

A Predicament

One beautiful warm afternoon, I decided to go for a walk in the city of Edina. When I arrived in the city, I was surprised to find it busy. There were traffic jams and people everywhere. Children were crying, mothers were shouting, horses were running, and dogs were dancing. Yes, dancing! ‘Oh, dear!’ I thought. ‘My dancing days are over.’

I remembered the many things I had left behind in my **youth**. I had been a beautiful and **talented** young woman. I could sing and play music, and everyone admired my soft skin and bright eyes. But that time had passed. I am a woman of strong emotions, and the memories made me cry.

I had two **companions** with me on my walk. The first was my little dog, a poodle called Diana. She had hair over her one eye and a **fashionable** blue ribbon round her neck. She was a very small poodle, but she had a large head and a very short tail, so she appeared more intelligent than she was.

predicament (noun) a difficult situation

youth (noun) the time of life when someone is young

talented (adjective) very good at something

companion (noun) friend

fashionable (adjective) modern and popular (e.g. clothes)



I had two companions with me on my walk.

My other companion was my **servant**, Pompey. He was short and fat, and his legs were bent. He had curly dark hair although he was seventy or eighty years old. He had a large mouth, perfect white teeth, big ears and no neck. He wore simple clothes except for an expensive overcoat that a tall gentleman had given him. He had to hold it out of the dirt with both hands.

The third person in our group was me, Signora Psyche Zenobia. I am a beautiful woman, and I was wearing my blood-red dress, decorated with small green birds and a long orange train, with a sky blue cloak. I **leaned** on Pompey's arm as we walked, and Diana followed at a good distance. I wasn't expecting to see the cathedral in front of us but, suddenly, there it was. Ancient, dark, with a tower that reached high up to the sky. I don't know why, but I really wanted to climb the tower. I wanted to look at the city of Edina below me. The door of the cathedral was open, so I entered and found my way to the stairs without damaging my orange **train**.

I continued to lean on Pompey as we started to climb round and round and round. The stairs seemed to have no end, and I started to think someone had removed the top of them.

lean (verb) to rest on something or someone

train (noun) a part of a long dress that spreads out onto the floor behind the woman who is wearing it

servant (noun) someone who is paid to do household or personal duties

But then I saw the final three steps to the bell room. I left Pompey and Diana and I took one step, two steps, and then I needed Pompey's help.

'Pompey!' I called. 'Give me your arm.'

'I cannot reach you,' he replied.

'But you must!' I said.

He dropped his overcoat, tripped over his feet, and fell head first onto my breast. I fell too and we **landed** heavily on the floor of the bell tower.

'You fool!' I shouted and pulled a handful of hair from his head and threw it over the tower. Pompey looked at me. He was very sad. 'I'm sorry, Pompey,' I said to him.

We looked around for an opening so we could view the city of Edina, but the only one was high up above our heads. There was a lot of clock machinery near the hole, and a length of iron went through it. There was just enough space for my body, and I was **determined** to see, so I called Pompey.

land (verb) to come to a surface after falling or moving through the air
determined (adjective) having a strong desire to do something and not letting anyone change your mind

‘I wish to see through that hole, Pompey. Put your hand here so I can climb on it. Now move here, and I will climb onto your shoulders.’

I stood on Pompey’s shoulders and I was able to put my head past the clock machinery through the hole. I was so excited to see Edina below me. I could see the city in all directions, but it was actually just a city like any other, so I started to **examine** the roof of the cathedral and the clock more carefully. After a few minutes, I heard Pompey’s voice call from below. ‘Signora Zenobia, I can’t stand it any longer! Please, will you come down?’

‘Pompey, I only just got here and I want to look at everything **in detail**,’ I said.

‘But please, Signora, I cannot carry you any more,’ he said.

‘You fool, Pompey! I didn’t climb up here just to climb straight down again. I haven’t seen everything, and you will hold me here as long as I need,’ I said. Pompey was quiet.

examine (verb) to look carefully

in detail (phrase) fully, completely



I stood on Pompey's shoulders and I was able to put my head past the clock machinery through the hole.

GRAMMAR QUIZZES

Quiz-1

Choose the correct answer.

- I all evening. It is dark outside now.
a) have been writing b) are writing c) wrote
- Have you your breakfast yet?
a) finishing b) finished c) finishes
- When I saw him, he to fix his bike.
a) is trying b) has tried c) was trying
- I in the shop all day. I'm going to sit down and rest now.
a) have been serving b) serve c) am serving
- They in the car for two days.
Give them something to drink.
a) have been travelling b) travelled c) travel
- We the school play when the alarm sounded.
a) have practised b) were practising c) practised
- You all the fabric to make the dress. There is none left for me.
a) use b) have been using c) have used
- He for you in the hall all morning. He is still there.
a) waited b) has been waiting c) is waiting
- She oysters before, but she didn't like them.
a) is trying b) has been trying c) tried
- We this mountain before. It's very high.
a) have climbed b) are climbing c) climb

Quiz-2

Complete the sentences with the gerund or infinitive form of the verbs in brackets.

1. She expected her mum at home when she returned. (find)
2. The man denied the old woman's necklace. (steal)
3. She wants in Istanbul. (live)
4. He wants the croissants with his morning coffee. (eat)
5. The workmen stopped in the road when it got dark. (dig)
6. He asked me his passport form yesterday. (sign)
7. "Would you like out?" asked mum. (go)
8. I want them to stop They are too loud. (shout)
9. She enjoys poems. (read)
10. "..... portraits is a talent," said the artist. (paint)
11. I saw him through the park last night. (run)
12. Try this curry. Is it too spicy? (taste)
13. He is ready home and move into his flat now. (leave)
14. He didn't stop even though we asked him to be quiet. (talk)
15. I wanted so that I was fit to run the marathon. (train)