

The Never-Never Nest

Character

JACK,
Jill, his wife
Aunt Jane
Nurse

Scene: The lounge of JACK and JILL'S Villa at New Hampstead The essential furniture consists of a table on which are writing materials, and two chairs. As the curtain rises the lounge is empty, but JACK and JILL come immediately, followed by AUNT JANE.

JILL : And this is the lounge.

AUNT JANE : Charming! Charming! Such a cosy little room! and such pretty furniture.

JACK (*modestly*) : We like it, you know, handy place to sit in and listen to the radiogram.

AUNT JANE : Oh, have you got a radiogram as well as a car and a piano?

JACK : Why, of course, Aunt Jane. You simply must have a radio set nowadays.

JILL : And it's so nice for me when Jack's away at business. I even make him move it into the kitchen, so that I can listen to it while I cook.

JACK : Sit down, Aunt Jane, You must be tired—and we've shown you everything now.

- JILL : What do you think of our little nest, Aunt Jane?
- AUNT JANE : I think it's wonderful, my dears. The furniture—and the car—and the piano—and the refrigerator and the radio—what's it—it's wonderful, really wonderful!
- JACK : And we owe it all to you.
- AUNT JANE : Yes, Jack, that's what's worrying me.
- JACK : Worrying you, Aunt Jane?
- AUNT JANE : Yes. That cheque I gave you for your wedding present—it was only two hundred pounds, wasn't it? I— didn't put two thousand by mistake?
- JILL : Why no, Aunt Jane. What on earth made you think that
- AUNT JANE (*relieved*): Well, that's all right. But I still don't altogether understand. This house—it's very lovely—but doesn't it cost a great deal for rent?
- JACK : Rent? Oh, no, we don't pay rent.
- AUNT JANE : But, Jack, if you don't pay rent, you'll get turned out—into the street. And that would never do. You've Jill and the baby to think of now, you know.
- JACK : No, no, Aunt Jane. You misunderstood me. We don't pay rent because the house is ours.
- AUNT JANE : YOURS?
- JILL : Why, yes; you just pay ten pounds and it's yours.
- JACK : You see, Aunt Jane, we realized how uneconomic it is to go on paying rent year after year, when you can buy and enjoy a home of your own for ten pounds—and a few quarterly payments, of course. Why be Mr Tenant when you can be Mr

Owner?

AUNT JANE : I see. Yes, there's something in that. Even so, you must be getting on very well to keep up a place like this.

JILL : Oh, he is, Aunt Jane. Why, only last year he had a five shilling rise—didn't you, Jack?

JACK (*modestly*): Of course that was nothing, really. I'm expecting ten this Christmas.

AUNT JANE (*suddenly*): Jack ! I've just thought of something. That car—is it yours?

JILL : Of course it's ours.

AUNT JANE : All yours?

JACK : Well, no. Not exactly all.

AUNT JANE : How much of it?

JILL : Oh, I should say the steering wheel—and one of the tyres -- and about two of the cylinders. But don't you see, that's the wonderful thing about it.

AUNT JANE : I don't see anything wonderful about it.

JILL : But there is, Aunt Jane. You see, although we could never buy a car outright, we can enjoy all the pleasures of motoring for a mere five pounds down.

AUNT JANE : And the rest by easy instalments, I suppose.

JILL : Exactly.

AUNT JANE : Exactly. And what about the radio-what's it?

JACK : Well, that's the—

AUNT JANE : And the piano?

- JILL : Well, of course—
- AUNT JANE : And the furniture?
- JACK : I—I'm afraid so—
- AUNT JANE : I suppose all you own is this leg. (*She points to one*)
- JILL : Well, no, as a matter of fact, it's that one. (*She points to another.*)
- AUNT JANE : And the rest belongs to Mr Sage, I suppose?
- JILL : Er—Yes.
- AUNT JANE : Well. I'm not going to sit on—Mr Sage's part for any one. (*She stands up.*) Now, tell me, how much do all these instalments come to?
- JACK : Well, actually—(*He takes out his pocket-book and consults it.*)—actually to seven pounds eight and eight pence a week.
- AUNT JANE : Good heavens! And how much do you earn?
- JACK : As a matter of fact—er—that is—six pounds.
- AUNT JANE : But that's absurd! How can you pay seven pounds eight and eight pence out of six pounds?
- JACK : Oh, that's easy. You see, all you have to do is to borrow the rest of the money for the payments from the Thrift and Providence Trust Corporation.
- JILL : They're only too glad to loan you any amount you like, on note of hand alone.
- AUNT JANE : And how do you propose to pay that back?
- JACK : Oh, that's easy, too. You just pay it back in instalments.
- AUNT JANE : Instalments! (*She claps her hand to her forehead and sinks*

back weakly into the chair. Then realises that she is sitting on Mr. Sage's piece and leaps to her feet again with a little shriek.)

JACK : Aunt Jane! Is anything the matter? Would you like to lie down?

AUNT JANE : Lie down? Do you suppose I'm going to trust myself in a bed that belongs to Mr Sage, or Marks and Spencer, or somebody? No, I am going home.

JILL : Oh, must you really go?

AUNT JANE : I think I'd better.

JACK : I'll drive you to the station.

AUNT JANE : What! Travel in a car that has only one tyre and two thingummies! No thank you—I'll take the bus.

JACK : Well, of course, if you feel like that about it....

AUNT JANE (*relenting a little*): Now, I'm sorry if I sounded rude, but really I'm shocked to find the way you're living. I've never owdd a penny in my life—cash down, that's my motto and I want you to do the same. (*She opens her handbag.*) Now look, here's a little cheque I was meaning to give you, anyway. (*She hands it to JILL.*) Suppose you take it and pay off just one of your bills—so that you can say one thing at least really belongs to you.

JILL (*awkwardly*): Er—thank you. Aunt Jane. It's very nice of you.

AUNT JANE (*patting her arm*): There! Now I must be going.

JACK : I'll see you to the bus. anyway.

JILL : Good-bye, Aunt Jane—and thanks so much for the present.

AUNT JANE (*kissing her*): Good-bye, my dear. (*She and JACK go out. JILL looks at the cheque and exclaims 'Ten pounds!' Then she hurries to the table, addresses an envelope, endorses the cheque and*

slips it inside with a bill which she takes from the bag and seals the envelope. Then she rings the bell. In a moment the NURSE comes in with the baby in her arms.)

JILL : Oh, nurse. I want you to run and post this for me. I'll look after baby while you're gone.

NURSE : Certainly, madam. *(She hands the baby to JILL, takes the letter, and goes.)*

(A second later JACK comes in again.)

JACK : Well, she's gone! What a tartar! Still, she did leave us a bit on account—how much was it?

JILL : Ten pounds.

JACK *(with a whistle)*: Phew! That's great! We can pay off the next two months on the car with that.

JILL : I—I'm afraid we can't—

JACK : Why ever not?

JILL : You see, I—I've already sent it off for something else. Nurse has just gone to post it.

JACK : Well that's all right. Who have you sent it to?

JILL : Dr. Martin.

JACK : Dr Martin! What on earth possessed you to do that?

JILL *(nearly in tears)*: There! Now you're going to be angry with me.

JACK : I'm not angry! But why waste good money on the doctor?
Doctors don't expect to get paid anyway.

JILL *(sobbing a little)*: Bu—but 'you don't understand —

- JACK** : Understand what?
- JILL** : Why; just one more instalment and **BABY'S REALLY OURS!**
(She is holding out the infant, a little pathetically, as we black out.)

- Cedric Mount

Glossary

villa	/ˈvɪlɪjə/	small house standing in its own garden
cosy	/ˈkɒzi/	warm and comfortable
absurd	/ˈɒsɜːd/	very foolish, unreasonable
shriek	/ˈʃriːk/	give a high loud cry
exclaims	/ɪkˈskleɪmz/	speak with strong feelings
tartar	/ˈtɑːtə(r)/	an irritable, hard to cope with person
phew	/fjuː/	expressing tiredness, shock or relief

Exercises

Vocabulary

A Supply a context of your own in which the following expressions take place naturally :

1. I think it's wonderful.
2. But that's absurd !
3. I'm afraid we can't
4. Oh, that' easy
5. It's very nice of you.

B. Rewrite the following sentences using a word, from the text in place of the word or words in bold type :

1. I had to spend Rs. 5000 on the purchase of cots, tables, chairs and cupboards.
2. One must learn the habit of careful spending and save some money every month.
3. Aunt Jane never owed any money to any one in her life, her principle was 'cash down.'
4. You have a warm and comfortable place, though it is expensive.
5. He looks at the cheque and speaks loudly and suddenly, because of surprise, Ten Pounds!

C. Write synonyms of the following words :

Villa, nice, angry, expect, infant

D. Pronounce the following words carefully and notice the difference in, their pronunciation.

Bye, Boy, By, Bay, Brie, Buy, Bye-Byes, Byre

Comprehension

A. Answer each of the following questions in about 25 words.

1. Describe Jill's house and the things that charmed Aunt Jane.
2. What made Aunt Jane worried about her gift cheque ?
3. What arguments did Jack give in support of purchasing the house and other things on instalment basis.
4. Why did Aunt Jane finally refuse to sit on the furniture ?

B. Answer each of the following questions in about 50 words.

1. What easy sources did Jack speak about to Aunt Jane to repay instalments ?
2. Discuss the disadvantages of purchase on instalments.
3. Who is the real owner of the house and other things till the payment of all the instalments? Why do you think so?

Grammar

A. Study the following sentences from a conversation.

JILL : What do you think of our little nest, Aunt Jane ?

AUNT JANE : It's wonderful, really wonderful !

JILL : What on earth made you think of that ?

AUNT JANE : Doesn't it cost a great deal for rent ?

We can give the exact meaning without using the speaker's words.

- Jill asked Aunt Jane what she thought of their little nest.
- AUNT JANE exclaimed that it was really very wonderful.
- JILL asked what on earth she had made think of that.
- AUNT JANE asked if it did not cost a great deal for that.

Now give the exact meaning of the following without using the speaker's words

1. Aunt Jane : How can you pay seven pounds eight and eight pence out of six pounds?
2. Jack : Aunt Jane ! Is anything the matter ?
3. Jack : We can pay off the next two months on the car with that.

4. Jill : There ! You are going to be angry with me.
5. Aunt Jane : How do you propose to pay that back ?
6. Jill : Oh, must you really go ?
7. Jack : Why waste good money on the doctor ?

Speaking Activity

- A. Enact a scene where two persons are planning to mitigate a loan purchasing house.
- B. Enact a scene showing facilities and furniture provided in your newly constructed house to your friends.
- C. Express your own views on borrowing books from friends.
- D. If you get a chance to go abroad for higher studies and you take a loan. How will you repay it ?

Writing Activity

- A. Write a letter to your cousin telling him/her the consequences of pretence. (50 words)
- B. Elaborate 'cut your coat according to your cloth'. (150 words)

Think it over

- A. What difficulties arise where a man spends more than what he earns ?
- B. Borrowing is easier than paying. Ponder

Things to do

Go to different banks and enquire about loan facility for buying a motorcycle and convince your parents for buying a new bike.



