

Name: _____ Class: _____

The Star and the Lily

By Hamilton Wright Mabie
1905



[1] An old chieftain sat in his wigwam,¹ quietly smoking his favorite pipe, when a crowd of Indian boys and girls suddenly entered, and, with numerous offerings of tobacco, begged him to tell them a story, and he did so.

There was once a time when this world was filled with happy people; when all the nations were as one, and the crimson tide of war had not begun to roll. Plenty of game was in the forest and on the plains. None were in want, for a full supply was at hand. Sickness was unknown. The beasts of the field were tame; they came and went at the bidding of man. One unending spring gave no place for winter — for its cold blasts or its unhealthy chills. Every tree and bush yielded fruit. Flowers carpeted the earth. The air was laden with their fragrance, and redolent² with the songs of wedded warblers that flew from branch to branch, fearing none, for there were none to harm them. There were birds then of more beautiful song and plumage than now. It was such a time, when earth was a paradise and man worthily its possessor, that the Indians were lone inhabitants of the American wilderness. They numbered millions; and living as nature designed them to live, enjoyed its many blessings. Instead of amusements in close rooms, the sport of the field was theirs. At night they met on the wide green beneath the heavenly worlds — the ah-nung-o-kah. They watched the stars; they loved to gaze at them, for they believed them to be the residences of the good, who had been taken home by the Great Spirit.³

One night they saw one star that shone brighter than all others. Its location was far away in the south, near a mountain peak. For many nights it was seen, till at length it was doubted by many that the star was as far distant in the southern skies as it seemed to be. This doubt led to an examination, which proved the star to be only a short distance away, and near the tops of some trees. A number of warriors were deputed to go and see what it was. They went, and on their return said it appeared strange, and somewhat like a bird. A committee of the wise men were called to inquire into, and if possible to ascertain the meaning of, the strange phenomenon. They feared that it might be the omen⁴ of some disaster. Some thought it a precursor of good, others of evil; and some supposed it to be the star spoken of by their forefathers as the forerunner of a dreadful war.

1. a dome-shaped hut or tent
2. an archaic term for fragrant or sweet-smelling
3. a spiritual force that some Native American cultures believe in
4. an event regarded as a sign of good or evil

1

One moon had nearly gone by, and yet the mystery remained unsolved. One night a young warrior had a dream, in which a beautiful maiden⁵ came and stood at his side, and thus addressed him: "Young bravel charmed with the land of my forefathers, its flowers, its birds, its rivers, its beautiful lakes, and its mountains clothed with green, I have left my sisters in yonder world to dwell among you. Young bravel ask your wise and your great men where I can live and see the happy race continually; ask them what form I shall assume in order to be loved."

[5] Thus discoursed the bright stranger: The young man awoke. On stepping out of his lodge he saw the star yet blazing in its accustomed place. At early dawn the chief's crier was sent round the camp to call every warrior to the council lodge. When they had met, the young warrior related his dream. They concluded that the star that had been seen in the south had fallen in love with mankind, and that it was desirous to dwell with them.

The next night five tall, noble-looking, adventurous braves were sent to welcome the stranger to earth. They went and presented to it a pipe of peace, filled with sweet-scented herbs, and were rejoiced⁶ that it took it from them. As they returned to the village, the star, with expanded wings, followed, and hovered over their homes till the dawn of day. Again it came to the young man in a dream, and desired to know where it should live and what form it should take. Places were named — on top of giant trees, or in flowers. At length it was told to choose a place itself, and it did so. At first it dwelt in the white rose of the mountains; but there it was so buried that it could not be seen. It went to the prairie; but it feared the hoof of the buffalo. It next sought the rocky cliff; but there it was so high that the children, whom it loved most, could not see it.

"I know where I shall live," said the bright fugitive — "where I can see the gliding canoe of the race I most admire. Children! — yes, they shall be my playmates, and I will kiss their slumber by the side of cool lakes. The nation shall love me wherever I am."

These words having been said, she alighted on the waters, where she saw herself reflected. The next morning thousands of white flowers were seen on the surface of the lakes, and the Indians gave them this name, wah-be-gwan-nee (white flower).

This star lived in the southern skies. Her brethren⁷ can be seen far off in the cold north, hunting the Great Bear, whilst her sisters watch her in the east and west.

[10] Children! When you see the lily on the water, take it in your hands and hold it to the skies; that it may be happy on earth, as its two sisters, the morning and evening stars, are happy in heaven.

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5. an archaic term for a girl or young woman
6. Rejoice (verb): to feel or show great joy
7. brothers

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Name: _____ Class: _____

The Poetry Quilt

By Deirdre Mundy
2014



[1] Charity stood by the house. Across the road, Andover's weathervane¹ spun in the wind.

Charity whispered, "The vane on the meeting house is turning to and fro. The first breeze of April whips across the melting snow."

That may be a fine addition to my poetry quilt, she thought. In fact, that poem will finish it. She repeated her rhyme aloud and smiled.

Her older sister, Prudence, overheard. "Charity, when are you going to grow up? Making rhymes is for babies. No one marries a girl for her poems. You should practice tending the house instead."

[5] Charity's throat tightened. "I know, Prudence. I'll work harder."

Prudence smiled and handed her the broom. "You can start by sweeping the walk. I'm going inside to help Mother with the baking."

Charity kept her head down as she swept. She tried to ignore the warm breeze. Prudence was right. Only babies made rhymes.

That evening, Charity embroidered² her last poem, the one about the weathervane. Then she finished the quilt and put it in her dowry³ chest. She was done with poems.

Weeks passed. Charity worked hard. She cooked and cleaned, and she didn't make any rhymes.

[10] One night, she took out her poetry quilt and looked at it. She'd embroidered 35 poems. It had been a lot of work, but she'd loved it. She sighed. "Prudence is right. I need to grow up. Only babies make rhymes about everything they see."

1. a turning pointer to show the direction of the wind
2. to decorate cloth by sewing on it with thread
3. a box filled with blankets and other items that a wife brings to her husband when they marry

She was so tired that she didn't put the quilt back. Instead, she left it folded on her bed.

That night, Charity tossed and turned. When she woke up in the morning, the air was hazy.⁴

She glanced at the foot of her bed.

The poetry quilt was missing!

[15] Charity dressed and hurried to the kitchen, where she found her father sitting at the table. Soot⁵ coated his face.

Charity gasped. "What happened? And where are Prudence and Mother?"

"The Bradstreets' house burned down last night," her father replied. "They lost everything. Prudence and your mother took them food and blankets."

"Blankets? Oh no!" Charity dashed⁶ out the door. The Bradstreets were among the most respected people in the colony.⁷ She couldn't let them see her poetry quilt. It was too embarrassing.

She met her mother and sister in the street. They'd already delivered the blankets.

[20] "I have to get my quilt back," Charity cried.

"The Bradstreets have nothing left! You can't begrudge⁸ them a blanket," her mother scolded⁹ her.

"Yes, Mother," Charity said forlornly.¹⁰

Later that afternoon, Charity knelt in the garden to weed. She glanced up and saw Mistress Bradstreet talking to her mother. She was holding the poetry quilt.

Charity blushed. Mistress Bradstreet probably didn't like the quilt. Prudence was right. She shouldn't have made those rhymes.

[25] Charity stood quickly when she noticed Mistress Bradstreet walking over to the garden. She brushed dirt from her apron. Her legs shook as she curtsied. "Good day, Mistress Bradstreet. I'm sorry for the fire at your house."

"I'm thankful no one was hurt," Mistress Bradstreet said softly. "But I fear that your mother may have accidentally given me this." She held out the quilt.

"It's all right," Charity replied. "It's just a silly old quilt. Some of my baby work. I'm sorry for the poems."

4. covered by fog or smoke
5. a black powder that is created by burning something
6. **Dash (verb):** to run somewhere quickly
7. an early type of state in the United States
8. to give unwillingly
9. **Scold (verb):** to point out someone's fault or wrongdoing
10. to do something in a sad manner

"Why are you sorry? I enjoyed the poems. Your work shows great promise."

"But Prudence says poems are for babies."

[30] Mistress Bradstreet smiled. "I'm not a baby, and I write poems. I've even published a book."

Charity's jaw dropped.

"In fact," the woman continued, "I make poems all the time. I'm working on one now about the fire. It's how I remind myself to be grateful for what I have. Otherwise I might waste my days bemoaning¹¹ what I've lost."

"I'm thankful for warm breezes in springtime," Charity said.

Mistress Bradstreet nodded.

[35] "I could tell from your poems."

Charity took a deep breath. "Mistress Bradstreet, may I show you more poems someday? And would you let me hear your poems?"

"I'd love that, Charity." Mistress Bradstreet handed her the quilt. "Your poems helped me smile after the fire. But you should keep this. It's a beautiful addition to your dowry chest."

"Thank you, Mistress Bradstreet!" Charity curtsied, then ran to put the quilt inside the house before returning to the garden. After all, she had an idea for a poem about radishes.

Name: _____ Class: _____

Teacher Tamer

By Avi
1994



[1] The whole fifth grade was engaged in silent reading. The students were reading their books while Mrs. Wessex, the teacher, sat at her desk in the front of the room, reading hers. Her book was a huge one titled *Crime and Punishment*. Fifteen minutes into the period, a large spitball landed on the middle of the page Mrs. Wessex was reading. She gasped — audibly.

As the class looked up, the teacher peered down at the page to see what had landed. When she lifted her face, it was the color of chalk.

An uneasy murmur fluttered through the room.

Life in the fifth grade was never good when Mrs. Wessex was angry. Lately, her anger seemed to erupt daily. A tall, big-boned woman with large hands, she had graying, curly hair and wrinkles on her face. That day she was wearing a baggy blue dress that was also wrinkled.

[5] "Nasty," was the way one student described her. No one disagreed.

She contemplated the class like a surgeon deciding where to cut. "Gregory Martinez!" she called. "Come here this instant!"

A hush fell upon the class as Gregory reluctantly slid out of his chair, then slumped to the front of the class, hands deep in his baggy pockets.

Gregory was short for his eleven years, and heavyset. His complexion was dark, his hair black, his eyes intense and at the moment full of worry. Though he had been in the school only a few months, everyone at Kennedy Middle School knew he was a brain. When Mrs. Wessex asked a question, it was always Gregory who had his hand up. More often than not he had the right answer, too.

Though Gregory liked being smart, his intelligence set him off from the other kids. He wanted to be liked, but they thought of him as different. Lately, however, things had begun to change.



"Female student and teacher" by Engineering at Cambridge is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

[10] During the past two weeks Mrs. Wessex had accused Gregory of various acts of misbehavior. She had gone so far as to punish him four times. Though getting into trouble improved Gregory's class standing, he kept insisting he was innocent. As far as he was concerned, Mrs. Wessex was picking on him. He wished he knew why.

Halfway to the teacher's desk, he said, "I didn't do it." Mrs. Wessex stopped him in his tracks with a hard glare. "Didn't do *what*?" she demanded.

Instantly aware he had made a tactical¹ mistake by saying anything before he was accused, he replied, "I was just reading."

"Come over here!" the teacher insisted. She pointed to a spot on the floor near her desk.

Gregory drew closer. Mrs. Wessex's desk was always neat. Its uncluttered state was taken by her slovenly² students as a rebuke.³

[15] "Hands out of your pockets!" she snapped.

Gregory ripped his hands out, bringing a shower of small coins that scattered upon the floor. A burst of laughter erupted from thirty-six kids.

Trying desperately to keep from grinning, Gregory bent over to gather up the coins.

"Do that later!" Mrs. Wessex shouted. She had become angrier.

The classroom stilled instantly. Gregory felt his grin evaporate.⁴ As he tried to control his growing anxiety, he stared at his feet.

[20] "Do you see that?" the teacher demanded. She pointed right at her book. "Look"

Gregory lifted his face. The spitball — surrounded by an expanding circle of moisture — lay upon the page. Not only did Gregory recognize the spitball for what it was, he knew that Ryan Jurgensen had shot it. Ryan, who occupied the desk right next to him, combined class bully, wisea-- and dummy in one skinny body topped with short-cropped blond hair. He was also school spitball artist, carrying a bundle of tissues and a bunch of large plastic straws in his pockets the way other kids carried pencils and erasers.

"Do you see that?" the teacher demanded of Gregory again.

"Yes, Mrs. Wessex."

"What is it?"

[25] Gregory's dark face turned darker. "A — a spitball."

1. relating to a plan of action meant to achieve a certain goal
2. messy and dirty
3. **Rebuke** (verb): to express strong disapproval or criticism
4. **Evaporate** (verb): to disappear

"Disgusting!" Mrs. Wessex informed him.

"I didn't do it," Gregory repeated with an intense sense of his own innocence.

"Young man, I believe you did!"

"I didn't!" Gregory protested.

"Then, who did?" she asked.

[30] Gregory made a half turn toward the class. Though he could sense other kids suppressing⁵ laughter at his plight,⁶ he felt they were on his side.

As for Ryan, not only did Gregory observe his barely stifled grin, he noted the bully's right fist balled up, a blatant⁷ threat that it Gregory dared to name him as culprit,⁸ the fist would be put to use.

"Gregory!" Mrs. Wessex said, "I asked you a question. If you didn't do this disgusting thing, who did?"

"I don't know," he replied, struggling to contain his sense of indignation. She had no right to blame him.

"Mrs. Wessex," he suddenly blurted out, "how come you're always blaming me?"

[35] The class gasped.

For a moment — but only a moment — Mrs. Wessex's face softened. Then she glared at him.

"Gregory," she ordered, "go stand with your face in the shame corner for fifteen minutes."

"But I didn't do anything!" Gregory protested anew.

On appeal, Mrs. Wessex said, "'Twenty minutes."

A giggle erupted from somewhere in the class.

"Quiet!" Mrs. Wessex cried.

Gregory, knowing that it would be useless to argue, shoved his hands back into his pockets and headed for the corner. Halfway there he stopped. "Mrs. Wessex, what about my money?"

"You may pick it up, then stand in the corner." This, from Mrs. Wessex, was a measure of kindness.

Hearing the suppressed snickers of his classmates, Gregory picked up the coins.

When he finally got into the shame corner, he was hot, upset, and angry. Mrs. Wessex was so unfair, he kept thinking. Staring into the corner, he vowed that this time he would have revenge.

5. **Suppress (verb):** to hold back
 6. an unpleasant situation
 7. **Blatant (adjective):** done openly
 8. **Culprit (noun):** a person who is responsible for a crime

[45] During recess a bunch of kids gathered around him. "How come she picks on you?" Susan asked.

"I don't know," Gregory said, pleased that someone had noticed. "But I'm going to get back at her."

"Yeah, sure you will," Ryan teased. "Smartest kid in class does something wicked to the teacher. Sure. Right."

Gregory looked at the circle of faces. His classmates were really paying attention to him. At the moment he felt they really liked him. If only he could do something to keep their positive feelings. "I am going to do something," he insisted.

"Everybody hear that?" Ryan crowed.⁹ "Gregory's going to get revenge on Wessex."

[50] "Man," said Dori, "you do that you'll be the hero of the whole class."

Hero of the whole class. The words filled Gregory with excitement. He looked at Dori and smiled. Here was his opportunity. He would have his revenge and become a hero, too.

Two blocks from the Kennedy Memorial Middle School, tucked between Jack's Skate & Snow Boards and Robert's Famous Bar-Bee-Q-Ribs, stood Mrs. Barman's candy store. You could buy any piece of candy for five cents. During most of the day, the candy store had modest¹⁰ sales. Between the hours of three and four-thirty, it was packed with kids.

The display case contained fifty-two white plastic trays of candy, from Black Crows to clear jellybeans to white peppermints — and all colors and flavors in between.

Behind the display case stood Mrs. Barman. She was a small old woman, whose marshmallow-colored face, arms, and torso seemed to be all there was of her. If she had a lower body, no one had ever seen it.

[55] Kids asked for candy by pointing and saying "one" or "two." Mrs. Barman counted out the candy pieces and put them in a small white paper sack. "Fifteen cents," she'd say. The price was all she normally spoke.

It was to Mrs. Barman's that Gregory went after school. When it was his turn, the old lady gave him an inquiring look. "I want to speak to Tiny," Gregory announced.

Tiny was Mrs. Barman's son. If he was asked the proper way, he would sell you fireworks. Selling fireworks was illegal.

"Tiny!" Mrs. Barman shouted. "Kidtaseeya."

Gregory waited nervously. He had never spoken to Tiny before, and he was only remembering what some kid told him to do. He hoped he'd ask the right way. One of the things the kid had told him was, "You got to ask right, or Tiny won't sell you nothing."

9. to utter in a loud cry
 10. **Modest (adjective):** limited in size or amount

Name: _____ Class: _____

Autumntime

By Anthony Lentini
1999

[1] I saw my first tree today. Dad finally broke down and took us to East Boston Urban Center after Mom had been harping on it for the past two weeks. I think he was glad we went after all, because he was smiling quietly all during the trip back.

Dad used to tell me stories about the trees that still existed when he was a boy. There weren't very many even then, with the urbanization² program in full swing, but most people had seen at least one tree by the time they started school. It wasn't like nowadays, at any rate. Oh, I've seen the plastic trees; practically every street has a few of them. But you can tell the plastic ones are artificial just from looking at pictures in the microdot library.



"Autumntime" by Mick Garratt is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

This morning when we got up, the house was all excited. Mom dialed a light breakfast of toast and synthetic³ milk so that we wouldn't waste time eating. And when finished, the three of us took an elevator-bus up to the fourth level, where we caught the air track to Brooklyn. From there we took another elevator-bus down to main level, rode the monorail to Intercity Subway Station 27, and caught the second sublevel AA train to Boston. Our expectations were so high that Dad and I didn't mind it when Mom told us again how the tree was discovered.

The O'Brien home was one of the few examples of old-style wooden structures that hadn't been demolished in Boston's urban-renewal campaign at the turn of the century. The family had been able to avoid this because of its wealth and political influence, and the house was passed on through several generations to the present. Old man O'Brien had no heirs, so when he died the family home went up for auction, and the Urban Center bought it. When local officials arrived for an appraisal,⁴ they discovered that the house had a back yard, which is forbidden by zoning restrictions.

1. **Harp** (verb): to talk persistently about a particular topic
2. **Urbanization** (noun): the process by which cities are formed and become larger as more and more people begin living and working in central areas
3. **produced** artificially
4. an estimate of what a home is worth

1

[5] In the yard was a live tree — an olke was what Mom called it. When the news of the tree's discovery leaked out, quite a few sightseers stopped by to have a look at it, and the local government, realizing the money-making potential, began charging admission and advertising the place. By now it had become a favorite spot for school field trips and family excursions such as ours.

When we arrived in main Boston we rode the elevator-bus up to ground level and caught a monorail out to East Boston Urban Center 3. An air-cush taxi took us the rest of the way to the residence.

The home itself was unimpressive. It had none of the marble gloss or steely sheen of modern buildings, but was rather a dull white color, with the paint peeling in places. Dad paid the admission fee, and we spent the next 15 minutes on a dull guided tour of the house. The rooms were roped off to keep people from touching anything, but there were no windows facing the illegal backyard anyway, so it really didn't matter that I couldn't enter the rooms on that side.

My mind was on the tree, and I thought the inside tour would never end, but soon we were walking through a doorway hidden in one of the bookshelves and into the backyard. The yard was big — at least 10 by 20 feet — and I was surprised to find real grass growing on the sides of the concrete walkway built for tourists. The grass didn't distract me for long, however, because I just couldn't help noticing the tree!

It was located at one end of the yard, and there was a mesh fence around it for protection. It was similar in form to the plastic trees I'd seen, but there was much more to it than that. You could see details more intricate⁵ than in any artificial plant. And it was alive. Long ago someone had carved their initials in the bark, and you could see where the wound had healed. But best of all was the smell. It was a fresh, living odor, alien to the antiseptic⁶ world outside with all its metal, plastic, and glass. I wanted to touch the bark, but the fence prevented me from doing so. Mom and Dad just breathed deeply and stared up with smiles on their faces. The three of us stood there for a moment, and then the tour guide told us to make room for the next group. I didn't want to go — in fact, I felt almost like crying.

[10] On the way back home, Mom and Dad were silent, and I read through one of the brochures the guide had passed out. When I came to the part that said the O'Brien home would be open only for the rest of this year, I was sad. They intend to tear down the place to make room for some kind of insurance building, and the tree will have to go, too.

For the rest of the trip, I just sat still, fingering the object in my pocket which I had picked off the grass in the O'Brien's backyard. I think it's called an acorn.

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5. **Intricate** (adjective): detailed
6. **Antiseptic** (adjective): extremely neat, sterile, and clean, occasionally to the point of harshness

2

Name: _____

Class: _____

Fourteen

By Alice Gerstenberg
1920

CHARACTERS

MRS. HORACE PRINGLE: A woman of fashion.

ELAINE: Her debutante daughter.

DUNHAM: The butler or maid.

Fourteen

[1] SCENE: The dining-room of a New York residence. A long table running from left to right, with a chair at each end and six chairs on each side, is set elaborately for fourteen. DUNHAM, the butler, is hovering over the table to give it a few finishing touches as MRS. PRINGLE comes in. She is a woman of fashion, handsome, and wears a very lovely evening gown. She is rather excitable in temperament but withal capable and executive, vivacious¹ and humorously charming. She enters in haste carrying a corsage bouquet of flowers and the empty box of paper from which she has unwrapped them.]

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MRS. PRINGLE: Dunham, I've just had word from Mr. Harper that he was called away to the bedside of a friend who is very ill. He sent me these flowers — it's a good thing he did. I don't approve of young men refusing dinner invitations at the very last minute.

DUNHAM: [Relieving her.] I'll take the box and paper, Mrs. Pringle.

MRS. PRINGLE: [Looking at the table anxiously and then at her watch.] It's too bad — after you've set it all so beautifully — and it's getting so late — some one might be coming any moment. How's cook?

[5] DUNHAM: Cook's in a temper, as always, madam.

MRS. PRINGLE: I'm glad to hear it. She's like an actress — the better the temper, the better the performance. As long as she serves us a good dinner I don't care how much she swears. The rest of you can just keep out of her way. Where's Gustave?

1. **Vivacious (adjective):** attractively lively and animated

DUNHAM: I'm sorry to have to say it, madam, but there's such an awful blizzard out he's sweeping off the sidewalk.

MRS. PRINGLE: Oh! Dear me, yes! I should have ordered an awning!² But who expected a storm like this.

[She glances out of the window. ELAINE, a young debutante³ in evening gown comes running in with a bunch of place-cards.]

[10] ELAINE: Here are the place-cards, mother, and the diagram. Shall I put them around?

MRS. PRINGLE: Yes, dear Elaine, I'm going up to look after your father. He's so helpless about his ties. [She starts to leave the room.] Remove one plate, Dunham.

DUNHAM: Remove one plate, madam? Oh! Madam! It is a certainty! You wouldn't sit down with thirteen.

MRS. PRINGLE: [Drawing back.] Thirteen! Why, you're right — thirteen! We can never sit down with thirteen. That's all due to Mr. Harper's negligence.⁴ Sick friend, nothing! He's just one of those careless men who never answer their invitations in time. His flowers, indeed, to make me forgive him — now look at the trouble he's put me to — thirteen! I wonder whom I could get to come in the last minute. Quick — Elaine — help me think.

[She rushes to the telephone and looks madly through her list of acquaintances.]

[15] ELAINE: There's always Uncle George.

MRS. PRINGLE: He never opens his head!

DUNHAM: Mr. Morgan, madam, he always tells a joke or two.

MRS. PRINGLE: Why, yes, Dunham — that's clever of you! Hello Central — Lakeview 5971 — at once, please — Elaine dear, your hair's much too tight — pull it out — pull it out — come here. [In telephone.] Mr. Morgan's Well, this is Mrs. Pringle speaking — from across the street. Yes. When Mr. Morgan comes in, please tell him to call me up right away. I want him to dine with us — in about ten minutes — you expect him? [She pulls ELAINE'S hair out to make it look fluffier. ELAINE makes faces of pain, but her mother pays no attention.] Have him call me right away. [She hands up the receiver.] Now if he shouldn't get it — then what'll I do?

ELAINE: Well, mother, I don't have to be at the table. It's your party, anyway. Everybody's married and older than I am.

[20] MRS. PRINGLE: [Pointing to the table diagram in ELAINE'S hand.] Didn't I put you next to Oliver Farnsworth? Millions! He's worth millions!

2. a roof-like shelter of canvas that extends over a doorway
3. an upper-class young woman making her first official appearance in society
4. **Negligence (noun):** failure to take proper care in doing something



ELAINE: Well, he won't be giving me any.

MRS. PRINGLE: Can't he marry you? Aren't you going to try to make a good match for yourself? I find every eligible man I can at your head. Can't you finish the rest yourself?

ELAINE: It's no use, mother, your trying to marry me off to anyone as important as he is. He frightens me to death. I lose my tongue. I'm as afraid of him as I'd be afraid of the Prince of Wales!⁵

MRS. PRINGLE: The Prince of Wales! Oh! What wouldn't I give to have the Prince of Wales in my house! New York has lost its heart to him. I was just telling Mr. Farnsworth yesterday that I'd give anything to have the Prince here. I would establish my social position for life! And I've such a reputation for being a wonderful hostess. *[The telephone rings.]* Dear me! — the phone — Mrs. Sedgwick — Yes — this is Mrs. Pringle — What? No — Oh! Caught in a snow drift — can't get another car? *[She puts her hand over the telephone and speaks delightedly to ELAINE.]* Good! The widow can't come — that leaves us twelve — remove two plates, Dunham. *[DUNHAM removes two plates. and ELAINE changes the table-cards. MRS. PRINGLE continues into the telephone.]* Oh! That's a shame! I'm heartbroken. Oh! My dear, how can we get along without you! But have you really tried? Oh, I'm reduced to tears. Good-bye, dear. *[She hangs up the receiver, and takes it down again.]* Well, I'm glad she dropped out — Central — give me Lakeview 5971 — Dunham, with two less, you can save two cocktails and at least four glasses of champagne. *[Into the telephone.]* Has Mr. Morgan come in yet? Well, don't give him the message I telephoned before about crossing the street to Mrs. Pringle's for dinner. It's too late — you understand? *[She hangs up the receiver.]* Well, anyway, I've invited Clem, returned my indebtedness and saved my champagne besides —

[25] DUNHAM: The liquor is getting low, madam — what with prohibition⁶ and entertaining so much —

ELAINE: *[In dismay.]* But, mother, if you only have twelve people, Father can't sit at the head of the table.

MRS. PRINGLE: But he has to sit at the head. It looks too undignified⁷ when the man of the house is pushed to the side —

ELAINE: There's no other way. There must be a woman at each end —

MRS. PRINGLE: *[Distracted.]* How absurd! I always forget. Of course twelve is an impossible number — *[She goes around the table looking at the place cards.]* I don't want to put any of these women at the head — there's Mrs. Darby — such a cat — I wouldn't give her the honor and Mrs. — *[The telephone rings.]* Answer it, Dunham.

[30] DUNHAM: Hello — Mrs. Pringle's residence — a message? Yes, sir — What, sir? — Mr. Darby — the doctor says your baby has the chicken-pox —

MRS. PRINGLE: Chicken-pox! Elaine!

ELAINE: Mother!

5. The Prince of Wales is the title granted to the heir to the throne of the United Kingdom. The Prince of Wales becomes King when the King or Queen of England leaves the throne.

6. the time from 1920 to 1933 when it was illegal to make or sell alcohol in the United States

7. Undignified (adjective): appearing foolish

8. Distracted (adjective): deeply upset and agitated



DUNHAM: Yes, sir, *[He hangs up the receiver.]* Mr. Darby sends his apologies — but owing to the transmutability of the disease, Mr. and Mrs. Darby feel obliged to regret and also their house-guests, Mr. and Mrs. Fleetwood —

MRS. PRINGLE: That's four out.

[35] ELAINE: Then you're only eight! Quick, the plates, Dunham —

[She begins to remove chairs and gathers up silver and plates feverishly.] MRS. PRINGLE getting more and more distraught, helps. With so much unaccustomed help, DUNHAM gets confused and goes through many unnecessary motions; removes plates, breaks them, drops silver, aimlessly trying to hurry, his fingers all thumbs.]

MRS. PRINGLE: Don't we know someone to invite the last minute —

ELAINE: The Hatwoods —

MRS. PRINGLE: They don't serve drinks when they entertain — I can't afford to invite them to drink mine —

[40] ELAINE: The Greens —

MRS. PRINGLE: She's not interesting enough.

ELAINE: Mr. Conley —

MRS. PRINGLE: He never makes a dinner call, even after all the times I have invited him.

ELAINE: Hester Longley —

[45] MRS. PRINGLE: Not at the same table with you and Oliver Farnsworth. She's far too pretty, too clever —

ELAINE: Where's our book? *[She runs her finger down the address book.]* The Tupper's?

MRS. PRINGLE: The Tupper's! Good Heavens, Elaine, six in the family.

ELAINE: That would get us back to fourteen; then father could sit at the head of the table.

MRS. PRINGLE: Well, try them. I'll rush and tell your father to hold up the drawing room — *[Exit left.]*

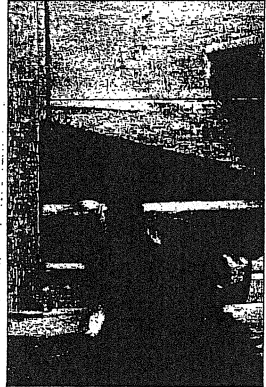
9. Feverish (adjective): feeling or showing extreme excitement or energy

Unnamed #1

Name: _____ Class: _____

Hungry there is no food but such as he must seek and oftentimes fight for, and his limbs are weighted before he reaches the water that is good to his thirsting throat.

So does he live, seeking, finding, joying and suffering. The door which accident had opened is opened still, but the cage remains forever empty!



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"Emancipation: A Life Fable" by Kate Chopin (1963) is in the public domain.

[1] There was once an animal born into this world, and opening his eyes upon Life, he saw above and about him confining walls, and before him were bars of iron through which came air and light from without; this animal was born in a cage.

Here he grew, and threw¹ in strength and beauty under the care of an invisible protecting hand. Hungry, food was ever at hand. When he thirsted water was brought, and when he felt the need to rest, there was provided a bed of straw upon which to lie, and here he found it good, licking his handsome flanks,² to bask in the sun beam that he thought existed but to lighten his home.

Awaking one day from his slothful³ rest, lo! the door of his cage stood open: accident had opened it. In the corner he crouched, wondering and fearfully. Then slowly did he approach the door, dreading the unaccustomed, and would have closed it, but for such a task his limbs were purposeless. So out the opening he thrust his head, to see the canopy of the sky grow broader, and the world waxing⁴ wider.

Back to his corner but not to rest, for the spell of the Unknown was over him, and again and again he goes to the open door, seeing each time more Light.

[5] Then one time standing in the flood of it; a deep in-drawn breath — a bracing of strong limbs, and with a bound he was gone.

On he rushes, in his mad flight, heedless⁵ that he is wounding and tearing his sleek sides — seeing, smelling, touching of all things; even stopping to put his lips to the noxious⁶ pool, thinking it may be sweet.

1. to grow or develop well
2. the side of a person or animal's body
3. Slothful (adjective); lazy
4. to become larger or more visible
5. Heedless (adjective); taking no notice of something
6. Noxious (adjective); harmful or unpleasant

Unnamed #2

Name: _____

[10] Dudley, who was so large his bottom drooped over either side of the kitchen chair, grinned and turned to Harry.

"Pass the frying pan."

"You've forgotten the magic word," said Harry irritably.

The effect of this simple sentence on the rest of the family was incredible: Dudley gasped and fell off his chair with a crash that shook the whole kitchen; Mrs. Dursley gave a small scream and clapped her hands to her mouth; Mr. Dursley jumped to his feet, veins throbbing in his temples.

"I meant 'please!'" said Harry quickly. "I didn't mean —"

[15] "WHAT HAVE I TOLD YOU," thundered his uncle, spraying spit over the table, "ABOUT SAYING THE 'M' WORD IN OUR HOUSE?"

"But I —"

"HOW DARE YOU THREATEN DUDLEY!" roared Uncle Vernon, pounding the table with his fist.

"I just —"

"I WARNED YOU! I WILL NOT TOLERATE MENTION OF YOUR ABNORMALITY UNDER THIS ROOF!"

[20] Harry stared from his purple-faced uncle to his pale aunt, who was trying to heave Dudley to his feet.

"All right," said Harry, "all right..."

Uncle Vernon sat back down, breathing like a winded rhinoceros and watching Harry closely out of the corners of his small, sharp eyes.

Ever since Harry had come home for the summer holidays, Uncle Vernon had been treating him like a bomb that might go off at any moment, because Harry Potter wasn't a normal boy. As a matter of fact, he was as not normal as it is possible to be.

Harry Potter was a wizard — a wizard fresh from his first year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. And if the Dursleys were unhappy to have him back for the holidays, it was nothing to how Harry felt.

[25] He missed Hogwarts so much it was like having a constant stomachache. He missed the castle, with its secret passageways and ghosts, his classes (though perhaps not Snape, the Potions master), the mail arriving by owl, eating banquets in the Great Hall, sleeping in his four-poster bed in the tower dormitory, visiting the gamekeeper, Hagrid, in his cabin next to the Forbidden Forest in the grounds, and, especially, Quidditch, the most popular sport in the wizarding world (six tall goal posts, four flying balls, and fourteen players on broomsticks).

[1] Not for the first time, an argument had broken out over breakfast at number four, Privet Drive. Mr. Vernon Dursley had been woken in the early hours of the morning by a loud, hooting noise from his nephew Harry's room.

"Third time this week!" he roared across the table. "If you can't control that owl, it'll have to go!"

Harry tried, yet again, to explain. "She's bored," he said. "She's used to flying around outside. If I could just let her out at night —"

"Do I look stupid?" snarled Uncle Vernon, a bit of fried egg dangling from his bushy mustache. "I know what'll happen if that owl's let out."

[5] He exchanged dark looks with his wife, Petunia.

Harry tried to argue back but his words were drowned by a long, loud belch from the Dursleys' son, Dudley.

"I want more bacon."

"There's more in the frying pan, sweetums," said Aunt Petunia, turning misty eyes on her massive son. "We must build you up while we've got the chance... I don't like the sound of that school food..."

"Nonsense, Petunia, I never went hungry when I was at Smeltings," said Uncle Vernon heartily. "Dudley gets enough, don't you, son?"

1. Massive (adjective): enormous

All Harry's spellbooks, his wand, robes, cauldron, and top-of-the-line Nimbus Two Thousand broomstick had been locked in a cupboard under the stairs by Uncle Vernon the instant Harry had come home. What did the Dursleys care if Harry lost his place on the House Quidditch team because he hadn't practiced all summer? What was it to the Dursleys if Harry went back to school without any of his homework done? The Dursleys were what wizards called Muggles (not a drop of magical blood in their veins), and as far as they were concerned, having a wizard in the family was a matter of deepest shame. Uncle Vernon had even padlocked Harry's owl, Hedwig, inside her cage, to stop her from carrying messages to anyone in the wizarding world.

Harry looked nothing like the rest of the family. Uncle Vernon was large and neckless, with an enormous black mustache; Aunt Petunia was horse-faced and bony; Dudley was blond, pink, and porky. Harry, on the other hand, was small and skinny, with brilliant green eyes and jet-black hair that was always untidy. He wore round glasses, and on his forehead was a thin, lightning-shaped scar.

It was this scar that made Harry so particularly unusual, even for a wizard. This scar was the only hint of Harry's very mysterious past, of the reason he had been left on the Dursleys' doorstep eleven years before.

At the age of one year old, Harry had somehow survived a curse from the greatest Dark sorcerer of all time, Lord Voldemort, whose name most witches and wizards still feared to speak. Harry's parents had died in Voldemort's attack, but Harry had escaped with his lightning scar, and somehow — nobody understood why — Voldemort's powers had been destroyed the instant he had failed to kill Harry.

[30] So Harry had been brought up by his dead mother's sister and her husband. He had spent ten years with the Dursleys, never understanding why he kept making odd things happen without meaning to, believing the Dursleys' story that he had got his scar in the car crash that had killed his parents.

And then, exactly a year ago, Hogwarts had written to Harry, and the whole story had come out. Harry had taken up his place at wizard school, where he and his scar were famous... but now the school year was over, and he was back with the Dursleys for the summer, back to being treated like a dog that had rolled in something smelly.

The Dursleys hadn't even remembered that today happened to be Harry's twelfth birthday. Of course, his hopes hadn't been high; they'd never given him a real present, let alone a cake — but to ignore it completely...

At that moment, Uncle Vernon cleared his throat importantly and said, "Now, as we all know, today is a very important day."

Harry looked up, hardly daring to believe it.

[35] "This could well be the day I make the biggest deal of my career," said Uncle Vernon.

Harry went back to his toast. *Of course*, he thought bitterly. *Uncle Vernon was talking about the stupid dinner party.* He'd been talking of nothing else for two weeks. Some rich builder and his wife were coming to dinner and Uncle Vernon was hoping to get a huge order from him (Uncle Vernon's company made drills).

"I think we should run through the schedule one more time," said Uncle Vernon. "We should all be in position at eight o'clock. Petunia, you will be —?"

"In the lounge," said Aunt Petunia promptly, "waiting to welcome them graciously to our home."

"Good, good. And Dudley?"

[40] "I'll be waiting to open the door." Dudley put on a foul, simpering smile. "May I take your coats, Mr. and Mrs. Mason?"

"They'll love him!" cried Aunt Petunia rapturously.²

"Excellent, Dudley," said Uncle Vernon. Then he rounded on Harry. "And you?"

"I'll be in my bedroom, making no noise and pretending I'm not there," said Harry tonelessly.

"Exactly," said Uncle Vernon nastily. "I will lead them into the lounge, introduce you, Petunia, and pour them drinks. At eight-fifteen —"

[45] "I'll announce dinner," said Aunt Petunia. "And, Dudley, you'll say —"

"May I take you through to the dining room, Mrs. Mason?" said Dudley, offering his fat arm to an invisible woman.

"My perfect little gentleman!" sniffed Aunt Petunia.

"And you?" said Uncle Vernon viciously to Harry.

"I'll be in my room, making no noise and pretending I'm not there," said Harry dully.

[50] "Precisely. Now, we should aim to get in a few good compliments at dinner. Petunia, any ideas?"

"Vernon tells me you're a *wonderful* golfer, Mr. Mason.... Do tell me where you bought your dress, Mrs. Mason..."

"Perfect... Dudley?"

"How about — We had to write an essay about our hero at school, Mr. Mason, and I wrote about you." This was too much for both Aunt Petunia and Harry. Aunt Petunia burst into tears and hugged her son, while Harry ducked under the table so they wouldn't see him laughing.

"And you, boy?" Harry fought to keep his face straight as he emerged. "I'll be in my room, making no noise and pretending I'm not there," he said.

2. **Rapturous** (*adjective*): full of joy