

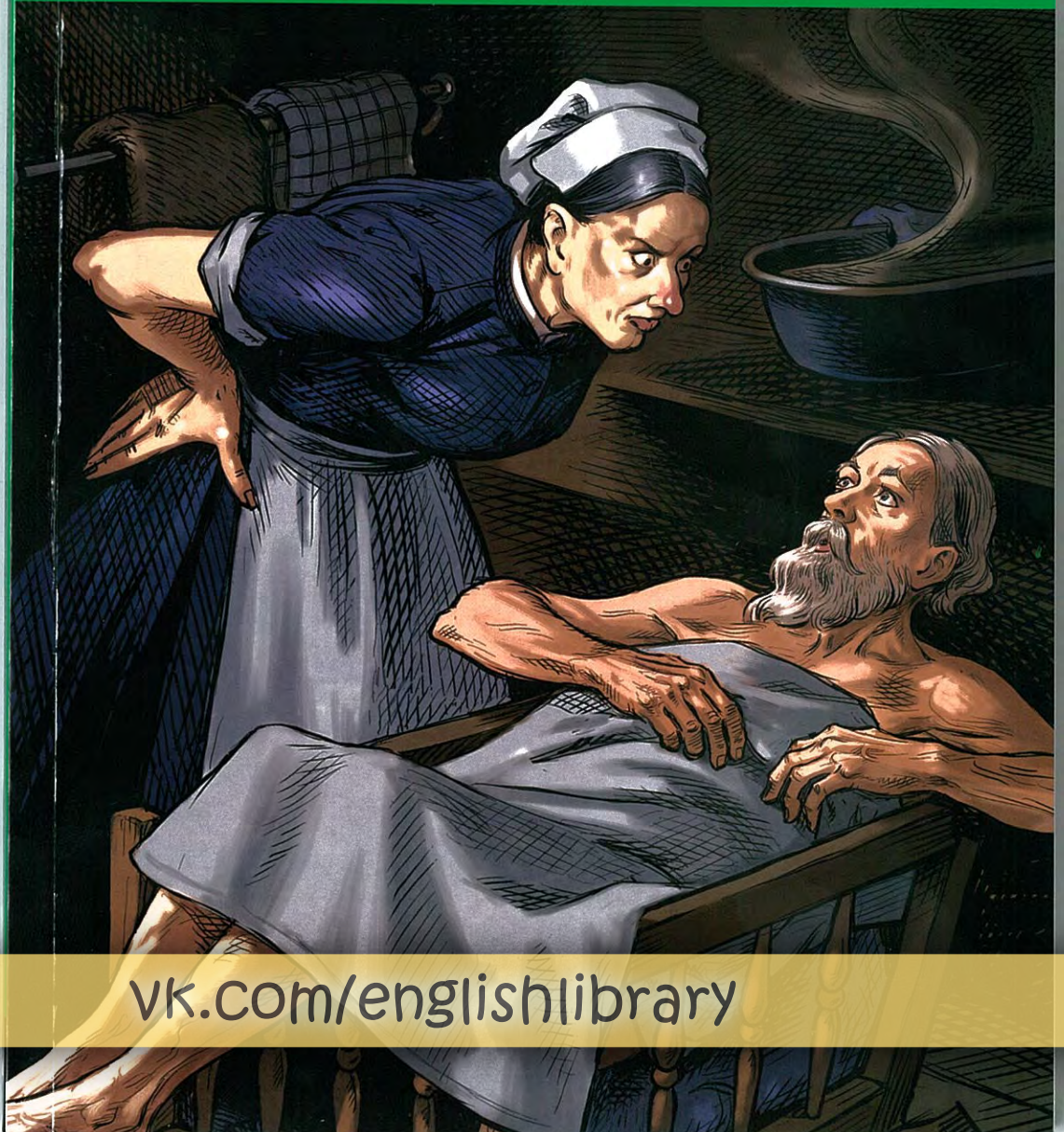


PENGUIN ACTIVE READING

LEVEL 3

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button and Other Stories

F. Scott Fitzgerald



vk.com/englishlibrary

Pearson Education Limited
Edinburgh Gate, Harlow,
Essex CM20 2JE, England
and Associated Companies throughout the world.

ISBN: 978-1-4082-6121-7

This edition first published by Pearson Education Ltd 2011

3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4

Text copyright © Pearson Education 2011

Illustrations by Piers Sanford

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted in accordance with
the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988

Set in 11/13pt A. Garamond
Printed in China
SWTC/03

Produced for the Publishers by Red Paper Design

*All rights reserved; no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying,
recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the Publishers.*

Published by Pearson Education Ltd in association with Penguin Books Ltd,
both companies being subsidiaries of Pearson Plc

Acknowledgements

The publisher would like to thank the following for their kind permission
to reproduce their photographs:

Fotolia.com: Alysta 74; **Shutterstock.com:** Anmor Photography 76

Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders and we apologise in advance for
any unintentional omissions. We would be pleased to insert the appropriate acknowledgement
in any subsequent edition of this publication.

Contents

	Activities 1	iv
Story 1	The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (Part 1)	1
	Activities 2	12
	The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (Part 2)	14
	Activities 3	26
Story 2	The Ice Palace (Part 1)	28
	Activities 4	36
	The Ice Palace (Part 2)	38
	Activities 5	48
Story 3	Ardita and the Pirate (Part 1)	50
	Activities 6	60
	Ardita and the Pirate (Part 2)	62
	Talk about it	72
	Write about it	73
	Project: New You!	74

For a complete list of the titles in the Penguin Active Reading series please go to www.penguinreaders.com.
Alternatively, write to your local Pearson Longman office or to: Penguin Readers Marketing Department,
Pearson Education, Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE, England.

vk.com/bastau

1.1 What's the book about?

1 These stories are by F. Scott Fitzgerald, a very famous writer. Discuss what you know about him. You can find out more on the Internet.

- a What other stories did he write?
- b Which country was he from?
- c When did he write his books?

2 Look at these pictures of pairs of people from these three stories.

Who do you think they are? Choose the right words and write them under the pictures.

- girlfriend and boyfriend mother and son husband and wife
brother and sister friends from schooldays teacher and student



mother... and... son girlfriend and boyfriend

1.2 What happens first?

1 Look at the words in *italics* at the top of the next page. Which of these sentences about Benjamin Button is correct, do you think?

- a He is an old man.
- b He is a baby.

2 Look at the pictures in the first part of the story. Which of these sentences is correct?

- a He is getting older.
- b He is getting younger.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

"I can't say exactly who I am," the old man replied. "I was only born a few hours ago. But I know my last name is Button."

Our story starts in the summer of 1860, in the busy city of Baltimore. At that time, babies were usually born at home, not in hospitals. But young Mr. and Mrs. Roger Button had different ideas. They wanted their first baby to arrive in a hospital.

Was this one of the reasons for the strange history that I am going to tell you? I can only describe what happened. Then you can decide.

The Roger Buttons were important people in Baltimore society. They knew every good family in town, and everyone knew them. This was their first baby, so Mr. Button was naturally nervous. He was hoping for a boy so he could send him to Yale College in Connecticut. Mr. Roger Button was a student at Yale when he was a young man. Of course, he wanted his son to follow him there.

The great day arrived. Mr. Button hurried to the hospital one morning in September for news of his wife and baby.

When he was close to the Maryland Private Hospital, he saw the family doctor on the front steps. There was a serious look on the doctor's face and this worried Mr. Button.

He ran toward the doctor.

"Doctor Keene!" he called. "Oh, Doctor Keene!"

The doctor heard him, and turned around. He saw Mr. Button, and a curious look came over his face.

"What happened?" asked Mr. Button. "What was it? How is she? A boy? What ...?"

"Talk sense!" said the doctor, a little angrily.

"Is the child born?" asked Mr. Button.

Doctor Keene didn't answer immediately. "Yes," he said slowly. "A strange birth."

"Is my wife all right?"

"Yes."

"Is it a boy or a girl?"

"Go and see," replied Doctor Keene. He still seemed strangely angry.

"Terrible! One more case like this will finish me in medicine."

society /sə'saiəti/ (n) the group of upper-class people who are rich and important.

At social activities, you meet people and spend time with them.

curious /'kjuriəs/ (adj) strange, unusual; wanting to know about something

case /keɪs/ (n) a problem that a doctor has to solve



“What’s the matter? Is there a problem with the baby?” asked Mr. Button.

“Go and see them,” said Doctor Keene. “And then get yourself another doctor. I brought you into the world, young man, and I’ve looked after your family for forty years, but this is the end! I don’t want to see you or any of your relatives ever again! Goodbye!”

And without another word, he turned and walked away.

Mr. Button stood there on the sidewalk, feeling very worried and afraid.

“Something terrible has happened,” he thought. Now, he didn’t want to go into the hospital. But he walked slowly up the steps and through the entrance doors.

A nurse was sitting behind a desk.

“Good morning,” she said, smiling.

“Good morning. I—I am Mr. Roger Button.”

A look of fear came over the girl’s face. She stood up, clearly planning to run away. Then she calmed herself and sat down again.

“I want to see my child,” said Mr. Button.

The nurse gave a little scream. “Oh, of course! Upstairs! Go upstairs!” she said quickly.

She pointed to the stairs and Mr. Button turned away from the desk. He went upstairs and found another nurse. She was carrying a large metal bowl.

“I’m Mr. Button,” he began nervously. “I want to see my ...”

Clank! The nurse dropped the bowl. It fell down the stairs, one step at a time, and landed with a loud noise at the bottom.

“I want to see my child!” Mr. Button shouted.

“All right, Mr. Button,” the nurse agreed in a quiet voice. “All right. But it’s

terrible! We’re all feeling—well, nobody will want to use the hospital again after this ...”

“Hurry!” Mr. Button cried. “I can’t wait any longer.”

“Come this way, Mr. Button.”

Mr. Button followed the nurse. There was a sound of babies crying. This grew louder until they stopped outside a room. The nurse pushed the door open and they went in. Around the walls were white **cribs**, each one with a name tied to the top.

“Well,” said Mr. Button, “which is mine?”

“There!” said the nurse.

Mr. Button’s eyes followed her pointing finger. And this is what he saw. An old man of about seventy years old sat in one of the cribs. His hair was almost white, and he had a long, gray beard. His feet hung over one end of the crib, and his head and arms hung over the other. He was wearing only a large, white **blanket**. He looked at Mr. Button with a question in his eyes.

“Am I crazy?” Mr. Button shouted angrily at the nurse. “Is this some terrible hospital joke?”

“It doesn’t seem like a joke to us,” said the nurse angrily. “And I don’t know if you’re crazy or not. But there’s no mistake. That is your child.”

The old man looked calmly at the nurse, and then at Mr. Button.

“Are you my father?” he asked. “Because if you are, please get me out of this place. It’s very uncomfortable.”

“Where did you come from? Who are you?” screamed Mr. Button.

“I can’t say exactly who I am,” the old man replied. “I was only born a few hours ago. But I know my last name is Button.”

“You’re lying! I don’t believe you!”

The old man turned to the nurse.

“That’s a nice way to welcome a new-born baby,” he said. “Please tell him he’s wrong.”

“You’re wrong, Mr. Button,” said the nurse coldly. “This is your child and you’ll have to make the best of it. We want you to take him home as soon as possible. Some time today.”

“Home?” said Mr. Button. “Take him home?”

“Yes, we can’t have him here.”

“I’ll be glad to get home,” said the old man. “I can’t sleep because of all the crying in here. And I asked for something to eat and they brought me a bottle of milk!”

Mr. Button sat on a seat next to his son and put his head in his hands.

crib /kɪb/ (n) a bed with high sides for a baby

blanket /ˈblæŋkɪt/ (n) a warm cover for a bed



“What will people say? What must I do?” he said to himself quietly.

“You’ll have to take him home,” said the nurse. “Immediately!”

Mr. Button suddenly imagined himself walking through the town with the old man at his side. What could he say to people? “This is my son, born early this morning.” He thought of those people looking in surprise at the old man next to him.

The nurse was watching him impatiently.

“Don’t sit there feeling sorry for yourself,” she said.

“I’m not going to walk home in this blanket,” said the old man suddenly.

“Babies always have blankets,” replied the nurse.

“Well, this baby’s not going to wear this blanket any longer. In a few minutes I’m going to take it off.”

“Keep it on! Keep it on!” said Mr. Button, hurriedly. He turned to the nurse.

“What shall I do?”

“Go down town and buy your son some clothes,” the nurse told him.

As Mr. Button left the room, his son called to him. “And a hat, Father. I want a hat. Maybe I need some glasses, too.”

Mr. Button shut the door hard behind him, and all the babies started crying again.

He went to the nearest clothes store.

“I want to buy some clothes for my son,” he said to the salesclerk.

“How old is your child, sir?”

“About six hours old,” answered Mr. Button, without thinking.

“Babies’ clothes are at the back of the store.”

“I don’t think—he’s an unusually large child. Very large.”

“They have the largest babies’ sizes.”

“Where are the boys’ clothes?” asked Mr. Button. He felt nervous. He was sure that the salesclerk already knew his terrible secret.

“Boys’ clothes are right here.”

Mr. Button stopped and thought for a minute. He didn’t like the idea of dressing his son in men’s clothes. Maybe a very large boy’s suit? Then he could cut his son’s beard off and color his hair brown. He looked around. But he couldn’t see anything to fit the new-born Button.

“How old did you say your son was?” asked the salesclerk curiously.

“He’s—he’s sixteen.”

“I’m so sorry, sir. I thought you said six hours. You’ll find something for the young man in the next room.”

Mr. Button turned away. Then he stopped and pointed his finger at a suit in the shop window.

“There!” he said. “I’ll take that suit.”

The salesclerk looked at the suit in surprise.

“But—that’s for a child to wear to a party, sir. It’s not for everyday wear, it’s a **costume.**”

“It’s what I want.”

The surprised salesclerk sold him the costume.

Back at the hospital, Mr. Button almost threw the package at his son.

“Here are your clothes,” he said. “Put them on.”

The old man untied the package and looked at the suit.

“I don’t want to look stupid,” he said.

“I’m the one who looks stupid,” said Mr. Button angrily. “Put them on or—or I’ll—I’ll hit you.” That sounded strange. But wasn’t it what fathers said to their sons?

“All right, Father. You’ve lived longer than me, you know best. I’ll do what you want.”

“And hurry.”

“I’m hurrying, Father.”

When his son was dressed, Mr. Button looked at him unhappily. It wasn’t good. The pants were pink, the socks were green, and the white shirt had a belt around the waist. Hanging down over the front of the shirt was his son’s long, gray beard.

“Wait!” he said.

Mr. Button picked up a hospital knife and cut off most of the beard. But **costume** /ˈkɑstəm/ (n) clothes that are worn to a special kind of party. In these clothes you look like a famous person, an animal, or someone from a story.



even this didn't help much. The watery eyes, the yellow teeth ... You could see that this was an old man.

But Mr. Button held out his hand.

"Come along!" he said.

His son took his hand and they walked together from the hospital.

"What are you going to call me, Father? 'Baby' until you think of something better?" the old man asked.

"I don't know," said Mr. Button coldly. "I think we'll call you Methuselah*."

Mr. and Mrs. Roger Button didn't call their baby Methuselah—they called him Benjamin. They cut his hair short and colored it brown. They shaved his beard every day and they ordered very large baby suits for him. They wanted Benjamin to look like a baby, and they tried very hard. But the baby nurse took one look and left the house immediately.

At first, on Mr. Button's orders, his son was only given warm milk. But this didn't please Benjamin, so Mr. Button finally changed his mind. After that, Benjamin was given bread and butter and other soft food. Mr. Button brought home toys for babies, and Benjamin tried to play with them. But the toy trains and animals didn't interest him. Soon, he found other things in the house that he liked better.

* Methuselah: the oldest man in the Bible. He lived to the age of 969 years.

One day when Mr. Button came home, his cigarettes weren't in their usual place. He looked everywhere. Later that evening, he walked into his son's bedroom. The room was full of smoke and Benjamin was trying to hide a cigarette.

Mr. Button was angry. He knew that he should punish his son. But he found that he couldn't hit him.

"You won't grow," he told Benjamin. "Smoking is very bad for children."

He continued to bring home toys, but Benjamin wasn't interested. When he was alone in the house, he often took books from the shelves downstairs. Then he read them all afternoon in his room. His toys stayed in a corner of the room, and he never played with them.

Soon, everybody in Baltimore knew about Benjamin. Most people didn't know what to say to Mr. and Mrs. Button.

"He looks very much like his grandfather," some kind people said.

This was of course true, but Mr. and Mrs. Button weren't pleased and Benjamin's grandfather was very angry.

Small children were brought to the house to play with Benjamin. He tried to be interested in their games, but it wasn't easy for him. Their games were very simple baby games, and Benjamin wanted more difficult activities. One day,



he broke a kitchen window with a stone when he was playing with some of the children. It was an accident but the boys were all afraid. But Mr. Button wasn't angry. Secretly, he was very pleased.

"Accidents happen when small boys are playing," he told his wife. "You see, Benjamin is only a child, like every other small boy."

After this success, Benjamin tried to break something every day, to please his parents.

After a difficult start, Benjamin and his grandfather became very good friends. They sat together for hours, talking about news from the town or stories in the newspapers. Benjamin started to feel more comfortable with his grandfather than with his parents. Mr. and Mrs. Roger Button always seemed a little afraid of their son. They told him what to do. But they often called him "Mr."

Benjamin was as surprised as everyone by the age of his mind and body. He didn't understand it. He read books about medicine but he never found another case like his.

Because Mr. Roger Button wanted him to play with other boys, Benjamin tried to do this. But he couldn't run with them and football was too hard for him. His body was too old. He was afraid of getting hurt.

The other boys couldn't understand Benjamin. They didn't know his age. They thought he was an old man. It seemed strange to them to play games with him. When he was five, Benjamin was sent to **kindergarten**. There he learned to stick pieces of colored paper together. He made things from old boxes and he drew pictures. But he was bored



and he often went to sleep in class.

His teacher was worried by this. She wrote to his parents, and soon Benjamin was taken out of school.

The Buttons explained this to their friends.

"We think he's still too young for school," they said.

By the time he was twelve years old, his parents were used to him. Most of the time, they didn't think he was different from other children. Then, one day, Benjamin looked in the mirror and discovered something very surprising.

"My hair," he thought. "It was white under the brown color, but now it

looks gray. And my skin seems smoother and healthier. Can it be true? Is it possible ...?"

He went to his father.

"I'm grown-up," he said. "I want to wear long pants."

His father thought about it.

"Well," he said finally, "I don't know. Fourteen is the usual age for putting on long pants. You're only twelve."

"But you must agree that I'm big for my age," said Benjamin.

"Oh, I'm not sure about that," said Mr. Button. "I was as big as you when I was twelve."

This wasn't true, but Mr. Button wanted to believe it. He wanted nothing more than an ordinary son.

Finally, Benjamin's parents agreed to his request.

"But you must continue coloring your hair," said Mr. Button. "And you must try harder to play with boys of your own age."

"Yes, Father."

"And there's one more thing, Benjamin. You mustn't wear your glasses in the street."

"No, Father."

"Then I will buy you a suit with long pants," said Mr. Button.

Benjamin was very happy.



The years passed. Benjamin became younger as he grew older. When he was eighteen, he looked like a man of fifty. He had more hair and it was dark gray. His voice was deeper and stronger. So, his father sent him to Connecticut to take the entrance tests for Yale College. Benjamin passed all the tests and became a **freshman**.

Three days later, he received a letter from Mr. Hart, one of the professors.

"Please come to see me today," the letter said. "We must discuss the times of your classes."

Benjamin looked in the mirror. His hair needed more brown color, but he didn't have time to go to the store. He had to go to Mr. Hart as he was.

"Good morning," said Mr. Hart politely. "You've come to discuss your son."

"Well, my name's Button ..." began Benjamin.

"I'm very glad to meet you, Mr. Button. I've asked Benjamin to see me today. He'll probably be here soon."

"That's me!" said Benjamin quickly. "I'm a freshman."

"What?"

freshman /'frefʃmən/ (n) a student in the first year of college

"I'm a freshman."

"You are joking, of course."

"No. I'm Benjamin Button."

Mr. Hart looked at the information on his desk.

"Mr. Benjamin Button's age is, I believe, eighteen."

"That's my age," said Benjamin.

Mr. Hart looked at him. "You surely don't think I believe that?"

Benjamin smiled. "I am eighteen," he repeated.

Mr. Hart pointed to the door. "Get out," he said. "Get out of this college and out of town. You are a crazy, dangerous man."

"I'm eighteen."

Mr. Hart opened the door.

"That's terrible!" he shouted. "A man of your age trying to come here as a freshman! Eighteen years old, are you? Well, I'll give you eighteen minutes to get out of town."

Benjamin walked slowly out of the room. Some students were waiting outside and they watched him curiously. Benjamin turned around and faced Mr. Hart again.

"I am eighteen years old," he repeated.

The group of students laughed. Benjamin walked away.

Benjamin started to walk back to the railroad station. But the students outside Mr. Hart's room were telling other students about the crazy man. Soon, everyone in Yale knew the story.

Benjamin started to realize that people were following him. At first there were only two or three people. Then more joined the group. Soon, there were a lot of students behind him, and the college football team came, too. They were all laughing and shouting at Benjamin.

"He thought the college was an old people's home!"

"He's a really good student for his age!"

"Go to Harvard!"

Benjamin walked faster, and soon he was running. When he was safely on the train for Baltimore, he put his head out of the window.

"I *will* go to Harvard!" he shouted at them. "You'll be sorry for this one day!"

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed the students.

Benjamin learned an important lesson that day. Sometimes it was better not to be completely honest.

But it was also the biggest mistake that Yale College ever made.

2.1 Were you right?

Look back at your answers to Activity 1.2 on page iv. Then circle the best word in each of these sentences.



- 1 Benjamin is the *oldest / youngest* baby in the hospital.
- 2 He is *older / younger* than his parents.
- 3 He is getting *older / younger* all the time.

2.2 What more did you learn?

Put these in the right order. Write the numbers 1–9.

- a Roger Button buys Benjamin his first long pants.
- b Mr. Button cuts off Benjamin's beard.
- c Benjamin is wearing only a blanket.
- d Benjamin is smoking in his bedroom.
- e Benjamin goes to kindergarten.
- f Mr. Button buys a fancy dress suit for his son.
- g Mr. Hart sends Benjamin away from Yale.
- h Benjamin breaks a kitchen window with a stone.
- i Benjamin becomes a freshman at Yale college.

2.3 Language in use

Read the sentences on the right. Then finish these sentences in the same way.

He walked **slowly** up the steps.
Mr. Button shouted **angrily** at the nurse.

- 1 Dr. Keene seemed angry. (strange)
- 2 Mr. Button and the nurse were both angry, but Benjamin spoke quite (calm)
- 3 Mr. Button shut the door behind him. (noisy)
- 4 In the store, Mr. Button spoke to the salesclerk. (impatient)
- 5 The news about Benjamin reached people in Baltimore. (quick)
- 6 At first, Mr. Hart spoke very to Benjamin. (polite)

2.4 What's next?

- 1 **What do you think will happen in Chapter 2? Check (✓) the boxes.**
 - a Benjamin has a very unhappy life.
 - b Benjamin likes getting younger.
 - c He reaches the middle of his life and then starts getting older again.
 - d His family doesn't want him and he lives alone.
 - e He meets another person with the same problem.
- 2 **Look at the pictures in the second part of the story. Now look again at the sentences above. Do you want to change your ideas about the story? Talk with other students.**
- 3 **Read the first four lines of Part 2. Then discuss these questions.**
 - a How do you think Benjamin's father feels about their evenings together?
 - b How does Benjamin feel?
 - c What do they talk about?
 - d What do other people think?

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

*He compared his face with a photograph taken before the war.
There was no question about it: he was still getting younger.*

In 1880, Benjamin Button was twenty years old. On his birthday, he started working for his father at Roger Button & Company. In the same year, Benjamin began going out to social activities. His father wanted to take him out to dances in the town, and they spent many evenings together.

Roger Button was now fifty, and he and his son were friends. Benjamin had stopped coloring his hair (it was still a little gray) and he and his father looked about the same age. People often thought they were brothers.

One night in August, they dressed in their evening suits and drove out to a dance at the Shevlins' country house, a few miles outside of Baltimore. It was a beautiful evening. The moon was a great, round ball in the sky. They drove through fields of flowering plants, green and silver and sweet-smelling in the warm night air. The sky above them was full of stars.

But Benjamin's father didn't seem to notice the wonderful evening. He was a practical man.

"There's a great future for our business," Roger Button said. "But old men like me can't learn new tricks. That great future is there for **energetic** young people like you."

Far up the road, they saw the lights of the Shevlins' country house, and soon they arrived at the front of the building.

Benjamin looked out the window at other arriving guests. A lady and an older man waited at the front steps. Then another, very beautiful young lady joined them.

Benjamin sat up straight. He suddenly felt different. His face became red, and there was an unusual noise in his ears. It was first love.

The girl's hair was silver under the moon, and a pale gold color under the gas lights. She was wearing a yellow and black dress, and her small, pretty feet were in gold dance shoes.

Roger Button turned to his son.

"That's young Hildegard Moncrief, and her parents," he said quietly.

"A pretty little thing," said Benjamin, trying to sound uninterested. Then he added, "Dad, maybe you could introduce me to her."

They walked across the drive. Hildegard Moncrief was now at the center of a group of people.

energetic /enəˈdʒetɪk/ (adj) able to do a lot without getting tired. An *energetic* person has a lot of *energy*.

"Miss Moncrief," said Benjamin, after the introduction, "will you be very kind and dance with me?"

"Yes," she answered. "I'll be happy to dance with you later this evening."

Benjamin thanked her and, with difficulty, walked away. He seemed to be walking on air.

Inside the house, Benjamin stood at the side of the room and hours seemed to pass. He watched with murderous eyes as the young men of Baltimore danced with Hildegard Moncrief. What stupid young boys they were—he hated them.

Benjamin didn't look at any other girls. For him, Hildegard was the only girl in the room. He couldn't enjoy the evening until she danced with him.

When his time came, he took her hand. They walked onto the dance floor. In that minute, he felt that now his life was beginning.



Hildegard looked up at him with bright blue eyes.

"You and your brother arrived here at the same time as us, didn't you?"

Benjamin didn't reply immediately.

"She thinks we're brothers," he thought. "Is it best to tell her now?"

But he remembered that day at Yale, and the lesson that he learned there. He decided not to say anything.

"If I tell her, she won't like me," he thought. "And I want her to like me very much. I'll tell her later. Maybe."

So he smiled, listened, and was very happy.

"I like men of your age," Hildegard told him. "Young boys are so silly. They tell me how much wine they drink at college. They talk about how much money they lose at cards. It all means nothing! Men of your age are more serious. And they understand women and enjoy their company."

Benjamin suddenly wanted Hildegard to marry him. It was difficult not to ask her there and then.

"You're the best age," she continued. "Fifty. Twenty-five is too young. Men of thirty work too much. At forty, men tell endless stories. Sixty is—oh, sixty is too close to seventy. But fifty is perfect. I love fifty."

As they danced, Benjamin wanted to be fifty more than anything in the world.

"I've always said that," Hildegard continued. "It's better to marry a man of fifty. He'll look after his wife. If a woman marries a man of thirty, *she'll* have to look after *him*."

For the rest of the evening, Benjamin was lost in his own world. Hildegard gave him two more dances. They discovered that they agreed on all the important subjects of that time. He asked her to go driving with him on the following Sunday. Then they would discuss all these subjects more.

Benjamin and his father drove home in the early morning, before the sun came up. Roger Button was talking about business again. It was his favorite subject. But Benjamin wasn't listening.

"... so what do you think about that?" Roger Button asked him.

"Love," replied Benjamin, quietly.

"Love? What do you mean?" his father said. "How will love solve the problem of our costs?"

Benjamin didn't understand, and Roger Button had to explain everything again. And then the sun suddenly came over the hill, and a beautiful new day began.

Six months later, Benjamin and Miss Hildegard Moncrief became **engaged**. Her father wasn't happy about this. He thought that Benjamin was too old for his daughter. The excited people of Baltimore society suddenly remembered the old man brought home from the hospital years ago. The subject was discussed in every home. Was Benjamin really Roger Button's father? Or maybe Roger Button's brother, freed from prison after forty years. And there were other

engaged /in'geɪdʒd/ (adj) When two people are *engaged*, they have agreed to marry.

stories—some too crazy for anyone to believe.

Most people thought that Hildegard was mad. Why was she marrying a man of fifty when many young men in Baltimore wanted to marry her? Nobody understood Hildegard.

After a local newspaper called Benjamin "the Mystery Man of Maryland," Mr. Roger Button took his son's birth records to the paper.

"This proves his age," he said, angrily.

But no one believed it. You only had to look at Benjamin.

Hildegard believed none of the stories, not even the true one. It didn't matter to her if he was fifty. It didn't matter if he looked fifty. She wanted to marry Benjamin and nothing could change her mind.

In 1880, they were married. Benjamin believed he was the happiest man alive.

Between 1880 and 1895, the Buttons' business did very well and made a lot of money. This was mostly because of Benjamin's ideas. Roger Button did less and less work and he left the company in 1895.

Baltimore soon forgot all the stories about Benjamin, and the young Buttons were popular in the town. Even Mr. Moncrief changed his mind about his daughter's husband. When Benjamin paid for the printing and sale of Mr. Moncrief's war stories, Hildegard's father was a very happy man.

In fifteen years, there were many changes to Benjamin himself. He had more energy. It pleased him to get up early. He enjoyed walking through the sunny streets each day to work. He worked very hard, and with great success. His father's business made more money than ever, thanks to Benjamin.

Then, as time passed, he was more interested in having fun. Benjamin was the first man in the city of Baltimore to buy a car.

His friends saw his energy and good health, and they were surprised.

"He seems to grow younger every year," they said.

Roger Button, now sixty-five, thought his son was a wonderful man. Benjamin was liked by everyone who met him.

There was a problem, though. One thing in Benjamin's life was less than perfect: he stopped loving his wife.

By that time, Hildegard was a woman of thirty-five, with a son, Roscoe, who was fourteen years old. When they were first married, Benjamin loved his wife completely. But, as the years passed, her beautiful gold-colored hair changed to an unexciting brown. Her blue eyes became less bright. She was different in other ways, too. She didn't want to go out. Fifteen years earlier, Hildegard was always the one who said, "Let's go out to this party, or that

dinner.” Now the opposite was true. She went to social evenings with Benjamin, but she didn’t really want to go. They went at his suggestion, and because he wanted to. Hildegard was happy to stay at home.

Benjamin grew unhappy with her. When the Spanish-American War began in 1898, he decided to become a soldier. He was a very good officer and his men liked him. He was brave, too. But his business needed him, so in 1901 he returned home. A noisy band met him at the station. They walked with him to his house, playing their music all the way. Baltimore was happy to welcome Benjamin home again.

Hildegard was waiting at the house to greet him. He kissed her, but his heart was heavy. After three years, her hair now had some gray in it. She was a woman of forty, but she looked older.

In his room, Benjamin looked in the mirror. He compared his face with a photograph taken before the war. There was no question about it: he was still getting younger. He now looked like a man of thirty.

“Good God!” he said to himself. “I’ve waited for this day, when my body age has reached my real age. I wanted to be able to say, ‘It’s finished. Now I’m like other men.’ But I can see that’s not going to happen.”

The future looked terrible, unbelievable—and he was afraid.

Hildegard was waiting downstairs for him. She looked angry.

“She’s guessed,” he thought. “She knows what’s happening to me.”

So at dinner he tried to talk to her about it.

“Everybody says I look younger than ever,” he started.

Hildegard didn’t smile. “That’s nothing to be proud of,” she replied.

“I’m *not* proud of it,” he replied.

“You should stop it,” she added.

“How can I?”

“I’m not going to discuss it with you,” said Hildegard. “But there’s a right way of doing things and a wrong way. If you’ve decided to be different from other people, I can’t stop you. But I don’t think it’s fair.”

“But Hildegard, I can’t stop it,” said Benjamin.

“Yes you can. You’re being difficult. I’m glad that other people don’t think like you.”

There was no answer to this. But from that day, life with Hildegard became less and less comfortable. Soon, they were like

two strangers living in the same house.

Benjamin found that he wanted to go to more and more social evenings. This made things worse at home.

He was invited to every party, every dinner, and every dance in town, and he went to all of them. He danced with the prettiest young married women, and talked to the smartest girls. Sometimes his wife went with him. She sat with other older women and watched him, sadly, without understanding.

“Look!” people said. “The poor young man, tied to a woman of forty-five. He must be twenty years younger than his wife.”

They didn’t remember that, back in 1880, their parents were saying almost the same thing—but the other way around.

As Benjamin became unhappier at home, he found many new interests. He started to play tennis and made a great success of it. He took dancing lessons—in 1906 he learned “The Boston” and was excellent at this new dance. A few years later, he could dance the “Castle Walk” better than any other young man in town.



His social life was becoming more important than his business life. And after twenty-five years with Roger Button & Company, Benjamin decided to leave work. His son, Roscoe, was home again after completing his studies at Harvard College. He was the right age to take Benjamin's place in the family business. Roscoe was very interested in the business, too. Benjamin could remember feeling the same at one time.

In fact, people often thought that Benjamin and his son were brothers. This pleased Benjamin, as he liked to look young. There was only one thing in his life that he didn't enjoy. He hated going out in Baltimore with Hildegarde. She was now almost fifty. When they were together, Benjamin felt stupid. She looked like his mother.



One September day in 1910, Benjamin Button went to Harvard College as a freshman. He looked about twenty and he didn't tell them his correct age. He remembered that mistake from his short time at Yale. And he didn't say that his son was a student there, years before.

He seemed a little older and wiser than the other, mostly eighteen-year-old freshmen. And he was excellent at football. In his first year, the Harvard team played against Yale. In that game, Benjamin played the best football that anyone could remember. Because of this, he was soon the best-known student at the college.

But in his third year, he wasn't always on the team. He weighed less, and he seemed shorter than before. He wasn't playing as well as in his first year. He was really only chosen for the team to bring fear to the other side.

In his final year, Benjamin didn't play on the team. He was much smaller and thinner. Some first year students thought that he, too, was a freshman. At the same time, his studies seemed more difficult. He felt that the other students in his class were older and much wiser than he was.

Some of them spoke about St. Midas's School. Many of the Harvard students came from St. Midas's. At this school they prepared young boys for college. Benjamin started to think about going there after his studies at Harvard. It was a good plan—he would like to be with boys of his own size and with the same interests.

In 1914, Benjamin returned to Baltimore from college. Hildegarde was now living in Italy, so he moved in with his son, Roscoe, and his wife. They tried to be welcoming—he could see that. But it was clear that Roscoe didn't really want his father there. Roscoe, now a successful businessman, had an important position in Baltimore society that he wanted to protect. Benjamin understood this, but he felt a little sad.

Benjamin was bored at home and he had no friends now in Baltimore. Old girlfriends from his dancing days weren't interested in him. The tennis players, from before his time at Harvard, stayed away. They thought he was only a boy. There were only three or four fifteen-year-old boys living in the neighborhood, and he spent time with them. The idea of St. Midas's School came to him again.

He asked Roscoe about it one day.

"I'd really like to go there," he said.

"Then go," replied Roscoe.

He disliked the subject, and didn't want to discuss it with his father.

"I can't go alone," said Benjamin. "You'll have to take me."

"I don't have time," Roscoe told him, angry and red-faced. "In fact, you can't continue like this. You must stop, and—and go back the other way. This isn't a joke now."

Benjamin almost started crying.

"And another thing," Roscoe continued. "When visitors are in the house, I want you to call me 'Uncle'—not Roscoe, but 'Uncle'. Do you understand? It seems wrong for a boy of fifteen to call me by my first name. Wait, here's a better idea—call me 'Uncle' all the time. Then you'll find it easier."

Roscoe turned away from his father and walked out of the room.

Benjamin went upstairs and looked at himself in the mirror.

"I haven't shaved for three months," he thought, "but there's still nothing there."

Roscoe wanted him to wear glasses. He also suggested a beard to stick onto Benjamin's face. It seemed for a time that the crazy days of his early life were starting again. But Benjamin cried and Roscoe didn't continue with the idea.

Now, in his room, Benjamin opened a book of boys' stories. But he only read a little because he was thinking of other things. American soldiers were fighting in the First World War in Europe and Benjamin wanted to join them. But he had to be sixteen to become a soldier, and he looked younger. His true age was fifty-seven, but that, of course, was too old.

But the government wanted soldiers from the Spanish-American War to fight again. They wrote to all these men, and soon a letter arrived for Benjamin. It invited him to get a new **uniform** and to go to **Camp** Mosby in South Carolina.

Benjamin hurried into town. Because he was so small, he couldn't buy the uniform ready-made. He needed one to be made to his size. The salesclerk in the store measured him.

uniform /'ju:nəfɔ:rm/ (n) a special suit of clothes for a job. Soldiers, police officers, and nurses all wear *uniforms*.

camp /kæmp/ (n) a place where soldiers stay for a short time, often in tents

“Do you want to play soldiers, son?” he said, smiling.

“I’m not playing,” replied Benjamin. “This uniform must be correct.”

The man laughed at him, and Benjamin became angry.

“My name’s Button, and I live on Mount Vernon Place,” he said. “So you know I can pay for it.”

“Well,” said the man, “I guess that’s OK. If *you* can’t pay for it, your father can.”

A week later, Benjamin’s uniform arrived at the house. He said nothing to Roscoe about his plans, but one night in April he left the house and took the train to South Carolina. A taxi carried him and his suitcases to Camp Mosby.

The soldier at the gate laughed at the boy who wanted to play soldiers.

“Get someone to take my suitcases!” said Benjamin. “And hurry—we’re at war, Soldier!”

Some other soldiers arrived to watch. Then an officer came along on his horse. He was a kind man.



“Whose little boy are you?” he asked, with a smile in his eyes.

“I’ll soon show you!” said Benjamin angrily. “Here! Read this!” And he gave the officer his letter from the government.

The officer read it. He was very surprised.

“Where did you get this?” he asked.

“I got it from the government. You can check with them,” Benjamin replied.

The officer put the letter in his pocket.

“You come along with me,” he said to Benjamin, looking strangely at him, “and we’ll talk about this.”

He turned and began walking his horse toward the office buildings. Benjamin followed behind him, on foot.

Everyone thought that the letter really belonged to Benjamin’s father. Nobody believed Benjamin’s story. Two days later, Roscoe arrived from Baltimore and took Benjamin back home. Benjamin left in tears, without his uniform.

In 1920, Roscoe Button’s first child was born. It was a happy time. But there was one thing that nobody talked about. The baby’s grandfather was a small ten-year-old who played around the house. He was a little boy who loved his toy soldiers.

No one disliked the little boy. He had a fresh, happy face, with eyes that were sometimes a little sad. But Roscoe Button wasn’t happy about having Benjamin in his home. It wasn’t right for a man of sixty to look fifty years younger. Like Hildegard, many years before, Roscoe didn’t think it was fair.

“It’s good for older people to stay young,” he said. “But this is too much.”

Five years later, Roscoe’s little boy was old enough to play games with little Benjamin. There was a nurse to look after the two children. Roscoe took them both to kindergarten on the same day. Here, Benjamin discovered how much he enjoyed playing with little pieces of colored paper. He

also made things from old boxes and he drew pictures. But this time, he didn't hate these activities and he wasn't bored. Once he was bad, and had to stand in the corner, and he cried. But most days were happy. He loved the time that he spent there. His teacher, Miss Bailey, was kind to him, and he loved her, too.

Roscoe's son moved into the next class after a year, but Benjamin happily stayed in the kindergarten. Sometimes, other children talked about their hopes for their futures. Benjamin never joined in these conversations, and his little face became sad. Maybe he realized that his future was different.

In his third year of kindergarten, Benjamin was too little to understand much. He didn't know what to do with the pieces of colored paper. He cried because the other boys were bigger. He was afraid of them. The teacher talked to him, but he didn't understand her.

He was taken out of the kindergarten. His nurse, Nana, became the center of his little world. On bright days, they walked to the park.

"Dog," Nana taught him. "Cat."

"Dog," Benjamin repeated happily. "Cat."



Sometimes Benjamin jumped on his bed, and this was fun. He jumped until he was tired. Sometimes he took a stick from the yard and went around the house with it. He hit the chairs and tables and shouted, "Fight, fight, fight!" When there were visitors, the older ladies always wanted to talk to him. The young ones tried to kiss him. He was a good boy and he held up his face to them, but this bored him. And when the long day ended, at five o'clock, he went upstairs with Nana. There, she fed him milk and nice, soft food from a spoon.

There were no memories in his child's sleep. Benjamin didn't remember



his brave college days, or the many beautiful girls from his past. There were only the white, safe walls of his crib and Nana, and a man who visited him sometimes. When the sun went down, his eyes were sleepy. There were no dreams in his head, and nothing to worry him.

The past wasn't in his head now. He didn't remember his days as a soldier, or the first years of his marriage. He forgot about Hildegard, and his work at the family business. He had no memory of talking with his grandfather, into the night, in Roger Button's family home.

He didn't remember clearly if the milk was warm or cold at the last feed. There was only the crib, and Nana. And then he remembered nothing at all. When he was hungry, he cried. There were sounds and smells, light and dark, and nothing more.

Then it was all dark. The crib, the faces above him, and the sweet smell of milk disappeared completely from his mind.

3.1 Were you right?

Look back at your answers to Activity 2.4.1. Then circle the correct word in each of these sentences.

- 1 As a young man, most of the time, Benjamin is *unhappy* / *happy*.
- 2 He marries for *love* / *money*.
- 3 At first, he is *worried* / *excited* about getting younger.
- 4 Later, he is *worried* / *excited* about getting younger.
- 5 Hildegarde and Roscoe both think that he is being *difficult* / *smart*.
- 6 Nobody *understands* / *thinks* about Benjamin's problems.
- 7 In the end, he *remembers* / *forgets* everything in his life.
- 8 When he dies, he looks like a *baby* / *very old man*.

3.2 What more did you learn?

Who is speaking? Who to? Write the letters.



- 1 "The great future is there for energetic young people like you." to
- 2 "Will you be very kind and dance with me?" to
- 3 "Men of your age are more serious." to
- 4 "How will love solve the problem of our costs?" to
- 5 "There's a right way of doing things and a wrong way." to
- 6 "You must stop and—and go back the other way." to

3.3 Language in use

Read the sentences on the right. Then put a word from Box A and one from Box B into each of the sentences below.

He was a **kind** man.

The **sweet** smell of the milk disappeared completely from his mind.

A
 murderous important
 colored flowering sunny
 social successful endless

B
 stories plants eyes
 paper streets activities
 businessman subjects

- 1 In the same year, Benjamin began going out to
- 2 They drove through fields of
- 3 He watched with as the young men of Baltimore danced with Hildegarde Moncrief.
- 4 "At forty, men tell"
- 5 They discovered that they agreed on all the of that time.
- 6 He enjoyed walking through the each day to work.
- 7 Roscoe, now a, had an important position in Baltimore society.
- 8 Benjamin discovered how much he enjoyed playing with little pieces of

3.4 What's next?

The next story is "The Ice Palace." Discuss these questions.

- 1 Look at the words in *italics* on page 29.
 - a How old do you think the speaker is?
 - b Who do you think he/she is talking to?
- 2 Now look at the picture on the next page.
 - a Which of those people do you think is the speaker from Question 1?
 - b Which of these words describes the boy best? Which describes the girl?
 sad happy surprised serious angry amused

The Ice Palace

*"I want to go to places and see people. I want my mind to grow.
I want to live in a place where bigger things happen."*

The sun shone down on the Happer house. The houses to the right and left stood behind tall trees and were covered in shadows. Only the Happer house had the full sun. It looked straight onto the street at the front. This was in the city of Tarleton in the far south of Georgia. It was a September afternoon in 1919.

Up in her bedroom, nineteen-year-old Sally Carrol Happer sat at the window and looked down at the street. She felt hot, lazy, and sleepy. She watched Clark Darrow's old Ford turn the corner. Clark had the car windows open, but she could almost feel the heat inside it. He drove across the road and stopped in front of the Happer house. The old car made a loud noise, like a cough, then it was silent. Clark called her name out of the window.

Sally Carrol looked down sleepily. Clark was still sitting in the car. After a minute or two, he called again.

"Good morning," she said.

Clark turned his tall body around and moved his head. He looked up at the window.

"It's not morning, Sally Carrol."

"Isn't it?" she said lazily.

"What are you doing?"

"Eating an apple."

"I'm going swimming—do you want to come?"

Sally Carrol thought about this. "OK," she said, slowly.

"Then hurry," said Clark.

Sally Carrol stood up and walked to her mirror. She looked at herself, then put a sunhat on her head. It covered most of her short fair hair, except for the front. She looked again and moved the hat a little. Then she left the room.

A minute later, she opened the car door.

"How are you, Clark?" she asked.

"Fine, Sally Carrol."

"Where are we going?"

"Out to Walley's Pool. We're calling for Marylyn and Joe Ewing on the way."

Clark was tall and dark. His eyes were large and he had a nice smile. Clark knew this, and smiled often. He finished his studies at Georgia College in 1917, but he didn't work. His parents gave him enough money to put gas in the car

and have some fun. Tarleton was a lazy town. Clark spent his time talking about work but not doing any.

Clark knew a lot of girls in the town from his school days. They were growing up beautifully and they all liked Clark very much. The best of them all was Sally Carrol. When the girls were busy, Clark spent time with other young men. They played tennis or football, talked, and drank together. Sometimes one of the boys left town and went up to New York, Philadelphia, or Pittsburgh. They left Tarleton to go into business. But most of the boys stayed in town.

Clark's car coughed again, and moved off down the road. They drove along Valley Street, past the big expensive houses of the town. Then they came to Main Street and Tarleton's stores. The town was busy and a lot of people were walking around. Clark slowed down behind some other cars. A local farmer and his sheep were in the road. Nobody was in a hurry—it was too hot. The doors to the stores were open onto the street to keep customers comfortable. But this didn't help because the air wasn't moving much.

"Sally Carrol," said Clark suddenly, "is it true that you're engaged?"

She looked at him quickly.

"Where did you hear that?"

"Tell me—are you engaged? I heard that you met a Yankee* in Asheville last summer."



"Everyone in this town tells stories about other people," said Sally Carrol.

"Don't marry a Yankee, Sally Carrol. We need you around here."

Sally Carrol was silent for a minute.

"Clark," she asked suddenly, "then who shall I marry?"

"You could choose me."

* Yankee: a name for a person from the north of the United States

“You don’t have enough money for a wife,” she said, smiling. “And I know you too well to fall in love with you.”

“That’s not a good reason to marry a Yankee.”

“But maybe I love him.”

Clark shook his head. “You can’t. Yankees are too different from us, in every way.”

He stopped the car in front of an old house. Marylyn Wade and Joe Ewing were waiting at the door. They climbed into the car, and Clark started driving again.

“Sally Carrol,” Marylyn asked immediately, “are you engaged?”

“Where did this story start? Maybe I did meet a man. But now everybody in town thinks we’re engaged.”

Clark kept his eyes on the road. When he spoke again, he sounded sad.

“Sally Carrol, don’t you like us?” he asked.

“What?”

“Us down here?”

“Clark, you know I do. I love all you boys.”

“Then why are you getting engaged to a Yankee?”

“Clark, I don’t know. I’m not sure what I’ll do, but ... Well, I want to go to places and see people. I want my mind to grow. I want to live in a place where bigger things happen. I love you, and Joe here, and Ben Arrot, and all of you but ... you’ll ... you’ll ...”

“We’ll all fail?”

“Yes, but I don’t mean only with money. You’ll fail because you like Tarleton too much. You’ll never want to change things or do more.” She reached over and took Clark’s hand. “Clark, I don’t want you to change. You’re sweet the way you are. I love everything about you. I even love the reasons why you’ll fail.”

“But you’re going away?”

“Yes, because I can’t ever marry you. You have a place in my heart that no other boy will ever have. But I can’t rest, tied down here. There are two sides to me, you see. There’s the sleepy side that you love. But there’s an energy, too. That’s the feeling that makes me wild. Maybe I can use that energy somewhere when I stop being beautiful. But not here.”

Everybody was silent. Sally Carrol closed her eyes and put her head back. They were in the country now. The car hurried along, between green fields and under the shadows of tall trees. They passed lazy cotton-fields with families working under the sun. And everywhere there was the same heat.

“Sally Carrol, we’re here!”

“She’s gone to sleep.”

“Water, Sally Carrol! Wonderful cold water waiting for you!”

Her eyes opened sleepily.

“Hi!” she said, smiling.

In November, Harry Bellamy—tall, handsome, and full of energy—came down from his northern city. He planned to stay for four days in Tarleton. He wanted to ask Sally Carrol to marry him. It didn’t take four days for him to ask her. It only took one afternoon and one evening. Harry Bellamy had everything she wanted. And she loved him.

On his last afternoon they walked, and she took him to one of her favorite places, the church yard. They stopped by the gate, under the late sun.

“Do you mind going in here?” she asked. “Some people don’t like it, but I do.”

They passed through the gate and followed a path through the **graves**. Some had very big stones, with names and dates on them. They saw one or two people next to a grave, putting flowers on the earth. But most of the church yard was empty and silent.

They reached the top of the hill and Sally Carrol stopped at a grave.

“Margery Lee,” she read. “1844 to 1873. She died when she was twenty-nine. Dear Margery Lee.”

She put her hand in Harry Bellamy’s.

“I can see her,” she said. “I think she had dark hair. She wore wide skirts in blue cotton—or rose pink. Can you see her, Harry?”

“Yes, I think I can.”

“Oh, I imagine that she was sweet, Harry. A lot of Tarleton men went away to war. They probably wanted to come back to her. But none did.”

They stood together and looked down at Margery Lee’s grave.

Harry looked more carefully at the stone, but there was no record of a marriage.

Then Sally Carrol pointed down the



grave /greɪv/ (n) the final resting place, in the ground, for a dead body

other side of the hill.

“Those are the graves of local Confederate* boys killed in the war, Harry. Some of them don’t have a name, just the date. Nobody knows who they were.” She looked up at Harry with tears in her eyes. “I want you to understand how real this is for me. They died for us, for the South.”

Hand in hand, they turned and walked slowly away. Then they sat on the grass with their backs against an old wall and they kissed.

“You’ll come up in the middle of January,” Harry said as they walked slowly home. “You have to stay for a month or more. There’s a winter **carnival**, and there’ll be a lot of snow. You’ve never seen snow, have you? It’ll be great fun. You’ll love it.”

“Will I be cold, Harry?” she asked suddenly.

“No!” he laughed. “Your nose, maybe, but you won’t really feel the cold. It’s dry, you know.”

“I think I’m a summer child. I don’t like the cold.”

“Sally Carrol,” he said, slowly, “what do you say to a wedding in March?”

“I say I love you.”

“March?”

“March, Harry.”



All night in the train, it was very cold. Sally Carrol tried to sleep but it was freezing. She asked for another blanket but couldn’t get one. Everyone on the train was cold and there were no more blankets. At six o’clock she went to get a cup of coffee. Sitting in the dining car, she looked out the window at fields white with snow. Sometimes, she saw a farmhouse. She felt colder as she thought about the people inside. She saw their poor animals out in the fields.

But as she left the dining car, she had a sudden feeling of great energy. This was the North—her land now! Everything was different and new. Sally Carrol wanted to see and do as much as possible.

Soon, the view from the train changed. There were more houses, then she saw a bus. Then streets, more streets—the city!

* Confederate: soldiers from the south of the United States. They fought the men from the north.

carnival /ˈkɑːnəvəl/ (n) a party for the people in a town. They dance in the streets, play music, and wear special clothes.

She stood for a minute at the cold station before three people in big coats and hats came toward her.

“There she is!”

“Oh, Sally Carrol!”

Sally Carrol dropped her bag. Harry kissed her. His face was icy-cold. He introduced her to the other people and she shook hands. First there was Gordon, Harry’s brother, a short man of about thirty. Then there was Myra, Gordon’s wife. Someone put Sally Carrol’s bag into a taxi, and they drove away from the station.

In the snowy streets Sally Carrol saw small boys playing games in the snow. “Oh,” she cried. “I want to do that! Can we, Harry?”

“That’s for kids ... but maybe ...”

“It looks fun,” she said.

Harry’s home was a large, old house sitting on a blanket of snow. There she met his father, a big man with gray hair. Sally Carrol liked him immediately.



His mother was shaped like an egg. She kissed Sally Carrol, but there was something cold about her.

Then everybody started talking at the same time.

“Would you like a drink?”

“Or something to eat?”

“Let me show you your room.”

“I’ll take your bags.”

Sally Carrol started conversations with everybody, but didn’t finish any of them. There was too much happening in the house.

After about an hour, she and Harry were finally alone. They sat together in the library. There were plenty of books on the shelves. But most, she guessed, were never opened. The room was large and the furniture looked expensive. It wasn’t very comfortable. Sally Carrol thought of the library in her parents’ house. The books there were old and read many times. The sofa was comfortable, somewhere to sit and dream. It was all very different here.

“I hope they like me,” she said.

“Of course they do! *I’m* happy, so *they’re* happy,” said Harry.



Sally Carrol wasn’t sure about Mrs Bellamy. But she didn’t say any more to Harry.

“What do you think of it up here?” asked Harry. “Is it what you thought? Does it surprise you? Do you like it?”

Sally Carrol reached out her arms and kissed him.

“I like *you*, Harry,” she said, smiling.

“The town, I mean. What do you think of the town? Can you feel the energy?”

“Oh Harry,” she laughed. “You’ll have to give me time. I only just arrived.” She became quiet.

“One thing I want to say to you,” said Harry. “Down in the South you’re very proud of your families, and that’s good. But you’ll find that things are different here. You’ll notice some things that will seem strange. You see, our grandfathers started this town. They were ordinary men doing ordinary jobs in those days. So they did some strange jobs before they became rich. For example there’s a very rich old lady here. You’ll probably meet her—she’s well-known in society. Well, her father picked up the trash in town.”

“Harry!” said Sally Carrol, surprised. “Do you think that matters to me? I don’t say bad things about people.”

“Of course it doesn’t matter,” said Harry. “But ... well, a girl from the South came up here last summer. She said some things that people didn’t like. It was only because she didn’t understand us.”

Sally Carrol felt a little angry but she didn’t say anything. Harry didn’t see the look on her face and continued happily.

“It’s carnival time,” he said suddenly, “the first carnival in ten years. And they’re building an ice palace. It’s made of clear ice and it’s very, very big.”

Sally Carrol stood up and walked to the window.

“Oh,” she said. “There are two little boys out here making a snowman. Harry, can I go out and help them?”

“You wonderful girl! Come here and kiss me.”

She went back to the sofa, and to Harry’s arms.

“I have a week’s vacation,” he said, “and there’s a dinner-dance tonight.”

“Oh, Harry, I don’t know what people will think of me. I don’t know if I like it here yet. And what do people want from me? You’ll have to help me.”

“I’ll help you,” he said softly. “But you must tell me that you’re happy here. And happy with me.”

“Oh yes, I’m happy,” she said. “You’re here, so this is home for me, Harry.”

But for the first time in her life, Sally Carrol didn’t feel like herself. She felt more like an actress in a play.

4.1 Were you right?

Look back at your answers to Activity 3.4. Then put the correct first names in these sentences.

- 1 is leaving Tarleton.
- 2 Her friend doesn't want her to go.
- 3 She is going to marry
- 4 doesn't think this is a good idea.
- 5 died before her thirtieth birthday.
- 6 has never seen snow before.
- 7 thinks she will love the winter carnival.
- 8 suggests a wedding in March.

4.2 What more did you learn?

Finish the sentences with the words on the right.



- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1 Sally Carrol can't sleep on the train because | in a taxi. |
| 2 There are no more blankets because | in the North. |
| 3 She and Harry drive away from the station | everyone is cold. |
| 4 Harry's home is | in the library. |
| 5 His mother is | it is too cold. |
| 6 Harry and Sally Carrol sit alone | in the street. |
| 7 Some small boys are making a snowman | old and large. |
| 8 Sally Carrol is worried about life | shaped like an egg. |

4.3 Language in use

Read the sentences on the right. Then join the sentences below with *because* or *so*.

You'll fail **because** you like Tarleton too much.
I'm happy, **so** they're happy.

- 1 Sally Carrol wore a sunhat. It was very hot.
Sally Carrol wore a sunhat because it was hot.
- 2 Most of the boys stayed in town. They were lazy.
.....
- 3 There were sheep in the road. Clark couldn't drive fast.
.....
- 4 Sally Carrol liked the churchyard. It was quiet there.
.....
- 5 Harry wanted her to stay for the winter carnival. It was great fun.
.....
- 6 Harry wanted to get married in March. Sally Carrol agreed.
.....
- 7 Mr. Bellamy was just like Harry. Sally Carrol liked him immediately.
.....
- 8 Sally Carrol needs Harry's help. She doesn't know anybody.
.....

4.4 What's next?

What do you think? Read these sentences and answer *yes* or *no*.

- 1 Sally Carrol learns to love the snow and the city.
- 2 She becomes good friends with Mrs. Bellamy.
- 3 She is afraid in the Ice Palace.
- 4 She marries Harry.
- 5 Clark arrives, and takes Sally Carrol back to Tarleton.
- 6 Sally Carrol returns to Tarleton and marries Clark.

The Ice Palace

*Sally Carrol looked around. Harry was right. It was beautiful.
The ice walls were almost clear and the lights shone on them.*

That night, at the dinner party, Sally Carrol felt uncomfortable. Most of the men did the talking, and the girls sat and looked pretty. Harry told her about some of the other guests.

“They’re a good-looking crowd, aren’t they? That’s Spud Hubbard—we were students together. And that’s Junie Morton—he was the best football player at Yale. Some of the best sportsmen in the country come from around here. This is a man’s country, you know ...”

She turned suddenly to a voice on her right.

“I guess they forgot to introduce us. My name’s Roger Patton.”

“I’m Sally Carrol Happer,” she replied.

“Yes, I know. Harry’s told me all about you.”

“Are you a relative?”

“No, I’m a professor, at the college. You’re from the South, aren’t you?”

“Yes, she said proudly. “Tarleton, Georgia.”

She liked him immediately. He had a red-brown mustache and pale blue eyes. They spoke a little during dinner. She liked the idea of seeing him again.

After coffee, Harry introduced her to many good-looking young men. Some of them danced with her and talked about nothing except Harry. They were very different to the boys that she knew in the South. There, they joked and had fun with all the girls, engaged or not. Here, they were polite but a little cold. She was happy when Roger Patton found her again. He suggested that they should sit down.

“So,” he asked, “how’s the lady from the South?”

“I’m fine. Are you from this area?”

“No, I’m from Philadelphia. I teach French at the college. I’ve been here for ten years.”

“That’s ... nine years, three hundred and sixty four days longer than me.”

“Do you like it here? Really?”

“Yes I do. Well, why not?”

“I saw you look out of the window a minute ago. You **shivered**.”

“Oh, it was nothing,” laughed Sally Carrol. “Sometimes I look out and see the snow in the wind. I think that the dead are moving out there. It’s silly, I know.”

“Have you ever been north before?”

shiver /ˈʃɪvə/ (v) to shake a little, because you are cold or afraid

“Only two days in Asheville, North Carolina.”

They watched the dancers.

“They’re a nice-looking crowd, aren’t they?” said Roger.

Sally Carrol was surprised.

“Harry said that, too. Yes, they are.”

“But I think they’re becoming frozen,” Roger continued. “Like all people in cold countries with long winters, they become sad and narrow-minded—they lose the possibility of great happiness. There are a lot of people here from Sweden. It’s because the weather is so similar, I guess. Did you know that more Scandinavians kill themselves than any other people in the world?”

“So why do you stay here?”

“It doesn’t worry me. I think that’s because books are more important to me than people. But there’s something that I want to say to you. You’re marrying a very fine man.”

“I know. I need someone to look after me. I’m sure he will.”

“So you know why you’re marrying. That’s good. Most girls don’t. They see too many happy endings in movies. They think real life is the same.”

Sally Carrol laughed.

“Shall we dance?” said Roger.

She decided that he could become a real friend.

Two hours later, on the way home, Sally Carrol sat in Harry’s arms in the back of the car.

“Oh, Harry, it’s so cold,” she said. “Listen to that wind!”

“But it’s warm in here,” said Harry.

She shivered again as his cold mouth kissed the top of her ear.

The first week of Sally Carrol’s visit went very quickly. The January days were short and cold. Dark mornings and evenings were new to her. There was some pale yellow sunshine in the afternoons, but it soon disappeared. The Georgia sunshine was nothing like this.

Sally Carrol tried some winter sports for the first time. She wasn’t very good at them, and she often fell over on the snow and ice. She enjoyed some sports, but they were all quite difficult for her. Sometimes, small children stopped to help her. They were surprised that an adult was having difficulty. But Sally Carrol tried hard and she had fun. They were new activities and they were different.

“I wanted new people and new things,” she thought, “and now I have them. My friends in Georgia will be surprised!”

But she soon realized that these activities were for children. The adults around her organized them for her, to make her happy.



At first, the Bellamy family seemed strange to her. She liked the men, and Harry's father was her favorite. She found that he was born in Kentucky. This made him special to her—a bridge between the old life and the new. But she didn't like the Bellamy women. Myra, her future sister-in-law, was very pretty but had no interesting conversation. She was completely different to any of the girls back home.

"If these women aren't beautiful," Sally Carrol thought, "they're nothing. They don't do anything. They have nothing to say. Men are the center of every mixed group."

And there was Mrs. Bellamy, Harry's mother. Sally Carrol hated her. It was clear that Mrs. Bellamy didn't like strangers. She called Sally Carrol "Sally." She didn't believe that she really had a double name.

"I feel like half a person," Sally Carrol thought.

She soon realized that Mrs. Bellamy didn't like her hair. She didn't like her clothes, either.

"I don't think Mrs. Bellamy likes anything about me," she thought.

She met a lot of men in town, but she liked Roger Patton best of all. He was often a visitor to the Bellamy house. They talked about books and poems. They found that they liked the same writers.

One day, Sally Carrol and Harry were walking home through the snowy streets. They passed a little girl, in a gray wool coat.

"Look, Harry!" said Sally Carrol. "That little girl. Did you see her face? It was as red as an apple! She looked so sweet."

"Your face is almost as red as hers," said Harry. "Everybody's healthy here—it's this wonderful weather. We're out in the cold as soon as we can walk."

Sally Carrol had to agree. Harry and his brother were very healthy.

Suddenly, they saw a poor man at the corner of the street. His dirty old clothes didn't fit him well. He was cold and shivering.

"He's probably from the South," said Harry. "Look at those old pants!"

"Harry, that's not fair," said Sally Carrol.

"I'm sorry, but they've lived too long down there. It's made them lazy."

Sally Carrol was angry. "If they're lazy, it's because of the heat. Some men from the South are the finest in the world. And they're my best friends. Please don't talk like that."

"Oh, I know. Some are OK. There was one in my class at college. They're all right when they come north to college."

"Nobody from the South talks the way you're talking now."

"But you said that you didn't want to marry a man from the South," said Harry.

"That's different. I didn't want to tie myself to a boy from Tarleton. I didn't make any general statements like that."

They walked in silence.

"I'm sorry, Sally Carrol. Maybe I said too much," said Harry, as they reached home.

Sally Carrol said nothing, but then suddenly she threw her arms around him.

"Oh, Harry, let's get married next week. These disagreements won't happen after we're married."

"That's silly. We decided on March," he said.

"Yes, of course. I'm sorry. I guess it was a stupid idea," said Sally Carrol, quietly.

Harry took her hand. "Come and kiss me, and let's forget about it," he said. They kissed, but Sally Carrol didn't forget.

It was a very cold night, after a day that was only a little warmer. But now there was snow on the streets again and the wind was coming from the north. The sky was completely gray. Sally Carrol and Harry drove through the silent streets. There were lights in all the houses. But Sally Carrol sometimes felt there was nobody living there.

"This is a sad, lonely place," she thought.

She thought again of the country houses outside the city. She pictured the people inside. In her mind they were looking outside. They were waiting for the snow to go. They were waiting all winter for spring to arrive. She knew that spring in the North came slowly. It was still cold, and wet when the snow cleared. It was nothing like the sunny, flower-filled spring days of the South.

"If I die in this place," she thought, "there'll be snow on my grave all winter. I'll have to lie under a great blanket of it." The thought made her sad. She wanted her grave washed with sun and rain and the warm, sweet days of the South.

Slowly, a storm arrived. There was more snow and the wind grew stronger. They continued driving through the snow. After another ten minutes, they turned a corner—and there it was! The ice palace stood on a tall hill. It was three floors high, with a lot of narrow windows. Electric lights inside the palace shone out over the snow.

"It's beautiful!" said Harry. "They haven't had a palace here since eighty-five!"

Sally Carrol felt sadder when he said that. This palace of ice was surely filled with the shadows of dead people from the eighties. She pictured their pale faces and snow-filled hair, and she shivered.

Harry took her hand and they started to walk toward the palace. Another group of people arrived—Gordon and Myra, Roger Patton, and another girl.



There were a lot of people there already, dressed in warm coats and hats. They called to other people and talked together as they walked.

"It's a hundred and seventy feet tall," Harry told someone.

Sally Carrol heard other people discussing the palace.

"There's one main room," someone said.

"The walls are twenty to forty inches thick," another man said.

It seemed everyone knew about the palace.

They went inside and found seats. Sally Carrol looked around. Harry was right. It was beautiful. The ice walls were almost clear and the lights shone on them.

"Look!" cried Harry.

A band in the corner started to play. And then the lights went out. The music grew softer and then stopped. From outside came the sound of men singing. It came nearer.

Suddenly, lines of men walked into the main room, carrying lights. The first line wore gray hats and each man had a gray blanket over his shoulders. As their singing continued, more men arrived, this time in red blankets. Then another line of men with lights walked in. Their color was blue. The last group had white hats and blankets.

"The men in white are people that you've met at dances," Harry said quietly.

The singing grew louder, their lights were brighter. It seemed that the room was on fire. The men gave a great shout! The electric lights came on again and the band started playing. The musicians walked toward the palace entrance and the lines of men followed. Soon, they were all outside the palace again.

"Let's go!" shouted Harry. "We want to see the underground rooms before they turn the lights off."

Everybody stood up and moved at the same time. Some people went outside



some went downstairs. Sally Carrol put her hand in Harry's and they followed a lot of people down to a long room. They couldn't stand up, it was so low. Suddenly, their hands were parted and Sally Carrol couldn't see Harry in the crowd. She looked around at the many exits from the room. She thought she saw him disappear through an opening on her right. She looked through to a long **passage**.

"Harry!" she called.

"Follow me!" he shouted back.

Most of the other people in the room were already leaving. Sally Carrol followed the sound of Harry's voice, but she couldn't see him.

"Harry!" she called again.

Sally Carrol reached a turning-point in the passage. She didn't know which way to go. She listened carefully. Was that Harry's voice on her left? She went that way. Then she passed another turning point on her right.

"Harry!"

There was no answer. She started to run straight forward, but then an icy fear took hold of her. She turned quickly and ran back. She reached a turn.

"This is where I turn left," she thought. "This will take me back to the long room."

But it only took her to another long passage. At the end there was only darkness. She called again, but there was no reply. Her voice came back to her from the ice walls.

She turned around again. There was another corner, and another passage. It was difficult to walk now because of the ice on the bottom of her boots. She had to be careful not to fall. She put her hands out to the wall.

"Harry!"

Still there was no answer.

And then the lights went out and it was completely dark. Sally Carrol gave a small cry and fell onto the ice. She imagined the ice walls closing around her. She imagined them taking her life.

But fear made her move again. She suddenly felt great energy in her body. She got up and started moving carefully along the passage. She held her hands in front of her in the darkness.



"I must get out," she thought.

Harry was probably outside by now. Maybe he thought she was with other people. Maybe he wasn't looking for her. Maybe nobody was.

"No one will know until tomorrow. If they don't find me for days," she thought, "I'll freeze to death. I must keep moving until I find the right way."

She reached her hand out for the wall. Forty inches thick, they said—forty inches!

"Oh, send somebody—send somebody!" she cried loudly.

Her friends at home, Clark Darrow or Joe Ewing—they understood her. She couldn't stay here to die. Not in this ice palace in a freezing northern town. Not Sally Carrol. She was a happy girl! She loved the sun and the warm South. The ice and these other cold, northern things—they were foreign to her. This wasn't her land. She didn't belong here.

"You're not crying," something said from the darkness. "You'll never cry again. Your tears will freeze."



Sally Carrol fell forward onto the ice.

"Oh, God!" she cried.

Minutes passed. She was becoming tired. She felt her eyes closing. Then someone seemed to sit near her and take her head in warm, soft hands. She looked up slowly.

"It's Margery Lee!" she said softly. "I was hoping to see you."

Margery Lee looked exactly as Sally Carrol imagined her that day in the graveyard. She had wide, welcoming eyes and dark hair. Her hands held Sally Carrol's head and smoothed her hair. She was wearing a rose pink skirt made of soft cotton. Sally Carrol rested her head on that skirt.

"Margery Lee," she said.

She stopped worrying and felt safe again. Everything was all right.

It was getting darker and darker. The minutes passed quickly, and then slowly. Suddenly, Sally Carrol heard a great noise above her. It was the sun,

wasn't it? No, it was a light. It was more than one light. Then she saw a face under the light and felt arms lifting her. Someone touched her face, someone put a blanket around her.

"Sally Carrol, Sally Carrol!"

It was Roger Patton, and two other faces that she didn't know.

"Child, child! We've looked for you for more than two hours! Harry's half-crazy with worry!"

Sally Carrol started to remember things: the singing, the lights, the music. She moved in Roger Patton's arms and gave a long, low cry.

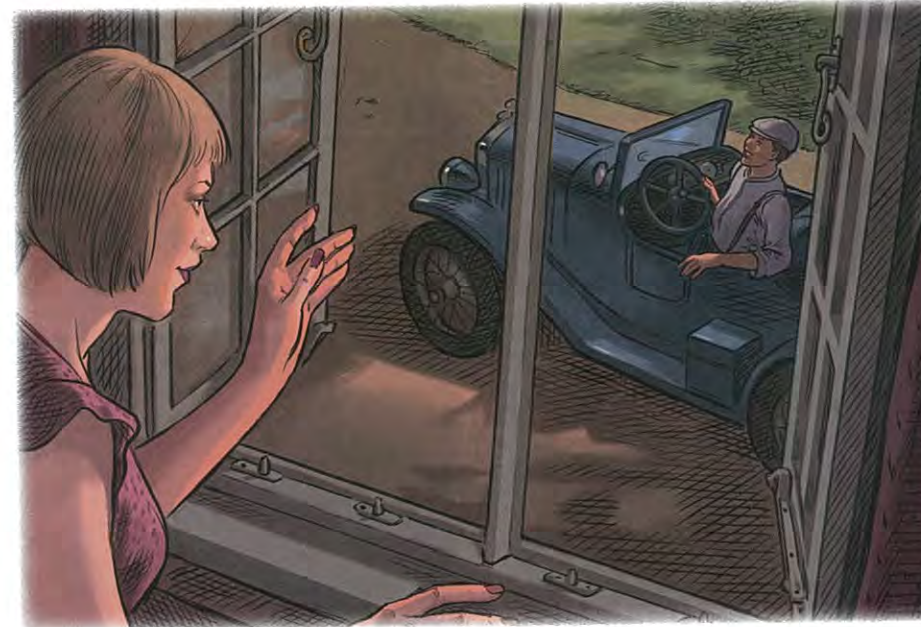
"Oh, I want to get out of here! I'm going back home. Take me home ..."

Her words became a scream.

Harry heard the scream as he raced along the passage toward her. An icy hand took hold of his heart. He knew that it was the end.

"I'm going home! Tomorrow!" she cried. "Tomorrow! Tomorrow!"

Golden sunlight poured down, warming the house. The road at the front of the house was comfortably quiet in the heat. Two birds in the yard next door were making a noise. They flew around a tree until they found a place out of the sun. Then they became quieter. Down the street, a black fruit seller called out. It was an April afternoon, and the first hot day of spring.



Sally Carrol Happer sat in her bedroom. She rested her head on her hands and looked out the window. She was watching a very old Ford as it turned the corner. It stopped outside the house, the car coughed, then it was silent. Sally Carrol made no sound. A minute later, she heard a voice calling her name. She smiled and lifted her head.

"Good morning."

A head looked out the car window.

"It's not morning, Sally Carrol."

"Oh, isn't it?" she said, smiling. "Well, maybe you're right."

"What are you doing?"

"Eating a green apple. It'll probably kill me."

Clark moved his body a little more, so he could see her face.

"The water's warm, Sally Carrol. Want to go swimming?"

"I hate to move," she said, sleepily. "But yes, I think I do."

5.1 Were you right?

Look back at your answers to Activity 4.4. Then choose the right words for these sentences.

- 1 Sally Carrol thinks that Roger Patton is very *unpleasant / friendly / impolite*.
- 2 She enjoys learning some *card games / musical activities / winter sports*.
- 3 She and Harry have *no / some / a lot of* disagreements.
- 4 From outside, she thinks that the Ice Palace is a *beautiful / sad / terrible* place.
- 5 In the ice passages, she feels *fear / happiness / sadness*.
- 6 She is found by *friends / Harry / Roger*.

5.2 What more did you learn?

Complete the sentence under each picture. Then put the pictures in order, 1–4



"We've looked for you for two hours!"



"I was hoping you."



"The water's warm. Want to"



"Everybody's healthy here— it's this"

5.3 Language in use

Read the sentences on the right. Then add *too* or *either* to the sentences below.

"They're a nice-looking crowd, aren't they?" said Roger.
Sally Carrol was surprised. "Harry said that, **too**."
Mrs. Bellamy didn't like her hair. She didn't like her clothes, **either**."

- 1 Roger isn't from this city and Sally Carrol isn't,
- 2 The January mornings and evenings are dark, and they're cold,
- 3 Sally Carrol doesn't like Myra and she doesn't like Mrs. Bellamy,
- 4 Roger likes books and poems and Sally Carrol likes them,
- 5 Harry knows a lot about the Ice Palace and other people do,
- 6 The musicians walk out of the palace and then the men with torches walk outside,
- 7 Sally Carrol can't see Harry and she can't see any other people,

5.4 What's next?

The next story is called "Ardita and the Pirate." Look at the words in *italics> and the picture on the next page.*

- 1 What kind of girl is Ardita, do you think?
.....
- 2 Write a sentence describing the picture.
.....
.....
- 3 Do you think the man in the picture is:
 - a her friend?
 - b her husband?
 - c her uncle?
 - d her employer?

Ardita and the Pirate

"You can't get me off this boat," she said, "and you can't take it anywhere. My uncle will have telephone messages traveling all over this ocean by six thirty."

This improbable story begins on an ocean that was a blue dream. It was below a sky as blue as the blue of children's eyes. The sun danced across the tops of the waves and made a golden pool a mile out. It was the beginning of a beautiful evening.

Between the Florida coast and the golden pool lay a white boat called the *Narcissus*. It wasn't moving, but was sitting silently on the waves. On the boat, a yellow-haired girl was lying on a sofa, reading a book.

She was about nineteen, with a wide mouth and quick, gray eyes. In her hand was half an orange. As she read, she brought the orange to her mouth. Then she touched it with her tongue. She was lost in her book and didn't hear the sound of footsteps.



An older, gray-haired man stopped in front of the girl. He didn't look pleased. His shadow fell across her, but she didn't look up. She turned the page of her book and touched the orange to her mouth again.

"Ardita!" said the gray-haired man.

She didn't reply.

"Ardita!" he said again. "Ardita!"

She continued to read, and lifted the orange again.

"Oh, shut up," she said.

"Ardita, will you listen to me?"

"Put it in writing."

"Please close that book for two minutes. And put that orange down while I'm speaking to you."

"Oh, can't you leave me alone?"

"Ardita, I've just received a telephone message from the **shore** ..."

"Telephone?" Ardita said, showing a little interest for the first time.

"Yes, it was ..."

"You mean you have a telephone on this boat, out here?" she asked.

"Yes, and ..."

"Well, isn't science wonderful!"

"Will you listen to me for a minute?"

"Oh, OK," said Ardita, smoothing the page of her book.

"My friend Mr. Moreland has called again. He wants me to bring you to shore for dinner tonight. His son Toby has come all the way from New York to meet you. He's invited some other young people, too. For the last time, will you ...?"

"No," said Ardita, "I won't. I came along on this boat trip to go to Palm Beach. You knew that was my idea. I don't want to meet your friend, or his son or the other young people. So either take me to Palm Beach or shut up and go away."

"Very well, young lady. But I know you're planning to meet a man who ..."

"I know," said Ardita. "I've heard it all before. You don't like him. You want to protect me. So you go your way and I'll go mine. I'd like nothing better."

"But as your uncle ..."

"Oh, go away!" Ardita shouted. "Do you want me to throw this book at you?"

Smack! The book flew through the air. It missed Ardita's uncle and landed at his feet. He turned away and called for a small boat. Then he walked back to the sofa. Ardita was sitting there, with the orange at her tongue again.

shore /ʃɔːr/ (n) the place where the land meets the sea. You go *ashore* when you go from a boat onto the land.

“I am going ashore,” he said, slowly. “I will return at nine o’clock tonight, and we will start back for New York. When we arrive, I shall hand you back to your aunt. And you will stay there.”

He stopped and looked at her. Suddenly, he was no longer angry. She was little more than a child, he thought.

“Ardita,” he said, kindly. “I’m not stupid. I know men. Men like this one don’t change until they’re very old. Maybe the man loves you—that’s possible. He’s loved many women and he’ll love many more. It’s less than one month since he was seen with that terrible red-haired woman, Mimi Merrill. He promised her the gold and silver ring that Catherine of Russia gave his mother. You know this—you read the newspapers.”

“Make a film,” said Ardita. “It’s a good story for a movie.”

“Will you tell me why you want to marry him?”

“Maybe because he’s different to the stupid young men that I usually meet. Maybe because he has imagination and he’s brave. And don’t worry about the famous Russian ring. He’s going to give it to me at Palm Beach.”

“And the red-haired woman?”

“He hasn’t seen her for six months,” she said, angrily. “Men do what I want them to do. Don’t you know that by now?”

“Is it the Russian ring that interests you?”

“No it isn’t. And you know that I never change my mind. So please go away. I refuse to go ashore. Do you hear?”

“Very well,” he said. “You’re an impossible, selfish girl and ...”

Splush! The piece of orange hit him in the neck.

A voice came from below.

“The boat is ready to take you ashore, Mr. Farnam.”

Mr. Farnam was too angry to speak. He turned and climbed down the ladder.



The sun dropped slowly and silently toward the ocean. Suddenly, the sound of men singing came up from below. Ardita lifted her head and listened. It was a very strange song, one that she didn’t know.

“Potatoes and cheese,
Pigs on their knees,
Apples and socks,
Fish on the rocks,
Lazy weather!
Send us some wind,
Send us some wind,
Send us some wind.
Pull together!”

Ardita threw her book down and hurried to the side of the ship. Fifty feet away, she saw a small boat coming toward her. There were seven men in it. Six of them were black, and one white man was standing at the front of the boat. All were singing. Ardita watched them curiously. Then the white man lifted one hand and the music stopped.

“Greetings, *Narcissus*,” he called.

“What’s all this noise?” asked Ardita.

By this time, the small boat was against the side of the *Narcissus*. One of the



black men took hold of the ladder, and the white man climbed quickly up it. He stood in front of Ardita.

“The women and children are safe!” he cried. “The men are our prisoners!”

Ardita looked at him, unable to speak with excitement. He was a young man, and handsome. His hair was short and very black. His clothes were smart.

“This ship is now mine.” he said.

“Who are you?” she asked coldly. “Are you mad, or is this a joke?”

“We’re **pirates**, and we have now taken this ship,” he replied.

“Get off the boat,” Ardita said.

“What?” The young man seemed very surprised.

“Get off the boat! You heard me!”

He looked at her for a minute.

“No I won’t,” he said slowly. “*You* can get off, if you want to.”

He went to the side of the ship and called to the men below. Immediately, the six black men climbed up the ladder and stood in front of him. They were all wearing dirty old blue uniforms. Each man was carrying a white bag.

“Step forward, Babe,” the young man said, and the smallest man stepped in front of the others.

“Yes, sir!”

“Go down below. Tie up everyone you find. And put those bags over there.”

“Yes, sir!”

Babe turned to the other pirates and then they all went downstairs.

“Now,” said the young man to Ardita, “promise to keep your pretty little mouth shut for forty-eight hours. Then you can take our boat and go ashore.”

“And if I don’t?”

“Then you’re going to sail with us.”

The young man sat down on Ardita’s sofa and looked around. He noticed the book and the orange.

“Hm. Have you got a clear head?”

Ardita didn’t reply.

“Because in five minutes you have to decide. Go or stay.”

He picked up the book and looked at it curiously.

“This is written in French—are you French?”

“No.”

“What’s your name?”

“Farnam.”

“Farnam what?”

“Ardita Farnam.”

pirate /ˈpaɪrət/ (n) a sailor who attacks other ships. Then he steals from them.

“Well, Ardita, don’t stand there looking nervous. Come over here and sit down.”

Ardita’s hands were shaking a little. She walked across to the other sofa and sat opposite the young man.

“You can’t get me off this boat,” she said, “and you can’t take it anywhere. My uncle will have telephone messages traveling all over this ocean by six thirty.”

The young man looked back at her, but said nothing.

“I don’t mind,” she continued. “It isn’t my boat. I don’t mind sailing with you for an hour or two. You can borrow that book if you like. Then you can read it when the **revenue men** catch you. There will be plenty of time to read it in prison.”

He laughed. “This was planned a long time before I knew about this boat. One boat is as good as another.”

“Who are you?” asked Ardita suddenly. “And *what* are you?”

“You’ve decided not to go ashore?”

“I never even thought about it.”

“We’re called Curtis Carlyle and his Six Black Friends. We were musicians and singers until today. Now, we’re pirates and we’re running from the law.”

He waved a hand at the white bags.

“What’s in the bags?” Ardita asked curiously.

“Well, let’s call it sand—Florida sand.”



Ten minutes later, the *Narcissus* was sailing away from the coast. It went south through the warm evening, as the sun came down. Babe seemed to be Curtis Carlyle’s main assistant. He gave orders to the other pirates. One of them was busy with a can of paint. He painted over the name *Narcissus* on the front of the boat and wrote the new name, *Hula Hula*.

Carlyle sat with Ardita, waiting for dinner. He lay back on the sofa and closed his eyes. Ardita looked at him carefully.

“He’s a romantic person,” she thought, “but less sure of himself than he seems. He’s not really like me. There’s something different about him.”

But he was the same as her in some ways. Like Ardita, Curtis Carlyle was selfish. She liked selfish people—they were never boring—and they always fell at her feet in the end. But this man seemed softer, even defenseless. She was interested in him, more interested than in herself. And that was unusual for Ardita.

The night became darker and the stars came out. A pale moon smiled

revenue men /ˈrevənu men/ (n) government men who try to catch pirates

down onto the ocean and dark clouds came across the sky. The shore slowly disappeared. Sometimes, one of the pirates lit a cigarette. The only other light came from the moon. There was no sound except for the waves. All around them was the smell of the salt water.

Carlyle broke the silence.

“Lucky girl,” he said. “I’ve always wanted to be rich—and to buy all this.”

“Better to be you,” said Ardita. “I’m not really interested in money. It can’t give you everything. And it can’t change the person you are. I’m not afraid of anything on earth. Money didn’t give me that. It’s how I am.”

“Hm. *I’m* afraid of *some* things.”

“Let’s talk about you. What have you done? And how did you do it?” she asked.

“Why do you want to know? Are you going to write a movie about me?”

“Tell me,” she said. “Lie to me by moonlight. Tell me a wonderful story.”

One of the men arrived and lit some lights. Then he prepared the table for dinner. They ate cold chicken, salad, and fruit. Carlyle began to talk, slowly at first. Then he saw her interest and continued more happily. Ardita ate very little as she watched his handsome young face. And it was a good story.

“I began life as a poor kid in a Tennessee town. We were so poor, we were the only white family on the street. My friends were all black kids. There was a black woman called Belle Pope Calhoun. She played the piano at parties for rich white children. I sat next to her piano for hours, listening to her. She taught me to play. By the time I was thirteen, I was playing music in little cafés around Nashville. Eight years later, I took six of my black friends with me and we became a band. These are the men that you see me with now. We had great success. We played in all the big theaters in New York, and suddenly we were rich.”

Carlyle stopped. He took a drink, then put his glass down.

“And then it all changed. I stopped enjoying that life. We were making money—lots of it. Sometimes we played for private parties at three thousand dollars a night. But these were in houses where I wasn’t welcome during the day. I was only the paid musician. I thought about leaving the boys—becoming a pianist without them. But I was sick of the theater life. I wanted to have a lot of money, but I wanted time for reading and playing. I wanted to be part of the society that I played for. So I needed to get rich, quickly. I put all of my money into a business idea. But the business failed and I lost everything.

“Then the war came. I became a soldier, but one of the officers knew me as a musician. After that, I spent the war playing in a band, for the soldiers.”

Carlyle lit a cigarette and lay back on the sofa.



“And then, after the war, it all started again. The band came together again. We played for private dances, and some of the best Florida hotels wanted us, too. It was only a question of time then.”

Ardita looked at him and waited for him to continue. But he shook his head.

“No,” he said. “I’m not going to tell you about it. It’s the best part of my story. I’m enjoying my life too much now. I want to keep it for myself a little longer. If I tell you, I’ll lose some of the excitement. I want to remember that wonderful feeling when they suddenly realized.”

“Realized what?” asked Ardita.

“That I was more than a musician.”

From below came the sound of singing. Ardita listened, smiling. Her eyes closed.

Carlyle was silent for a minute. He looked up at the stars in the warm night sky.

“This is what I’m looking for,” he said softly. “I want something beautiful that comes suddenly, like a dream. Like the beautiful eyes of a girl.”

He turned to Ardita, but she was silent.

“You understand, don’t you, Anita—I mean, Ardita?”
But she didn’t answer. She was asleep.

Next day, Ardita sat as usual in her favorite seat, reading. At around noon, she reached the last page of her book and put it down next to her. She looked up and saw an island in the ocean. It was green with trees, and all around it was a white, sandy beach. At one end, she could see a tall, gray **cliff**.

Carlyle was standing at the side of the ship, looking at the island. Ardita called across to him.

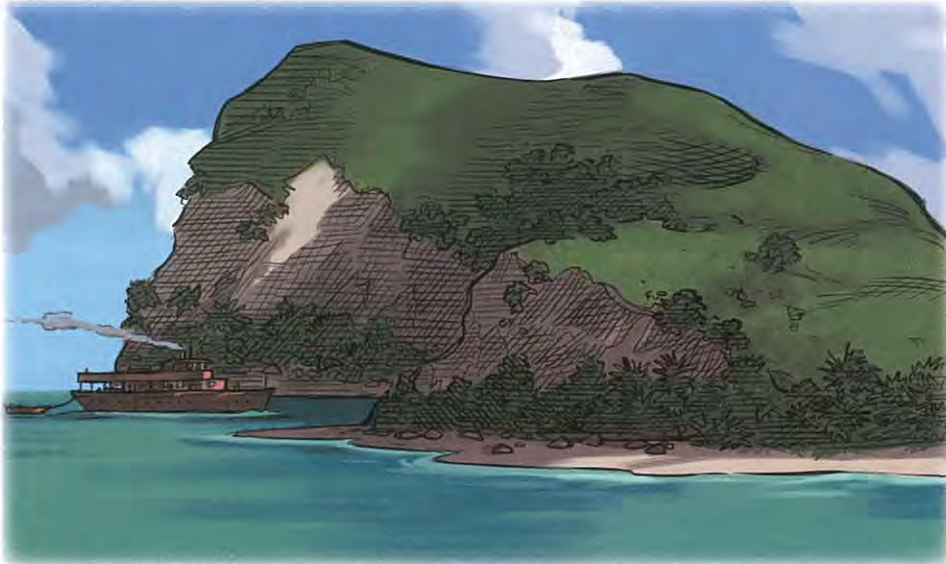
“Is this it? Is this where you’re going?”

But Carlyle didn’t know. He shouted to Babe.

“Oh, Babe, is this your island?”

“Yes, sir! This is it!”

Carlyle joined Ardita.



“It looks interesting, doesn’t it?” he said.

“Yes,” Ardita replied, “but it doesn’t look big enough for a hiding place.”

“Are you still thinking of your uncle’s telephones? Do you think he’ll find us out here? Maybe you’re hoping for that.”

“No. I’m with you now. I’d like to see you escape.”

Carlyle laughed.

“You’re our Lady Luck. We’ll have to keep you with us—for now.”

cliff /klɪf/ (n) a large area of rock with a very steep side, often next to water

“Well, you can’t ask me to swim back,” she said. “If you do, I shall write down your long, long story. I’ll turn it into a book.”

“I’m very sorry I bored you last night,” he replied.

“Oh you didn’t—only at the end. You were very angry, weren’t you? Only because you couldn’t dance with those ladies. You were no more than a musician to them.”

Carlyle was angry, but Ardita laughed.

“Men usually want to talk about *me*,” she said, “not themselves.”

“And does every man say, ‘I love you?’”

Ardita laughed. “All of life is moving toward, or away from, that one sentence—I love you.”

“That’s a very smart thing to say,” said Carlyle.

“Much too smart for this time in the morning. Morning’s the time for sleeping and swimming. And being careless.”

The island came closer, and the black musicians started to sing again.

“Oh, down, Oh down,

My Momma wants to show me the stars,

Oh down, Oh down,

Daddy says tomorrow!

But Momma says today,

Yes Momma says today!”

Ten minutes later, the ship reached the island. It went around in a wide circle to the northern point.

“There’s a trick somewhere,” Ardita thought. “He can’t mean to stop under this cliff.”

They were now heading straight toward the rock. The cliff was over a hundred feet tall. Then Ardita saw where they were going.

There was a break in the cliff, hidden from the ocean. It was a very narrow passage, just wide enough for the boat. They traveled slowly, on calm, clear water between high gray walls. Finally, the passage opened out into a wide lake. Around them were trees and flowers, and in front of them was a beach.

Ardita laughed. “It’s a wonderful place to hide!” she said.

“It’s the kind of place that you read about,” said Carlyle.

“What’s its name?” Ardita asked Babe.

“No name,” he replied, laughing. “Just ‘Island,’ that’s all.”

A small boat was lowered onto the lake, and they went ashore.

“Come with me,” said Carlyle as he jumped onto the sandy beach. “Let’s take a look around.”

6.1 Were you right?

Look back at your answers to Activity 5.4. Then finish this description of the picture.

Ardita and her ¹..... are on the ocean, on his boat. She is ²..... a book and she doesn't ³..... him coming toward her. She has an ⁴..... in her hand. Ardita looks happy but her uncle seems ⁵..... It's a big, expensive boat, so Ardita and her uncle are probably ⁶..... people.



6.2 What more did you learn?

Three of these sentences are wrong. Change them and write them correctly in the box below.

- 1 Ardita is more interested in the Russian ring than the man.
- 2 There are six black men and one white man in the small boat.
- 3 The men were all musicians, then they became pirates.
- 4 Ardita is bored by Carlyle's stories.
- 5 Carlyle takes her to Miami.

Correct answers

1 Ardita is more interested in the Russian ring than the man.

2 There are six black men and one white man in the small boat.

3 The men were all musicians, then they became pirates.

4 Ardita is bored by Carlyle's stories.

5 Carlyle takes her to Miami.

6.3 Language in use

Read the sentences on the right. Then complete these sentences in the same way. Use the words in *italics* to help you.

If I **tell** you, I'll **lose** some of the excitement.
If you **do**, I **shall write down** your long, long story.

- 1 If Ardita meets the man in Palm Beach, *he will give her the gold and silver ring*..... (*he/gold and silver ring*).
- 2 If (*white man/hand*), the black musicians will stop singing.
- 3 If Ardita wants to go, (*Carlyle/the island*).
- 4 If (*Carlyle/story*), Ardita will listen quietly.
- 5 If (*another boat/the island*), the sailors won't see the break in the cliff.
- 6 If the Narcissus stays on the lake, (*nobody/it*)

6.4 What's next?

Discuss possible endings to the story. Then write one below.

I think that

Ardita and the Pirate

*“Think of the newspaper stories! The society girl and the pirate!
Ardita Farnam runs away with a bank robber!”*

They walked south to another beautiful white beach. Ardita kicked off her shoes and walked into the warm water. Then they walked slowly back to the small boat. Babe already had lunch ready for them. He had a man on the cliff, looking out for other boats. But he was sure that nobody knew about the break in the cliffs—or the island.

“This island’s not on any maps,” he said, smiling. “It’s too small.”

In the afternoon, they sat with their backs against the rocks on the highest part of the cliff. Carlyle told Ardita about his plans.

“The revenue men will be after me by now,” he said. “So we’ll stay here for a few weeks. Then we’ll travel south and go to Callao in Peru.”

“How much money have you stolen?” asked Ardita.

“Just under a million dollars,” he said.

“And what will you do in Callao?”

“Take a ship for India. I plan to go into Afghanistan. I’ll buy a palace there. Then after about five years, I’ll go to England. I’ll sound strangely foreign and my past will be a mystery. But India first. They say that all the gold in the world goes back to India in the end. I find that very interesting. And I want to read. I want enough time to read every possible book.”

Ardita laughed.

“You can laugh. But I know exactly what I want. Do you?”

“Oh, yes.”

“What is it?”

“A man.”

“What do you mean? Which man? Are you engaged?”

“Not exactly. But I had a plan to meet him in Palm Beach. You changed all that when you arrived. He’s waiting there for me with a gold and silver ring. It belonged to Catherine of Russia. I liked him because he had imagination and strong opinions.”

“And your family weren’t happy about this man?” he asked.

“I only have a silly uncle and a sillier aunt. They were very unhappy. There was another woman in the story. But he gave her up immediately, for me.”

Ardita moved forward and looked over the cliff. The ocean was far below.

“Let’s go swimming tonight,” she said, “by moonlight.”

Carlyle said nothing, but he smiled to himself.

Night came, turning everything blue and silver. They took the small boat into the lake and pulled it up onto the beach. Then they sat in the bright moonlight and watched the water.

“Are you happy?” Carlyle asked.

“I’m always happy near the ocean,” said Ardita. “You know, you and I are the same in some ways. We have a similar history. Two years ago, when I was eighteen and you were ...”

“Twenty-five.”

“... well, we were both successful in ordinary ways. You were a successful musician. I was beautiful young woman joining society. But deep inside us, we wanted more than that. I didn’t know what I wanted. I went from man to man and I became more and more unhappy. I wanted things now—now—now! I didn’t want to wait.”

Ardita stood up suddenly.

“Wait a minute. I’m going to try this wonderful-looking water.”

She ran forward, and then he heard her in the water. Her voice came back to him.



“I read everything I could find. I began to hate society.”

“Come back, Ardita,” he called to her.

“I will, in a minute. Listen, first. I enjoyed being terrible—that was all. I went to parties in beautiful but impossible costumes. I went around with the most exciting men in New York. I was a very bad, wild girl.”

Soon, Carlyle heard the sound of her feet on the sand and she sat down next to him.

“Go in,” she said. “It’s wonderful.”

He swam a little, then they sat together again on the sand.

“My family was angry,” she continued. “They tried to find me a husband. And then, suddenly, I found something. I discovered that I was brave. I started to believe in myself. And that helped me through life. Men still came to me—old men and young men. They all wanted to marry this proud, brave woman, but I didn’t want any of them. I decided to live exactly as I liked. I wanted to die in my own way, too.”

“That’s OK for you,” said Carlyle. “You can be brave if you’re rich. It’s different for me.”

“You have to believe in yourself. But I also have hope, and you can have that, too. My hope always is that things will get better.”

She ran to the water again. Carlyle heard her laugh as she reached the warm lake. And then he knew he loved her.



For the next three days, Ardita got up early. She started every morning with a swim. The black musicians left their work and watched her over the side of the ship.

In the afternoons, she swam again or she sat with Carlyle on the cliff. There, they talked for hours. Sometimes, they went to the beach on the south of the island to watch the sun go down.

Ardita didn’t want this to end. She stopped thinking of it as a crazy, romantic adventure in the middle of her boring life.

“How can I go back to my old life,” she thought, “after this? How can I start making decisions again about my future?”

She began to hate the idea of Carlyle leaving the island.

“Take me with you,” she said late one night.

She was sitting on the grass with Carlyle. Across the other side of the lake, the musicians were playing their music.

“I’d love to become a very rich Indian lady,” she added.

Carlyle looked at her quickly.

“You can, you know.”

She laughed.

“Are you asking me to marry you? Think of the newspaper stories! ‘The society girl and the pirate! Ardita Farnam runs away with a bank robber!’”

“It wasn’t a bank.”

“What was it? Why don’t you tell me?”



“I don’t want to take away your good opinion.”

“My good opinion of you?”

“No, of yourself.”

Ardita looked up in surprise.

“Myself? I don’t understand. We’re talking about *your* crimes,” she said. “Not about me.”

“Well, we’ll see about that. But it’s better if you don’t know, right now.”

She reached over and touched his hand.

“Dear Mr. Curtis Carlyle,” she said softly, “are you in love with me?”

“Does it matter?”

“Yes,” she said, “it does. Because I think I’m in love with you.”

“That must make your January total at least six,” he suggested. “Maybe I will ask you to come to India with me.”

“Will you?”

“We can get married in Callao.”

“But what will happen when the revenue men catch you? What will happen to me?”

“I thought you weren’t afraid.”

“I’m not. But I won’t throw my life away to prove it to one man.”

“I love you, Ardita,” he said quietly.

Her face became serious.

“I love to be with you,” she said, “more than with any man I’ve ever met.”

And I like your looks and your dark hair. You're brave, and I like that, too. I like all the things you do, Curtis Carlyle. But I'm not old enough, or bored enough, to go with you. I think I'll go back. I'll marry—that other man."

Across the silver lake, the musicians continued to play.

"Let's dance!" cried Ardita. "I can't sit here with this music playing."

Carlyle took her hand and they walked out onto a wide area of hard sand. The music came across the lake to them. Ardita felt that she was in a dream. They danced under the moonlight and the stars, with the summer smells of flowers all around them.



"This is perfect," said Ardita, softly.

"It's a private dance, only for the very rich and the very beautiful," Carlyle said softly in her ear.

"I feel quite crazy, but wonderful!"

They both laughed, but then suddenly the music stopped. They saw one of

the men running around the lake. He came closer. They saw it was Babe.

"There's a ship out there," he said, pointing. "It's less than a mile away and it's not moving."

"A ship? What's it like?" Carlyle asked, and Ardita saw his face change. He looked very worried.

"I don't know, sir."

"Are they sending a boat ashore?" Carlyle asked.

"No sir."

"We'll go up."

They climbed the hill in silence, hand in hand. At the top, they looked carefully over the cliff. Carlyle gave a little cry.

"It's a revenue boat," he said.

There were six-inch guns at the front and back.

"They know," he said. "They know we're here. How did they find us?"

"Are you sure they know about the break in the cliff? Maybe they'll just take a look at the island in the morning. They can't be sure we're here. They won't see our ship from out there," Ardita said.

"Maybe they will," he said. He looked at his watch. "It's almost two o'clock now. You're right that they won't do anything until morning. Maybe they're waiting for another ship. It's possible."

The hours passed and Ardita and Carlyle lay there, side by side. They were both silent, their heads in their hands, like dreaming children. Behind them, the musicians also waited.

Just before five o'clock, Babe came to Carlyle.

"There are guns on the *Narcissus*, sir," he said. "We can fight. We only need a plan."

But Carlyle laughed and shook his head.

"That's a revenue boat, Babe. Look at the guns that they have! We can't fight them and win. You can hide those bags in the sand if you like. But the men will go all over the island. They'll find them."

Babe turned away silently.

"He's the best friend I've ever had," Carlyle said to Ardita.

"You've given up?" asked Ardita.

"I have to—they'll catch me. Look!"

The color of the sky was growing lighter. On the revenue ship they could see a group of men looking toward the island. They were looking straight at the break in the cliff.

"I'm so sorry," Ardita said, softly. There were tears in her eyes.

"We'll go back to the boat," said Carlyle. "It's better that way."



They went down to the lake, and the small boat took them all back to the *Narcissus*. Ardita and Carlyle sat on the sofas and waited.

Almost an hour later, the front of the revenue boat came into view. It was sailing slowly into the break in the cliff. Then it stopped, and the sailors put two small boats over the side. In one boat was an officer and six men in blue uniforms. In the other were four men in uniform. Two gray-haired men were sitting at the back of the boat.

Ardita and Carlyle stood up at the same time and he moved toward her. Then he put his hand into his pocket and gave Ardita a small package.

“What’s this?” she asked.

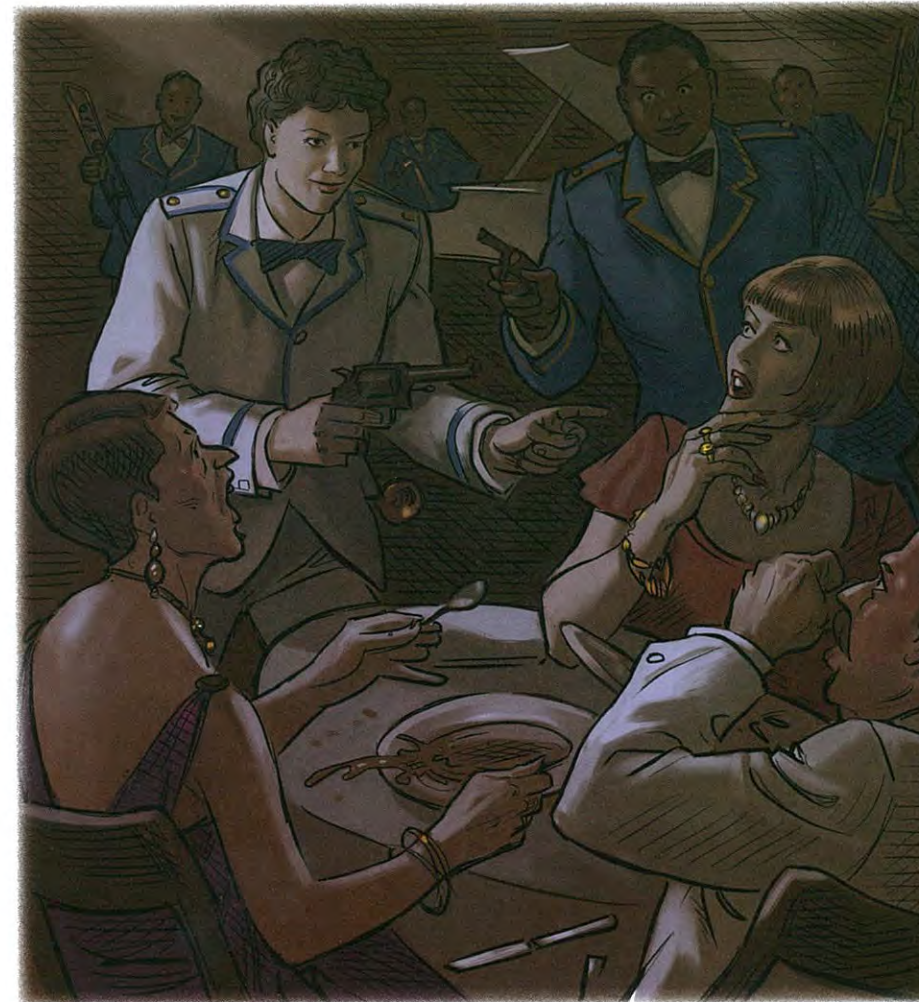
She opened the paper and took out a gold and silver ring.

“I can’t be completely sure. But look closely. I think that’s your promised Russian ring,” he said.

“But how ... where ...?”

“It came out of one of those bags. Let me explain. Curtis Carlyle and his Six Black Friends were playing in the tea-room of an expensive hotel in Palm Beach. In the middle of a song, they suddenly pulled out guns and pointed them at the crowd. I took this ring from a pretty woman with red hair.”

Ardita smiled.
 “So that’s what you did! I knew you were brave! And you *do* believe in yourself.”
 And then the sun came up and the sky was golden. The shadows on the ship disappeared into the corners. Ardita and Carlyle moved closer together and kissed.
 She smiled up at him.
 “Are you happy?” he asked.
 But it was clear from the look on her face. Ardita was happier than ever before. For another minute, life was wonderful. Then they heard the sound of a



small boat at the side of the *Narcissus*.

The two gray-haired men came up the ladder first. An officer and two sailors followed behind them.

Mr. Farnam looked at Ardita.

“So,” he said, slowly.

Ardita took her arms away from Carlyle’s neck. She looked at her uncle.

“So,” he repeated angrily. “So this is your romantic idea of life. You decided to run away with a pirate.”

“What a stupid old man you are!” she said quietly.

“Is that your best defense?”

“No,” she said. “No, there’s another thing. I’ve used these words to end most of our conversations for the past few years—‘Shut up!’”

She took one last look at the two old men, the officer, and the sailors. Then she turned and walked away.

As soon as she left, her uncle started to laugh. The second old man laughed, too, then he turned to Carlyle.

“Well, Toby,” he said, “you crazy romantic boy. What have you learned? Is she the person you wanted?”

Carlyle smiled.

“Yes, of course. I was sure when I first heard about her. You received Babe’s message last night?”

“We did,” said Mr. Moreland. “But we kept quite close to you all the time. We were a little worried about those strange black musicians. We don’t know much about them.”

Carlyle laughed.

“They’re good men,” he said. “They played their part perfectly. Ardita never guessed.”

“Your father and I sat up all night, waiting,” said Mr. Farnam. “You’re welcome to her, my boy. She’s driven me crazy. Did you give her the Russian ring that my detective got from that Mimi woman?”

“Yes,” said Carlyle. “Be quiet! She’s coming back!”

Ardita looked at the group of men.

“Why does everybody look so pleased?” she thought. “What has happened here without me?”

“Ardita,” said Carlyle.

He took a step toward her. She took a step toward him.

“Ardita,” he repeated. “I have to tell you now. My story wasn’t true. It came out of thin Florida air. My name isn’t Carlyle. It’s Moreland—Toby Moreland.”

She looked at him, unbelieving at first, then surprised, and then angry.



The three men waited. Mr. Moreland moved toward her. Mr. Farnam waited, worried.

But Ardita suddenly smiled, then laughed. She went to young Moreland and looked up at him. Her gray eyes were not at all angry.

“Promise me,” she said, “that *you* thought of this.”

“I promise,” he said. “It was my idea completely.”

Ardita kissed him.

“You imagined all this! That’s wonderful!” she said softly. “I want you to lie to me as sweetly for the rest of my life.”

The singing of the black musicians started again. Then Ardita remembered something.

“What was in those bags?” she asked.

“Florida sand,” he answered. “That was one of two true things that I told you.”

“Maybe I can guess the other,” she said, and she kissed him again.

1 Work with another student. Think about the story of "Ardita and the Pirate" and have this conversation.

Student A You are Ardita's aunt, at home in New York. You knew nothing about Toby Moreland's plan. What happened? Ask your husband to explain. You want to know everything!



Student B You are Mr. Farnam. Answer your wife's questions. Explain how everything was planned. How successful was the plan, in your opinion?



2 Work with other students. Remember the story of "The Ice Palace."

In Harry's northern town there was a winter carnival, and an Ice Palace. Imagine that you are Sally Carrol and her friends. Plan a summer carnival for Tarleton, Georgia. What will happen? There can't be an Ice Palace, so what will there be? Discuss your plans and write notes below. Then tell the class. Whose ideas are best?

Notes

Imagine that you have the same problem as Benjamin Button. Write a letter to Maggie at "What's your problem?" on the Internet. Explain what is happening. What have you tried? How do you feel? What help do you hope that Maggie can give you?

Maggie | What's your problem?


Dear Maggie,

Lined writing area for the letter to Maggie.

Send

1 *New You!* is a magazine for people who want excitement in their lives. It gives readers information about activities, and vacations for them to try.

- a Read this report in *New You!* about dancing and discuss it with another student. Does this activity interest you? Why (not)?



Everybody's dancing!

- ★ All over the UK dance schools are opening—and plenty of people want to learn.
- ★ You can start at any age and you don't need to buy a lot of expensive equipment. Dancing will keep you fit and and make you lose weight. And it's fun! You'll meet new people and make friends. Some towns even offer free dance classes for people over 60.
- ★ Take the first step today. Find your nearest school and get your dancing shoes on!

- b Imagine that you and your friend work for *New You!* The magazine has asked you to try a dance class. You have never danced before. Write some notes.

What we liked:

.....

.....

What we didn't like:

.....

.....

Best dance:..... Worst dance:

The teacher:

More classes?

- c With your friend, write a report on your dance class for the magazine. Write it on a piece of paper and put it on your classroom wall. Then read the other reports.

2 *New You!* has received this email about a company called *Sail Away*.

- a Read the letter and discuss it with your friend. What kind of vacation does *Sail Away* offer? Do you agree that Mrs. Trellis should be angry about her family's vacation?

New Email

Dear *New You!*

Last September my family went on a two week *Sail Away* vacation. Everything went wrong. The equipment and the boat were old. Our children hated the trip because nothing was organized for them. The sailing teacher on our boat only spoke Greek. The food was terrible and we all lost weight. We stopped at a few islands but we only went ashore once. We asked *Sail Away* for our money back, but they refused.

Can your magazine help?

Yours,

Mrs. Rosalind Trellis

- b Continue working with your friend. Have this conversation.

Student A You are a *New You!* reporter. Interview the boss of *Sail Away*. Get as much information as possible about the vacations. Ask about the cost, the boats, the food, the visits, and the teaching. Talk about the problems that the Trellis family had. Will they get their money back?

Student B You are the boss of *Sail Away*. Answer the reporter's questions. Explain why some families take *Sail Away* vacations year after year. What do you feel about the Trellis family's vacation? Will you give them back their money? Why (not)?

- c Write a report in your notebook. If you were a *New You!* reporter, write about the Trellis's vacation and the result of your interview for the magazine. If you were interviewed as the boss of *Sail Away*, write about the Trellis's vacation and the result of the interview for other people in the company.

