

CHAPTER- A DAY'S WAIT

NOTE: Parents please ensure that the student reads the given subject matter very carefully to answer the questions that follow.

Let's Read

Now, read the story of a boy who fell ill and felt he was going to die.

He came into the room to shut the windows while we were still in bed and I saw he looked ill. He was shivering, his face was white and he walked slowly as though it ached to move.

'What's the matter, Schatz?'

'I've got a headache.'

'You better go back to bed.'

'No. I'm all right.'

'You go to bed. I'll see you when I'm dressed.'

But when I came back downstairs, he was dressed, sitting by the fire, looking a very sick and miserable boy of nine years. When I put my hand on his forehead, I knew he had a fever.

'You go up to bed,' I said, 'you're sick.'

'I'm all right,' he said.

When the doctor came, he took the boy's temperature.

'What is it?' I asked him.

'One hundred and two.'

Downstairs, the doctor left three different medicines in different-coloured capsules with instructions for giving them. One was to bring down the fever, another, a purgative, the third to overcome an acid condition. The germs of influenza can only exist in an acid condition, he explained. He seemed to know all about influenza and said there was nothing to worry about if the fever did not go above one hundred and four degrees. This was a light epidemic of flu and there was no danger if you avoided pneumonia.

Back in the room, I wrote the boy's temperature down and made a note of the time to give the various capsules.

'Do you want me to read to you?'

'All right. If you want to,' said the boy. His face was very white and there were dark areas under his eyes. He lay still in the bed and seemed very detached from what was going on.

I read aloud from Howard Pyle's *The Book of Pirates*; but I could see he was not following what I was reading.

'How do you feel, Schatz?' I asked him.

'Just the same, so far,' he said.

I sat at the foot of the bed and read to myself while I waited for it to be time to give another capsule. It would have been natural for him to go to sleep, but when I looked up, he was looking at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely.

'Why don't you try to go to sleep? I'll wake you up for the medicine.'

'I'd rather stay awake.'

After a while he said to me, 'You don't have to stay in here with me, Papa, if it bothers you.'

'It doesn't bother me.'

'No, I mean, you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you.'

I thought perhaps he was little light-headed and after giving him the prescribed capsule at eleven o'clock, I went out for a while.

It was a bright, cold day; the ground covered with a sleet that had frozen so that it seemed as if all the bare trees, the bushes, the cut brush and all the grass and the bare ground had been varnished with ice. I took the young Irish setter for a little walk up the road and along a frozen creek, but it was difficult to stand or walk on the glassy surface and the red dog slipped and slithered and I fell twice, hard, once dropping my gun and having it slide over the ice.

We flushed a covey of quail under a high clay bank with overhanging brush and I killed two as they went out of sight over the top of the bank. Some of the covey lit in trees, but most of them scattered into brush piles and it was necessary to jump on the ice-coated mounds of brush several times before they would flush. Coming out while you were poised unsteadily on the icy, springy brush they made difficult shooting and I killed two, missed five and started back pleased to have found a covey so close to the house and happy there were so many left to find on another day.

At the house, they said the boy had refused to let anyone into the room.

'You can't come in,' he said. 'You mustn't get what I have.'

I went up to him and found him in exact same position I had left him in, white-faced, but with the tops of his cheeks flushed by the fever, staring still, as he had stared, at the foot of the bed.

I took his temperature.

'What is it?'

'Something like a hundred,' I said. It was one hundred and two and four tenths.

'It was a hundred and two,' he said.

'Who said so?'

'The doctor.'

'Your temperature is all right,' I said. 'It's nothing to worry about.'

'I don't worry,' he said, 'but I can't keep from thinking.'

'Don't think,' I said. 'Just take it easy.'

'I'm taking it easy,' he said and looked straight ahead. He was evidently holding tight on to himself about something.

'Take this with water.'

'Do you think it will do any good?'

'Of course it will.'

I sat down and opened the Pirate book and commenced to read, but I could see he was not following, so I stopped.

'About what time do you think I'm going to die?' he asked.

'What?'

'About how long it will be before I die?'

'You aren't going to die. What's the matter with you?'

'Oh, yes, I am. I heard him say a hundred and two.'

'People don't die with a fever of one hundred and two. That's a silly way to talk.'

'I know they do. At school in France the boys told me you can't live with forty-four degrees. I've got a hundred and two.'

He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o' clock in the morning.

'You poor Schatz,' I said. 'Poor old Schatz. It's like miles and kilometers. You aren't going to die. That's a different thermometer. On that thermometer, thirty-seven is normal. On this kind it's ninety-eight.'

'Are you sure?'

'Absolutely,' I said. 'It's like miles and kilometers we make when we do seventy in the car?'

'Oh,' he said.

But his gaze at the foot of the bed relaxed slowly. The hold over himself relaxed too, finally, and the next day it was very slack and he cried very easily at little things that were of no importance.

Ernest Hemingway

Q1. Write the meanings of the underlined words (use dictionary) and learn the spellings.

Q2. Fill in the blanks:-

- a) _____ was sitting by the fire.
- b) The doctor took the boy's _____.
- c) Schatz was a miserable boy of _____ years.
- d) The boy was looking at the _____ of the bed very strangely.
- e) The father took the young _____ for a walk.
- f) The _____ was pleased to have found a covey so close to the house.
- g) The boy was waiting ever since _____ O'clock in the morning to die.
- h) When Father took the temperature it was _____.
- i) The _____ has refused to let anyone into the room.
- j) Schatz's face was very white and there were _____ areas under his eyes.

Q3. Who said to whom:-

- a) 'I've got a headache.'
- b) 'No, I mean, you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you.'
- c) 'I'd rather stay awake.'
- d) 'You go to bed. I'll see you when I'm dressed.'
- e) 'It's like miles and kilometers we make when we do seventy in the car?'
- f) 'People don't die with a fever of one hundred and two. That's a silly way to talk.'
- g) 'You aren't going to die. What's the matter with you?'
- h) 'You poor Schatz.'
- i) 'Just the same, so far.'
- j) 'No. I'm all right.'

Q4. Reference to Context:-

- I. 'You go up to bed,' I said, 'you're sick.'
 - a. Name the lesson.
 - b. Who was being asked to go to bed and Why?
 - c. What was the boy doing when the speaker came downstairs?
- II. 'Why don't you try to go to sleep? I'll wake you up for the medicine.'
 - a. Who is the speaker of these lines?
 - b. What was the strange thing that the speaker noticed about the boy?
 - c. When did the speaker give the prescribed medicine? What did he do after that?
- III. 'Do you think it will do any good?'
 - a. Who is the speaker of these lines?
 - b. What was being discussed here?
 - c. Why did the speaker say these words?

- IV. 'Your temperature is all right,' I said. 'It's nothing to worry about.'
- Name the writer of the story.
 - Why did the speaker say that there is nothing to worry about?
 - Who wanted to know the temperature and why?

Q5. Answer the following questions:-

- Who is the narrator of the story? When did he notice that Schatz was unwell?
- What were the different medicines left by the doctor?
- What was the doctor's diagnosis? What was the boy suffering from?
- Who was reading the book and for whom? Name the book that was being read.
- Who went out for a while? How was the weather that day?
- Why did Schatz feel that he was going to die?
- When did the boy realise that he was not going to die?
- What confusion did the boy have about the thermometer? How did father make him understand the difference between the thermometers?

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