

Raja Nasr

20

SHORT
STORIES

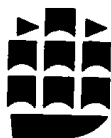
TWENTY SHORT STORIES

RAJA T. NASR, M.A., E.D.

*Professor of Education and
Chairman, Department of Education
Beirut College for Women
and*

*Director, Centre for English Language Research and Teaching
American University of Beirut
Beirut, Lebanon*

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To Raif

FOREWORD TO TEACHERS

This book is a collection of twenty short stories written within a vocabulary of about 1,050 words. The stories are international in character. The real life stories are ones of people who have distinguished themselves in different fields in different parts of the world.

The fiction stories, similarly, represent a number of different cultural backgrounds.

Teachers will find the Exercises at the end of each story of help in making the book a *language learning* device as well as a source of interest to students. The Exercises may be used for oral or written work to develop and test the students' comprehension and expression in English as related to the stories.

The author wishes here to express his gratitude to his wife, Bonnie S. Nasr, who contributed much to the writing of these stories, and whose unfailing encouragement made this work possible.

A NOTE ABOUT THE STORIES

1. **THE BRAVE HERO** is a story about William Tell. Tell was a Swiss hero who lived in the early 1300s. It might be added that although he succeeded in hitting the apple on his son's head, he was still taken prisoner because he had intended to kill Gessler, the Austrian tyrant, with the second arrow.
2. **THE GREATEST POWER** is a fictitious story about four soldiers. The point in the story is the moral implied in the answer of the fourth soldier.
3. **A FAMOUS BELL** is a story about patriotism. The origin of the story is not known.
4. **THE SPIDER WINS** is a story about Robert Bruce who became King of Scotland. Bruce was born in 1274. He became a famous soldier and leader of his armies and nation. He died in 1329.
5. **JEHA'S DONKEYS** is a story about the legendary humorist of Lebanon.
6. **ONE AGAINST TEN THOUSAND** is a story of Horatius, a legendary hero of Rome. As a result of his feat, he was given as much land as two oxen could plough for a whole day.
7. **A TRUE FRIEND** is a story about a loyal dog. It is a fictitious story.
8. **A LESSON IN THE JUNGLE** is a story of a hunter in Africa. Although no names are mentioned in the story, the story actually did take place in the early 1900s. The author's father was the hunter.

9. A GIRL'S DREAM is a fictitious story about a girl who makes one wish after another. There is a moral implied in the story.
10. A SAILOR'S LIFE is a story of Vasco da Gama and his sea voyages. Vasco da Gama was a Portuguese navigator who was born around 1460. He died in 1524. He came from a noble family and was a good soldier, too.
11. JEHA'S FRIENDS is another story about Lebanon's legendary humorist.
12. THE MUSICAL HEART is a story of the great musician Georg Friedrich Handel. Handel was born in Saxony in 1685. He became known for his organ recitals as early as at the age of eight. He died in London in 1759.
13. BEST AND PEST is a fictitious story about two men: one good and one bad. There is a moral implied in the story.
14. A SOLDIER'S PROMISE is a story about Hannibal, the Carthaginian soldier who was born in 247 B.C. Hannibal died in 183 B.C. after becoming famous for his strong armies and for his conquests.
15. AN UNKNOWN DANCE is a story about bees and how they manage to communicate with their colleagues about the location of flowers.
16. THE HORSELESS CARRIAGE is a story about Henry Ford, the famous American car maker. Ford was born in Michigan, U.S.A. in 1863 and died in the same state in 1947. Apart from his interest in cars, he was devoted to the promotion of world peace.

17. **WHAT'S IN A NAME** is a story about Tarik Ibn Zaid, the Arab leader after whom Gibraltar is named.
18. **THE LOST PURSE** is a story about an Arab merchant who lost and then recovered his purse and money. The moral implied centres around honesty.
19. **FLYING HEROES** is a story about three brave pilots. The story took place in the 1950s.
20. **THE LONGEST RACE** is a story about Pheidippides, the Greek soldier who ran from the Plain of Marathon to Athens.

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1. *The Brave Hero*

hero

shoulder

to bow

Once there was a Swiss man named Tell. He was not a rich man. But he was not poor. He lived in a small village near the high mountains. People might never have known his name. But one brave act made him a hero in his own country.



shoulder

The whole world knew about this act. His story became famous. It was even set to music.

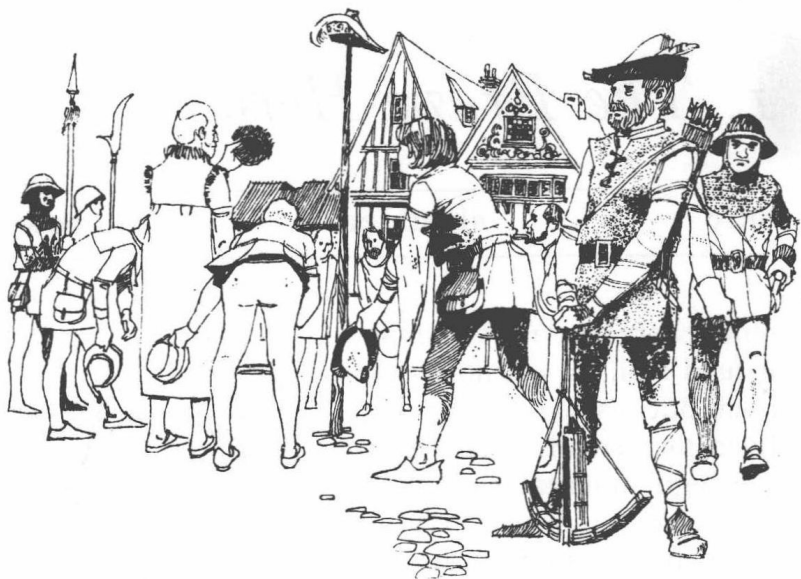
Now William Tell is going to tell us his own story.

Our ruler decided to visit our village. He was not from our country and did not treat us well. He made laws against us. We tried to do what the ruler wanted. But no one loved the ruler.

When he came to my village, few people were there to see him. He asked where they were. He was told that they all had their own work to do. This made him very angry. He ordered his soldiers to bring all the people from their shops and homes.

Soon every one hurried into the street. They were afraid that something bad was going to happen. All were quiet as the ruler spoke.

"Fools!" he shouted. "You did not honour me.



Now every person must take off his hat and bow to my hat."

He went away and left his hat behind. A group of soldiers stood there. People began to take off their hats and bow to the ruler's hat.

"I can't," I heard myself shouting. "It is not right!" I could not bow to this man's hat. I waited for others to join me, but no one did.

The next thing I remember was that I was standing before the ruler. I had not done what he wanted; but I knew that it was not fair.

"You," he shouted, pointing a finger at me. "Do you see your young son standing over there? And do you see this apple? Soldiers, put the apple on the boy's head! Give this foolish man a bow and some arrows. Now shoot the apple off your son's head!"

"I can't do it!" I cried to myself. Then I decided that if the arrow struck my son, I would shoot another straight at the ruler. The third would be for myself.

Carefully, I put the arrow in its right place. I did not dare to look at my son's face. I pulled the bow back and shot the arrow.

The crowd was happy, but I could not look towards my son. Quickly I fixed the next arrow to shoot the ruler. Suddenly the soldiers were near me again.

They carried me up on their shoulders. I saw my son running towards me. He was waving the apple in his hand.

"Father, you're the greatest hero in Switzerland today," he said. "I want to tell this story to the whole world."



EXERCISES

1 Read the following sentences, using the correct word in parentheses:

1. (Henry, William) Tell was the name of the man in this story.
2. He (live, lived) in a small village.
3. His village was near (high, low) mountains.
4. (No, every) one loved the ruler.
5. The ruler wanted the people to (bow, sing) to his hat.
6. The ruler said, "You (did, did not) honour me."
7. William Tell (was, was not) a rich man.
8. The ruler went away and left his (hat, stick) behind.
9. William Tell stood (before, behind) the ruler.
10. The soldiers put the apple on the (girl's, boy's) head.
11. William Tell shot the (apple, boy).
12. The boy was William Tell's (brother, son).
13. William Tell wanted to shoot the (ruler, soldiers).
14. William Tell came from (Switzerland, France).
15. This story made him a (soldier, hero).

2 Answer the following questions: (Give short answers.)

1. What was Tell's first name?
2. Where was he from?
3. Did he live in a big city? Where did he live?

4. Was the ruler from the same city as Tell was?
5. Why were there only few people waiting to see the ruler?
6. How did the ruler bring all the people to him?
7. What did he ask them to do?
8. Why didn't Tell do what the ruler ordered?
9. What did the ruler ask Tell to do?
10. Did Tell want to do that? Why not?
11. What was Tell going to do with the second arrow?
12. Do you think that Tell was a great hero? Why?

3 Pattern: *He was not a rich man. But he was not poor.*

Complete the following sentences:

1. He was not a tall man. But he (short)
2. She was not a beautiful girl. But she (ugly)
3. They were not heavy people. But they (light)
4. You are not a fat boy. But you (thin)
5. It is not a black cat. But it (white)
6. It was not a long road. But it (short)
7. He is not a strong man. But he (weak)
8. They are not good students. But they (bad)
9. This is not a fast car. But it (slow)
10. She was not a young girl. But she (old)

TO THE TEACHER

Let the students draw William Tell shooting the arrow at the apple on his son's head. Let them write the names of the things they have drawn. Give recognition to the student who draws the best picture. Correct the students' spelling.

2. *The Greatest Power*

hunt

spear

medal

gun



spear



medal



gun

A long time ago men hunted for their food. Often they killed wild animals, birds, or fish. How did they kill the beasts? They used rocks and wooden sticks. Sometimes they fought with their own hands and bodies.

Later on, people began fighting each other. Everyone wanted more food and more land. They made arrows from sticks. They also made spears from stones.

Then somebody invented the gun. Soldiers were taught how to shoot and kill enemy soldiers. Great wars were fought and many people died.

A famous general cried as he looked at one battle field. His soldiers were fighting well, but he felt very sad. He turned to his men and said, "My soldiers, I am going to ask you a question. The one who gives

the best answer will receive a medal. The question is this: What is the strongest power in the world?"

Four soldiers raised their hands. They wanted to answer the general's question. He asked the first one to speak.

"Sir," said the young man, "I think my gun is the strongest power. It can kill a person or an animal from a great distance."

"Thank you," said the general. "Next." He pointed to the man who was his best soldier.

"A soldier is stronger," said the second man. "He must shoot the gun and aim well. A gun's power comes from the way it is used."

The third soldier thought he had the best answer of all. "No, sir," he said, "our general is the strongest power. He gives the orders for his soldiers to shoot their guns."

The general said nothing. He waited for the last man to answer his question. The fourth soldier answered the general's question this way: "I believe, sir, that the greatest power on earth is love. It makes the general decide if he wants his soldiers to use their guns. Also, if men had more love for each other, they would not use their guns."

Now if you were this general, which of your soldiers would receive the medal? He gave it to the last man.