

# A Treasure of Short Stories for English Language Learners

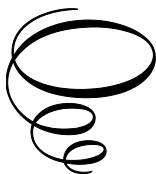


# A Treasure of Short Stories for English Language Learners

By

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**Cambridge**  
**Scholars**  
Publishing



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This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-5961-0

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-5961-5

To the greatest father: Dr. Eyad Al-Alami, and most wonderful mother:  
Mrs. Da'ad Al-Alami, who have *taught* me what millions and billions of  
books could never do.



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# INTRODUCTORY UNIT<sup>1</sup>

What do you enjoy most about reading stories: travelling around the world, meeting new characters, or experiencing unexpected endings? Stories can be seen as being wonderfully versatile. Like a dress, a story may take various shapes and have different colours. This book includes fourteen short stories by different writers. The fourteen selections seek to illustrate how great writers can, through their gift for words, help us to see the world in new and exciting ways.

## *Main Aims*

Upon successful completion of this course, you are expected to be able to:

- read for both information and pleasure,
- write for a wide range of purposes, to convey meaning in language appropriate to purpose and audience, and,
- communicate orally with native and non-native speakers of English, employing language as required.

## *Language Concepts*

### **•Character**

The development of a character depends on the importance of the character to the story. In a short story, usually only one or two characters are developed very fully. In a novel, by contrast, more than three characters are usually developed.

### *Character's role:*

**Protagonist:** A protagonist is the main character in a story who is attempting to solve the major conflict and/or trying to introduce helpful ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> A version of this 'Introductory Note' was published in: Al-Alami, S. (2013). *Learn and Gain*. United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 1-7, and is reprinted with their permission.

**Antagonist:** An antagonist character is the protagonist's opponent, for example, in a fight or competition. Antagonists are usually intended to portray wickedness.

***Character's type:***

**Dynamic:** A dynamic character undergoes a permanent change in personality or attitude. It is important to evaluate the plausibility (believability) of the change a dynamic character goes through. Two questions should be considered: was the situation or experience that the character went through strong enough to cause him or her to change, and was it within the character's capabilities to undergo the change?

**Flat:** Only one or two traits are usually revealed. Generally speaking, we see them in only one or two situations in the story. They are not developed. Flat characters are not always unimportant. They can be used as part of the setting, or they can advance the plot in significant ways.

**Round:** Round characters are complex and many faceted. The reader sees them in a variety of situations. Because they are well developed, they are realistic and therefore, it is difficult to describe them in definite terms. When describing the traits of a round character, it is important to back up your understanding with reference to behavior, events and description in the story.

**Static:** A static character does not undergo any basic personality change, or a significant change in attitude in the story. They are essentially the same at the end of the story as they were at the beginning. Flat and stock characters are always static. Round characters may be static or dynamic.

**Stock (stereotype):** These characters have occurred so often in literature that their nature is immediately known. They do not exist in real life, because they are predictable and follow a set pattern in their behavior.

**•Conflict**

Conflict arises from the difficulties the protagonist encounters when trying to achieve his or her goal.

***Types of conflict***

**Person versus environment:** The protagonist is against a facet or belief of society, or against any outside force that is not necessarily a person.

Person versus him or herself: The protagonist is in conflict with something within him or herself-physical, mental, emotional, moral or spiritual. This type of conflict is also called an internal conflict.

Person versus person: The protagonist is pitted against one or two other characters.

### •Irony

Irony is a literary technique by which an author can express a meaning contradictory to, or opposite from, the one literally stated. Something is not as it appears to be. Irony can be: *verbal irony* meaning that a speaker knowingly states the opposite to what he or she means, *situational irony* meaning that the opposite happens to what is expected, and *dramatic irony* meaning that a speaker unknowingly says or does something that is the opposite of what he or she would say or do if they were aware of the circumstances.

### •Plot

Plot is the series of events that take place in a story. Not all stories begin at one point in time, and continue forward through time to a conclusion at a later date. To understand the basis of plot, you need to have a clear idea about linear plot outlines. A linear plot outline consists of the following developments:

Exposition: The exposition provides you with background information about which you must be aware in order to understand or receive full benefit from the story. It is not always revealed at the beginning. It may include any or all of the following: a description of the setting, antecedent action which is the actions or events that occur prior to the opening of the story, and atmosphere or mood which is the feeling the story conveys to the reader.

Initial incident: The initial incident is the incident that first begins the conflict.

Rising action: The series of events and crisis that lead up to the climax.

Crisis: An individual event within the rising action that creates tension and pushes the conflict toward a resolution at the climax.

Climax: The highest point of interest, at which the reader learns the outcome of the conflict.

Denouement: A denouement is wrapping up of “loose ends.” The unanswered questions about characters’ lives or sub-plots in the story may be answered. A denouement is not always present.

### •Point of view

The narrator’s point of view is important because it can set both the tone of the story and amount of information which the author can give about the thoughts and feelings of the characters. It also influences the degree to which you identify with the protagonist.

#### *Types of point of view:*

First person: The narrator is a character in the story. Therefore, the story is written in first person (using *I/my/me/mine/ we/our/us/ours*). In this case, the author is limited to revealing only the thoughts and feelings of the narrator, and to being only in places the narrator is able to be. If the narrator is the protagonist, strong identification on the part of the reader with the protagonist is more easily achieved.

Second person: The author addresses the reader using the pronoun you. This type of narration is rarely used.

Limited omniscient: The narrator can delineate both the feelings and thoughts of one character. This point of view attempts to combine the advantages of both omniscient and first person narration since the narrator is able to be in places this character is not, while there is also a strong identification with the protagonist since we can see only into this character’s mind and heart.

Omniscient: The narrator is able to reveal the thoughts and feelings of more than one character. He or she is able to move from place to place and through time as needed.

### •Setting

Setting refers to both the time when and location where a story takes place. The amount of description depends on the importance the setting has to the story. In some stories, the setting may have a great influence on other elements of the story, thus bearing on the characters or their development,

on the mood, or on the theme of a story. In other stories, the setting is only important in that the story must take place somewhere at some time, but has little influence on the other elements of the story.

### ***Writing Workshop: A Revision Checklist***

- Does the composition meet the requirements of the assignment?
- Is the length of the composition appropriate?
- Does the composition address an appropriate topic?
- Does the composition have a clear purpose?
- Does the composition have a clear thesis?
- Does each paragraph support the thesis?
- Are ideas coherently arranged?
- Does the composition include adequate examples to illustrate the various points?

## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT BY R. K. NARAYAN

1. 'What is sixteen and three multiplied?' asked the teacher. The boy blinked. The teacher persisted, and the boy promptly answered: 'Twenty-four,' with, as it seemed to the teacher, a wicked smile on his lips. The boy evidently was trying to fool him and was being contrary on purpose. He had corrected this error repeatedly, and now the boy persisted in saying twenty-four. How could this fellow be made to obtain fifty in the class test and go up by double-promotion to the first form, as his parents fondly hoped? At the mention of 'twenty-four' the teacher felt his blood rushing to his head. He controlled himself, and asked again: 'How much?' as a last chance. When the boy obstinately said the same, he felt as if his finger were releasing the trigger: he reached across the table, and delivered a wholesome slap on the youngster's cheek. The boy gazed at him for a moment and then burst into tears. The teacher now regained his normal vision, felt appalled by his own action, and begged frantically: 'Don't cry little fellow, you mustn't...'

2. 'I will tell them,' sobbed the boy.

3. 'Oh, no, no, no,' appealed the teacher. He looked about cautiously. Fortunately this nursery was at a little distance from the main building.

4. 'I'll tell my mother,' said the boy.

5. According to the parents, the boy was a little angel, all dimples, smiles and sweetness - only wings lacking. He was their only child, they had abundant affection and ample money. They built a nursery, bought him expensive toys, fitted up miniature furniture sets, gave him a small pedal motor car to go about in all over the garden. They filled up his cupboard with all kinds of sweets and biscuits, and left it to his good sense to devour them moderately. They believed a great deal in leaving things that way.

6. 'You must never set up any sort of contrariness or repression in the child's mind,' declared the parents. 'You'll damage him for life. It no doubt requires a lot of discipline on our part, but it is worth it,' they declared primly. 'We shall be bringing up a healthy citizen.'

7. 'Yes, yes,' the teacher agreed outwardly, feeling more and more convinced every day that what the little fellow needed to make him a normal citizen was not cajoling – but an anna's worth of cane, for which he was prepared to advance the outlay. For the teacher it was a life of utter travail – the only relieving feature in the whole business was the thirty rupees they paid him on every first day. It took him in all three hours every evening - of which the first half an hour he had to listen to the child-psychology theories of the parents. The father had written a thesis on infant psychology for his M.A., and the lady had studied a great deal of it for her B.A. They lectured to him every day on their theories, and he got more and more the feeling that they wanted him to deal with the boy as if he were made of thin glass. He had to pretend that he agreed with them, while his own private view was that he was in charge of a little gorilla.

8. Now the teacher did not know how to quieten the boy, who kept sobbing. He felt desperate. He told the youngster, 'You must not cry for these trifling matters, you must be like a soldier....'

9. 'A soldier will shoot with a gun if he is hit,' said the boy in reply. The teacher treated it as a joke and laughed artificially. The boy caught the infection and laughed, too. This eased the situation somewhat. 'Go and wash your face,' suggested the teacher - a fine blue porcelain closet was attached to the nursery. The boy disobeyed and commanded: 'Close the lessons today.' The teacher was aghast. 'No, no,' he cried.

10. 'Then I will go and tell my mother,' threatened the boy. He pushed the chair back and got up. The teacher rushed up to him and held him down. 'My dear fellow, I'm to be here for another hour.' The boy said: 'All right, watch me put the engine on its rails.'

11. 'If your father comes in ...' said the teacher.

12. 'Tell him it is an engine lesson,' said the boy, and he smiled maliciously. He went over to his cupboard, opened it, took out his train set, and started assembling the track. He wound the engine and put it down, and it went round and round. 'You are the station master,' proclaimed the boy. 'No, no,' cried the teacher. 'You have your tests the day after tomorrow.' The boy merely smiled in a superior way and repeated, 'Will you be a station master or not?'

13. The teacher was annoyed. 'I won't be a station master,' he said defiantly, whereupon the young fellow said: 'Oh, oh, is that what you say?' He gently touched his cheek, and murmured: 'It is paining me here

awfully, I must see my mother.’ He made a movement towards the door. The teacher watched him with a dull desperation. The boy’s cheek was still red. So he said: ‘Don’t, boy. You want me to be a stationmaster? What shall I have to do?’

14. The boy directed, ‘When the train comes to your station, you must blow the whistle and cry: Engine Driver, stop the train. There are lots of people today who have bought tickets.’

15. The teacher hunched up in a corner and obeyed. He grew tired of the position and the game in thirty minutes, and got up, much to the displeasure of his pupil. Luckily for him the engine also suddenly refused to move. The boy handed it to him, as he went back to his seat, and said: ‘Repair it, sir.’ He turned it about in his hand and said: ‘I can’t. I know nothing about it.’

16. ‘It must go,’ said the boy firmly. The teacher felt desperate. He was absolutely non-mechanical. He could not turn the simplest screw if it was to save his life. The boy stamped his foot impatiently and waited like a tyrant. The teacher put it away definitely with: ‘I can’t and I won’t.’ The boy immediately switched on to another demand. ‘Tell me a story...’

17. ‘You haven’t done a sum. It is eight-thirty.’

18. ‘I don’t care for sums,’ said the boy. ‘Tell me a story.’

19. ‘No...’

20. The boy called, ‘Appa! Appa!’

21. ‘Why are you shouting like that for your father?’

22. ‘I have something to tell him, something important....’

23. The teacher was obliged to begin the story of a bison and a tiger, and then he passed on to ‘Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves’ and ‘Aladdin’s Lamp.’ The boy listened, rapt, and ordered: ‘I want to hear the story of the bison again. It is good...’ The teacher was short of breath. He had done six hours of teaching at school during the day. ‘Tomorrow. I’ve lost all my breath....’

24. ‘Oh! All right. I’ll go and tell ...’ exclaimed the boy; he got up and started running all of a sudden towards the house, and the teacher started after him. The boy was too fast for him, and wheeled about madly, and



made the teacher run round the garden thrice. The teacher looked beaten. The boy took pity on him and stopped near the rose bush. But the moment he went up and tried to put his hand on him, the boy darted through and ran off. It was a hopeless pursuit; the boy enjoyed it immensely, laughing fiendishly. The teacher's face was flushed and he gasped uncomfortably. He felt a darkness swelling up around him. He sank down on the portico step.

25. At this moment Father and Mother emerged from the house. 'What is the matter?' The teacher struggled up to his feet awkwardly. He was still panting badly and could not talk. He had already made up his mind that he would confess and take the consequence, rather than stand the blackmail by this boy. It seemed less forbidding to throw himself at the mercy of the elders. They looked inquiringly at the boy and asked: 'Why have you been running in the garden at this hour?' The boy looked mischievously at the teacher. The teacher cleared his throat and said: 'I will explain....' He was trying to find the words for his sentence. The father asked: 'How's he preparing for his test in arithmetic. .?'. On hearing the word 'test' the boy's face fell; he unobtrusively slunk behind his parents and by look and gestures appealed to the teacher not to betray him. He looked so pathetic and desperate that the teacher replied: 'Only please let him mug up the 16th table a little more..... He is all right. He will pull through.' The boy looked relieved. The teacher saw his grateful face, felt confident that the boy would not give him up now, and said: 'Good night, sir; we finished our lessons early, and I was just playing about with the child...something to keep up his spirits, you know'.

### *Warm Up*

- A. Have you ever received private lessons in any academic subjects? What impressions of such an experience have you had?
- B. What kinds of punishment do you know of?

### *Reading in Action*

#### **Speed reading**

- A. Were the parents well-educated?
- B. Was the boy spoiled?

#### **Keeping track**

- A. According to the parents, what should the teacher avoid doing when dealing with the boy?
- B. What effect did the child's behaviours have on the teacher?

#### **Story elements: focus on character**

- A. The boy is described in the story as an angel and as a gorilla. Find pieces of evidence to support both.
- B. This story is unusual in that the four main characters are just referred to as the teacher, the parents, and the boy. Name the characters and then read the first page. Does this have any effects upon you? Explain.

#### **Reader's response**

- A. How do you view the boy – as an angel or as a gorilla? Justify your answer.
- B. What do you think would happen to the teacher and the child next?

#### **Web activity**

Conduct a study on R.K. Narayan's publications and share the results with your classmates.

### *Language Highlights*

#### **Vocabulary in context**

Find the words in the story which are similar in meaning to each of the following:

- A. with evidence (paragraph 1)
- B. persuaded (paragraph 7)

- C. suddenly (paragraph 24)
- D. appeared (paragraph 25)

### **Grammar in context - question formation**

Write down the questions given in paragraphs 1, 21, & 25 explaining what each is used to ask about.

### **Literary qualities in context**

What literary device is used in each of the following?

“According to the parents, the boy was a little angel,”

“...while his own private view was that he was in charge of a little gorilla ...”

### ***Talking Focus***

Divide into two groups. Group A will support the idea that the teacher’s responses to the boy’s behaviours are appropriate. Group B, on the other hand, will support the idea that the teacher’s responses to the boy’s behaviours indicate a passive character. The group to come up with the more convincing justifications will be declared *winner*.

### ***Writing Workshop***

#### **Knowing your purpose – personal narrative**

You are going to produce a personal narrative I CAN. Your purpose will be to tell about a time when you first learned how to do something of interest.

- A. **Prewriting.** First you need to choose a topic for your personal narrative. Write a list of activities you can perform, and then circle one activity for your personal narrative.
- B. **Drafting.** Write a draft based on your selection of the activity for your personal narrative.
- C. **Revising.** Use the checklist provided in the Introductory Unit to help you in revising your work.
- D. **Proofreading.** Check for mistakes in linking words, spelling and punctuation.
- E. **Publishing your classroom journal.** Use clothespins to hang your narrative on a line in your classroom. Read your classmates’ narratives. Tell your classmates what you like most about their narratives.

### ***Building Up Your Portfolio***

In order to get his own way, the boy uses a number of strategies. For example, he cries; makes jokes; threatens to tell his parents; points to the red mark where the teacher hit him; runs off. Choose three of the boy's strategies and re-write the story in such a way that the teacher's response is likely to gain the upper hand.

### ***Values in Perspective***

What value(s) can be derived from the text *Crime and Punishment*? Explain your answer relating it to genuine life situations.

### ***Self-Evaluation***

Use the PM table below to reflect on your progress in English.

<b>PLUS</b>	<b>MINUS</b>

## HOW'S YOUR MOTHER BY SIMON BRETT

1. "It's all right, Mother. Just the post," Humphrey Partridge called from the bottom of the stairs, as he opened the door to the village postman.
2. "There's a package for you, Mr. Partridge," said Reg Carter, putting his hand on the door. "From a garden center, it says on it. Roses, I think."
3. "Yes," said Partridge, trying to close the door.
4. "It's the right time of year for planting roses, is it?"
5. "Yes."
6. "How's your mother?" Reg went on. He was in no hurry to leave.
7. "Not so bad."
8. "She never seems to get any letters, does she?"
9. "No. Well, when you reach that age, most of your friends are dead."
10. "How old is she now?"
11. "She was eighty-six last July."
12. "That's a good age. She doesn't go out much, does she?"
13. "No, not at all. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to leave to catch my train to work."
14. Partridge closed the door and called up the stairs, "Goodbye Mother. I'm off to work."
15. On his way to the station he stopped at the village shop to get his newspaper.

16. "Good morning", said Mr. Denton, the shopkeeper. "How's the old lady?"

17. "Oh, not too bad, thank you – for her age, that is."

18. "Oh, Mr. Partridge", said Mrs. Denton, "there's going to be a meeting in the village hall on Sunday, about...."

19. "I'm sorry", said Mr. Partridge, "I don't like to leave my mother at weekends. I'm at work all week, you see." He hurried away.

20. "He lives for his old mother," said Mr. Denton.

21. "Well," said his wife, "she probably won't live much longer. She's been in bed ever since they moved here. And how long ago was that? Three years?"

22. "Three or four."

23. "I don't know what he'll do when she dies."

24. "Someone told me that he was talking about going to live in Canada."

25. "Well, I expect she'll leave him some money."

26. When Mrs. Denton expected something, everyone in the village soon heard about it.

27. In his office that afternoon, Partridge was getting ready to go home when the telephone rang. Mr. Brownlow wanted to see him. He hurried to his employer's office.

28. "Humphrey! Come in and sit down."

29. Partridge sat on the edge of a chair. He was going to miss his train.

30. Mr. Brownlow said, "You know I intended to go to Antwerp next week, for the meeting?"

31. "Yes."

32. “Well, I’ve just heard that I must go to Rome tomorrow. Parsons is ill and I’m taking his place. So, I’d like you to go to Antwerp on Monday.”

33. “Me? But what about Mr. Potter? He has a position of more responsibility in the company...”

34. “He’s too busy. It will be a good experience for you. So I’ll ask my secretary to change the tickets...”

35. “No, Mr. Brownlow. You see, it’s rather difficult.”

36. “What’s the problem?”

37. “It’s my mother. She’s very old and I look after her.”

38. “Oh, it’s only for three days, Humphrey. And this is important.”

39. “I’m sorry, it’s not possible. My mother...”

40. There was a pause. Mr. Brownlow was looking annoyed.

41. “All right, then. You can go now, or you’ll be late for your train.”

42. Partridge looked at his watch. “I think I can just catch it if I hurry.”

43. “Oh, that’s great!” His employer gave a cold smile.

44. “Mother, I’m home. It’s exactly six thirty-five. I had to run for the train, but I caught it.”

45. Humphrey Partridge hurried up the stairs, went past his own bedroom and stood by the open door of the second bedroom. There was a smile on his lips as he looked at the empty bed.

46. It was Monday morning, and Partridge was making his breakfast. He turned on his cooker and prepared to boil an egg. It was an old cooker, but it still worked well.

47. He looked out of the kitchen window with satisfaction. During the weekend he had dug the garden and planted all the roses.

48. The doorbell rang. It was Reg Carter, the postman, with a big package in his hand.

49. "Sorry, I couldn't get this through the letterbox."

50. Partridge could see that it contained more information about Canada. He would enjoy reading that on the train.

51. "Oh, and there's this letter too. But nothing for the old lady. Is she all right today?"

52. "Fine, thank you." Partridge managed to shut the door behind the postman. He opened the letter.

53. When he saw what was in it, he sat down at the bottom of the stairs, feeling weak with shock. He had won a large sum of money in a competition.

54. "You wanted to see me, Partridge?"

55. "Yes, Mr. Brownlow."

56. "Well, be quick, then. I've just flown back from Rome."

57. "I've come to tell you I'm leaving."

58. "You mean you want to leave the company? This is sudden."

59. "Yes, I'm going abroad. To Canada, with my mother."

60. "Well, you can go in a month: I need a month's notice."

61. "Is it possible for me to go sooner?"

62. Mr. Brownlow suddenly lost his temper. "Yes! Go today!"

63. Partridge got home after lunch, feeling pleased. He had telephoned a man who had agreed to sell the house for him, and he had completed the forms necessary for living in Canada. He opened his front door and called out, "Hello Mother. I'm home."



64. He stopped suddenly as he saw Reg Carter coming out of his kitchen. "Good God, what are you doing here?"

65. "I was passing the house, and I saw the smoke".

66. "How did you get in?"

67. "I had to break a window. I've called the police. I explained it all to Sergeant Wallace."

68. Partridge's face was white. "Explained what?"

69. "About the fire. There was a fire, in your kitchen. You left the cooker on this morning, and the curtains were on fire. I was thinking of your mother upstairs, not able to move. So, I put the fire out."

70. "Oh thank you, that was very good of you."

71. "Then I wanted to see if she was all right. I went upstairs. All the doors were closed. I opened one – your room, I think. Then I opened another. There was a bed there. But there was no one in it."

72. "No".

73. "There was no one anywhere. The house was empty."

74. "Yes."

75. The postman stood there, looking at him. "I thought that was rather strange, Mr. Partridge. You told us your mother lived here."

76. "She does – I mean she did. She died."

77. "Died? When? You said this morning when I asked..."

78. "She died two days ago." His face was red now. "I'm sorry, I can't think straight. It's the shock, you know."

79. "I see", Reg Carter said quietly. "Well, I must go now."

80. It was about a week after the fire. Of course Reg Carter had talked to Mr. and Mrs. Denton, and they had talked to almost everyone who had come to the shop. Sergeant Wallace, the village policeman, had heard a lot of strange stories about Humphrey Partridge. So now he decided to go and talk to him himself.

81. Partridge opened the door slowly, and the sergeant went straight into the sitting room. It was full of boxes.

82. "You're packing your books, I see, Mr. Partridge. When are you going to Canada?"

83. "In about a month."

84. "And you're going to buy a house there, I hear?"

85. "Yes."

86. "You're going alone? Your mother's not with you now?"

87. "No. She...she died."

88. "Yes. That's what I want to discuss. As you know, this is a small place, and most people take interest in other people's business. I've been hearing some strange things about you.... People are saying you killed your mother, to get her money."

89. "That's stupid! It's not true!"

90. "Perhaps. Let me ask you a few questions. First, when did your mother die?"

91. "Ten days ago; the eleventh."

92. "Are you sure? The 11<sup>th</sup> was the day you had the fire."

93. "Sorry. Two days before that. It was such a shock..."

94. "Of course. And so, the funeral was on the 10<sup>th</sup>."

95. "Some time about then, yes."

96. "It's strange that none of the local funeral directors know anything about it."

97. "I...I used someone from town."

98. "I see. And was it a doctor from town who signed the document saying that she was dead?"

99. "Yes."

100. "Do you perhaps have a copy of the document?"

101. Partridge looked unhappy. "You know I don't."

102. "I'm afraid", the sergeant said, "that suggests there may be something unusual about your mother's death. Now, if a crime has taken place..."

103. "No crime has taken place!" Partridge cried. "I haven't got a mother. I never saw my mother. She left me when I was six months old, and I grew up in a children's home."

104. "Then who was living upstairs?"

105. "Nobody. I live alone. I always have lived alone. I hate people. People are always asking you questions. They want to come into your house, take you out for drinks. I can't stand it. I just want to be alone."

106. Sergeant Wallace tried to stop him, but now Partridge couldn't stop. "But people don't allow you to be alone! You have to have a reason. So I invented my mother. I couldn't do things, I couldn't see people, because I had to get back to my mother. I even began to believe in her and talk to her. She never asked questions, she just loved me, and was kind and beautiful. Now you've all killed her!"

107. Sergeant Wallace took a moment to organise this new information. "So you're telling me, there never was any mother. You didn't kill her, because she wasn't here. Hmm. And how do you explain that you suddenly have enough money to go to Canada and buy property?"

108. "I won a competition. I got the letter on the morning of the fire. That's why I forgot to turn the cooker off. I was so excited."

109. "I see." Sergeant Wallace got up and moved across to the window. "You've been digging the garden, I notice."

110. "Yes, I put those roses in."

111. "You plant roses, when you're going away? Hmm!"

112. A few days later, there was exciting news in the village: Partridge had been put in prison. And the police had dug up his garden, and taken up part of the floor in his house... But they hadn't found a body. Then the news came that he had been freed.

113. It seemed that his strange story to Sergeant Wallace was true. There had been no one else living in the house. He had won a large amount of money. And Partridge's mother was living in Liverpool, and had been in trouble with the police on several occasions.

114. Partridge came back to his house and continued preparing for his move to Canada.

115. Two days before he was going to leave, in the early evening, someone rang his doorbell. It was December, dark and cold. All the villagers were inside their houses.

116. He did not recognise the woman standing on the doorstep. She was dressed in the clothes of a young woman, but her face was old.

117. "Hello, Humphrey," she said.

118. "Who are you?" He held the door, ready to close it.

119. The woman laughed. "No, I don't expect you to recognise me. You were very young when we last met."

120. "You're not...?"

121. "Yes, I am. Don't you want to give your mother a kiss?"

122. She pushed her painted face towards him, and Partridge stepped back into the hall. The woman followed him in.

123. She looked at the packing cases. "Of course, you're going away. Canada, is it? I read about it in the paper. I read about the money, too."

124. "What do you want?" said Partridge.

125. "I've just come to see my little boy. I was thinking, perhaps you should help your poor old mother now."

126. "You never did anything for me. You left me."

127. "That was a long time ago. Now I want you to look after me in my old age. Why don't you take your old mother to Canada with you?"

128. "But you aren't my mother." He spoke quietly.

129. "Oh yes, I am, Humphrey."

130. "My mother is beautiful and kind. She is nothing like you. You are not my mother!" His hands were on her shoulders, shaking her.

131. "I'm your mother, Humphrey!" She was laughing at him.

132. His hands moved to her neck to stop her words. They became tighter and tighter as he shook her.

133. He opened his hands, and the woman's body fell to the floor. Her mouth opened and her false teeth dropped out.

134. Next morning Humphrey Partridge went to the police station to see Sergeant Wallace.

135. "Good morning, Mr. Partridge. What can I do for you?"

136. "Sergeant, about my mother.... I just wanted to tell you.... That I did kill her."

137. "Oh yes, and then you buried her in the garden?"

138. "Yes, I did."

139. "Fine."

140. "I'm telling you I murdered someone," Partridge said.

141. "Listen, Mr. Partridge," said the sergeant. "I'm very sorry about what happened, and you can have a little joke if you like. But now I have other things to do, so..."

142. "You mean I can just go?"

143. "Do. Please."

144. "To Canada?"

145. "Anywhere you like."

146. "All right, then, I'll go." He left the police station.

147. Outside, Humphrey Partridge took a deep breath of air, and smiled.

148. "Right, Mother. We're going to Canada," he said.