Terry: 'Well, look at that now! I know a wood where there are dozens of 'em growing, getting ready for Christmas. We'll take you there on Saturday. Like to come and see real Christmas tree growing at Bosworth's place?'

Of course, Terry would like to come! He talked of nothing else all the week, and Mick has a car, so it was easy. Mick worked for Mr Garrod who let him keep his car in the yard. Mick taught all of us boys to drive in the yard and up and down the lane at the back that wasn't a public road but a kind of place belonging to Mr Garrod.

On Saturday we raced him down to Garrod's in his push chair, with our Mum shouting after us to take care of Terry just as she always does.

We got him in the car - pushchair and all. 'Bosworth doesn't like cars on his private land and so we will have to walk a bit. Nobody was supposed to know the trees were there because of people stealing them for Christinas,' said Mick.

'How did you know they were there, then?' Chris asked.

‘The boss and I were out there on a job,’ said Mick. ‘But we don’t have to go near Mr Bosworth’s place to see them, anyway. We can get round the back and leave the car in the lane.’

That was just what we did.

Any of us boys could have carried Terry but he wouldn’t let us do so. He likes to feel he’s too big to be carried outside the house. So he sat up proudly in his chair as we pushed him: up the lane and through the field.

We walked quite away then we saw them... a kind of plantation...there must be hundreds of them. Nice little trees they were! Some of them more than six feet tall, and some much smaller.

Terry just stared and stared.

‘Nice, aren’t they?’ said Mick, crouching down beside him, ‘I guess there are hundreds of them there. Now you don’t believe they grow in Woolworth’s, do you?’

‘They aren’t silver!’ said Terry.

‘Look at that now!’ said Mick, ‘we bring him all this way and kill ourselves dragging him and he says they aren’t silver!’

‘I want one!’ said Terry next.

‘You want a tree and it’s five weeks from Christmas?’ said Mick ‘You’re too early, boy! You’ll have to wait, that’s all!’

‘Can I have one for Christmas?’ Terry asked.

‘Oh you’ll have one for Christmas all right.’ We all promised him.

‘Which one do you want?’ said Mick as he stretched his long leg over the fence. ‘This one?’

‘Yes, that one!’ said Terry, when Mick touched four or five trees. Terry had chosen a tree in the front row.

‘That’s then!’ said Mick, coming back.

‘That’s not big enough yet’, Mick told Terry, ‘We’ll wait till Christmas. Let it grow bigger.’

Well, after that there wasn't a day when Terry didn't talk about his tree. The whole neighbourhood knew that he was going to have one and that Mick was going to get it for him.

It was quite a thing, getting ready for Terry's tree. We found a pot for him to put it in, and our Sandra brought him something pretty to hang on it. Terry kept it in a box beside his bed. He was very proud of it.

Next Saturday he wanted to go to look at the trees again. We were all going to see the League match so we couldn't take him and Terry cried a bit. We did go the next Saturday and Terry wanted to take one of his ornamental things to hang on the tree he had chosen, to show it was his! 'Else I, shan't know!' he said.

Terry chose a glass ball all silver with red and blue flowers on it. We were happy to see his tree again. Chris tied the glass ball to the tree with a string. It looked ever so pretty.

Anyway when Terry went on saying that he wanted to take it home, Mick said, 'We've got to leave it just one more week, boy! And then next Saturday we'll come along with a spade and we'll dig it up for you!'

Later I heard Bob ask Mick to talk to Mr Bosworth through Mr Garrod and that all the boys would like to chip in and get a tree for Terry.

So we all wanted to go there to bring the tree the next week. None of us wanted to miss the minute when Terry got his own tree and took it home.

Well, we never thought about Saturday being bad weather, but it was. There were sleet and cold. Mum didn't want Terry to go out in that weather. I said, 'He isn't made of sugar Mum and we'll be back in the house by four o'clock. I swear we will. Since he is so eager to go, he won't even notice the cold.' So she and Sandra packed up the kid like he was a Christmas parcel.'

When we got down to Garrod's, Mick wasn't there. There was no one at the garage. It was very cold, so someone took Terry

across to put him inside Mick's car. There was a note in the car and a spade too. Mick had written on the paper, 'Gone on job to Kingston with the boss. Back 3.30, Mick.' 'Better take our Terry home,' said I. 'We can't wait till half past three in this cold.'

Terry looked so miserable that we couldn't bear to look at him. 'Go on,' said Chris, 'I'll drive you! I'll be seventeen in January.'

We all knew he couldn't drive, as he had no licence. 'Oh, I know a track through all the back lanes,' continued Chris. He was already in the driver's seat.

Terry was so excited. 'When you've dug the tree up and put in on my chair, I'll take it home,' he said. We all piled inside the car. He drove through the back lanes and we hardly met any car, much less a cop.

But when we reached the spot, every Christmas tree was gone! Cut down, they were, every single one of them... just a lot of little stumps sticking out of the ground. I looked at the others and then at our Terry, he was perfectly white. 'He's cut them,' Chris said. 'I might have known it! They've been selling trees in town all the week.'

'We'll get you one in town, Terry,' Bob said to comfort him, 'we'll go straight back and buy one out of the shops.'

'A silver one from Woolworth's', said Steve. That did nothing for Terry. He began to cry, ever so quietly, and he cried and cried. We were all trying to cheer him up and not thinking of anything else very much. So we never noticed two men coming to us. They were right on top of us.

'Is that your car in the lane?' The cop wanted to know. Terry just went on crying. 'What are you doing here?' asked the other.

'We've come to see, the Christmas trees because the kid had never seen any growing.' 'What's he crying for?' asked the man who was with the policeman 'Is he cold?' He is crying because

the tree's gone!' Chris said. 'So you know there were supposed to be trees?' the cop said suspiciously.

We didn't say yes or no to that one. 'Is that your car in the lane?' he asked again. We said yes this time. 'Which of you is the driver?' he asked. Chris said he was. Chris is older than most of us yet he looks about twelve. 'You've got a licence? I'd like to see it', he said.

'I haven't got a licence', Chris said. Terry continued crying, staring at the place where the Christmas trees were. The cop took down our names. He said, 'Mr Bosworth, I leave now, I might get some light thrown on this tree-stealing business. I'll take the boys in their own car and get hold of their parents'.

'We have nothing to do with the stolen trees. We came here couple of times to show to the kid, see,' said Chris, 'Mick O' brein was supposed to ask, Mr Garrod to fix up with Mr Bosworth. '

Mr Bosworth's face cleared when Chris said that, 'That's right,' he nodded, 'Jim Garrod told me last Thursday. But when I came here this morning, the whole lot was gone.'

'It's hard luck for the kid', said Chris. Mr. Bosworth and the policeman looked at Terry who was crying like his heart would break.

'Cheer up, son! ' said Bosworth kindly.

'What's, the matter son?' asked the cop. 'It's got my ball on it! ' cried Terry.

We told the Cop what had happened and he looked real upset.

So was Mr Bosworth, too.

'There are lots of trees in the town. You tell your Dad what's happened! Father Christmas will get you another tree!' the Cop said.

' It won't have my silver ball on it!' said Terry.

An idea occurred in the Cop's head, right through the middle of his helmet.

'Well, son! I guess I know what they've done with your Christmas tree!' said the Cop.

He had to say it twice, because you know what kids are when they are bawling - Terry stopped crying and he looked at the cop, as if the cop was going to bring his tree out of a hat.

'Where is it?' he whispered. The Cop leaned over Terry and said, 'the Mayor asked for the best tree in the wood. He wanted to set it up outside the town hall for all of the town to see and it is there now. Isn't it there, Mr. Bosworth? You come in see! And you come along too, you all!' he said and he drove us to the town. We went by the main road this time.

Terry was quiet, sitting on my knee, and looking ahead. I was very surprised when the officer drove the car to the Municipal Office, and there standing in the middle of the square, was the biggest Christmas tree I have ever seen in my life. You should have seen our kid's face! 'Grown quite a lot, hasn't it?' the Cop said, as if he had done it all himself, just for Terry.

Terry stared at the tree, and then suddenly he said, 'That's my silver ball! ' Chris and the boys cheered, so did the Cop, then he whispered to us, 'you all look quite straight- but I have to check up -I'll have a word with your fathers may be I can help you....I don't promise thought.....'

But he kept his word.

Mick didn't speak to us for two days, because we left him out. We did get into trouble at home... Mum and Sandra screamed at us though Dad didn't say much. As for Terry, he just lived those days for the evenings when one of us pushed him down to the Town Hall to look at the Christmas tree. We didn't know where his real tree was. This was the real one for him. By the end of the fortnight we were sick of the sight - but not Terry. After Christmas when the tree was taken down, Terry wanted his silver ball back! and of course, he was given one.

A. GLOSSARY

<i>kid</i>	: child
<i>Woolworth's</i>	: the name of a store in the U.K.
<i>spastic</i>	: a person who has no control over his/her muscles or movement
<i>crazy</i>	: liking very much
<i>raced</i>	: moved fast
<i>plantation</i>	: large area of land planted with trees
<i>dragging</i>	: pulling something/someone with force
<i>stretched</i>	: put out a leg/arm to reach something
<i>League match</i>	: groups of teams playing with each other to win the final match
<i>swear</i>	: to promise that you are telling the truth
<i>miserable</i>	: feeling unhappy
<i>suspiciously</i>	: suspecting someone
<i>bawling</i>	: crying loudly
<i>get into trouble</i>	: get involved
<i>straight</i>	: honest

B. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Choose the correct answer:
The boys loved Terry very much because
 - (a) he was the youngest
 - (b) he was very confident
 - (c) he was the author's brother
2. Who was Mick and where did he work?
3. Why did the boys take Terry to the plantation?
4. Whose Christmas trees were they ?
5. Why did the boys go to see the trees again?
6. What did Terry take with him to tie on the tree? Who gave it to him?

7. What did the boys plan to do a few days before Christmas?
8. Did the boys want to take the permission of the planter? How do you know?
9. Choose the correct answer:
Chris drove the boys to the plantation because
 - (a) he was keen to drive.
 - (b) the boys did not want Mick to drive.
 - (c) none else could drive.
10. Who were the two men who saw the boys near the trees? What did they think of the boys?
11. Why did the policeman want to please Terry? What did he say to Terry?
12. Did Terry believe him? What did he do then?
13. What did the policeman say to the boys? Did he stick to his words?
14. How long had the boys to take Terry to see the Christmas tree? Did they like it? How do you know?
15. What did Terry want when the Christmas tree was removed? Did he get it?
16. Was Terry a confident child? Give examples to prove your point.

C. DISCUSSION

Do you approve of Chris driving the car though he was underage? Give reasons in support of your answer.

D. SUGGESTED READING

1. 'I Can Play Schools' by May C, Jenkins



10

THE UNEXPECTED

Ella Adkins

Two convicts escaped from the prison. Everyone was talking about this in the village. So was Joe. He thought one of the convicts had entered Mrs. Parker's house. Was it true? Did Mrs. Parker try to help him?

SCENE: *A room in a lonely cottage on Dartmoor.*

The room is simply furnished. Table (set for tea) down R.C. Armchair down L.C. Door up R. Door up L.

At rise of curtain MRS. PARKER is seen at table, preparing tea.

Knock at door. L. MRS. PARKER answers it. Enter ALEC and TOM.

MRS. PARKER. Hello! I certainly didn't expect to see you boys this afternoon.

ALEC. We *had* to cycle over to see you, Mrs. Parker.

We've brought you an exciting piece of news.

MRS. PARKER. Have you indeed? Well, come along inside.

[TOM and ALEC cross R.C.]

[Closing door and crossing R. above table]. You boys shouldn't be allowed on the moors on such an afternoon as this. The fog's getting thicker every minute. Sit down at once, and I'll pour out some tea.

[Tom sits R. and Alec L. of table.]

Now, what's this exciting piece of news?

TOM. Two convicts escaped from the prison this afternoon.

[MRS. PARKER has a tea-cosy in her hand. As this is said, she drops it, and remains motionless.]

ALEC. Yes. [*According to what we heard*]. They got away from a working gang about half an hour ago, when the mist came on so suddenly. They are believed to be somewhere on the moors, and, of course, everyone in the village - [*Suddenly noticing MRS. PARKER'S expression.*] Why, Mrs. Parker – what's up? [*Rising and picking up tea-cosy.*] I say, I believe we've frightened you.

TOM. The convicts aren't likely to come this way, and, anyhow, Alec and I are with you.

MRS. PARKER [*recovering herself*]. That's all right. I'm not afraid, but I was thinking of you boys. You must go back as soon as you've had a cup of tea. Your mother will be worried. [*Crossing R*] Wait one moment and I'll bring two more cups. [*Exit R.*]

ALEC [*above table*]. Now, who would have thought Mrs. Parker would be nervous of a convict? She's lived alone in this cottage for the last six months, and has never shown any fear of tramps, or of anything else for that matter; yet, just now, she looked as frightened as a rabbit.

[Knock at door L.]

ALEC. Hello! Who can this be?

TOM [*rising*]. Let's hope it's not one of the convicts.

ALEC [L.C.]. I wonder if I'd better open the door or call Mrs. Parker.

[Knock repeated.]

TOM [*picking up toasting fork and holding it behind him*]. Open the door, Alec. If it's a convict we'll be heady for him.

[ALEC opens door. Enter JOE BADGER.]

JOE. Good evenin'. I've called to see Mrs. Parker. What be you two kids doin' here?

ALEC. Hello, Joe! We're also here to see Mrs. Parker – – and, by the way, there's no need for that word 'kids'. You're not quite ninety-nine yourself yet.

JOE. Boys of your age should be kept at home when there be dangerous criminals at large. Do you know there may be a couple of convicts prowling about the house at this moment?

[Enter MRS. PARKER R., carrying tray of cups and saucers.]

MRS. PARKER [to JOE], Why, Joe! What are you doing here on such an evening?

JOE [crossing L.C.]. I've just come to ask you a few questions, Mrs. Parker, and, seein' as I'm, helping my uncle, the constable of the village, I'm hopin' as you'll be so kind as to answer them.

MRS. PARKER [setting down the tray], Well, Joe, I'll do my best. Will you have a cup of tea?

JOE. No, thanks. I've no time for tea when there be man's work to do. Somewhere out on those moors there be two criminals, ready to murder us all in our beds, maybe – – if they get the chance.

MRS. PARKER [pouring tea']. Don't be nervous, Joe. May be, they'll be caught before nightfall:

JOE [angrily]. Nervous! As a matter of fact, I be hopin' to catch one of them myself.

TOM. Then why not do it first, and boast about it afterwards? Well, my education may not be so fine as yours, but I've been taking correspondence lessons from a school of detectives, and afore you knows where you are I'll be top of the Force. See?

ALEC [up L.] Don't be silly, Joe.

JOE [angrily]. I tell you I'm going to catch one, and may be both,

of them convicts, and afore I go there's one or two questions I'd like to ask Mrs. Parker. I've been hearin' things down in the village, and what I want to know is, why should a lady like her want to live alone in a place like this?

Why should she live as near to the prison as she possibly can, and never encourage any visitors to see her – unless it be you two boys, maybe?

MRS. PARKER [interrupting]. Wait a minute, Tom. [To JOE.] Why are you asking these questions?

JOE [more calmly]. Because I've been hearin' things down in the village, that's why. Mind you, I be making no accusations against you, but when my aunt wanted you to take over one of her boarders last summer you wouldn't hear of it – not for any price she offered you. Well, that made people wonder why you always want to be so private-like.

MRS. PARKER. I think the people of the village should mind their own business.

JOE. Yes, but that's not all. I've been doin' a little detective work round here myself this last half-hour. What be a lady like you doin' with a Bentley sports car hidden away in an old shed where no one be likely to notice it?

MRS. PARKER [now thoroughly alarmed]. Why, how dare you spy on me like this? You'll be accusing me of hiding the convicts next.

JOE. That's as may be. My uncle is a constable, and I want to join the Force myself. It's my business to find out things; that's why I be asking questions.

TOM. Stop that. I've a good mind to knock you down.

MRS. PARKER. Please, Tom, don't let's have any fighting. Joe has been reading too many detective stories. [Crossing L. to JOE.] Now, listen, Joe. I want you to leave this house at once. Perhaps

you don't realize that you insulted me just now, but I want you to go home before you cause any further unpleasantness. The sports car you saw this afternoon belongs to my nephew, if that satisfies you. [opening door L.] Now, go away, joe-please and for goodness' sake stop reading silly detective stories !

JOE [at door L.]. Very well, Mrs. Parker, I'll be goin'. But mind, I warn you, I'm goin' to get to the bottom of this.

ALEC [coming down L.]. You'll get to the bottom of the duck-pond if you don't clear out quickly.

[Exit JOE hurriedly.]

MRS. PARKER [coming down L.C. and sitting in armchair]. I'm afraid he's going to make a great deal of trouble for me.

TOM [sitting R. of table]. He'd better not. You know, Mrs. Parker, you've been that good to us fellows that anyone who starts making trouble for you is going to get a nasty tap on the nose.

ALEC [sitting L. of table]. You have a Bentley sports car hidden away in that old shed! Why have you never told us about it?

MRS. PARKER. Because you might have worried me to let you drive it. Come, now, hurry up and drink that tea. I want you to go, or your mother will be worried.

TOM [between sips of tea]. No fear! We're not going home yet. We don't like the idea of leaving you here alone.

MRS. PARKER [in great agitation]. But you must go, I tell you.

ALEC. I say, Mrs. Parker, what's up? You seem awfully worried this afternoon.

MRS. PARKER. I - Oh, heavens! I only wish I could tell you.

ALEC [rising and crossing L.C.]. Then there is something wrong! [Learning over R. of armchair.] Please tell us what it is.

MRS. PARKER. Will you both promise me that you will never repeat what I am going to tell you?

ALEC. Why, of course!

TOM. Certainly. We promise.

MRS. PARKER. Then listen. Somewhere in that prison a boy is suffering for another's crime. Maybe you heard of the Felton forgery case? Well, Roger Felton is innocent of that crime. Oh, I've no time to go into details now, but working in the same office with Roger was a scoundrel who pretended to be his friend. This man signed his employer's name to a cheque, but he covered his tracks so cleverly, that when the forgery was discovered, suspicion fell upon Roger. Roger was known to be in money difficulties, so he was suspected of forging the cheque. He was convicted and sentenced to three years imprisonment.

ALEC. You speak as though you knew this boy.

MRS. PARKER [slowly]. He is my son. My real name is Mrs. Felton.

TOM. What! You mean that – that your son –

MRS. PARKER [rising]. Oh, my dear boys, I am trusting you as I have never trusted anyone else in my life. [Crossing R.] I took this cottage, and that was to help Roger to escape. I have kept the car ready for use ever since I came here, and this afternoon I am praying that my boy may be one of the escaped convicts. If he is, he knows where I am, and he will come here. I have a suit of clothes ready for him, and then –

TOM. Then he'll escape in the Bentley.

MRS. PARKER. Yes, but now you must go. Go, please, and don't breathe a word of this to anyone.

ALEC. But, Mrs. Parker – I mean Mrs. Feiton – can't we stay and help?

MRS. PARKER. No, no, I can't let you do that! You don't realize what it would mean if you were caught helping me in this. You must go quickly.

[Knock at door L.]

ALEC. Too late. There's someone here now. [Crossing L.] I'll open the door.

[Opens door L, Enter CONVICT]

ALEC. [to CONVICT]. Don't be afraid of us fellows. Your mother has told us your story, and for her sake we'll do everything in our power to help you to escape.

CONVICT [crossing R. to MRS. PARKER and taking her hands]. Mother -- please -- don't give up now. They're after me, and there's no time to lost if I'm to get away, I must talk to you about our plans afterwards.

MRS. PARKER [weakly]. My boy -- come quickly -- you must change at once.

[MRS. PARKER AND CONVICT go off R.]

ALEC. [sitting himself in armchair]. Well, of all the extraordinary adventures! Who on earth thought we should be mixed up in a thrill like this? That poor fellow will need a lot of luck, even now, if he's to get away. All the roads are sure to be watched.

TOM. It must be a nerve-racking job to escape from prison. You never know from one moment to the next when someone is going to come and -

[Knock at door L. The boys look at each other in alarm.]

TOM, Here - wait a bit. Don't go to the door. It may be a warder from the prison. Someone is almost sure to come here to make inquiries.

ALEC, All the same, I must open the door, [Crossing L.] Delay

will only make things look suspicious. If it's a warder, we'll have to throw him off the scent somehow, for Mrs. Parker's sake.

[Opens door L. Enter JOE.]

JOE. Where's Mrs. Parker?

ALEC. She's very busy at the moment, trying to find a cure for boys that can't mind their own business.

JOE [advancing into the room]. Just tell Mrs. Parker I want to see her.

TOM. You'll be getting a thick ear if you start worrying Mrs. Parker again.

JOE. Shall I, now? Well, let me tell you, you may find yourselves in a prison cell before tomorrow. I thought there be somethin' suspicious-like goin' on around here, so I just lay low, and watched. Well [with an air of triumph], I saw him come in! So What have you to say about that?

ALEC [trying to hide his alarm]. Really, joe, I haven't the least idea what you're talking about.

JOE. Oh, haven't you? Well, maybe you will have when you find yourselves arrested for helpin' a convict to escape. I saw him dart in here, I tell you, an' I'm goin' to tell all I know.

[Enter MRS. Parker R.]

MRS. PARKER. Joe, what are you doing here?

JOE [with great self-importance]. I just now saw a convict come in here. Are you goin' to hand him over, or must I go for help?

MRS. PARKER. You saw a convict come in here? You must have seen my nephew, who arrived from London this morning.

JOE [with sarcasm]. Well, that may be, but I have't heard that convicts' clothes be fashionable just now in London.

MRS. PARKER. Really Joe. You are insulting me. [Calling off R.] Frank, come here a moment, will you?

[Enter CONVICT R., now wearing an ordinary suit.]

MRS. PARKER [to CONVICT]. This young fellow [pointing at JOE] has an idea he saw a convict enter this house just now.

CONVICT [to JOE]. What's that? A convict in the house? No, no, young man. I'm quite sure you're making a mistake.

JOE [lopping hard at CONVICT]. Oh, no, I'm not! You be the man I saw come in here a few minutes ago, and you were wearing a convict's suit then.

CONVICT. Look here, my lad, you'll get yourself into serious trouble.

JOE. Very well, then. If you be Mrs. Parker's nephew, and not a convict, you won't have no convict's clothes hidden away, will you?

CONVICT [with sarcasm]. That sounds very logical.

JOE [crossing R]. Well, then, do you mind if I just look in the next room for a moment?

CONVICT [quickly barring his way]. Indeed I do.

JOE. Ah! Of course you do. Your convict's clothes are in that room.

CONVICT Now, look here, enough of this nonsense. I think we'd all be well pleased if you'd kindly get out of the house.

JOE [crossing L.C.]. All right! I'm goin', but mind you, I have my bike outside. I'm goin' straight to my uncle, and I'm goin' to tell him all that I've seen here. He'll soon send out a description of that car of yours, and you'll find you won't get away so easily after all.

TOM [coming down L.]. You're going to do no such thing?

JOE. Oh, and who's goin' to stop me?

TOM [taking off his coat]. I am. You may be a bit bigger than I am, but I could lick you, and it will be a doctor that you'll need, not a constable.

[JOE tries to hit TOM, who skillfully avoids his blows.]

MRS. PARKER [R.C.]. Tom, Joe-for goodness' sake stop fighting!

[A loud knock at door L. The boys stop fighting, and there are a few moments of silent anxiety. Knock repeated.]

JOE. Now, you'd better open that door, if you dare.

MRS. PARKER [to CONVICT}. Quickly! You'll have to get out the back way.

CONVICT. Too late! There's no time for that.

JOE opens door. Enter WARDER L.

TOM, ALEC, look in alarm at each other, and at the WARDER, MRS. PARKER, R., clings to CONVICT'S arm, as though the strain is almost too much for her.]

WARDER [looking about the room suspiciously]. Excuse me – I don't want to interrupt - but we're looking for an escaped convict. Two men got away in the mist this afternoon. Fortunately, one has already been caught, but we're still looking for the other man. Have you, by any chance, noticed any strangers about here?

JOE. You need look no farther, [pointing to CONVICT.] There be the man you've been searching for.

WARDER [crossing R.C.]. Ah, I thought I recognized him!

MRS. PARKER [clinging to CONVICT], No, no! It's all a mistake, I tell you!

JOE. I saw him sneak in here about ten minutes ago, and if you want proof his prison clothes be in the next room. I was just goin' to fetch my uncle – the constable of the village, you know – and these boys tried to stop me.

WARDER. Indeed! This is a smart bit of work, my lad. Your uncle should be proud of you.

[Produces handcuffs and goes towards CONVICT.]

MRS. PARKER [almost in tears]. Oh, wait! Please – please don't take him.

CONVICT [trying to console her]. Hush! It's no use. The game's up now.

WARDER [handcuffing CONVICT]. I'll have to take you back at once. [To MRS. PARKER.] I'm sorry, lady, but I'm afraid there's going to be trouble for you over this. Did you know that this man was convict when he entered the house?

JOE [promptly]. Of course she did. She had a sports car hidden in her shed ready to get him away; and what's more, she must have had those clothes waitin' for him.

WARDER [TO JOE.] Just keep an eye on this fellow for a moment. I'm going to have to look for those prison clothes.

MRS. PARKER. But, please – won't you just let me explain? You see –

[Exit WARDER R., followed by MRS. PARKER.]

TOM [slowly approaching JOE]. I'm going to hit you so hard that you won't know what's happened until you wake up in hospital next week.

JOE [nervously backing up L.]. Stop that! You daren't touch me. I be doin' my duty, and if you're not careful, you'll be gettin' locked up yourself for this.

ALEC [up C.]. Listen, you rotter. You're not doing your duty. You're sending an innocent man back to prison. That's what you're doing.

[Re-enter WARDER, with CONVICT'S clothes and a parcel, followed by MRS. PARKER.]

WARDER [to JOE], You were quite right, my lad. Here are the prison clothes, and I've found this parcel of provisions, which was evidently prepared for a long journey. [To MRS. PARKER.] I'm sorry lady, but this is going to be very serious for you. You were surely helping this man to escape, and it's my duty to report the matter.

ALEC. Oh, I say, officer – must you do that?

WARDER. I'm sorry, but duty's duty, you know.

MRS. PARKER [wearily]. Oh, it doesn't matter! If my boy goes back to prison they can do as they like with me.

[Sits L. of table, crying bitterly.]

WARDER [to CONVICT]. Come along, my man. We'll be getting back, and I take these clothes with us. [Crossing L. with CONVICT.] Oh, and by the way, I don't think it would be a bad idea if I took you back in that sports car the lady has outside. That car's an important piece of evidence.

JOE [up L.C.]. I have my bike outside, so I think I'll ride up to the prison after you. May be I could see that Governor, and tell him just what happened this evening. I want to get into the Force maybe – well, what I mean is – it might help.

WARDER [at door L.]. It's a good idea, but I don't think you'd better ride tonight. All the roads are guarded, and you might have trouble to pass. [Thoughtfully.] Of course, I could give you the password, but that's against the regulations.

JOE [proudly]. That be all right, officer. I already know the password. "Regent" is the word, I believe.

WARDER [startled]. Yes, that's right. But how did you know?

JOE. Ah! You forget that my uncle is a constable in the village. He told me the word. You see, he knows it's safe with me. I'm not the one to blab any secrets about.

WARDER. No, my lad. I'm sure of that. You've done me a very good turn this evening, and some day I'm sure you'll be a great man in the Force yourself. Good night.

[WARDER and CONVICT go out L.]

JOE [proudly]. Well, I told you I'd catch one of the convicts, didn't I? You thought I hadn't the brains to be a detective.

ALEC [R.C.]. Oh, get out of here if you want to get out alive!

[Exit JOE L. TOM follows him to door.]

MRS. PARKER [lowering handkerchief from her face]. Tom, please don't fight again tonight. It's no use now. [She continues to cry.]

ALEC [standing awkwardly above MRS. PARKER'S chair, as though not knowing how to comfort her]. Mrs. Parker - I - I can't tell you how sorry we are about this.

[Sound of car off L.]

MRS. PARKER. Listen. There goes the car. [suddenly drying her eyes]. Hush! Listen, boys - I've something to tell you. [In a stage whisper.] They've not taken my boy away.

ALEC [surprised]. But why? What do you mean?

MRS. PARKER [now perfectly calm]. Just this. The convict you saw just now was not Roger.

TOM. Not Roger? You mean he was not your son?

MRS. PARKER. I've never seen him before in my life.

ALEC. But - he called you Mother?

MRS. PARKER. I know-after you told him that you were willing to help my son escape. He called me Mother in the hope that I should not tell the truth. And I-well, I thought of Roger, and I just hadn't the heart to turn against the poor fellow.

ALEC [Surprised], Then – then your son didn't escape after all?

[MRS. PARKER rises, crosses L., and makes sure that they are not overheard.]

MRS. PARKER [coming down C.]. Yes, boys – Roger did escape. That's just what's making me so happy. You see, he was the warder who just now arrested his pal, and took him off to freedom in the Bentley.

TOM [*in great excitement, coming down L. of MRS. PARKER*] What? You mean —

MRS. PARKER. Hush! Not so loudly! Yes, Roger explained everything to me while we had that minute together in the next room. He was hiding behind a boulder when a warder who had separated from others came quite close to him. Roger managed to overcome the warder; and then he had a change of clothes. He immediately came here, but he very soon realized the situation where Master Joe was concerned. [*Laughing.*] It was a splendid idea of Roger's to take away the Bentley as evidence.

ALEC [*coming down R.C.*]. Then by this time they're well on the way to freedom. But, I say, won't it be awkward if they're stopped on the road? ‘

MRS. PARKER. Why, that's just the cream of the joke! Joe never blabs any of his uncle's secrets, but he told Roger the one thing he needed to know. He told him the password that will get him safely to freedom. Now, all I have to do is join him, and we're going to Australia to start all over again.

ALEC [*gripping her hands*]. Mrs. Parker. I can't tell you how glad I am about this.

MRS. PARKER [*wiping her eyes*]. I know, but I'm just crying for happiness.

TOM [*down L.C.*]. well, I'm blowed! But there, as my dad says, “Where women are concerned the unexpected always happens.”

CURTAIN

A. GLOSSARY

<i>convict</i>	: a person who has done a crime and is in jail
<i>motionless</i>	: not moving
<i>tramps</i>	: beggars; homeless people
<i>toasting fork</i>	: a fork of eating slices of bread
<i>called to</i>	: (here) visited
<i>at large</i>	: free; not captured
<i>prowling</i>	: moving quietly in a place, especially to commit crime
<i>gaol-birds</i>	: convicts
<i>accuse</i>	: to say someone that he has done something wrong
<i>accusation</i>	: statement to say that someone is guilty or wrong
<i>boarder</i>	: a person who pays money to live in somebody's home (paying guest)
<i>spy on someone</i>	: watch someone secretly
<i>alarmed</i>	: got afraid
<i>pals</i>	: friends
<i>scoundrel</i>	: a bad person
<i>forged</i>	: not real, copied
<i>extraordinary</i>	: very unusual
<i>nerve-racking</i>	: making someone worried
<i>pounce</i>	: to move forward fast to catch/attack someone
<i>off the scent</i>	: to stop someone from discovering something
<i>alarm</i>	: fearing something dangerous will happen
<i>dart</i>	: move very quickly (with speed)
<i>sarcasm</i>	: making fun by use of words that mean the opposite of what you are saying

<i>lick</i>	: beat
<i>savagely</i>	: violently
<i>provisions</i>	: food or drinks for long journey
<i>wearily</i>	: tiredly
<i>blab</i>	: give information that should not be told
<i>regulations</i>	: rules
<i>blowed</i>	: shocked

B. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where did Mrs Parker live? Who else lived with her?
2. Who brought the news of the escape of the convicts?
3. Why was Mrs Parker disturbed to hear the news?
4. How did the convict escape the prison?
5. Choose the correct answer:
Mrs Parker wanted Alec and Tom to leave her house because
 - (a) she did not want them to get into trouble
 - (b) she was hoping that her son would come
 - (c) she was too nervous to talk to them
6. Who was Joe? Why did he come to Mrs Parker's house?
7. Why did Joe suspect Mrs Parker?
8. Why did Joe want to catch the convicts?
9. What advice did Mrs Parker give to Joe?
10. What did Mrs Parker reveal to Alec and Tom?
11. Who came after Joe left? What did he do?
12. Why did Joe come back? Who came while he was there?

13. Was Joe an intelligent boy? Give reasons in support of your answer.
14. Who was actually the second convict? How did he manage to look like a warder?
15. What did the two convicts do to finally escape?
16. Was Mrs Parker a part of the plan? How do you know?
17. Where was Mrs Parker to go and with whom?

C. DISCUSSION

‘Where women are concerned the unexpected always happens’.

Do you agree with the observation? Discuss.

D. SUGGESTED READING

‘Life’s a Glorious Gift’ by Ken Whitmore



GLOSSARY (NEW)

1. A Vine on a House

Glossary

overruns	:	to spread over something
cold mannered	:	unfriendly
porch	:	an entrance to a building
stagnant	:	not moving
mysterious	:	strange
sheriff	:	principal law enforcement officer

2. Bed No. 29

Glossary

depression	:	a state of feeling sad
minutely	:	detailedly
pleaded	:	requested
persuade	:	convince
regained	:	got back
masses	:	a large number

3. Half a rupee worth

Glossary

flourished	:	to be very successful
apprentice	:	one who is learning a trade under an expert
steadfastness	:	dedication/devotion
groaned	:	to complain about something
surrender	:	hand over
considerable	:	large in size/amount

exhausted	: to consume entirely
contempt	: a feeling of dislike
enraged	: to make someone very angry
mutter	: to complain in a quiet way

4. The dying detective

Glossary

listless	: lacking energy or spirit
symptoms	: a change in the body which indicates that a disease is present
dreadful	: very bad or unpleasant

5. The Stolen Bacillus

Glossary

streaks	: stripes
devastate	: cause destruction
dormant	: inactive
anarchist	: one who advocates disorder and lawlessness
reservoir	: an artificial lake used to store a large supply of water
shuddered	: to shake, shiver
queer	: (here) not quite well, strange

7. How Much land does a Man Need

Glossary

inevitable	: sure to happen
boasting	: self praising
supper	: light evening meal served before dinner

interpreter	:	someone who mediates between speakers of different languages
dispersed	:	move away from each other
ruined	:	caused failure

8. Terry's Tree

Glossary

doted on	:	show excessive affection on
chip in	:	contribute, give
stump	:	the base part of a tree that remains after the rest is removed
cop	:	policeman

10. The Unexpected

Glossary

moor	:	a broad area of open land that is not good for farming
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ENGLISH LITERATURE BOOK

(Supplementary Reader)

for
Class X

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ਇਹ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮੁਫਤ
ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਣੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਕਾਊ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ।



PUNJAB SCHOOL EDUCATION BOARD

Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar

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Published by : Secretary, Punjab School Education Board, Vidya Bhawan, Phase-8, Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar-160062 & Printed by M/s Nova Publications, C-51, Focal Point Ext. Jalandhar City.