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John Cheever. Selected Prose

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по домашнему чтению

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Учебно-методические материалы по домашнему чтению предназначены для студентов III курса переводческого факультета. Цель данных методических материалов – формирование у студентов-переводчиков профессионально значимого навыка анализа текста, а также – обогащение словарного запаса студентов. Содержащиеся в материалах задания призваны способствовать тому, чтобы студенты усваивали не только лексические единицы, но и стоящие за ними концепты.

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The Season of Divorce

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) a gentle disposition;
- 2) resourceful marriage;
- 3) to find fault;
- 4) to be confined by something;
- 5) arbitrary impulse;
- 6) well-adjusted physician;
- 7) to do something furtively;
- 8) matinee;
- 9) a tireless gossip;
- 10) to lose one's heart;
- 11) to be cross at someone for something;
- 12) to be captive of commitments;
- 13) an assumed name;
- 14) to regale someone with something;
- 15) a passionate account;
- 16) at the back of one's mind;
- 17) inestimable and wayward passion;
- 18) to lead somebody on;
- 19) to have a fever;
- 20) to come down with a disease;
- 21) to take turns;
- 22) to be insane;
- 23) bewilderment;
- 24) legibly;
- 25) matter of fact;
- 26) custody;
- 27) hard-headed;
- 28) to sob;
- 29) a hand-me down dress;
- 30) preposterous.

II. *Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:*

- 1) to twist three lengths of hair over and under each other to make one thick length;

... She gets up at seven and turns the radio on. After she is dressed, she rouses the children and cooks the breakfast. Our son has to be walked to the school bus at eight o'clock. When Ethel returns from this trip, Carol's hair has to be braided. I leave the house at eight-thirty, but I know that every move that Ethel makes for the rest of the day will be determined by the housework, the cooking, the shopping, and the demands of the children. ...

- 2) a meal of cut-up meat with corn;
- 3) to leave your house to attend any social event;

... Then it is over. She lights the four white candles in their silver sticks, and we sit down to a supper of corned-beef hash or some other modest fare.

We go out once or twice a week and entertain about once a month. Because of practical considerations, most of the people we see live in our neighborhood. We often go around the corner to the parties given by a generous couple named Newsome. The Newsomes' parties are large and confusing, and the arbitrary impulses of friendship are given a free play. ...

- 4) a dog of a very short-legged and long bodied breed;

... I think that Mrs. Trencher was the aggressor in this friendship, and after our first meeting she telephoned Ethel three or four times. We went to their house for dinner, and they came to our house, and sometimes in the evening when Dr. Trencher was walking their old dachshund, he would come up for a short visit. He seemed like a pleasant man to have around. I've heard other doctors say that he's a good physician. The Trenchers are about thirty; at least he is. ...

- 5) waterproof shoes, usually made of rubber, for wearing over ordinary shoes in the rain or snow;
- 6) a squalid and overcrowded urban street or district inhabited by very poor people;

... I know what my wife looks like in the playground. She wears an old tweed coat, overshoes, and Army gloves, and a scarf is tied under her chin. The playground is a fenced and paved lot between a slum and the river. The picture of the well-dressed, pink-cheeked doctor losing his heart to Ethel in this

environment was hard to take seriously. She didn't mention him then for several days, and I guessed that he had stopped his visits. ...

7) a bus travelling from one side of a town to the other;

... "When did he say this?"

"At the playground. And walking home. Yesterday."

"How long has he known?"

... "That's the funny part about it," she said. "He knew before he met me at the Newsomes' that night. He saw me waiting for a cross-town bus about three weeks before that. He just saw me and he said that he knew then, the minute he saw me. Of course, he's crazy." ...

8) a long piece of rope used to control the dog;

9) look fixedly or vacantly at someone or something;

... I went to the window. There were only three people on the sidewalk across the street. It was dark and it would have been difficult to recognize anyone, but because one of them, walking toward the corner, had a dachshund on a leash, it could have been Trencher. ...

"Well, what about it?" I said. "He's just walking the dog."

... "But he wasn't walking the dog when I first looked out of the window. He was just standing there, staring up at this building. That's what he says he does. He says that he comes over here and stares up at our lighted windows." ...

10) bring into disrepute or danger by indiscreet, foolish, or reckless behavior;

... He's crazy, darling. I know he's crazy, but I feel so sorry for him. He says that he spends night after night looking up at our windows. He says that he sees me everywhere – the back of my head, my eyebrows – that he hears my voice. He says that he's never compromised in his life and that he isn't going to compromise about this. I feel so sorry for him, darling. I can't help but feel sorry for him." ...

11) an extreme tiredness;

12) annoyed;

13) not guided by or based on good sense;

... There were blankets and pillows, ashtrays, and medicine glasses everywhere. We divided the work of sickness reasonably and took turns at getting up in the night, but I often fell asleep at my desk during the day, and after dinner Ethel

would fall asleep in a chair in the living room. Fatigue seems to differ for adults and children only in that adults recognize it and so are not overwhelmed by something they can't name; but even with a name for it they are overwhelmed, and when we were tired, we were unreasonable, cross, and the victims of transcendent depressions. ...

14) a pathological condition of the larynx that makes you cough a lot and have difficulty breathing;

... A light was burning in the hall. I got up. The children's room and the living room were dark. I found Ethel in the kitchen sitting at the table, drinking coffee. "I've made some fresh coffee," she said. "Carol felt croupy again, so I steamed her. They're both asleep now."

"How long have you been up?"

"Since half past twelve," she said. "What time is it?"

"Two." ...

15) to make someone feel less enthusiastic about something.

... "How long was Trencher here this afternoon?"

"A minute. I've told you."

"I don't believe it. He was in here."

"He was not. I didn't let him in. I didn't let him in because I looked so badly. I didn't want to discourage him."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. He may be a fool. He may be insane but the things he's told me have made me feel marvelously, he's made me feel marvelously." ...

III. Answer the questions:

1. How long has Ethel been married?
2. What does Ethel's typical day look like?
3. How did Ethel get acquainted with the Trenchers?
4. Why didn't Ethel and Mrs. Trencher become friends?
5. Why did Dr. Trencher visit Ethel when she walked with her children at the playground?
6. What did Ethel's husband think about Dr. Trencher's declaration?
7. When did Dr. Trencher's love to Ethel appear to become a serious problem for her husband?

8. How did Ethel and her husband distribute the duties when the children came down with bronchitis?
9. What was the day when Ethel's husband found a bunch of roses in their flat?
10. Why didn't Ethel let Dr. Trencher in when he brought her the flowers?
11. What did Ethel and her husband talk about late at night before their children got better?
12. What did Dr. Trencher's want to speak about with Ethel's husband?
13. What were Ethel's husband's reminiscences when he took the children for a walk on Sunday?
14. What were the words that seemed to be articulated by the waste from the smokestacks along the East River? Why did these two words come together in Ethel's husband's thoughts?
15. Did Ethel divorce her husband?
16. Why is the story called "The Season of Divorce"?

IV. Agree or Disagree.

1. Ethel was happy in her marriage.
2. Ethel threw away her diploma.
3. Ethel fell in love with Dr. Trencher.
4. Dr. Trencher's marriage was a marriage of convenience.
5. Dr. Trencher wasn't a success at his job.
6. Ethel's husband wanted to divorce his wife when he learnt about Dr. Trencher's feeling to his wife.
7. Ethel alone took care of her children when they got ill with bronchitis.
8. Ethel's husband lost his job because he made a mistake in business.
9. Ethel often spoke about her childhood and her parents.
10. Dr. Trencher wanted Ethel to go with him to Nevada.

V. *Comment on the extracts from the story given below. How do they characterize:*

a) Ethel

1. ... She once hung her diploma above the kitchen sink, but it was a short-lived joke and I don't know where the diploma is now. ...
2. ... Oh, I guess I love you, I do love the children, but I love myself, I love my life, it has some value and some promise for me and Trencher's roses make me feel that I'm losing this, that I'm losing my self-respect. ...
3. ... For the first time then, the situation seemed serious to me, for in his helplessness I knew that he might have touched an inestimable and wayward passion that Ethel shares with some other women – an inability to refuse any cry for help, to refuse any voice that sounds pitiable. It is not a reasonable passion, and I would almost rather have had her desire him than pity him. ...

b) Ethel's husband

1. ... We often find fault with the way we were educated, but we seem to be struggling to raise our children along the same lines, and when the time comes, I suppose they'll go to the same school and colleges that we went to.
...
2. ... I tried to remember the willingness with which Ethel had followed my regiment during the war, from West Virginia to the Carolinas and Oklahoma, and the day coaches and rooms she had lived in, and the street in San Francisco where I said goodbye to her before I left the country, but I could not put any of this into words, and neither of us found anything to say. ...

c) Dr. Trencher

1. ... He has the singular optimism of a well-adjusted physician – the feeling that death is a chance misfortune and that the physical world is merely a field for conquest. ...
2. ... He's crazy, darling. I know he's crazy, but I feel so sorry for him. He says that he spends night after night looking up at our windows. He says that he sees me everywhere – the back of my head, my eyebrows – that he hears my voice. He says that he's never compromised in his life and that he isn't going to compromise about this. ...
3. ... I have plenty of money. I can give Ethel everything she needs, but there are the children. You'll have to decide about them between yourselves. I have a check here. It's made out to Ethel. I want her to take it and go to Nevada. ...

d) Mrs. Trencher

1. ... The house is old-fashioned; its living rooms are large, its halls are gloomy, and the Trenchers don't seem to generate enough human warmth to animate the place, so that you sometimes take away from them, at the end of an evening, an impression of many empty rooms. Mrs. Trencher is noticeably attached to her possessions – her clothes, her jewels, and the ornaments she's bought for the house – and to Fraulein, the old dachshund. ...

VI. Speak about:

- 1) Ethel's background and her life before her family settled down;
- 2) Dr. Trencher's feelings to Ethel;
- 3) Ethel's reaction towards Dr. Trencher's love;
- 4) Her husband's attitude to the situation when his wife is adored by another man.

VII. Draw a character sketch of one of the characters at your option. Follow the plan:

1. *Appearance:* how does the character look and dress? What do they tell about the character?
2. *Background:* where did the character grow up? What kind of educational background does the character have? What past experience has the character had? How does the character's background affect his or her thoughts and actions in the present?
3. *Personality:* does the character tend to be emotional or rational? Principled or unscrupulous? Obstinate or open-minded? Caring or cold?
4. *Relationships:* how does the character interact with other characters in the story? Friends and enemies?
5. *Words and actions:* what kind of things does the character say and do? What kind of language does the character use? What can the reader learn about the character from his or her words and actions?

6. *Motivation*: what makes the character act and speak the way they do? What does the character value? What are the character's goals, dreams, desires, needs?
7. *Change*: does the character change in the course of the story? If so, how? How does the reader know that the character has changed?

VIII. Retell the story on behalf of:

- 1) Ethel;
- 2) Ethel's husband;
- 3) Dr. Trencher;
- 4) Mrs. Trencher.

A Woman without a Country

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) a tree-splitting thunderstorm;
- 2) to board the plane;
- 3) a lumber-mill;
- 4) a county;
- 5) a tabloid;
- 6) a nightgown;
- 7) to run out of gas;
- 8) a rake;
- 9) to sue for;
- 10) custody;
- 11) humidity;
- 12) to surrender a claim;
- 13) the outcast of the society;
- 14) boodle;
- 15) high seas;
- 16) royalties;
- 17) freight;
- 18) a maritime state;
- 19) lettuce;
- 20) snorkel.

II. *Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:*

- 1) a pub, typically one in the country, in some cases providing accommodation;
- 2) a break between two parts of a film, concert, or show etc;

... I saw her at the Passion Play in Erl – not at the Passion Play, actually, but at the inn in the village, where you have lunch during the intermission, and I saw her at the horse show in the Piazza di Siena, and that autumn in Treviso, boarding the plane for London. ...

- 3) showing a great effort and energy and refusing to give up or take a rest;

- 4) the responsible local executive at a mill controlled by absentee ownership;

... She was one of those tireless wanderers who go to bed night after night to dream of bacon-lettuce-and-tomato sandwiches. Although she came from a small lumber-mill town in the north where they manufactured wooden spoons, the kind of lonely place where international society is spawned, this had nothing to do with her wanderings. Her father was the mill agent, and the mill was owned by the Tonkin family – they owned a great deal, they owned whole counties. ...

- 5) a person's inherent qualities of mind and character;
- 6) pretending to be poor;

... She was a plain girl with a sweet and modest disposition – qualities that she never lost – and they were married at the end of a year. Though immensely rich, the Tonkins were poor-mouthed, and the young couple lived modestly in a small town near New York where Marchand worked in the family office. They had one child and lived a contented and uneventful life until one humid morning in the seventh year of their marriage. ...

- 7) to try to start the car;

... It was about seven when he kissed Anne goodbye. She had not dressed and was lying in bed when she heard him grinding the starter on the car that he used to take to the station. Then she heard the front door open and he called up the stairs. The car wouldn't start, and could she drive him to the station in the Buick? ...

- 8) petrol;
- 9) a device sounding a warning or other signal;

... She was stopped in front of the Beardens', and they would give her some gasoline, she knew, or at least lend her a coat. She blew the horn and blew it and blew it, until she remembered that the Beardens were in Nassau. All she could do then was to wait in the car, virtually naked, until some friendly housewife came by and offered her help. ...

- 10) a formal meeting in a law court, at which a judge and jury listen to evidence and decide whether a person is guilty of a crime;
- 11) dishonest and illegal behavior, misconduct or wrongdoing;

... Marchand left the house then, and Anne never saw him again. He died of a heart attack in a New York hotel ten days later. Her parents-in-law sued for the custody of the only child, and during the trial Anne made the mistake, in her innocence, of blaming her malfeasance on the humidity. The tabloids picked this up – “IT WASN’T ME, IT WAS THE HUMIDITY” – and it swept the country.
...

12) too strong to be defeated or overcome;

13) a constant desire to criticize other people or ideas and find faults in them;

... In the middle of the trial she surrendered her claims, put on smoked glasses, and sailed incognito for Genoa, the outcast of a society that seemed to her to modify its invincible censoriousness only with a ribald sense of humor. ...

14) a person who is blamed for the wrongdoings, mistakes, or faults of others;

15) to be ridiculed publicly;

16) to get very angry;

... From what she knew of life she was entitled to forgiveness, but she had received none, and her own country, remembered across the Atlantic, seemed to have passed on her a moral judgment that was unrealistic and savage. She had been made a scapegoat; she had been pilloried; and because she was genuinely pure-hearted she was deeply incensed. She based her expatriation not on cultural but on moral grounds. ...

17) a small amplifying device which fits on the ear, worn by a partially deaf person;

... She took a cab to a hotel on the Via Veneto, sent her bags upstairs, and went into the bar for a drink. There was a single American at the bar – a white-haired man wearing a hearing aid. He was alone, he seemed lonely, and finally he turned to the table where she sat and asked most courteously if she was American. ...

18) a continuous loud crashing or ringing sound;

19) railway carriage;

... If she made the walk in the afternoon, she would sometimes have to wait at the grade crossing for a freight to pass. First there would be a sound in the distance like a cave of winds, and then the iron thunder, the clangor of the

wheels. The freights went through there at full speed; they stormed through. But reading the lettering on the cars used to move her; used to remind her not of any glamorous promise at the end of the line but of the breadth and vastness of her own country, ...

20) be excited and agitated;

... It was time to go home, and she got a plane for Orly that night and another plane for Idlewild the next evening. She was shaking with excitement long before they saw land. She was going home; she was going home. Her heart was in her throat. How dark and fresh the water of the Atlantic looked, after those years away. ...

III. Answer the questions.

1. How did Anne get acquainted with her husband?
2. What kind of life did they lead?
3. What happened to Anne on her way back from the station?
4. How did it happen that nobody helped Anne when she ran out of gas on her way home?
5. Who helped Anne to get home?
6. Why did Anne's parents-in-law sue for the custody of her only child?
7. Why didn't she win the trial?
8. Why did she decide to go abroad?
9. Where did she settle down after her husband's death?
10. Why did she try to conceal her nationality, lying to the porter that she was Greek?
11. What was the story of her incident acquaintance whom she met at the bar of the hotel?
12. What was his greatest desire on his tour around Europe?
13. What story did he tell Anne about one of his friends?
14. What reminiscences did the chat with her compatriot provoke?
15. Why wasn't her attempt to return to the motherland successful?

IV. *Agree or Disagree.*

1. Anne was a perfect match for Marchand Tonkin.
2. Marchand's parents were a happily married couple.
3. Though being extremely rich Anne and Marchand Tonkin led a modest life.
4. Nobody gave Anne a helping hand when she ran out of gas because she didn't have any friends in the neighborhood.
5. Marchand Tonkin died because of her betrayal and cheating.
6. After her husband's death Anne couldn't earn her living and asked her parents-in-law to bring up her child.
7. She enjoyed living in Italy and completely forgot her past, and especially her nationality.
8. Anne enjoyed mountain skiing.
9. At her villa in Italy she usually treated her guests to bacon-lettuce-and-tomato sandwiches that were her favorite dish.
10. Unlike Anne, the stranger with whom she got acquainted in the bar was longing to return to the USA.

V. *Comment on the extracts from the story given below. How do they characterize Anne?*

1. ... She was one of those tireless wanderers who go to bed night after night to dream of bacon-lettuce-and-tomato sandwiches. ...
2. ... Her parents-in-law sued for the custody of the only child, and during the trial Anne made the mistake, in her innocence, of blaming her malfeasance on the humidity. ...
3. ... She based her expatriation not on cultural but on moral grounds. ...
4. ... She continued to polish her impersonation of a European, and while her accomplishments were admirable, she remained morbidly sensitive to criticism and detested being taken for a tourist. ...
5. ... But reading the lettering on the cars used to move her; used to remind her not of any glamorous promise at the end of the line but of the breadth and vastness of her own country, ...

6. ... She gripped her umbrella (Parisian) and her handbag (Sienese) and waited her turn to leave the plane, but as she was coming down the steps, even before her shoes (Roman) had touched her native earth, she heard a mechanic who was working on a DC-7 at the next gate singing:
Oh, Humid Isabella
Never kissed a fellah.
She never left the airport. ...

VI. Describe Anne and draw her character sketch following the plan:

- 1) Her childhood;
- 2) The story of her marriage;
- 3) Her way of life after her husband's death;
- 4) Her desire to polish her impersonation of a European;
- 5) Her unsuccessful attempt of coming back to her country;
- 6) Your suppositions about her future life.

The Angel of the Bridge

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) wiry;
- 2) disconcerting;
- 3) a hat-check girl;
- 4) rink attendant;
- 5) to long for;
- 6) an airport waiting room;
- 7) to gasp deeply;
- 8) to cash in the ticket;
- 9) stale;
- 10) calf's-foot jelly;
- 11) stubbornness;
- 12) to take a lead in the race;
- 13) composure;
- 14) to resign;
- 15) phobia;
- 16) to brake the car;
- 17) to feel a darkening of one's vision;
- 18) to think back;
- 19) to muddle through;
- 20) hidden obstacle;
- 21) to lose consciousness;
- 22) to reason out;
- 23) convent school;
- 24) a freeway;
- 25) a harp.

II. *Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:*

- 1) a source of great worry and stress;
- 2) attracting notice or attention;

... Once when I was passing that way, a total stranger took me by the arm and, pointing to Mother, said, "Look at that crazy old dame." I was very embarrassed. I suppose I should be grateful for the fact that she amuses herself

and is not a burden to me, but I sincerely wish she had hit on some less conspicuous recreation. ...

- 3) to anticipate with pleasure;
- 4) disappearing;

... The older she grows, the more she longs for the vanishing and provincial world of her youth. She is a hardy woman, as you can imagine, but she does not relish change. ...

- 5) covered with patches of different colours which do not form a regular pattern;

... When we had been waiting half an hour, she began to have some noticeable difficulty in breathing. She spread a hand over the front of her dress and began to gasp deeply, as if she was in pain. Her face got mottled and red. I pretended not to notice this. ...

- 6) a sudden attack, spasm, or convulsion, as in epilepsy or another disorder;
- 7) deep understanding;
- 8) cover (a surface or area) with scattered things;

... I cashed in her ticket and drove her back to her apartment, and I have never mentioned this seizure to her or to anyone, but her capricious, or perhaps neurotic, fear of dying in a plane crash was the first insight I had into how, as she grew older, her way was strewn with invisible rocks and lions and how eccentric were the paths she took, as the world seemed to change its boundaries and become less and less comprehensible. ...

- 9) soft covering on chairs and seats that makes them more comfortable to sit on;
- 10) a feeling of being deserted, abandoned and not cared for;
- 11) a person whose talk or behaviour is dull and uninteresting;

... You are tired. The gold thread in the upholstery scratches your cheek, and there is a momentary feeling of forlornness, a sulky and childish sense of estrangement. You find good companions, of course, and bores, but most of the errands we run at such high altitudes are humble and terrestrial. ...

- 12) be forced to feel ashamed and foolish;

... I laughed cruelly, I guess. For it all seemed terribly funny, his vision of the buildings of New York banging against one another like ninepins as they fell to

the earth. There has always been a strain of jealousy in our feelings about one another, and I am aware, at some obscure level, that he makes more money and has more of everything than I, and to see him humiliated – crushed – saddened me but at the same time and in spite of myself made me feel that I had taken a stunning lead in the race for honors that is at the bottom of our relationship. ...

13) to hold on tightly;

14) a series of steps between floors or levels;

15) the area near the entrance that usually has corridors and staircases leading off it;

... I led him to the stairway, and we climbed slowly down the eleven flights. He clung to the railing. We said goodbye in the lobby, and I went up in the elevator, and told my wife about his fear that the building might fall down. ...

16) ridiculous and absurd;

17) abnormal and pathological;

... I thought back over the weekend for some incident that might account for my preposterous fear that the George Washington Bridge would blow away in a thunderstorm, but it had been a pleasant weekend, and even under the most exaggerated scrutiny I couldn't uncover any source of morbid nervousness or anxiety. ...

18) strength of character;

... "Your mother is past seventy," he said, "and one of the most remarkable women I've ever known. I wouldn't bring her into this. What you need is a little more backbone." ...

19) the most important organs of the body, especially the heart and lungs;

20) an unintended consequence of an event or action, especially an unwelcome one;

... There are obviously areas of true and false pain, and my pain was meretricious, but how could I convince my lights and vitals of this? My youth and childhood had their deeply troubled and their jubilant years, and could some repercussions from this past account for my fear of heights? ...

21) to cause (a fire or light) to cease to burn or shine;

22) to come to an end or to stop;

23) to lubricate, to apply some oil;

... Outside my hotel window was a monumental statue of a young woman, advertising a Las Vegas night club. She revolves slowly in a beam of light. At 2 a.m. the light is extinguished, but she goes on restlessly turning all through the night. I have never seen her cease her turning, and I wondered, that night, when they greased her axle and washed her shoulders. ...

24) have an intense feeling of longing for something;

... And it was at the highest point in the arc of a bridge that I became aware suddenly of the depth and bitterness of my feelings about modern life, and of the profoundness of my yearning for a more vivid, simple, and peaceable world. ...

25) a division of a road marked off with painted lines and intended to separate single lines of traffic.

... All the symptoms returned, and this time they were much worse than ever. The wind was knocked out of my lungs as by a blow. My equilibrium was so shaken that the car swerved from one lane into another. I drove to the side and pulled on the hand brake. The loneliness of my predicament was harrowing. ...

III. Answer the questions.

1. What kind of hobby did the narrator's mother have?
2. How was the narrator's mother dressed when she was skating in the rink?
3. How did the narrator feel about his mother's hobby?
4. What happened in the airport when the narrator's mother was waiting for the flight to Toledo?
5. What were the narrator's thoughts and emotions when he was on board the plane?
6. Did anybody else from the narrator's family apart from his mother suffer from any phobia?
7. What was the narrator's reaction when he learnt that his brother was afraid of going in the elevator?
8. Why did the narrator's brother have to resign though he was quite satisfied with his job?
9. What happened to the narrator on the way home after he had visited his brother?
10. What were the symptoms of the panic attack the narrator had while he was going over the George Washington Bridge?

11. What made the narrator go to the family doctor?
12. What was the family doctor's remedy?
13. Why did the narrator visit the psychiatrist only once?
14. What did the narrator do to follow the family doctor's recommendation to overcome his fear of heights?
15. What were the scenes the narrator saw through the window when he was staying at the hotel in Los Angeles? What did they make him think about?
16. What did the narrator do to cross the San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge?
17. Why did the narrator have to cross the George Washington Bridge?
18. Why did the narrator choose the Tappan Zee Bridge on his way back from the convent school, where his daughter was studying?
19. What were the narrator's thoughts before he "decided to take a chance and turned onto the approach to the bridge"?
20. Crossing over the bridge, why did the narrator drive to the side and stop the car?
21. Who asked the narrator to give a lift, when he was thinking of how he would end up in a psychiatric ward?
22. Did the narrator manage to overcome his phobia of bridges?
23. Why didn't the narrator call his brother to share the good news about his crossing the bridge without any panic attack?

IV. Speak about:

1. A hobby of waltzing on the ice at the age of seventy-eight and a phobia of flying by plane. How could they coexist within one person?
2. Three types of phobia the narrator's family suffered from. What unites them and what makes them different?
3. The competition for honours that was at the bottom of the relationship between the narrator and his brother. Who takes a lead and who wins?
4. The "Angel" with a harp who "sang" the narrator across the bridge. A coincidence or a healing power of music?

The Sutton Place Story

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) Sutton Place;
- 2) avaricious;
- 3) sleep-in nurse;
- 4) enchanting;
- 5) to sleep off;
- 6) a neglected child;
- 7) a standing joke;
- 8) to feel possessive;
- 9) to name after;
- 10) to suffer with a cold;
- 11) to sob;
- 12) an usher;
- 13) a negligee trimmed with feathers;
- 14) call off;
- 15) to kidnap;
- 16) to feel filthy with guilt;
- 17) a brewery;
- 18) a tenement;
- 19) a cellar;
- 20) to dodge.

II. *Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:*

- 1) a central part in a structure to which other parts are connected;
- 2) a cup for wine, usually made of glass or metal, with a stem and base but no handle;

... Katherine and Robert Tennyson would be drinking with friends, and Deborah would be allowed to pass the smoked salmon, and she had naturally come to assume that cocktails were the axis of the adult world. She made Martinis in the sand pile and thought all the illustrations of cups, goblets, and glasses in her nursery books were filled with Old-Fashioneds. ...

- 3) a woman employed to look after a child;
- 4) lacking knowledge in general; being uneducated;

... Mrs. Harley was a widow. She had lived a hearty and comfortable life until her husband's death, but he had left her with no money and she had been reduced to working as a nursemaid. She said that she loved children and had always wanted children herself, but this was not true. Children bored and irritated her. She was a kind and ignorant woman, and this, more than any bitterness, showed in her face when she took Deborah downstairs. ...

- 5) being reserved and saying little;
- 6) to rely on;

... The child had never complained about Mrs. Harley; it was as though she already understood the evil importance of appearances. Deborah was taciturn about the way in which she spent her days. She would tell no one where she had been or what she had done. Mrs. Harley had found that she could count on this trait, and so the child and the old woman had come to share a number of secrets. ...

- 7) distasteful or disagreeable;

... They stopped asking her to the house. "After all," Katherine said, "I've always felt that there was something unsavory about that girl." Renee called them twice and asked them for cocktails, and Katherine said no, no thanks, they were all suffering with colds. ...

- 8) obedient or attentive to an excessive or servile degree;
- 9) to have pity for someone; you show that you are sorry for them;

... Renee put on a black dress the next day and took a cab to the funeral parlor. As soon as she opened the door, she was in the hands of a gloved and obsequious usher, ready to sympathize with a grief more profound and sedate than any grief of hers would ever be. ...

- 10) frown in an angry or bad-tempered way;

... "Yes, I'm sure you have a friend named Martha," Renee said. She noticed that the child was scowling and that her eyes were full of tears. "What's the matter, darling?" she asked. "What is the matter? Here, here, you sit on the sofa and listen to the radio. I've got to fix my face." She went into the bedroom to arrange her face and brush her hair. ...

- 11) doing something secretly, trying to avoid notice or attention;

- 12) a group of things that are fastened, held, or growing together;
- 13) to push something quickly and carelessly into a small space;
- 14) a member of a police force, who wears civilian clothes while being on duty;

... There was a hedge of privet around the tennis courts, and an old woman was cutting some privet with a knife. She wore a round hat and a heavy winter coat that reached to her ankles. He realized that she was stealing the privet. She worked quickly and furtively, and she kept looking over her shoulder to make sure that no one saw her. When she had cut a good bunch of the green branches, she stuffed them into a bag and hurried down the street.

The doorbell rang. A police sergeant and a plainclothesman were there. They took off their hats. "This kind of thing is hard on the ladies," the sergeant said. "Now, if you'd give me the facts again, Mr. Tennyson. ..."

- 15) the mudguard or area around the wheel well of a car;
- 16) a device sounding a warning signal;
- 17) a device for slowing or stopping a moving car, typically by applying pressure to the wheels;
- 18) a high-pitched piercing sound;

... He imagined the accident in the clichés of "Drive Safely" posters, badly drawn and in crude colors. He saw a stranger carrying the limp body away from the fenders of a taxi; he saw the look of surprise and horror on a lovely face that had never known any horror; he heard the noise of horns, the shrieking of brakes; he saw a car coming over the rise of a hill. ...

- 19) dark, depressing and dirty;
- 20) smelling extremely unpleasant;

... The streets were crowded. He saw the city only in terms of mortal danger. Each manhole cover, excavation, and flight of stairs dominated the brilliance of the day like the reverse emphasis of a film negative, and he thought the crowds and the green trees in Central Park looked profane. The Hotel Princess was on a dingy street in the West Seventies. The air in the lobby was fetid. The desk clerk became uneasy when he saw the policeman. ...

- 21) a tightly heaped up fire, the one that burns slowly;
- 22) the quality of being unreasonable, unwise and indiscreet;
- 23) a chance of being injured or harmed;

... “The little girl was one of the fire people – banked fire. I gave her palm a good deal of study. We were left alone a great deal, of course. She had a long life line and a good sense of balance and a good head. There were signs of imprudence there, but a great deal of that would depend upon you... I saw deep water there and some great danger, some great hazard. That’s why I wrote the letter to Mrs. Tennyson. ...

24) something, often an animal, that is burned in honour of a god, as a religious sacrifice;

... “And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. ...

25) exposed to the possibility of being attacked or hurt, either physically or emotionally;

26) a solemn promise.

... You see, I think children mean much more to us than they did to our parents. That’s what I’ve been thinking. I suppose it’s because we’re not as religious and because the way we live makes us much more vulnerable. I feel filthy with guilt. I feel as though I’d been a rotten mother and a rotten wife and as though this were punishment. I’ve broken every vow and every promise that I’ve ever made. ...

III. Answer the questions.

1. How did the Sunday morning start in the Tennyson family?
2. How did Deborah entertain herself while waiting for the nursemaid to come?
3. What kind of woman was Mrs. Harley?
4. What were the relations between Deborah and Mrs. Harley?
5. What was Deborah’s reaction when she saw a dead bird?
6. What kind of secrets did Mrs. Harley and the girl share?
7. What kind of person was Renee?
8. Why did Renee get a telephone call from her ex-lover’s mother one day?
9. How did Walton’s funeral influence Renee’s ideas about her life?
10. How did Renee get acquainted with Deborah?

11. Why did Renee begin to feel possessive of Deborah and how was it manifested in her behavior?
12. Why did Katherine stop asking Renee to her house and turn down all her invitations?
13. How did it happen that Renee started to spend time with Deborah while Mrs. Harley went to church?
14. Why didn't Renee come one Sunday to take Deborah to her place and to let Mrs. Harley go to church?
15. How did Mrs. Harley feel about Renee's not coming and consequently depriving her of her usual Sunday prayer?
16. How did it happen that Deborah ran away?
17. How did the Tennysons react to the news about Deborah's running away?
18. What did Robert see while he was waiting for the police?
19. Why did Katherine mention Mrs. Emerson while talking to the policemen?
20. What was Robert thinking about while he was going in the police car to visit Mrs. Emerson?
21. Why did Mrs. Emerson have a premonition that something bad was going to happen to Deborah?
22. What did Mrs. Emerson learn about Deborah's destiny from the lines on her palm?
23. Why did Robert cut it short when the policeman tried to find out the reason for Mrs. Emerson's having quitted her job as Deborah's nursemaid?
24. What was Katherine doing when Robert got home after he had visited Mrs. Emerson?
25. Why was Katherine afraid that she was going out of her mind?
26. Why did Katherine ask Robert to go out while they were waiting for news from the police?
27. What places did the policemen inspect in search of Deborah?
28. Where was the girl found?

IV. Agree or Disagree.

1. Deborah was a neglected child.
2. Katherine was very pleased that Renee and Deborah got on very well.

3. Renee passionately loved Walton and sobbed at his funerals because she grieved sincerely.
4. Mrs. Harley let Deborah stay with Renee because Deborah loved Renee.
5. Katherine suspected Mrs. Emerson of kidnapping Deborah and was waiting for her demand of a ransom.
6. Mrs. Emerson was a fortune teller and predicted a lot of hazards to Deborah.
7. Deborah ran away because she was looking for a friend.

V. *Comment on the extracts from the story given below. How do they characterize Deborah?*

1. ... Deborah Tennyson waited in her nursery on Sunday morning for a signal from her father that would mean she could enter her parents' bedroom. ... but when Deborah was given the signal she ran clumsily down the dark hall, screaming with pleasure. ... "The weather is lovely out," Deborah said. "Weather is divine." ...
2. ... She [Deborah] made Martinis in the sand pile and thought all the illustrations of cups, goblets, and glasses in her nursery books were filled with Old-Fashioneds. ...
3. ... She [Deborah] pretended to pick clothing and jewelry from the advertisements in the paper and to dress herself with these things. ...
4. ... They [Deborah and Mrs. Harley] quarreled a good deal when they were alone, and they quarreled like adults, with a cunning knowledge of each other's frailties. ...
5. ... The child [Deborah] had never complained about Mrs. Harley; ...
6. ... Deborah was taciturn about the way in which she spent her days. She would tell no one where she had been or what she had done. ...
7. ... "The pretty pigeon is sleeping," Deborah said. Her face clouded suddenly and tears came into her eyes. She stood with her hands folded in front of her and her head bowed, an attitude that was a comical imitation of Mrs. Harley's reaction to sorrow, but the grief in her voice and her face came straight from her heart. ...
8. ... when Deborah heard her [Renee's] voice, she escaped from Mrs. Harley and flew down the hall. The child's adoration excited Renee. They sat together again. Renee wore a string of furs and a hat piled with cloth roses, and Deborah thought her the most beautiful lady in the world. ...

9. ... Deborah saw Renee first. She called Renee's name and ran toward her, struggling up the steps one at a time. Renee picked her up. "Pretty Renee," the little girl said. "Pretty, pretty Renee." ...
10. ... "I have a friend. Her name is Martha," the little girl said. "Yes, I'm sure you have a friend named Martha," Renee said. She noticed that the child was scowling and that her eyes were full of tears. "Where have you been, Deborah? Who gave you the bread? Where have you been? Where have you been?" "The lady gave the bread," she said. "I had to find Martha." ...

VI. Collect the evidence from the text to prove that the following statements about Deborah are not true:

1. Deborah was a happy child having a doll carriage which cost twenty-five dollars, getting elaborate presents from Renee and having eight thousand dollars in the bank in her name.
2. Deborah enjoyed spending time with her nursemaid who took her to the movies and left her with a friend of the Tennysons.
3. Deborah made friends with Renee because she liked playing with her furs and jewellery.
4. Deborah ran away from Renee because she was desperately missing her mother.

VII. Speak on the following topics:

1. The life the Tennysons led and its reflection in Deborah's world.
2. Mrs. Harley: her past and present.
3. Renee's story and her affection towards Deborah.
4. These are the three women (Katherine, Renee and Mrs. Harley) who are to blame for Deborah's running away.

VIII. Retell the story on behalf of:

- 1) Katherine;
- 2) Renee;
- 3) Deborah;
- 4) Mrs. Harley.

The Wrysons

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) civic activity;
- 2) upzoning;
- 3) a bully;
- 4) to go in for gardening;
- 5) to forge a drug prescription;
- 6) composure;
- 7) to be aware of;
- 8) palliative;
- 9) leftover medicines;
- 10) trifling illness;
- 11) to grope;
- 12) to take up a life of unmitigated need;
- 13) to lean on somebody;
- 14) to keep body and soul together;
- 15) to separate eggs;
- 16) nut meat;
- 17) crusading zeal;
- 18) to skid down;
- 19) convalescence;
- 20) to be in probate (about the will).

II. *Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:*

- 1) severe and intense;
- 2) a residential institution where old or frail people are cared for;

... Their dread of change – of irregularity of any sort – was acute, and when the Larkin estate was sold for an old people's rest home, the Wrysons went to the Village Council meeting and demanded to know what sort of old people these old people were going to be. ...

- 3) morally correct behavior;
- 4) a person who likes arguing and disagreeing with other people;

... Donald Wryson was a large man with thinning fair hair and the cheerful air of a bully, but he was a bully only in the defense of rectitude, class distinctions, and the orderly appearance of things. Irene Wryson was not a totally unattractive woman, but she was both shy and contentious, especially contentious on the subject of upzoning. ...

- 5) not very friendly, unsociable, reserved;
- 6) different to what is usual or expected; strange;

... Donald had a laugh like a jackass, and people who did not like him were careful not to sit in the same train coach with him. The Wrysons were stiff; they were inflexible. They seemed to experience not distaste but alarm when they found quack grass in their lawn or heard of a contemplated divorce among their neighbors. They were odd, of course. ...

- 7) the soft substance in the cavity of bones;
- 8) moving in the opposite direction from that in which a river flows;

... She didn't know if these were vapor trails or some part of that force that would destroy the marrow in her bones. The gray air seemed final. The sky would never shine with light again. From her window she could see a river, and now, as she watched, boats began to come upstream. At first, there were only two or three. Then there were tens, and then there were hundreds. ...

- 9) a boat with a portable motor which is attached to the outside of the stern of a boat;
- 10) a medium-sized sailing boat equipped for cruising or racing;
- 11) a sailing ship with two or more masts and with its sails parallel to the length of the ship;
- 12) a small boat that you move through the water by using oars;
- 13) to maneuver for a certain position;

... There were outboards, excursion boats, yachts, schooners with auxiliary motors; there were even rowboats. The number of boats grew until the water was covered with them, and the noise of motors rose to a loud din. The jockeying for position in this retreat up the river became aggressive and then savage. ...

- 14) a liquid that you can put on your skin when it is sore or itchy;

... She opened the medicine cabinet, the one place in the house that the Wrysons, in their passion for neatness, had not put in order. It was crowded with leftover medicines from Dolly's trifling illnesses – cough syrups, calamine lotion for poison ivy, aspirin, and physics. ...

- 15) a small piece or amount of something that is left from a larger original piece or amount;
- 16) a small tablet of medicine, often coated, taken by swallowing whole or by chewing;

... And the mild perfume of these remnants and the tenderness she had felt for her daughter when she was ill – as if the door of the medicine cabinet had been a window opening onto some dazzling summer of the emotions – made her cry again. Among the bottles was one that said "Poison," and she reached for this and unscrewed the top, and shook into her left hand a pill for herself and one for the girl. ...

- 17) a protective garment that you wear over the front of your clothes and tie at the back especially when you are cooking, in order to prevent your clothes from getting dirty;
- 18) to move hurriedly with short quick steps;
- 19) a powder obtained by grinding grain, typically wheat, and used to make bread, cakes, and pastry;

... Then Donald would put on an apron and scurry around, getting out the necessary bowls and pans, measuring out flour and sugar, separating eggs. He learned the contents of every cupboard. He knew where the spices and the sugar were kept, the nutmeats and the citron, and when the work was done, he enjoyed washing the bowls and pans and putting them back where they belonged. ...

- 20) to put the flour through a sieve to remove large particles;
- 21) a semi-liquid mixture of flour, egg, and milk or water, used for making cakes;
- 22) to disappear suddenly and completely;

... He went out and bought the ingredients – deeply ashamed of himself – and sifted the flour and chopped the nuts and citron in the kitchen of the little walk-up apartment where he lived. As he stirred the cake batter, he felt his depression vanish. ...

- 23) burnt to ashes;
- 24) be utterly bewildered or perplexed.

... There were no further explanations. He threw the cake, which was burned to a cinder, into the garbage, and they turned out the lights and climbed the stairs, more mystified by life than ever, and more interested than ever in a good appearance. ...

III. Answer the questions.

1. What kind of people were the Wrysons?
2. In what way did the Wrysons differ from other people in the community?
3. What kind of oddness did their neighbours have?
4. What was Irene's strange dream about which she couldn't tell anybody?
5. What was Donald's secret activity that he tried to conceal?
6. What kind of person was Mrs. Wryson, Donald's mother?
7. Why did he take up the habit of baking a Lady Baltimore cake approximately once a year?
8. What was the possibility of a tragic ending of the Wrysons' lives that was considered in the narrative?
9. What happened one night when Irene had her dream?
10. Why didn't Irene and Donald talk about their odd secrets when they practically caught each other "red-handed"?

IV. Describe the main characters following the plan:

1. Appearance.
2. Civic activities in the community.
3. Intellectual life.
4. Social life.
5. Hobbies.
6. Relationship with neighbours.
7. Secrets concealed from each other.

V. Discuss Irene's and Donald's oddness.

1. What unites them?
2. How do they differ?
3. What prevented Irene and Donald from talking about their oddness to each other?

VI. Agree or disagree.

1. Irene and Donald had a lot of interests and activities in common, so there was mutual love and understanding in their marriage.
2. They wrote a lot of cards at Christmas because they had a lot of friends.
3. Irene's dream about the hydrogen bomb was a premonition of a disaster.
4. In his childhood Donald learnt baking, though he detested that activity; he only wanted to please his mother.
5. After his mother's death he often baked a Lady Baltimore cake because he desperately missed his mother.
6. Donald never treated anybody to a lady Baltimore cake because he believed himself to be a bad cook.
7. His desire to bake a Lady Baltimore cake usually coincided with Irene's having a bad dream about a hydrogen bomb.
8. On waking up at midnight and smelling a sweet smoke Irene realized that her bad dream came true.
9. That night Irene and Donald didn't talk about the burnt cake and the hydrogen bomb because they were afraid of being overheard by a stranger with a beard and a book, whom Irene seemed to see at the gate.

VII. Think over the following questions:

1. What is the message of the story?
2. Why does the author consider the possibility of a tragic ending, reject it, suggest a possibility of a happy ending and also abandon it?

An Educated American Woman

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) a halfback;
- 2) to run a travel agency;
- 3) to run for town supervisor;
- 4) to band birds;
- 5) to hold an office;
- 6) expatriate;
- 7) to knit;
- 8) to face up to the limitations of;
- 9) a fraud;
- 10) to simmer down to;
- 11) to take over;
- 12) homesickness;
- 13) to turn down (an application);
- 14) to shoulder the burdens of life;
- 15) to be in charge of;
- 16) to get over the hump;
- 17) to lead somebody by the nose;
- 18) a fly-by-night cook;
- 19) to yield on;
- 20) to be at stake;
- 21) to go without a hitch;
- 22) a contractor;
- 23) midtown
- 24) to storm the counters;
- 25) to come down with a cold;
- 26) a spinster;
- 27) a pantry;
- 28) to make the whole thing up;
- 29) to regain consciousness;
- 30) to dwell upon.

II. *Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:*

- 1) healthy, and full of energy;
- 2) short, with a strong, solid body;

... Her mother, Amelia Faxon Chidchester, was a vigorous, stocky woman with splendid white hair, a red face, and an emphatic accent whose roots seemed more temperamental than regional. Mrs. Chidchester's words were shaped to express her untiring vigor, her triumph over pain, her cultural enthusiasm, and her trust in mankind. ...

- 3) (of a child) having developed certain abilities or inclinations at an earlier age than is usual or expected;
- 4) a rivalry which is really tough;

... Jill appeared to be precocious, and when she was three her mother took her to Munich, where she was entered in the Gymnasium fur Kinder, run by Dr. Stock for the purpose of observing gifted children. The competition was fierce, and her reaction tests were only middling, but she was an amiable and a brilliant girl. ...

- 5) to settle down;

... They moved from there to England, to the famous Tower Hill School, in Kent. Then Amelia, or Melee, as she was called, decided that the girl should put down some roots, and so she rented a house in Nantucket, where Jill was entered in the public school. ...

- 6) feeling strong affection;
- 7) to feel great admiration or devotion for;

... They had a devoted servant – of Melee's servants worshipped the ground she walked on – and Jill's only idea about housework was that it was work she was not expected to do. She did, when she was about ten, learn to knit Argyle socks and was allowed this recreation. She was romantic. ...

- 8) very determined and impossible to defeat;
- 9) behaving in a way that shows your belief that you are worth more than other people;

... Her mother was not a liar, but she was a fraud. Her accent was a fraud, her tastes were fraudulent, and the seraphic look she assumed when she listened to music was the look of someone trying to recall an old telephone number. With her indomitable good cheer, her continual aches and pains, her implacable

snobbism, her cultural squatter's rights, her lofty friends, and her forceful and meaningless utterances, she seemed, for a moment, to illustrate a supreme lack of discernment in nature. ...

10) to stop running the business;

11) to try to get something you want without asking directly for it;

12) route;

... When Jill put down the reins of the travel agency, she decided to organize a European tour. She had not been abroad since their marriage, and if she wrote her own ticket she could make the trip at a profit. This, at least, was what she claimed. Georgie's shipyard was doing well, and there was no real reason for her to angle for a free trip, but he could see that the idea of conducting a tour stimulated and challenged her, and in the end, he gave her his approval and his encouragement. Twenty-eight customers signed up, and early in July Georgie saw Jill and her lambs, as she called them, take off in a jet for Copenhagen. Their itinerary was to take them as far south as Naples, where Jill would put her dependents aboard a home-bound plane. ...

13) a person employed to take care of horses;

... It had begun to rain again, and Georgie couldn't tell whether the boy's face was wet with tears or drops of rain. He was on horseback and being led around the ring by a groom. Bibber waved once to his father and nearly lost his seat, and when the boy's back was turned Georgie went away. ...

14) passionate;

15) done carefully and with a lot of attention to detail;

... He flew to Treviso and took a train into Venice, where Jill waited for him in a Swiss hotel on one of the back canals. Their reunion was ardent, and he loved her no less for noticing that she was tired and thin. Getting her lambs across Europe had been a rigorous and exhausting task. ...

16) the activity of visiting places of interest in a particular location;

17) to vanish;

... He guessed that she had got into the habit of tireless sightseeing, and that the tactful thing to do would be to wait until the habit spent itself. He suggested that they go to Harry's for lunch, and she said, "What in the world are you thinking of, Georgie?" ...

18) impossible to stop or prevent;

- 19) to avoid doing;
- 20) scope for freedom of action or thought;

... The struggle was recent, he knew; it was real; it was inexorable; and while she sidestepped her domestic tasks, he could sense that she might do this unwillingly. She had been raised as an intellectual, her emancipation was still challenged in many quarters, and since he seemed to possess more latitude, to hold a stronger traditional position, it was his place to yield on matters like housework. ...

- 21) a person who is between 80 and 89 years old;
- 22) the scheme showing how the traffic goes;
- 23) having or showing no moral principles; not honest or fair;
- 24) having or showing an extreme greed for wealth or material gain;

... The owner, an octogenarian, lived in San Francisco and was either helpless, indifferent, or immobilized by indignation. The connecting road was of no use; no study of traffic patterns had proved that there was any need for such a road. A beautiful park and a large slice of tax money were to be handed over to an unscrupulous and avaricious contractor. ...

- 25) arranged in a pile;
- 26) a wooden frame for holding an artist's work while it is being painted or drawn;

... Her hair and her eyebrows were dark, her face was thin, and she might have been a spinster. She made him a drink, and when he asked to see her paintings she modestly refused, although he was to see them later, stacked up in the bathroom, where her easel and her other equipment were neatly stored. ...

- 27) determination to carry on;
- 28) be better in some activity;

... She was sincerely grateful to him for these sacrifices, and he had nothing but admiration for her intelligence and tenacity. She was far superior to him as an advocate and as an organizer. She was to appear before the commission on a Friday, and he looked forward to having this much of their struggle behind them. ...

- 29) to greet and congratulate;

... Jill had stopped long enough to have a drink with one of her assistants, and came in a half hour later. "Hail the conquering hero!" she called as she stepped into the empty house. "We shall have our hearing, and the scurvy rascals are on the run. ...

III. Answer the questions.

1. What achievements did Jill write about in her report for the college alumnae magazine?
2. Was Jill an attractive woman?
3. What kind of person was Jill's mother?
4. Why was Jill enrolled in the *Gymnasium fur Kinder*, an institution for gifted children?
5. How did moving from country to country influence Jill's life in her childhood?
6. Why wasn't Jill keen on any kind of household work?
7. What secret did Jill's mother tell her one day that completely changed Jill's attitude to her mother?
8. What was Jill's inner reaction and how did she behave on hearing her mother's secret?
9. What was fraudulent about Jill's mother?
10. Under what circumstances did Jill get married?
11. Was Jill's husband the perfect match for her?
12. Why did Jill's family move to the country after several years of living in the city?
13. Was it necessary for her to work after Bibber's birth?
14. What did she decide to do after quitting her job as the head manager of the travel agency?
15. Why did she decide to travel around Europe?
16. Where was Bibber sent while she was touring Europe?
17. What was the relationship between Georgie and Bibber?
18. How did Bibber behave when his father came to visit him in the camp?
19. What did Jill and Georgie devote their time to in Venice, when he joined her in her tour around Europe?
20. What kind of house did they have in the USA?
21. How did they usually share the duties of a host and a hostess when they were having a party?

22. Why was it Georgie who did household work?
23. What did Jill think about her husband wearing an apron and polishing the silver in the kitchen?
24. Why did Georgie get terribly drunk one night?
25. How did Jill come to be deeply involved in the matter of building a highway in the neighbourhood?
26. How did it happen that Georgie had a love affair?
27. What united Georgie and his mistress?
28. Why did Georgie decide that the love affair should end?
29. How did Jill learn that her husband had cheated on her?
30. Why did Jill refuse to believe that Georgie had a love affair?
31. Who was looking after Bibber while Jill was away on business?
32. Why did nobody congratulate Jill on winning the case of building a highway when she returned home?
33. Why did Jill's mother refuse to come and support her when Bibber died?
34. How did the death of the son change the life of his parents?
35. Why did the narrator throw away the piece of paper where Georgie wrote down all his contacts?

IV. Describe Jill following the plan:

1. Her childhood and her parents.
2. Her education and school results.
3. Her appearance.
4. Her marriage.
5. Her jobs and positions she held.
6. Her social life in the community.
7. Her life before and after her son's death.

V. Agree or disagree.

1. Having learnt her mother's crushing secret about wartime Jill decided to run away from home and live alone.
2. Jill's mother was a loving and affectionate woman who taught her daughter to do all household work.
3. Jill moved to the country because she got tired of her job and wanted to devote all her time to her son.

4. Jill's son Bibber enjoyed staying in the summer camp while his parents were on business in Europe.
5. Jill was happy that her husband enjoyed household work.
6. Georgie and Betty Landers were good friends; that was why they spent a lot of time together in New York.
7. Jill heard the story about building a new highway in the neighbourhood but preferred not to get involved in the matter.
8. Jill was very jealous because of her husband's love affair but she decided not to kick up a row in order to save her family life.
9. After Bibber's death Mrs. Amelia Childchester (Jill's mother) couldn't fly to the USA to support her daughter, but she welcomed Jill to stay with her in Italy for some time.
10. Georgie was crushed by the death of his son and blamed himself for having paid little attention to his son's illness.
11. Georgie gave the narrator all the telephone numbers he could be reached by because he felt very lonely.

VI. Speak on the following topics.

1. Being such an educated and intelligent woman Jill nevertheless failed to foresee that her family was bound to be ruined.
2. Georgie wasn't as intelligent as his wife, was he?
3. The traditional scheme of a family life: a father provides for the family and a mother takes care of children and does the housekeeping. Is that the only successful variant?

The Country Husband

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) heavy weather;
- 2) a painkiller;
- 3) an emergency landing;
- 4) to hit flat on its belly (about a plane);
- 5) crew;
- 6) a commuting train;
- 7) a driveway;
- 8) a tarnished nickel (*am.*);
- 9) hearth;
- 10) favoritism;
- 11) a splinter;
- 12) drudgery;
- 13) a snapshot;
- 14) heraldry;
- 15) ordeal;
- 16) an encounter;
- 17) a dashboard (in a car);
- 18) to give somebody a piece of mind;
- 19) a clothes tree;
- 20) a dining car (of a train);
- 21) a sleeping car compartment;
- 22) a regular commuter;
- 23) a stray;
- 24) to run like a golden thread;
- 25) an abyss;
- 26) a diamond sunburst;
- 27) a divinity school;
- 28) a vow of silence;
- 29) anniversary party;
- 30) to meet everything head-on;
- 31) a social leper;
- 32) an aisle seat;
- 33) a dead-end street.

II. Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:

- 1) a narrow-neck container for liquids carry around with you;
- 2) to become numb;

... Francis had been in heavy weather before, but he had never been shaken up so much. The man in the seat beside him pulled a flask out of his pocket and took a drink. Francis smiled at his neighbor, but the man looked away; he wasn't sharing his pain killer with anyone. The plane began to drop and flounder wildly. A child was crying. The air in the cabin was overheated and stale, and Francis' left foot went to sleep. ...

- 3) to be treated cruelly and unfairly;
- 4) destiny;

... Henry is always right; she is persecuted and lonely; her lot is hopeless. Francis turns to his son, but the boy has justification for the kick – she hit him first; she hit him on the ear, which is dangerous. Louisa agrees with this passionately. She hit him on the ear, and she meant to hit him on the ear, because he messed up her china collection. ...

- 5) causing a mood of gloom or depression;
- 6) bored or lacking enthusiasm, typically after having had too much of something;

... Francis sits down at the table with Helen. Helen is suffering from the dismal feeling of having read too intently on a fine day, and she gives her father and the room a jaded look. She doesn't understand about the plane crash, because there wasn't a drop of rain in Shady Hill. ...

- 7) a lazy, untidy person;
- 8) a short and sharp argument;

... Julia returns with Toby, and they all sit down and are served. "Do I have to look at that big, fat slob?" Henry says, of Louisa. Everybody but Toby enters into this skirmish, and it rages up and down the table for five minutes. Toward the end, Henry puts his napkin over his head and, trying to eat that way, spills spinach all over his shirt. Francis asks Julia if the children couldn't have their dinner earlier. ...

- 9) sociable and amiable;

10) to come from;

11) having a desire that is too great to be satisfied;

... Julia was well liked and gregarious, and her love of parties sprang from a most natural dread of chaos and loneliness. She went through her morning mail with real anxiety, looking for invitations, and she usually found some, but she was insatiable, and if she had gone out seven nights a week, it would not have cured her of a reflective look – the look of someone who hears distant music – for she would always suppose that there was a more brilliant party somewhere else. ...

12) understood or implied without being stated;

13) lacking energy or vitality; weak;

... The people in the Farquarsons' living room seemed united in their tacit claim that there had been no past, no war – that there was no danger or trouble in the world. In the recorded history of human arrangements, this extraordinary meeting would have fallen into place, but the atmosphere of Shady Hill made the memory unseemly and impolite. The prisoner withdrew after passing the coffee, but the encounter left Francis feeling languid; it had opened his memory and his senses, and left them dilated. ...

14) a convulsive catching of breath;

15) walk with difficulty, because of a stiff leg or foot;

... There was a gasp from Mrs. Wrightson, and Francis looked down at her to be sure that she knew he meant to be rude. She turned and walked away from him, so damaged in spirit that she limped. A wonderful feeling enveloped him, as if light were being shaken about him, and he thought again of Venus combing and combing her hair as she drifted through the Bronx. ...

16) a child's bed with barred or latticed sides; a cot;

17) having the quality or tendency to permeate everywhere;

... Going into the bathroom to shave, you would find Gertrude using the toilet. Looking into your son's crib, you would find it empty, and, looking further, you would find that Gertrude had pushed him in his baby carriage into the next village. She was helpful, pervasive, honest, hungry, and loyal. She never went home of her own choice. ...

18) the action or practice of allowing oneself to believe that a false idea, or situation is true;

19) lonely and empty.

... Her figure, so helpless in its self-deceptions, bent over the suitcase made him nearly sick with pity. She did not understand how desolate her life would be without him. She didn't understand the hours that working women have to keep. She didn't understand that most of her friendships existed within the framework of their marriage, and that without this she would find herself alone. ...

III. Answer the questions.

1. Why did the stewardess of the airplane that Francis Weed took announce an emergency landing?
2. What had the passengers been doing just before the plane hit flat on its belly in a cornfield?
3. Why did the man beside Francis start talking about his wish to buy a farm and raise cattle?
4. Why wasn't Francis's friend, Trace Bearden, deeply impressed by his story about the plane that had almost crashed?
5. Who greeted Francis when he got home?
6. Why didn't the children want to listen to Francis's story about the plane crash?
7. Why did Francis prohibit his elder daughter from reading *True Romance* magazine?
8. What kind of atmosphere was there while the family were having dinner?
9. What was Julia's reaction to Francis's suggestion of having their dinner separately without the children?
10. How did Francis spend the evening after that disastrous dinner?
11. What kind of person was Julia?
12. Why did Julia like going to parties?
13. What did Francis know about the past of a new maid who served the drinks at the Farquarsons' party?
14. Why couldn't Francis talk to anybody about the maid's past?
15. How did Francis get acquainted with Anne Murchison?
16. What were Francis's feelings towards Anne?
17. What did Francis dream about that night?
18. How did Francis insult Mrs. Wrightson? Why did he do that?

19. What did Francis feel after having been so rude with Mrs. Wrightson?
20. What for did Francis go to a jeweler's after having lunch with Pinky Trabert?
21. Who was Gertrude?
22. Who visited the Weeds in the evening after they had been photographed for their Christmas card?
23. Why was Clayton going to leave Shady Hill?
24. What did Clayton and his fiancée Anne Murchison have in common?
25. Why did Francis and Julia quarrel that evening?
26. What happened in the train car when Francis was going to work the next morning?
27. Why did Francis decide to get an appointment at the psychiatrist's?
28. What happened in the psychiatrist's reception?
29. What treatment was prescribed to Francis? Did it help?

IV. Agree or Disagree.

1. Francis didn't tell anybody that he had been in a plane crash, because he didn't want to worry his wife and the children.
2. Julia rejected the idea of laying two separate dinners (one – for the children and the other – for her and Francis) because she enjoyed the dinner time when all the family gathered together.
3. Julia was a perfect housewife and a perfect mother.
4. Helen enjoyed reading *True Romance* magazine because a lot of amazing stories were published there.
5. Julia attended all the parties held in Shady Hill because she didn't want to be a social leper.
6. Francis fell deeply in love with Anne Murchison.
7. Being a very religious person Clayton Thomas wanted to continue his education in a divinity school, that was why he decided to leave college.
8. Having quarreled with Francis, Julia decided to divorce Francis and start a new life.
9. Francis went to the psychiatrist as he got scared of his aggression.

V. *Comment on the extracts from the story given below. How do they characterize:*

a) Julia

1. ... Nothing here was neglected; nothing had not been burnished. It was not the kind of household where, after prying open a stuck cigarette box, you would find an old shirt button and a tarnished nickel. The hearth was swept, the roses on the piano were reflected in the polish of the broad top, and there was an album of Schubert waltzes on the rack. ...
2. ... She does not seem to notice the fracas. "Hello, darling," she says serenely to Francis. "Wash your hands, everyone. Dinner is ready." She strikes a match and lights the six candles in this vale of tears. ...
3. ... Francis asks Julia if the children couldn't have their dinner earlier. Julia's guns are loaded for this. She can't cook two dinners and lay two tables. She paints with lightning strokes that panorama of drudgery in which her youth, her beauty, and her wit have been lost. ...
4. ... The Weeds drove home in silence. Francis brought the car up the driveway and sat still, with the motor running. "You can put the car in the garage," Julia said as she got out. "I told the Murchison girl she could leave at eleven. Someone drove her home." She shut the door, and Francis sat in the dark. ...
5. ... "You can conceal your dislikes. You don't have to meet everything head on, like a child. Unless you're anxious to be a social leper. It's no accident that we get asked out a great deal! ...
6. ... "I mean the way you leave your dirty clothes around in order to express your subconscious hatred of me." ... "I mean your dirty socks and your dirty pajamas and your dirty underwear and your dirty shirts!" She rose from kneeling by the suitcase and faced him, her eyes blazing and her voice ringing with emotion. "I'm talking about the fact that you've never learned to hang up anything. You just leave your clothes all over the floor where they drop, in order to humiliate me. You do it on purpose!" ...
7. ... I hope you won't drink too much, Francis. I hope that nothing bad will happen to you. If you do get into serious trouble, you can call me." ... "I guess I'd better stay and take care of you for a little while longer," she said. ...

b) Anne Murchison

1. ... Daddy's an alcoholic, and he just called me from some saloon and gave me a piece of his mind. He thinks I'm immoral. ...

2. ... He took her free hand, letting his fingers in between hers, climbed at her side the two concrete steps, and went up a narrow walk through a front garden where dahlias, marigolds, and roses – things that had withstood the light frosts – still bloomed, and made a bittersweet smell in the night air. At the steps, she freed her hand and then turned and kissed him swiftly. Then she crossed the porch and shut the door. ...

c) Clayton Thomas

1. ... what seems to me to be really wrong with Shady Hill is that it doesn't have any future. So much energy is spent in perpetuating the place – in keeping out undesirables, and so forth – that the only idea of the future anyone has is just more and more commuting trains and more parties. I don't think that's healthy. I think people ought to be able to dream big dreams about the future. ...
2. ... "I wanted to go to divinity school," Clayton said.
"What's your church?" Francis asked.
"Unitarian, Theosophist, Transcendentalist, Humanist," Clayton said. ...
3. ... I'm writing a long verse play about good and evil. Uncle Charlie might get me into a bank, and that would be good for me. I need the discipline. I have a long way to go in forming my character. I have some terrible habits. I talk too much. I think I ought to take vows of silence. I ought to try not to speak for a week, and discipline myself. ...

VI. Speak about the community of Shady Hill following the plan:

- 1) the person who had been running the community for the last forty years and who decided whom to invite to the assemblies;
- 2) the tacit claims and unwritten rules of the community;
- 3) the parties they organized;
- 4) the characters of the story who didn't fit into the community of Shady Hill (Anne Murchison, Clayton Thomas, Gertrude);
- 5) Francis's position – whether he fitted into the community of Shady Hill or not.

VII. *Collect the evidence from the text to prove that the following statements about Francis are true:*

1. Because of the plane crash Francis suffered a serious psychological upheaval.
2. Even having a perfect wife and four children Francis felt desperately lonely.
3. Analyzing his behaviour Francis realized that he was on the edge of committing something wrong.
4. The therapy, prescribed by the psychiatrist, helped Francis to cope with the crisis.

The Swimmer

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) parishioner;
- 2) well (*noun*);
- 3) cumulus clouds;
- 4) a subterranean stream;
- 5) to slip away;
- 6) prosperous;
- 7) a dwarf;
- 8) the headwater;
- 9) a dead stream;
- 10) to drain;
- 11) a portage;
- 12) shoulders of route;
- 13) a foul play;
- 14) to be barefoot;
- 15) to tool down;
- 16) northbound traffic;
- 17) a cloudy and bitter solution;
- 18) to contaminate;
- 19) a stagnant bend;
- 20) to bask in suspicion;
- 21) a brook;
- 22) an enormous do;
- 23) unease.

II. *Explain the meaning of the phrases. Describe the episodes in which they are used:*

- 1) a choppy stroke (*about swimming*);
- 2) a serviceable stroke (*about swimming*);
- 3) a hobbled side stroke (*about swimming*);
- 4) to turn one's back on somebody;
- 5) to keep the social score;
- 6) to go for broke;

- 7) to eat peas off a knife;
- 8) to regret invitations.

III. Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:

- 1) to move smoothly along a surface;
- 2) the structure formed by the uprights and handrail at the side of a staircase;

... Neddy Merrill sat by the green water, one hand in it, one around a glass of gin. He was a slender man – he seemed to have the especial slenderness of youth – and while he was far from young he had slid down his banister that morning and given the bronze backside of Aphrodite on the hall table a smack, as he jogged toward the smell of coffee in his dining room. ...

- 3) a person whose job is drawing maps;
- 4) a sequence, a particular series of something;

... His life was not confining and the delight he took in this observation could not be explained by its suggestion of escape. He seemed to see, with a cartographer's eye, that string of swimming pools, that quasi-subterranean stream that curved across the county. He had made a discovery, a contribution to modern geography; he would name the stream Lucinda after his wife. ...

- 5) to move oneself upwards to a higher position;
- 6) a piece of equipment consisting of a series of bars or steps between two upright lengths of wood or metal used for climbing up or down;

... To be embraced and sustained by the light green water was less a pleasure, it seemed, than the resumption of a natural condition, and he would have liked to swim without trunks, but this was not possible, considering his project. He hoisted himself up on the far curb – he never used the ladder – and started across the lawn. ...

- 7) a person travelling to a place of particular personal interest;

... Making his way home by an uncommon route gave him the feeling that he was a pilgrim, an explorer, a man with a destiny, and he knew that he would find friends all along the way; friends would line the banks of the Lucinda River. ...

- 8) a small boat made of rubber that is filled with air;
- 9) attractive or beautiful;
- 10) (of vegetation, especially grass) growing luxuriantly;
- 11) people or companies that provide food and drink for special occasions such as weddings and parties;

... The only person in the water was Rusty Towers, who floated there on a rubber raft. Oh, how bonny and lush were the banks of the Lucinda River! Prosperous men and women gathered by the sapphire-colored waters while caterer's men in white coats passed them cold gin. ...

- 12) an obstacle to be jumped, especially by a horse and rider in a competition;
- 13) take a structure to pieces;

... This meant crossing the Lindleys' riding ring and he was surprised to find it overgrown with grass and all the jumps dismantled. He wondered if the Lindleys had sold their horses or gone away for the summer and put them out to board. He seemed to remember having heard something about the Lindleys and their horses but the memory was unclear. ...

- 14) a weird joke;
- 15) boisterous play;

... He had signed nothing, vowed nothing, pledged nothing, not even to himself. Why, believing as he did, that all human obduracy was susceptible to common sense, was he unable to turn back? Why was he determined to complete his journey even if it meant putting his life in danger? At what point had this prank, this joke, this piece of horseplay become serious? ...

- 16) frown in an angry or bad-tempered way;
- 17) push, elbow, or bump against (someone) roughly;

... He dove, scowling with distaste, into the chlorine and had to swim with his head above water to avoid collisions, but even so he was bumped into, splashed, and jostled. When he got to the shallow end both lifeguards were shouting at him: "Hey, you, you without the identification disk, get outa the water." He did, but they had no way of pursuing him and he went through the reek of suntan oil and chlorine out through the hurricane fence and passed the handball courts. ...

- 18) to make his visit not so abrupt and unexpected;
- 19) showing great energy and enthusiasm;

... They were zealous reformers but they were not Communists, and yet when they were accused, as they sometimes were, of subversion, it seemed to gratify and excite them. Their beech hedge was yellow and he guessed this had been blighted like the Levys' maple. He called hullo, hullo, to warn the Hallorans of his approach, to palliate his invasion of their privacy. ...

20) marked by great personal bravery;

21) something that increases physical activity and makes your body work faster;

... He needed a drink. Whiskey would warm him, pick him up, carry him through the last of his journey, refresh his feeling that it was original and valorous to swim across the county. Channel swimmers took brandy. He needed a stimulant. He crossed the lawn in front of the Hallorans' house and went down a little path to where they had built a house for their only daughter, Helen, and her husband, Eric Sachs. ...

22) a situation in which people celebrate or enjoy themselves in a lively and noisy way, especially by singing, dancing, and drinking alcohol;

23) before a particular time;

24) reject in an abrupt or ungracious manner;

... He crossed some fields to the Biswangers' and the sounds of revelry there. They would be honored to give him a drink, they would be happy to give him a drink. The Biswangers invited him and Lucinda for dinner four times a year, six weeks in advance. They were always rebuffed and yet they continued to send out their invitations, unwilling to comprehend the rigid and undemocratic realities of their society. ...

25) a person who is professionally trained and licensed to examine the eyes for visual defects, diagnose problems or impairments, and prescribe corrective lenses or provide other types of treatment.

... They did not belong to Neddy's set – they were not even on Lucinda's Christmas-card list. He went toward their pool with feelings of indifference, charity, and some unease, since it seemed to be getting dark and these were the longest days of the year. The party when he joined it was noisy and large. Grace Biswanger was the kind of hostess who asked the optometrist, the veterinarian, the real-estate dealer, and the dentist. ...

IV. *Answer the questions.*

1. What kind of morning was it when Neddy started his unusual journey?
2. What route did Neddy choose to travel home?
3. Why did Neddy call his imaginary river of swimming pools the Lucinda River?
4. Where did Neddy find shelter during the storm?
5. What was the next obstacle on his way?
6. How did he manage to cross route 424?
7. Which rules did Neddy follow and which ones did he break while swimming through a public swimming pool?
8. What did Neddy and Mrs. Halloran talk about when Neddy was swimming through her swimming pool?
9. Whom did Neddy ask to give him a drink?
10. Why wasn't Neddy given a drink at the Sachses'?
11. What happened at the next swimming pool?
12. How did he feel when he happened to be at his ex-mistress's house?
13. What was the end of his journey?

V. *Describe Neddy's extravagant project of way back home.*

1. How many swimming pools were there in the Lucinda River?
2. Make a list of swimming pools.
3. Give a brief description of each pool, paying attention to
 - a) the water in the pool;
 - b) the atmosphere around the pool;
 - c) the way he was greeted by the owner of each pool.
4. Is there a certain tendency in the way the swimming pools differ from one another?
5. If there is a tendency, how can you describe it?
6. What does the tendency symbolize?

VI. *Describe Neddy Merrill at the beginning of his journey and at the end of it, paying attention to:*

- a) his emotional state;
- b) the way he dove, swam and got out of each pool on his way swimming home along the Lucinda River.

Compare your description at the beginning of his journey and at the end of it.

How does it correlate with the changes of swimming pools along the Lucinda River?

VII. *What happened to Neddy Merrill? Comment on the extracts given below.*

1. ... He left his trunks at the deep end, walked to the shallow end, and swam this stretch. As he was pulling himself out of the water he heard Mrs. Halloran say, "We've been terribly sorry to hear about all your misfortunes, Neddy."
"My misfortunes?" Ned asked. "I don't know what you mean."
"Why, we heard that you'd sold the house and that your poor children."
"I don't recall having sold the house," Ned said, "and the girls are at home."
"Yes," Mrs. Halloran sighed. "Yes..." Her voice filled the air with an unseasonable melancholy and Ned spoke briskly. "Thank you for the swim." ...
2. ... Was he losing his memory, had his gift for concealing painful facts let him forget that he had sold his house, that his children were in trouble, and that his friend had been ill? ...
3. ... Then he heard Grace at his back say: "They went for broke overnight – nothing but income – and he showed up drunk one Sunday and asked us to loan him five thousand dollars..."
4. ... "What do you want?" she [Neddy's former mistress] asked.
"I'm swimming across the county."
"Good Christ. Will you ever grow up?"
"What's the matter?"
"If you've come here for money," she [Neddy's former mistress] said, "I won't give you another cent." ...
5. ... The house was locked, and he thought that the stupid cook or the stupid maid must have locked the place up until he remembered that it had been some time since they had employed a maid or a cook. He shouted, pounded

on the door, tried to force it with his shoulder, and then, looking in at the windows, saw that the place was empty. ...

VIII. Think about the following questions

1. What does the Lucinda River and Neddy's journey symbolize?
2. How do these symbols characterize Neddy's life?

The Enormous Radio

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) college alumni bulletin;
- 2) appliances;
- 3) to put the plug into a wall socket;
- 4) to make peace with something;
- 5) to dim the interference;
- 6) power fuse;
- 7) to fiddle with;
- 8) to give hell;
- 9) to overshoot the mark;
- 10) an overdraft;
- 11) a furtive insight;
- 12) tambourine;
- 13) to surrender one's resentment;
- 14) hypocritical;
- 15) to indulge;
- 16) month's allowance;
- 17) a sobering talk;
- 18) to probate the will;
- 19) virtue;
- 20) a nun.

II. *Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:*

- 1) to lose power or strength in an uneven way, almost stop;
- 2) a wooden box or piece of furniture housing a radio, television set;
- 3) to become weak and disappear;

... Neither of them understood the mechanics of radio – or of any of the other appliances that surrounded them – and when the instrument faltered, Jim would strike the side of the cabinet with his hand. This sometimes helped. One Sunday afternoon, in the middle of a Schubert quartet, the music faded away altogether.

Jim struck the cabinet repeatedly, but there was no response; the Schubert was lost to them forever. ...

- 4) something which is not supposed to be there and not wanted;
- 5) be confused and perplexed;
- 6) the surface where the dials and switches are located;
- 7) a group of five people playing music together;

... Irene was proud of her living room, she had chosen its furnishings and colors as carefully as she chose her clothes, and now it seemed to her that the new radio stood among her intimate possessions like an aggressive intruder. She was confounded by the number of dials and switches on the instrument panel, and she studied them thoroughly before she put the plug into a wall socket and turned the radio on. The dials flooded with a malevolent green light, and in the distance, she heard the music of a piano quintet. ...

- 8) short sharp knocking sounds made by a mechanism;
- 9) distinguish with difficulty;
- 10) to broadcast or send out an electrical signal, or a radio or television programme;

... The rattling of the elevator cables and the opening and closing of the elevator doors were reproduced in her loudspeaker, and, realizing that the radio was sensitive to electrical currents of all sorts, she began to discern through the Mozart the ringing of telephone bells, the dialing of phones, and the lamentation of a vacuum cleaner. By listening more carefully, she was able to distinguish doorbells, elevator bells, electric razors, and Waring mixers, whose sounds had been picked up from the apartments that surrounded hers and transmitted through her loudspeaker. ...

- 11) with a lot of pauses between words often because of a lack of confidence;
- 12) to instruct or inform (someone) thoroughly, especially in preparation for a task;
- 13) to approach an end;

... She heard, in the course of the afternoon, the halting conversation of a woman entertaining her aunt, the hysterical conclusion of a luncheon party, and a hostess briefing her maid about some cocktail guests. "Don't give the best Scotch to anyone who hasn't white hair," the hostess said. "See if you can get

rid of that liver paste before you pass those hot things, and could you lend me five dollars? I want to tip the elevator man.”

As the afternoon waned, the conversations increased in intensity. From where Irene sat, she could see the open sky above the East River. There were hundreds of clouds in the sky, as though the south wind had broken the winter into pieces and were blowing it north, and on her radio she could hear the arrival of cocktail guests and the return of children and businessmen from their schools and offices. ...

- 14) to mend or repair;
- 15) a television or radio advertisement;
- 16) inappropriate and unwanted;

... A man came in the morning and fixed the radio. Irene turned it on cautiously and was happy to hear a California wine commercial and a recording of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, including Schiller’s “Ode to Joy.” She kept the radio on all day and nothing untoward came from the speaker. ...

III. Answer the questions.

1. What kind of people were the Westcotts?
2. What did the Westcotts try to conceal from their friends?
3. Why did the new radio set appear in the Westcotts’ living room?
4. What was the first experience when Irene turned on the new radio set?
5. What kind of interference prevented Irene from listening to music?
6. What interrupted Chopin prelude which Irene and Jim were listening to while having dinner?
7. Whose voices did the Westcotts hear over the radio that evening?
8. What were Irene’s thoughts when the next morning she was going downstairs in the elevator together with some of her neighbours?
9. Why did Irene refuse to go shopping with her friends?
10. What was the “broadcasting” Irene had been listening during the entire day before she and Jim went out for dinner?
11. What was strange about Irene’s behavior at the dinner party?

12. Why was Irene so agitated the next day when Jim got home after work?
13. Why was Jim so depressed?
14. Why did Jim lose control of his emotions and start shouting at Irene?
15. What did Jim accuse her of?

IV. Agree or disagree.

1. Jim had a perfect ability to fix all household appliances when they broke down.
2. Irene was happy to have a new radio set as it perfectly fitted her living room.
3. When Irene heard a conversation in the middle of the piece of music she thought it to be a play being broadcasted over the radio.
4. That was the nurse of their neighbours' child, whose voice Irene recognized at once.
5. All neighbours could hear Irene and Jim talking when the new radio set was turned on.
6. Irene sincerely sympathized with her neighbours who had serious problems.
7. Jim refused to overhear because he believed it to be indecent.
8. Irene got depressed about what she had overheard because the life around her was sordid and sinful.
9. Unlike their neighbours Irene and Jim never quarreled.

V. Speak on the following topics:

1. The evolution of the radio "broadcasting" in Irene's living room.
2. Irene's getting addicted to overhearing what was going on at her neighbours' apartments.
3. Irene's being as sordid, sinful and hypocritical as all the other neighbours.

The Superintendent

I. *Define the words and phrases. Describe the episode in which the word or phrase is used:*

- 1) water supply;
- 2) to keep an eye on the gauge;
- 3) handyman;
- 4) a moving day;
- 5) johnnycake;
- 6) to verge on awe;
- 7) a tenant;
- 8) to duck-foot;
- 9) a fan;
- 10) kitchen exhaust;
- 11) to light out;
- 12) sleep-out cooks and maids;
- 13) maintenance crew;
- 14) to hang up;
- 15) to get a cut from somebody;
- 16) a grass widow;
- 17) to overhaul;
- 18) caboodle;
- 19) be on the move;
- 20) a janitor;
- 21) to take pains;
- 22) to carry the full burden on one's shoulders;
- 23) porch furniture;
- 24) freighter;
- 25) to build a fire under somebody;
- 26) pass key;
- 27) to put on weight;
- 28) to extoll;
- 29) importunate;
- 30) a lunch pail.

II. Find words and phrases in the given extracts to fit the following definitions:

- 1) an instrument that measures and gives a visual display of the amount, level, or contents of something;

... The basement was still. Far up the back elevator shaft he could hear the car moving down, floor by floor, attended by the rattle of milk bottles. It would take an hour for the auxiliary to fill the roof tank, and Chester decided to keep an eye on the gauge himself, and let the handyman sleep. ...

- 2) tenants who rent the apartment for a long period of time;
- 3) tenants who can pay the rent only up to a certain limit and not more;

... Chester had seen the apartment building through many lives, and it seemed that another was commencing. He had, since 1943, divided the tenants into two groups, the “permanents” and the “ceilings.” A rent increase had been granted the management, and he knew that that would weed out a number of the “ceilings.” ...

- 4) to be too tight (about shoes);
- 5) nuts of a cultivated hazel tree;

... He duckfooted off to work at eight every morning in a pair of English shoes that seemed to pinch him. The Bestwicks had been used to more money than they now had, and while Mrs. Bestwick’s tweed suits were worn, her diamonds, as Mrs. Coolidge had noticed, were as big as filberts. The Bestwicks had two daughters and never gave Chester any trouble. ...

- 6) determined to do what they want and very unwilling to change their mind;
- 7) easily irritated;

... Mr. Negus was stubborn, and the two older women packed their trunks and moved to an apartment on West Fifty-eighth Street. After they had gone, a decorator came in and overhauled the place. He was followed by the grand piano, the poodles, the Book-of-the-Month Club membership, and the crusty Irish maid. ...

- 8) a piece of clothing that covers both the upper and lower parts of the body and is worn especially over other clothes to protect them;

... Chester went to the water tank and saw two men in overalls way up the iron ladder, working on the switch. Stanley stood a few rungs below them, passing up tools. Chester climbed the iron ladder and gave them his advice. ...

- 9) a flexible pipe used in firefighting;
- 10) an appliance fired by gas or oil in which air or water is heated to be circulated throughout a building in a heating system;

... Why, this place might catch fire in the middle of the night, and there's nobody here knows where the hoses are but you and Stanley. There's the elevator machines and the electricity and the gas and the furnace. How much oil did you say that furnace burned last winter, Chester?" ...

III. Answer the questions.

1. Why did Chester Coolidge wake up at six in the morning on the moving day?
2. Who was due to move out and to move in that very day?
3. What kind of people were the Bestwicks?
4. What was Mrs. Neguses background?
5. What did Chester think about his tenants and the way they equipped and furnished their living rooms?
6. What for did Mrs. Bestwick ask Chester to come in?
7. Why did Chester refrain from discussing any possibility to keep the rent low for the Bestwicks?
8. Why couldn't the Bestwicks move out in due time?
9. How did Chester try to hurry Mrs. Bestwick to leave the apartment?
10. What constituted Chester's daily routine?
11. How did Chester solve the problem with the broken-down pump machinery that controlled the water supply?
12. Is there any proof that he performed his duties well?
13. Why did Chester decide to have his shoes polished?
14. Why was Katie Shay so jealous when a stranger started to feed the pigeons?
15. Why did Chester think that the day had failed to have any meaning?

IV. Describe a) Mrs. Bestwick, b) Mrs. Negus following the plan:

1. Appearance.
2. Clothes they wore.
3. Background.
4. Marriage and family.
5. Financial position.
6. Way they tried to solve their problems.

What unites these two women in the situation described in the story?

- Compare the stories “The Enormous Radio” and “The Superintendent”.
 1. What do they have in common?
 2. What is the function of the radio in the first story?
 3. Why does the author choose a superintendent, not just one of the tenants, for the role of the central character in the second one?

- Can the idea of difference between the life on display, for everybody to see, and the inner life of a person or a family be traced in other stories? Substantiate your opinion.

- John Cheever is sometimes called “the Chekhov of the suburbs”. Why? What does the suburban America portrayed in his stories look like?

Мария Юрьевна Родионова

John Cheever. Selected Prose

Джон Чивер. Рассказы

Учебно-методические материалы по домашнему чтению

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