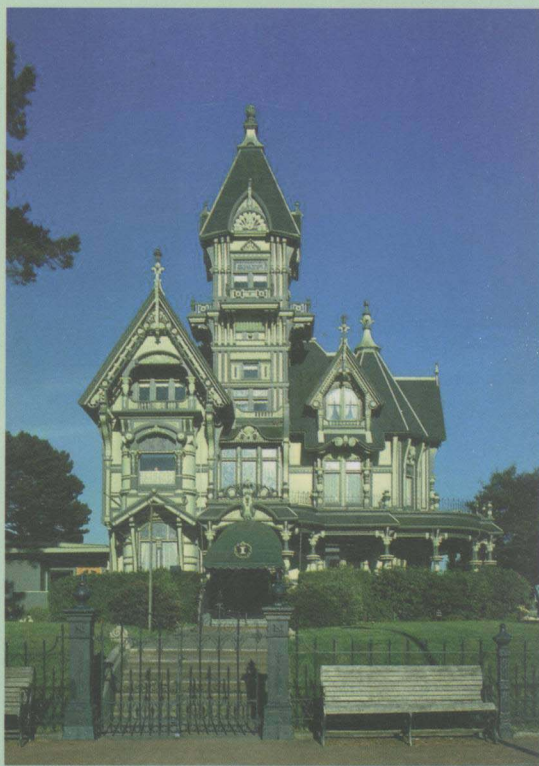


高等学校英语专业规划教材

高级英语阅读

Advanced English Reader

吴克明 季天祥 编著



南京大学出版社

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新版前言

《高级英语阅读教程》自 1995 年出版以来,受到了不少师生的好评。近年来,编者应邀对此教程进行修订,重新出版。

修订后的《高级英语阅读教程》共有 16 个单元,32 课,其中 12 课是新增加的。新增的课文内容涉及事业、婚姻、家庭、工作与娱乐等与学生毕业后的生活密切相关的主题,以期引起学生对未来生活的一些思考。此外,新版的教材还对原来的课文进行了修订,其中包括新增了注释,修改了作者简介、要点评析等。

新版的教程除了保留原来的编写特色外,最大的特点是对所有的课文略加修改——删除或修改了原文中少数冷僻的词语。例如,第 4 课第 14 段中原来有 endodontist 这样一个单词,意思是“治疗根管的牙医”,但这个单词在 Longman 和 Oxford 两部词典上都找不到,现在已用 dentist 代替了。又如第 12 课中,用大家较熟悉的 Eskimo 和 disobedient 分别代替 Esquimaux 和 recalcitrant;第 13 课中,用 relationship of common blood 代替 consanguinity。这样做既可减少学生学习的障碍,又不妨碍学生英语水平的提高。

近年来,国内出版的很多英语教材都讲究“原汁原味”,一词不改。编者认为,“原汁原味”并不是说一个词也不能改,尤其是本科生的教材,因为那样不仅会增加学生学习的困难,而且会让学生学习一些过于冷僻的词语,白白浪费了宝贵的时间和精力。当然,研究生攻读原著,那另当别论。

在这次修订的过程中,得到了南通大学季天祥副教授很大的支持。我女儿吴玲和女婿冯杰帮我购买参考书,收集网上资料,使修订得以顺利进行,在此谨表谢意。由于水平有限,书中难免有缺点和错误,欢迎师生们批评指正。

吴克明

2010 年 2 月于美国加州

前 言

《高级英语阅读教程》是根据教育部1990年6月公布的《高等学校英语专业高年级英语教学大纲(试用本)》编写的,适合于英语专业高年级学生使用,也可供具有大学外语四到六级水平的非英语专业学生作为阅读材料。

本教程收集了现、当代美、英著名作家的散文、演讲和故事共32篇,按主题编排。全书分为14个单元(unit),除个别单元外,每单元有两至三篇课文。课文内容涉及父爱、友谊、大学生活、家庭、妇女、体育运动、文化差异、西方民主等。同一主题的文章文体不同,风格各异,往往从不同的角度探讨同一主题,从而向青年学生展示在丰富多彩的现实生活中,人们多角度、多层次的思维模式,便于学生进行比较、对照、分析、讨论,有利于培养学生逻辑思维和判断评述的能力。这是本教材区别于国内出版的同类教材的显著特点。在课文的编排上,遵循由近到远的原则,即从学生们较为熟悉的内容(如:父爱、友谊、大学生活等)到他们不太熟悉的内容(如:文化差异等)。

每课的设计安排如下:课文前有作者简介,课文后有注释、要点评析(Highlights)、词汇练习和问题。要点评析涉及背景知识、思想内容、写作方法和修辞手段等方面。词汇练习用来复习、巩固本课中出现的词汇。问题分为学习题和讨论题两种,前者帮助学生回忆、掌握课文的内容,后者启发学生讨论课文中提出的各种问题,进行横向和纵向的比较、思考,即进行中、西方文化对比和历史的回顾。

本教程的课文有长有短,有些短课文并不容易,其中的难点、难句可让学生进行课堂讨论。对于较长的课文,也不必像低年级的综合英语课(精读课)那样逐句讲解,而可以拣重点来讲解。但不管课文长短,均可利用课文后面的讨论题,组织学生分小组用英语进行课堂讨论,并可在此基础上,布置适量的写作练习。较短的课文一般可用2学时教完,较长的课文可用3—4学时教完。以阅读课每周2学时计算,本教程可用一学年;以阅读课每周4学时计算,本教程可用一学期。

本教程在南京大学外国语学院英语系三年级经过四年试用,三次修订,终于脱稿,编者深感欣慰。在编写过程中,得到了乐眉云教授、刘海平教授、金筑云教授等同志的热情支持和帮助,还有杨敬清、叶晓兰等同志曾协助打印初稿,尤其是外籍专家Kate Allen博士仔细校阅了原稿,并提出了宝贵的意见,在此表示深深的谢忱。由于水平有限,书中难免有不少缺点和错误,欢迎师生们批评指正。

吴克明

1994年4月于南京

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Unit 1

Lesson 1

Dad

Andrew H. Malcolm

Andrew H. Malcolm was born in 1943 in Cleveland, Ohio. He studied journalism at Northwestern University and first joined *the New York Times* in 1967 as a news clerk. He worked as a reporter for *the New York Times* in New York, Chicago, and San Francisco and as a foreign correspondent for the newspaper in the Far East and Toronto before being assigned to Chicago as bureau chief in 1982. He has won major awards for reporting, and is the author of ten books, including *Unknown America* (1975), *The Canadians* (1985), and *Fury* (1998).

The first memory I have of him — of anything, really — is his strength. It was in the late afternoon in a house under construction near ours. The unfinished wood floor had large, terrifying holes whose yawning darkness I knew led to nowhere good. His powerful hands, then age 33, wrapped all the way around my tiny arms, then age 4, and easily swung me up to his shoulders to command all I surveyed. 1

The relationship between a son and his father changes over time. It may grow and flourish in mutual maturity. It may sour in resented dependence or independence. With many children living in single-parent homes today, it may not even exist. 2

But to a little boy right after World War II, a father seemed a god with strange strengths and uncanny powers enabling him to do and know things that no mortal could do or know. Amazing things, like putting a bicycle chain back on, just like that. Or building a hamster cage. Or guiding a jigsaw so that it formed the letter F; I learned the alphabet that way in those pre-television days, one letter or number every other evening plus a review of the collection. (The vowels we painted red because they were special somehow.) 3

He even seemed to know what I thought before I did. “You look like you could use a cheeseburger and chocolate shake,” he would say on hot Sunday afternoons. When, at the age of 5, I broke a neighbor’s garage window with a wild curve ball and waited in fear for 10 days to make the announcement, he seemed to know about it already and to have been waiting for something. 4

There were, of course, rules to learn. First came the handshake. None of those fishy little finger grips, but a good firm squeeze accompanied by an equally strong gaze into the other’s eyes. “The first thing anyone knows about you is your handshake,” he would say. And we’d practice it each night on his return from work, the serious toddler in the old Cleveland Indians cap running up to the giant father to shake hands again and again until it was firm enough. 5

When my cat killed a bird, he defused the anger of a 9-year-old with a little chat about 6

something called “instinked.” The next year, when my dog got run over and the weight of sorrow was just too immense to stand, he was there, too, with his big arms and his own tears and some thoughts on the natural order of life and death, although what was natural about a speeding car that didn’t stop always escaped me.

7 As time passed, there were other rules to learn. “Always do your best.” “Do it now.” “NEVER LIE!” And most importantly, “You can do whatever you have to do.” By my teens, he wasn’t telling me what to do anymore, which was scary and heady at the same time. He provided perspective, not telling me what was around the great corner of life but letting me know there was a lot more than just today and the next, which I hadn’t thought of.

8 When the most important girl in the world — I forget her name now — turned down a movie date, he just happened to walk by the kitchen phone. “This may be hard to believe right now,” he said, “but someday you won’t even remember her name.”

9 One day, I realize now, there was a change. I wasn’t trying to please him so much as I was trying to impress him. I never asked him to come to my football games. He had a high-pressure career, and it meant driving through most of Friday night. But for all the big games, when I looked over at the sideline, there was that familiar fedora. And, by God, did the opposing team captain ever get a firm handshake and a gaze he would remember?

10 Then, a school fact contradicted something he said. Impossible that he could be wrong, but there it was in the book. These accumulated over time, along with personal experiences, to buttress my own developing sense of values. And I could tell we had each taken our own, perfectly normal paths.

11 I began to see, too, his blind spots, his prejudices and his weaknesses. I never threw these up at him. He hadn’t to me, and, anyway, he seemed to need protection. I stopped asking his advice; the experiences he drew from no longer seemed relevant to the decisions I had to make. On the phone, he would go on about politics at times, why he would vote the way he did or why some incumbent was a jerk. And I would roll my eyes to the ceiling and smile a little, though I hid it in my voice.

12 He volunteered advice for a while. But then, in more recent years, politics and issues gave way to the talk of empty errands and, always, to ailments — his friends’, my mother’s and his own, which were serious and included heart disease. He had a bedside oxygen tank, and he would ostentatiously retire there during my visits, asking my help in easing his body onto the mattress. “You have very strong arms,” he once noted.

13 From his bed, he showed me the many sores and scars on his misshapen body and all the bottles for medicine. He talked of the pain and craved much sympathy. He got some. But the scene was not attractive. He told me, as the doctor had, that his condition would only deteriorate. “Sometimes,” he confided, “I would just like to lie down and go to sleep and not wake up.”

14 After much thought and practice (“You can do whatever you have to do.”), one night last winter, I sat down by his bed and remembered for an instant those terrifying dark holes in another house 35 years before. I told my father how much I loved him. I described all the things people were doing for him. But, I said, he kept eating poorly, hiding in his room and violating other doctor’s orders. No amount of love could make someone else care about life, I

said; it was a two-way street. He wasn't doing his best. The decision was his.

He said he knew how hard my words had been to say and how proud he was of me. "I had the best teacher," I said. "You can do whatever you have to do." He smiled a little. And we shook hands, firmly, for the last time. **15**

Several days later, at about 4 A.M., my mother heard Dad shuffling about their dark room. "I have some things I have to do," he said. He paid a bundle of bills. He composed for my mother a long list of legal and financial what-to-do's "in case of emergency." And he wrote me a note. **16**

Then he walked back to his bed and laid himself down. He went to sleep, naturally. And he did not wake up. **17**

■ Notes

1. The first memory I have of him – of anything, really – is his strength (para 1): The author had his first memory when he was four. When did you have your first memory? Not something which your parents said you did when you were six months old. When do most children start remembering things?
2. whose yawning darkness ... (para 1): whose wide open holes that seem dark and frightening as they appear to have no end
3. ... swung me up to his shoulders to command all I surveyed (para 1): ... swung me up to his shoulders so that I sat on his shoulders and was able to see more, which made me feel powerful and in charge of everything I saw.
4. uncanny powers (para 3): mysterious and unnatural powers
5. Amazing things, like ... just like that (para 3): Notice the style of the language. Is it adult language?
6. hamster (para 3): a small animal with pockets in its cheeks for storing food. It is a popular pet and used in laboratory research.
7. a jigsaw (para 3): a saw with a narrow blade, used to cut curved outlines
8. (The vowels we painted red because they were special somehow.) (para 3): Why are vowel letters special?
9. I broke a neighbor's garage window ... and waited in fear for 10 days to make the announcement (para 4): Do most parents wait for so long? What does this show?
10. ... he seemed to know about it already and to have been waiting for something (para 4): What is "something" Dad was waiting for?
11. fishy little finger grips (para 5): soft little finger grips
12. the old Cleveland Indians cap (para 5): The Cleveland Indians are a professional baseball team based in Cleveland, Ohio. Cleveland is the largest city in Ohio and a major Great Lakes port located in northeastern Ohio on Lake Erie. Population: 467 000.
13. "instinked" (para 6): This word is misspelt on purpose. Why?
14. "You can do whatever you have to do." (para 7): What are some of the things you have to do from the cradle to the grave? Think of a few things you have to do as a child, no

matter how painful they are.

15. I wasn't trying to please him so much as I was trying to impress him (para 9): What is the difference between pleasing someone and impressing someone? Give an example.
16. I never threw these up at him (para 11): I never mentioned these things to him again and again.
17. ... or why some incumbent was a jerk (para 11): ... or why a certain official was a fool
18. ostentatiously (para 12): unnecessary show of wealth, knowledge, etc.
19. I ... remembered ... those terrifying dark holes ... 35 years before (para 14): How old were the author and his father by then?
20. ... and violating other doctor's orders (para 14): ... and violating other orders by the (same) doctor
21. And we shook hands, firmly, for the last time (para 15): What is the function of the two commas in this sentence?

■ Highlights

1. Lessons 1 and 2 in this unit focus on paternal love. In the past a great deal was written about maternal love. It was only not long ago that people began to be aware of paternal love, which is different from maternal love, but equally important in the education of children. Today many people believe that a child with more contact and communication with its father will develop in an all-round way morally, intellectually, physically, and psychologically.
2. In paragraph 2 the author says: "It (The relationship between a son and his father) may sour in resented dependence or independence." This sentence itself is highly generalized. How do you paraphrase it? What do you think of it? Does it only mean that if a son is dependent on or independent of his father, he will be resented? If so, give examples and think what he should do in order not to be resented. But as there is no modifier before "resented dependence or independence," it does not refer to the son only. Have you ever thought that it may also mean that if the father is dependent on or independent of his son, his son will resent it, too? Can you give some examples? When you discuss this sentence, you should also discuss the changing relationships a person may have with his or her parents: first total dependence, then equality, and finally, caretaking. Which stage are you in now?
3. In paragraphs 10 and 11 the author says: "Then, a school fact contradicted something he said." "I began to see, too, his blind spots, his prejudices and his weaknesses." But he does not elaborate on these. As a matter of fact, there are no examples in the text so far to illustrate his father's shortcomings, while there are quite a number of incidents to show his father's love for him. Why is that? If you compare this lesson with Lesson 2, you will find they are different.

■ Vocabulary Exercises

- I. Scan the words listed below. Choose one that corresponds to one of the definitions on

the left. Write the word in the blank space at the right of each definition.

resent *toddler* *defuse* *buttress* *errand*
ailment *ease* *confide* *crave* *contradict*

1. (n.) a child who has just learned to walk _____
2. (v.) feel angry or bitter _____
3. (v.) ask seriously for _____
4. (v.) tell secrets to somebody one trusts _____
5. (v.) move somebody/something gently; make something less severe or painful _____
6. (n.) a short journey for a special purpose _____
7. (v.) support, strengthen _____
8. (n.) disease _____
9. (v.) make calmer or less dangerous _____
10. (v.) say that the opposite is true _____

II. Choose the word from this lesson that best completes each of the following sentences.

Write the word in the proper tense or form in the space given.

1. Ladies and gentlemen, may I _____ your attention, please?
2. It is quite common for the husband to _____ his secrets to his devoted wife.
3. The old man is always complaining of some _____ or other.
4. At the meeting, they _____ their arguments by producing lots of facts.
5. He is fully occupied, so he has no time to run _____ for his aging parents.
6. As a result of flexible foreign policy, the international crisis was _____.
7. As soon as the _____ saw its mother, it walked unsteadily toward her.
8. At that time children were not supposed to _____ their parents.
9. His girl-friend _____ being called a baby.
10. Logan took the money from his brief case and dropped it into the dusty drawer. Then he _____ the drawer into the table.

■ Study Questions

1. What is the author's earliest memory of his father?
2. Why did Malcolm refer to "putting a bicycle chain back on" as one of the amazing feats his father did?
3. How did the author learn the alphabet? Why does he mention the fact that he accomplished this in "those pre-television days"?
4. What were the four rules that Malcolm's father taught him after the handshake lesson? Why was the last one the most important?
5. How would you describe the audience for this article with regard to age and gender?
6. In which of his examples does Malcolm show the greatest affection for his father? Which ones were most valuable for his adult life?
7. What is Malcolm's thesis? Is it stated or implied?
8. Malcolm says that during his father's final illness, the patient would "ostentatiously retire" to his bed and oxygen tank. What does the word "ostentatiously" show about the re-

lationship between Malcolm and his father at this time?

■ Questions for Discussion

1. Is it still important today for a man to display a firm handshake and a steady gaze into someone's eyes? Is it necessary for a woman? When would these gestures be most helpful?
2. How do you feel about Malcolm's father crying with his son when the boy's dog was killed?
3. As you grew up, when did you shift from trying to please a parent to trying to impress that parent?
4. Discuss the changing relationships that a person may have with his or her parents: first total dependence, then equality, and finally, caretaking.
5. How well can a person younger than forty (Malcolm's age) understand the problems involved in a parent's aging and dying?
6. The author writes about his Dad from the age of 33 to that of 68. Still there are many things we do not know about him. What are they? Does the author intentionally leave them out? Why?
7. Recall the valuable lessons your father taught you. Show how each lesson has helped you in your adult life.
8. Recreate a frightening scene from your childhood in which a family member protected you from harm.
9. Describe your concept of an ideal father.
10. Write a letter to your imaginary child to be read on his or her twenty-first birthday. Describe the qualities that you hope he or she will have at this time of life.

Unit 1

Lesson 2

Discovery of a Father

Sherwood Anderson

Sherwood Anderson (1876 - 1941) did not become a writer until 1912, during his thirty-sixth year. His career as a writer was influenced by two important facts of his life. The first was that he was raised in a small town in Ohio, and the second was that he was a highly successful businessman before turning to writing as his life's work. His short stories and novels reflect these facts in their portrayal of characters whose talents and ambitions are stifled by a semi-rural environment, or whose monetary success rendered them alienated and unfulfilled rather than happy. Today Anderson is best remembered for his collection of stories entitled *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) and for his novel *Dark Laughter* (1925).

You hear it said that fathers want their sons to be what they feel they themselves cannot be, **1**
but I tell you it also works the other way. I know that as a small boy I wanted my father to be
a certain thing he was not. I wanted him to be a proud, silent, dignified father. When I was
with the other boys and he passed along the street, I wanted to feel a glow of pride: "There he
is. That is my father."

But he wasn't such a one. He couldn't be. It seemed to me then that he was always show- **2**
ing off. Let's say someone in our town had got up a show. They were always doing it. The
druggist would be in it, the shoe-store clerk, the horse doctor, and a lot of women and girls.
My father would manage to get the chief comedy part. It was, let's say, a Civil War play and
he was a comic Irish soldier. He had to do the most absurd things. They thought he was fun-
ny, but I didn't.

I thought he was terrible. I didn't see how Mother could stand it. She even laughed with **3**
the others. Maybe I would have laughed if it hadn't been my father.

Or there was a parade, the Fourth of July or Decoration Day. He'd be in that, too, right **4**
at the front of it, as Grand Marshal or something, on a white horse hired from a livery stable.

He couldn't ride for shucks. He fell off the horse and everyone hooted with laughter, but **5**
he didn't care. He even seemed to like it. I remember once when he had done something ridic-
ulous, and right out on Main Street, too. I was with some other boys and they were laughing
and shouting at him and he was shouting back and having as good a time as they were. I ran
down an alley back of some stores and there in the Presbyterian Church sheds I had a good long
cry.

Or I would be in bed at night and Father would come home a little lit up and bring some **6**

men with him. He was a man who was never alone. Before he went broke, running a harness shop, there were always a lot of men loafing in the shop. He went broke, of course, because he gave too much credit. He couldn't refuse it, and I thought he was a fool. I had got to hating him.

7 There'd be men I didn't think would want to be fooling around with him. There might even be the superintendent of our schools and a quiet man who ran the hardware store. Once I remember there was a white-haired man who was a cashier of the bank. It was a wonder to me they'd want to be seen with such a windbag. That's what I thought he was. I know now what it was that attracted them. It was because life in our town, as in all small towns, was at times pretty dull, and he livened it up. He made them laugh. He could tell stories. He'd even get them to singing.

8 If they didn't come to our house they'd go off, say at night, to where there was a grassy place by a creek. They'd cook food there and drink beer and sit about listening to his stories.

9 He was always telling stories about himself. He'd say this or that wonderful thing had happened to him. It might be something that made him look like a fool. He didn't care.

10 If an Irishman came to our house, right away Father would say he was Irish. He'd tell what county in Ireland he was born in. He'd tell things that happened there when he was a boy. He'd make it seem so real that, if I didn't know he was born in southern Ohio, I'd have believed him myself.

11 If it was a Scotchman the same thing happened. He'd get a burr into his speech. Or he was a German or a Swede. He'd be anything the other man was. I think they all knew he was lying, but they seemed to like him just the same. As a boy, that was what I couldn't understand.

12 And there was Mother. How could she stand it? I wanted to ask but never did. She was not the kind you asked such questions.

13 I'd be upstairs in my bed, in my room above the porch, and Father would be telling some of his tales. A lot of Father's stories were about the Civil War. To hear him tell it, he'd been in about every battle. He'd known Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, and I don't know how many others. He'd been particularly intimate with General Grant, so that when Grant went East, to take charge of all the armies, he took Father along.

14 "I was an orderly at headquarters, and Sam Grant said to me, 'I've,' he said, 'I'm going to take you along with me.'"

15 It seems he and Grant used to slip off sometimes and have a quiet drink together. That's what my father said. He'd tell about the day Lee surrendered and how, when the great moment came, they couldn't find Grant.

16 "You know," my father said, "about General Grant's book, his memoirs. You've read of how he said he had a headache and how, when he got word that Lee was ready to call it quits, he was suddenly and miraculously cured."

17 "Huh," said Father. "He was in the woods with me."

18 "I was in there with my back against a tree. I was pretty well cornered. I had got hold of a bottle of pretty good stuff."

19 "They were looking for Grant. He had got off his horse and come into the woods. He found me. He was covered with mud."

"I had the bottle in my hand. What'd I care? The war was over. I knew we had them 20
licked."

My father said that he was the one who told Grant about Lee. An orderly riding by had 21
told him, because the orderly knew how thick he was with Grant. Grant was embarrassed.

"But, Irve, look at me. I'm all covered with mud," he said to Father. 22

And then, my father said, he and Grant decided to have a drink together. They took a 23
couple of drinks and then, because he didn't want Grant to show up drunk before the immacu-
late Lee, he smashed the bottle against the tree.

"Sam Grant's dead now, and I wouldn't want it to get out on him," my father said. 24

That's just one of the kind of things he'd tell. Of course the men knew he was lying, but 25
they seemed to like it just the same.

When we got broke, down and out, do you think he ever brought anything home? Not 26
he. If there wasn't anything to eat in the house, he'd go off visiting around at farmhouses.
They all wanted him. Sometimes he'd stay away for weeks, Mother working to keep us fed,
and then home he'd come bringing, let's say, a ham. He'd got it from some farmer friend.
He'd slap it on the table in the kitchen. "You bet I'm going to see that my kids have something
to eat," he'd say, and Mother would just stand smiling at him. She'd never say a word about
all the weeks and months he'd been away, not leaving us a cent for food. Once I heard her
speaking to a woman in our street. Maybe the woman had dared to sympathize with her.
"Oh," she said, "it's all right. He isn't ever dull like most of the men in this street. Life is
never dull when my man is about."

But often I was filled with bitterness, and sometimes I wished he wasn't my father. I'd 27
even invent another man as my father. To protect my mother, I'd make up stories of a secret
marriage that for some strange reason never got known. As though some man, say the president
of a railroad company or maybe a Congressman, had married my mother, thinking his wife
was dead and then it turned out she wasn't.

So they had to hush it up, but I got born just the same. I wasn't really the son of my fa- 28
ther. Somewhere in the world there was a very dignified, quite wonderful man who was really
my father. I even made myself half believe these fancies.

And then there came a certain night. He'd been off somewhere for two or three weeks. 29
He found me alone in the house, reading by the kitchen table.

It had been raining, and he was very wet. He sat and looked at me for a long time, not 30
saying a word. I was startled, for there was on his face the saddest look I had ever seen. He sat
for a time, his clothes dripping. Then he got up.

"Come on with me," he said. 31

I got up and went with him out of the house. I was filled with wonder, but I wasn't 32
afraid. We went along a dirt road that led down into a valley, about a mile out of town, where
there was a pond. We walked in silence. The man who was always talking had stopped his talk-
ing.

I didn't know what was up and had the queer feeling that I was with a stranger. I don't 33
know whether my father intended it so. I don't think he did.

The pond was quite large. It was still raining hard, and there were flashes of lightning 34

followed by thunder. We were on a grassy bank at the pond's edge when my father spoke, and in the darkness and rain his voice sounded strange.

35 "Take off your clothes," he said. Still filled with wonder, I began to undress. There was a flash of lightning, and I saw that he was already naked.

36 Naked, we went into the pond. Taking my hand, he pulled me in. It may be that I was too frightened, too full of feeling of strangeness, to speak. Before that night my father had never seemed to pay any attention to me.

37 "And what is he up to now?" I kept asking myself. I did not swim very well, but he put my hand on his shoulder and struck out into the darkness.

38 He was a man with big shoulders, a powerful swimmer. In the darkness I could feel the movement of his muscles. We swam to the far edge of the pond and then back to where we had left our clothes. The rain continued and the wind blew. Sometimes my father swam on his back and when he did he took my hand in his large powerful one and moved it over so that it rested always on his shoulder. Sometimes there would be a flash of lightning and I could see his face quite clearly.

39 It was as it was earlier, in the kitchen, a face filled with sadness. There would be the momentary glimpse of his face and then again the darkness, the wind, and the rain. In me there was a feeling I had never known before.

40 It was a feeling of closeness. It was something strange. It was as though there were only we two in the world. It was as though I had been jerked suddenly out of myself, out of my world of the schoolboy, out of a world in which I was ashamed of my father.

41 He had become blood of my blood; he the strong swimmer and I the boy clinging to him in the darkness. We swam in silence, and in silence we dressed in our wet clothes and went home.

42 There was a lamp lighted in the kitchen, and when we came in, the water dripping from us, there was my mother. She smiled at us. I remember that she called us "boys."

43 "What have you boys been up to?" she asked, but my father did not answer. As he had begun the evening's experience with me in silence, so he ended it. He turned and looked at me. Then he went, I thought, with a new and strange dignity, out of the room.

44 I climbed the stairs to my own room, undressed in darkness, and got into bed. I couldn't sleep and did not want to sleep. For the first time, I knew that I was the son of my father. He was a storyteller as I was to be. It may be that I even laughed a little softly there in the darkness. If I did, I laughed knowing that I would never again be wanting another father.

■ Notes

1. a glow of pride (para 1): a strong feeling of pride
2. ... he was always showing off (para 2): ... he was always acting.
3. ... he was a comic Irish soldier (para 2): Some Europeans think Irishmen are not very clever, which is an old prejudice.
4. Decoration Day (para 4): It is also called Memorial Day, which is a day to honor dead servicemen in the United States. It falls on the last Monday in May in most states.