

BANGLADESH INTERNATIONAL TUTORIAL

CLASS: VIII, SUBJECT – ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Date: 5th – 9th April, 2020

Worksheet – I

Comprehension

Read the passage and then answer the questions given below.

TEARING UP THE TELEPHONE BOOK

The bell rang just as Jaime took her seat. The class waited for her to speak. But there was still a strong undercurrent of giggling and poking going on. Their faces were curious, cynical, sarcastic, hostile, mischievous or just plain bored. Suddenly, she felt nervous.

‘Well,’ she said brightly. ‘Good morning. I’m Miss Sommers.’

‘We know it!’ a boy’s voice rang out from the back row.

Well, you can’t say nobody warned you, Jaime told herself silently, here we go!

‘Well, that’s good,’ she said, smiling her sunniest smile. ‘I’ll get to know all of your names as quickly as I can.’

‘You had to quit tennis, huh?’ It was a gum-chewing girl of about thirteen, slouched back in her chair.

The only way Jaime knew how to deal with people was directly and honestly.

‘That is kind of a long story,’ she said, ‘and I’ll tell you sometime, when we get to know each other better. Now, I don’t know what routine you’ve been used to, but I’ve put my plans for the classroom organization up on the board here --’

The class seemed agitated with an attack of the titters as she turned to point to the blackboard on which she had spent the previous hour. It had been erased.

As she stared at it, the kids broke into real guffaws.

‘Well. I thought I had put the plans up on the board,’ Jaime said. She turned her back to them without a trace of annoyance they were expecting. ‘Excuse me a moment,’ she said.

She turned the large easel frame on its casters so that it was facing the other way, and stepped behind it. Picking up the chalk with her right hand, she rewrote the material at bionic speed. The class couldn’t see what she was doing, and the tittering grew louder and more excited. In less than a minute, Jaime turned the blackboard around again, and the children gasped. The entire assignment had been neatly replaced.

‘How’d she do that so fast?’ whispered a girl in the middle of a row, giving herself away as the guilty – and disappointed – culprit. Jaime made no sign that anything unusual had occurred.

‘Now then,’ she went on, ‘I’d like you each to copy off the section that applies to you – sixth, seventh or eighth grade.’

When she turned again to point to the board, a fast-moving pellet hit her in the back. She winced, then bent to pick up the spitball.

‘Who did that?’ she asked quietly, but of course there was no evidence of the rubberband weapon in sight. Only a sea of faces waiting to see what she would do.

She couldn’t ignore that. She looked over the kids, and then indicated a gawky young boy seated at a desk near the bookcase.

‘Would you hand me that telephone book over there, please? No, the big one. That’s it. Thank you.’ The boy handed her the book, a directory of the main Los Angeles area, about four inches thick. Holding it between her two hands in front of her, where all the children could see it plainly, she spoke in a calm, deceptively casual voice.

‘I guess you all know what a reputation this class had. The other teachers have all kinds of terrific names for you. I hear that you can be a rough and rowdy bunch. Well, that part doesn’t bother me, because that tells me you’ve got a lot of spirit, and I like that.’ These kids had heard that before, and she had lost some of her audience. Apathy and barely suppressed groans greeted what they anticipated as another boring lecture. But Jaime wasn’t worried about that. She knew how to get their attention. She went on in the same quiet voice.

‘But I’m not just another substitute. I’m here to stay, and if we’re going to get along, you are going to have to learn a little about respect, too. Now, some teachers feel that the best way to get respect is to threaten their kids.’

Bored eyes turned to staring ones, small spines were bolted upright from their slumped positions, and jeering mouths were opening in wonder as she spoke. It wasn’t what she was saying so much as the fact that she was ripping the Los Angeles phone book in half as she spoke.

‘Now, I don’t like to make threats,’ she was saying, ‘because so many times, they’re just not carried out. I’ve always felt that the gentle approach is the best one.’

Jamie held the heavy phone book in front of her with her left hand, while her right hand slowly pulled upward, tearing the thick mass of pages right up the center. Her voice was easy and natural, as if unaware of what her hands were up to. The children began to tune in carefully to what she was saying.

‘I feel that respect for a teacher should grow naturally, out of friendship and trust,’ she went on. ‘I certainly expect you to understand and to develop that sort of respect for me.’

The reactions of some of the individual students tipped her off, as she watched them staring and squirming in their seats. She thought she could spot the person who had erased the board, and single out the uncomfortable little boy who had performed so accurately with his slingshot. He was the one who was leaning forward to whisper in his neighbor’s ear. Jaime decided to listen in.

'Boy, this broad is spooky!' the boy whispered in a shaky breath.

'I'll make you a deal,' Jaime announced, looking straight at him. 'I won't call you a service brat, and you don't call me a broad.'

All the other children turned to stare at Teddy, who blushed a deep scarlet and murmured strictly to himself, 'Wow, how'd she hear that?'

'I've got very good hearing,' Jaime said.

The other children were silent as they turned to face front.

from The Bionic Woman

by Maud Willis

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why did Jaime suddenly feel nervous as she faced her new class for her first lesson?
- 2) Why did the class seem 'agitated with an attack of the titters' as she turned to point to the blackboard?
- 3) What caused the kids to break into 'real guffaws'?
- 4) What did Jaime do after saying, 'Excuse me a moment'?
- 5) What kind of bionic power did Jaime use to rewrite the erased material on the blackboard?
- 6) What made the children gasp?
- 7) What happened to Jaime when she turned to point to the board?
- 8) 'I hear that you can be a rough and rowdy bunch. Well, that part doesn't bother me...' Why was Jaime not bothered by that part of the class's reputation?
- 9) The class anticipated another boring lecture. How did they react?
- 10) What points did Jaime make about the respect she felt was due to her?
- 11) 'The children began to tune in carefully to what she was saying.' What was making them tune in?
- 12) How did Teddy react to Jaime's offer?
- 13) What was special about Jaime's 'very good hearing'?
- 14) Did you find this passage interesting? Give your reasons.