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All about a Dog

Rules are made for the convenience and comfort of people at large. They are there for all to follow. Sometimes, though, it should be possible to ‘wink’ at a rule – to mix it with a little goodwill and cheer, especially if its strict application is bound to inconvenience a beautiful Pekinese dog.

It was a bitterly cold night, and even at the far end of the bus the east wind that raved along the street cut like a knife. The bus stopped, and two women and a man got in together and filled the vacant places. The young woman carried one of those little Pekinese dogs that women like to carry in their laps. The conductor came in and took the fares. Then his eyes rested with cold malice on the beady-eyed lap-dog. I saw trouble brewing. This was the opportunity for which he had been waiting, and he intended to make the most of it. I had marked him as the type of what Mr Wells has called the

raved: blew noisily ('to rave' means to speak loudly and wildly about something) **beady-eyed:** with eyes small, round and bright like beads
Mr Wells: H. G. Wells (1866–1946), British novelist

Resentful Employee, the man with a great vague grievance against everything and a particular grievance against passengers who came and sat in his bus while he shivered at the door.

“You must take that dog out,” he said with sour venom.

“I shall certainly do nothing of the kind. You can take my name and address,” said the woman, who had evidently expected the challenge and knew the reply.

“You must take that dog out—that’s my orders.”

“I won’t go on the top in such weather. It would kill me,” said the woman.

“Certainly not,” said her lady companion. “You’ve got a cough as it is.”

“It’s nonsense,” said her male companion.

The conductor pulled the bell and the bus stopped. “This bus doesn’t go until that dog is brought out.” And he



Resentful Employee: a worker who is full of complaints/grievances
venom: poison (malice/spite)

stepped onto the pavement and waited. It was his moment of triumph. He had the law on his side and the whole busful of angry people under the harrow. His embittered soul was having a real holiday.

The storm inside rose high. “Shameful”; “Why isn’t he in the army?” “Call the police”; “Let’s all report him”; “Let’s make him give us our fares back.” For everybody was on the side of the lady and the dog.

That little animal sat blinking at the dim lights in happy unconsciousness of the rumpus, of which he was the cause.

The conductor came to the door. “What’s your number?” said one, taking out a pocket-book with a gesture of terrible things.

“There’s my number,” said the conductor imperturbably.

“Give us our fares back—you’ve engaged to carry us—you can’t leave us here all night.”

“No fares back,” said the conductor.

Two or three passengers got out and disappeared into the night. The conductor took another turn on the pavement, then went and had a talk with the driver. Another bus, the last on the road, sailed by indifferent to the shouts of the passengers to stop. “They stick by each other—the villains” was the comment.

Someone pulled the bell violently. That brought the driver round to the door. “Who’s conductor of this bus?” he said, and paused for a reply. None coming, he returned to his seat and resumed beating his arms across his chest. There was no hope in that quarter. A policeman strolled up and looked in at the door. An avalanche of indignant protests and appeals burst on him. “Well, he’s got his rules, you know,” he said genially. “Give your name and address.”

under the harrow: in great distress as if under a harrow (an implement used in farming) **rumpus:** noise/uproar **imperturbably:** calmly (showing no trace of worry or anxiety) **avalanche:** mass of ice/rock sliding down (far too many loud protests/appeals) **genially:** kindly; pleasantly



“That’s what he’s been offered, and he won’t take it.”

“Oh,” said the policeman, and he went away and took his stand a few yards down the street, where he was joined by two more constables.

And still the little dog blinked at the lights and the conductor walked to and fro on the pavement, like a captain on the quarter-deck in the hour of victory. A young woman, whose voice had risen high above the gale inside, descended on him with an air of threatening and slaughter. He was immovable—as cold as the night and as hard as the pavement. She passed on in a fury of impotence to the three policemen, who stood like a group of statuary up the street watching the drama. Then she came back, imperiously

gale: noisy outbursts **statuary:** statues **imperiously:** commandingly

beckoned to her young man who had sat a silent witness of her rage, and vanished. Others followed. The bus was emptying. Even the dashing young fellow who had demanded the number, and who had declared he would see this thing through if he sat there all night, had taken an opportunity to slip away.

Meanwhile the Pekinese party was passing through every stage of resistance to abject surrender. "I'll go on the top," said the lady with the dog at last. "You mustn't." "I will." "You'll have pneumonia." "Let me take it." (This from the man.) "Certainly not"—*she would die* with her dog. When she had disappeared up the stairs, the conductor came back, pulled the bell, and the bus went on. He stood sourly triumphant while his conduct was savagely discussed in his face by the remnant of the party.

Then the engine struck work and the conductor went to the help of the driver. It was a long job, and presently the lady with the dog stole down the stairs and re-entered the bus. When the engine was put right the conductor came back and pulled the bell. Then his eye fell on the dog, and his hand went to the bell-rope again. The driver looked around, the conductor pointed to the dog, the bus stopped, and the struggle re-commenced with all the original features—the conductor walking the pavement, the driver smacking his arms on the box, the little dog blinking at the lights, the lady declaring that she would *not* go on the top—and finally going.

"I've got my rules," said the conductor to me when I was the last passenger left behind. He had won his victory, but felt that he would like to justify himself to somebody.

beckoned: called (by making a gesture with the hand or head)
abject: wretched/miserable **remnant:** remaining members
smacking: hitting/striking with open hand

“Rules,” I said, “are necessary things, but there are rules and rules. Some are hard and fast rules, like the rule of the road, which cannot be broken without danger to life and limb. But some are only rules for guidance, which you can apply or wink at, as common sense dictates—like the rule about the dogs. They are not a whip put in your hand to scourge your passengers. They are meant to be observed in the spirit, not in the letter—for the comfort and not the discomfort of the passengers. You have kept the rule and broken its spirit. You want to mix your rules with a little goodwill and good temper.”

He took it very well, and when I got off the bus he said ‘Good night’ quite amiably.

A. G. GARDINER
(1856–1946)

ACTIVITIES

COMPREHENSION

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. “I saw trouble brewing.” What did the writer think was going to happen?
2. What impression do you form of the bus conductor? Is he friendly and helpful or aggressive and troublesome?
3. What was the rule about passengers with pet dogs?
4. Who did most passengers sympathise with—the conductor or the lady with the dog?
5. What did the policeman do to solve the problem?
6. (i) What did the lady with the dog do finally?
(ii) What was the result of it?

scourge: beat with a whip; cause (somebody) to suffer **amiably:** in a friendly manner

7. (i) While the conductor and the driver were busy repairing the engine, something interesting happened. What was it?
(ii) What did the conductor do when he discovered it?
8. The writer puts rules into two categories. What are the categories?
9. What advice does the writer offer the conductor about observance of rules in general?
10. How does the conductor take his advice? How does he show his agreement?

Discuss

- I. Who says this to whom? Take each sentence separately and put it in the right context.
 1. "I shall certainly do nothing of the kind."
 2. "What's your number?"
 3. "Give your name and address."
 4. "I've got my rules."
 5. "You have kept the rule and broken its spirit."
- II. Complete each of the following from memory. (Do not refer to the text.)
 1. I had marked him as the type of what Mr Wells has called _____. (a man with a vague grievance against everything/a man with a particular grievance against passengers/the Resentful Employee)
 2. He had the law on his side and the whole busful of angry people _____. (under the harrow/under his thumb/under the driver)
 3. Two or three passengers got out and disappeared _____. (from the pavement/into the crowd/into the night)
 4. He was immovable — as cold as the _____ and as hard as the _____. (weather/ice/night; word/stone/pavement)
 5. Rules are _____ things, but there are rules and rules. (important/compulsory/necessary)

WORDS IN USE

I. Rearrange the words in each set below to construct a meaningful sentence. Write the sentences using correct punctuation marks.

1. was/bitterly/night/a/cold/it

2. utterly/that/idea/is/an/useless

3. accident/what/terribly/a/unfortunate

4. is/original/that/remarkably/a/idea

5. different/he/view/a/has/vastly/of the situation

II. Look at these words:

genial	-	geniality
justified	-	justification

The words on the left are adjectives and those on the right are their noun forms. Fill in the blanks with the noun forms of the adjectives given in the following box.

vacant	indifferent	savage	long	triumphant
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1. She scored a resounding _____ over her old rival.
2. It is your _____ that worries me.
3. There are two _____ for computer experts in our office.
4. It was not the theme but the _____ of the story that put us off.
5. Isn't there a law in this country against treating prisoners with brutal _____ ?

III. 1. A verb can have more than one noun form. Study the two sets in the table below and write the missing items.

Verb	Noun	Noun
<i>carry</i>	<i>carrier</i>	<i>carriage</i>
<i>see</i>	<i>seer</i>	<i>sight</i>
_____	reporter	_____
<i>direct</i>	_____	_____
_____	_____	invention
_____	_____	development
<i>thieve</i>	_____	_____
_____	_____	belief

2. Fill in the blanks with the words given in the table.
- (i) The _____ sent by the official _____ has been put into the Reports File.
 - (ii) No _____ is worth its name unless it has been _____ by a worthy inventor.
 - (iii) A petty _____ committed by a small child cannot be called thieving.
 - (iv) Why can't the _____ carry all the passengers in his _____ now?
 - (v) A _____ of land claims to contribute to social _____ by designing amazing housing plans.
 - (vi) A _____ seen by a holy _____ may not be seen by ordinary people.
 - (vii) The _____ is doing his best to improve the work of the institution in all _____.
 - (viii) According to my _____, those who call themselves non-believers sometimes also believe.

COMPOSITION

- Read the story again focussing on the argument between the lady with the dog and the bus conductor.
- Write a dialogue between the lady and the conductor. You can change the lines given in the text or write new ones to make the dialogue interesting.
- Use your own words as far as possible.
- Begin like this:

(A cold night. A bus comes to a halt and a group of men and women get in. One lady is carrying a pet dog. The conductor approaches the new passengers to collect fares.)

CONDUCTOR : Good evening. What nasty weather! My fingers are frozen.

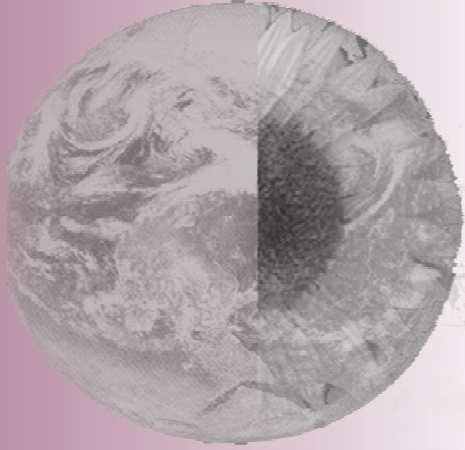
LADY : It's bitterly cold. We were wondering if the bus was ever going to arrive. Here is the fare.

CONDUCTOR : Thank you, lady. That's a nice overcoat you have on.

(Then he sees the dog for the first time and forgets the nasty weather.)

LADY : ...

For the Teacher: Group work should precede the writing task. Explain to children the importance of stage directions. Let them enact the dialogue once it is finalised.



Wishing

Don't we often wish things were better than they are? But most of us don't know what to do to make them better. In this poem, the poet offers practical advice as to how the world can be made a better, wiser and happier place.

Do you wish the world were better?
Let me tell you what to do:
Set a watch upon your actions,
Keep them always straight and true;
Rid your mind of selfish motives,
Let your thoughts be clean and high:
You can make a little Eden
Of the sphere you occupy.

Do you wish the world were wiser?
Well suppose you make a start
By accumulating wisdom
In the scrapbook of your heart.

Eden: (Bible) paradise

Do not waste one page on folly;
Live to learn, and learn to live.
If you want to give me knowledge
You must get it ere you give.

Do you wish the world were happy?
Then remember day by day
Just to scatter seeds of kindness
As you pass along the way;
For the pleasures of the many
May be oft-times traced to one
As the hand that plants an acorn
Shelters armies from the sun.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX
(1855–1919)

ACTIVITIES

Discuss

1. The title is indicative of
 - (i) what the world is and why.
 - (ii) what it is not and why.
 - (iii) what it should be and how it can be.
2. What is a scrapbook? Do you keep one?
3. Whose image or picture does the last stanza (lines 2–4) bring to your mind?
4. A ‘seed of kindness’ will grow into
 - (i) a bower of charm and beauty.
 - (ii) a plant of love and compassion.
 - (iii) a shrub of indifference and suspicion.
5. Give an example of how you want to “scatter seeds of kindness” along the way.

ere: before **acorn:** fruit of the oak-tree (Plant an acorn and you get a big shady oak.)

Write

Answer the following questions.

1. What are the three ways in which the world can be made better?
2. What is the first thing to do to make the world wiser?
3. What do you understand by “Do not waste one page on folly”?
4. (i) Consider this:
Some people live to eat, some others eat to live.
(a) To whom is good food the only objective of life—the former or the latter?
(b) What will be the objective of the other?
(ii) What difference in meaning do you find between “live to learn” and “learn to live”? Explain it in your own words.
5. ‘Many’ and ‘one’ in the last stanza have their equivalents in the lines that come after these words. Find the equivalent words/phrases.