



ST. LAWRENCE HIGH SCHOOL
A JESUIT CHRISTIAN MINORITY INSTITUTION



CLASS - IX
ENGLISH TEXT STUDY MATERIAL

TOPICS: ALL ABOUT A DOG

DATE:01.03.2021

ALL ABOUT A DOG

AUTHOR

Alfred George Gardiner (2 June 1865 – 3 March 1946) was an English journalist, editor and author. His essays, written under the alias "Alpha of the Plough", are highly regarded. He was also Chairman of the National Anti-Sweating League, an advocacy group which campaigned for a minimum wage in industry.

Alfred George Gardiner was a British journalist and author. He was a prolific essayist and his style and subject matter easily qualified him to be categorized as what the English would call a very civilized gentleman. His essays include 'On Habits', 'On Being Tidy' and 'On Talk and Talkers'. 'On the Rule of the Road', was included in one of Gardiner's compilations titled 'Leaves in the Wind' and was published under his pseudonym "Alpha of the Plough".

SUMMARY

It was a very cold winter night. The passengers were all eager to reach home early. A young lady carrying a little dog boarded the bus. Immediately, the conductor asked the lady to go up to the uncovered top with the dog. But the other passengers were quite sympathetic towards the lady with the dog, considering the weather. Moreover, the lady was suffering from cough and cold. So they did not object to carrying the dog inside the bus. But the bus conductor would not disobey the rule so easily. He forced the lady to go to the top of the bus on cold night. Initially the lady was reluctant to do that and persisted on staying inside. She also argued with the conductor. But the conductor was strict in his decision. So he stopped the bus in the midway, creating trouble to everyone in the bus. Ultimately the lady had to obey the order of the conductor.

After sometime when the bus developed some engine trouble, the passengers had to bear with the delay. But the conductor refused to compromise. All through the journey, the lady had to travel on the top of the bus. At the end the narrator of the story try to advice to the conductor that rules should be modified according to the circumstances and should be tempered with goodwill.

Rules are formed for comfort what should not cause inconvenience. That is the essence of the rule. That means in our society the most important thing is not the rules and regulations but its application with humanitarian consideration.

There is also a sense that the conductor has a chip on his shoulder. Something that is clearer to the reader by way of his enthusiasm to impose his rules on the woman. It is as though the conductor resents the position he finds himself in (class wise) and as such he is waiting for any moment that may arise in whereby he can exert power. The fact that he tries to move the woman upstairs might be seen as gender biased as one does not expect the conductor to do the same should a man come onto the bus with a dog. If anything both the conductor and the woman have an immense and immediate dislike for each other. With issues of gender and class bias being raised. It might also be important that everybody who is on the bus supports the woman and her refusal to go to the top of the bus. However it is more telling that the same individuals lose patience and end up getting off the bus altogether. The sense of unity does not last.

There are some symbolisms in the story which are important. The evening is bitterly cold which in many ways mirrors how the conductor feels towards the woman with the dog. The woman's tone with the conductor at the start of the story also suggests a tone of defiance. She is not prepared to do as she is told. The fact that the woman has a cough could also be significant as Gardiner might be using the cough to place a focus on the woman's voice. She has one and is prepared to use it. Only when it is really necessary does she go to the top of the bus and even then she tries to go back down the stairs and return to her original seat beside her friends.

The end of the story is interesting as the narrator engages with the conductor and explains to him that he took his rules too seriously and by doing so he became part of the problem too. The narrator has an alternative take on how things should have happened and it is interesting that the conductor does not necessarily disagree with the narrator. This could be important as it suggests that the conductor has the ability to change. That he may not react as he did should he be faced with the same problem again. If the conductor has changed so too has the woman with the dog. She does not question the conductor on the second occasion when he tells her to go back to the top of the bus. This may be the point that Gardiner is attempting to make. He may be suggesting that people regardless of their original differences can change and act differently when faced with a familiar problem. It is the spirit of the rule which is important for Gardiner and knowing when to be stricter and knowing when to be lenient.

IMPORTANT WORD-MEANINGS

Intended – planned or meant

Vague – not clearly expressed, indefinite

Grievance – a real or imagined cause for complaint

Evidently – in a way that is clearly seen or understood

Triumph – a victory or conquest

Indifferent – having no particular interest or sympathy

Criticized – to express disapproval

Justify – just behaviour or treatment

Guidance - advice or information aimed at resolving a problem or difficulty

Observed – notice or perceived something and register it as being significant

Temper – a person’s state of mind seen in terms of their being angry or calm

QUESTION – ANSWER

1. How many people got into the bus with the younger woman?

Ans: Two people got into the bus along with the younger woman.

2. What was the conductor's order to the younger woman?

Ans: The conductor ordered the younger woman to take the dog out of the bus.

3. Why did the conductor stand triumphant?

Ans: the conductor stood triumphant because somehow he was able to get the dog out of the bus.

4. What is that rule which cannot be broken without danger to life and limb?

Ans: The “Rule of the Road” cannot be broken without danger to life and limb.

5. When did the author feel that trouble was coming up?

Ans: The author felt trouble was coming up when the conductor first time saw the beady-eyed dog in the bus.

6. Mention two demands made by the passengers when the bus stopped.

Ans: The passengers demanded to get back their fares. They also demanded that the conductor must not leave them there at night.

7. How are rules of guidance to be observed?

Ans: The rules of guidance are to be observed with common sense. They are meant to be observed in the spirit, not in the letter.

8. What did a woman passenger do after the bus stopped?

Ans: A woman passenger raised her voice above the gale threatening the conductor. But he was cold as night and hard as the pavement. She expressed her anger to the three policemen who stood up the street watching the drama. Then she came back, called her companion and vanished.

9. What did the woman with dog do when the bus stopped for engine trouble?

Ans: The lady with the dog stole down the stairs and re-entered the bus.

10. What kind of a man was the conductor?

Ans: The conductor was a kind of man who had a general grievance about everything. He seemed to have particular grievance against passengers who came and sat in his bus while he shivered at the door.

11. What happened when the woman with the dog re-entered the bus?

Ans: When the woman with the dog re-entered the bus, the conductor saw the dog and his hand went to the bell-rope again. The driver looked around, the conductor pointed to the dog and the bus stopped. The whole struggle began all over again. The conductor walked on the pavement, the dog blinked, the lady declared again that she would not go to the top and finally went.