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# THREE MEN IN A BOAT



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## CHAPTER 1

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There were four of us: George, Harris, me and my dog Montmorency. We were sitting in my room one day, smoking and talking about how bad we were feeling.

We were all feeling sick and were quite unhappy about it. Harris said he felt so dizzy sometimes that he did not know what he was doing. Then George said that he felt dizzy sometimes too and did not know what he was doing. With me, it was my liver. I knew it was my liver because I had just been reading a liver-pill advertisement in which the **symptoms** of liver disease were listed. I had them all.

It is a very interesting fact that whenever I read a medicine advertisement, I come to the conclusion that I am **suffering** from the disease described.

\* \* \*

I remember one time I was in a reading room at the British Museum, where I looked up the treatment of an illness that I had at the time—I think it was hay fever. I picked up the book and read about hay fever, and then I kept turning the leaves and read about every disease in the book. I read the first one and **realised** I had all the symptoms.

Frozen with horror, I sat there for a while and read on. I came to cholera and read the symptoms and discovered that I had cholera. I read about diphtheria, and found, as I had **expected**, that I had that, too. Then I read about typhoid fever and realised I had actually been born with it.

So, I read about all of the illnesses in the book, and the only one I had not got was housemaid's knee.

Then I wondered how long I had to live. I tried to **examine** myself. I felt my pulse. I could not feel any heartbeat at all. Then, suddenly it seemed to start. I pulled out my watch and timed it. I counted a hundred and forty-seven beats a minute. I tried to feel my heart. I could not feel my heart. It had stopped beating. I tried to look at my tongue, so I stuck it out as far as it would go and shut one eye. I could only see the tip. I was certain I had scarlet fever.

I had walked into that reading room as a happy and healthy man. I came out as a broken man.

I went to my doctor. He is an old friend of mine and every time I think I'm ill, he feels my pulse, looks at my tongue and talks about the weather.

He said, 'Well, what's the matter with you?'

I said, 'I will not take too much of your time by telling you what's the matter with me, my friend. Life is short, and you might die before I finish telling you about my problems. But I will tell you what is *not* the matter with me. I don't know why, but I don't have housemaid's knee. However, I have got everything else.'

And I told him how I discovered all this.

Then he examined me, held my wrist and hit me on the chest when I wasn't expecting it. After that, he sat down and wrote a prescription, folded it up and gave it to me. I put it in my pocket and went out.

I did not open it. I took it to the nearest pharmacy and handed it. The pharmacist read it, and then gave it back.

‘We don’t have it,’ he said.

‘Are you not a pharmacist?’ I asked.

‘I am,’ he said.

I looked at the prescription, and it said:

*1 pound beefsteak (every 6 hours)*

*1 ten-mile walk (every morning)*

*1 bed at 11 sharp (every night)*

*And don’t read about things you don’t understand.’*

I followed the doctor’s directions, and my life was saved.

\* \* \*

So, as I told you, George, Harris and I were sitting describing to each other our illnesses. We had been talking for half an hour when Mrs. Poppets knocked at the door to ask us if we were ready for supper. We smiled sadly at each other and said maybe we could try to swallow a little bit of food. Mrs. Poppets brought the tray in.

I must have been very weak at the time because after the first half-hour of meal, I did not want to eat any more.

After supper, we continued our discussion about our health. None of us was sure of what our problem was, but we all agreed that it had been caused by overwork.

‘What we need is rest,’ said Harris.

‘Rest and a complete change,’ said George. ‘The stress on our brains has caused a general depression throughout the system. Change of scene and absence of thought will restore the mental balance.’

George's cousin is a medical student, so he has a medical way of talking about things.

I agreed with George and said we should look for some **remote** location far from people and noise and spend a week there.

Harris said, 'I know the sort of place you mean. It would be a small cabin. A place where everybody goes to bed at eight o'clock, and you have to walk ten miles for the local shop.'

'No,' said Harris. 'If you want to rest and recharge, you have to make a sea trip.'

I strongly **objected** to the sea trip. A sea trip may do you good if you are going to spend a couple of months, but for a week, it's awful.

You start on Monday with the belief that you are going to enjoy yourself. You wave goodbye to your friends on land, and walk on the deck as if you were Captain Cook or Christopher Columbus. Then the seasickness hits you. On Tuesday, you wish you hadn't come. On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, you wish you were dead. On Saturday, you are able to swallow a little tea and to sit up on the deck for a short while. On Sunday, you begin to walk about, and take solid food again. And on Monday morning, waiting to step on the shore, you begin to really like the sea trip.

So, I was against the sea trip. I wasn't thinking about myself; I never get seasick. But I was afraid for George. He said he would be all right. Harris said he never understood how people got sick at sea. He thought people did it knowingly. He had often wished to get seasick, but had never been able.

Then, George suggested something else.

‘Let’s take the boat, and go up the river,’ he said. ‘We’ll get fresh air, exercise and peace. The **constant** change of scene will keep us busy, and the hard work of rowing the boat will give us a good appetite and make us sleep well.’

‘I don’t think you should do something to make you sleepier than you already are, George,’ said Harris. ‘I don’t understand how you can sleep any more than you do now. There are only twenty-four hours in each day. If you slept any more than that, you might as well be dead. However, the river is a good idea.’

‘I think the river is a good idea, too,’ I said.

The only one who wasn’t very happy about the idea was Montmorency. He never liked the river. We were three to one, however, so the decision was made.

\* \* \*

We pulled out the maps and discussed plans.

We arranged to start on the following Saturday from Kingston. Harris and I would go there in the morning and take the boat to Chertsey. George would not be able to leave London because of work (George goes to sleep at a bank from ten to four every day), so he would meet us there in the afternoon.

‘Should we spend the nights camping or sleeping at inns?’ we asked.





*'Let's take the boat and go up the river. We'll get fresh air,  
exercise and peace.'*

George and I chose camping. We said it would be so wild and free and manly.

I guess the picture in our minds was something like this:

Slowly the dead sun fades from the hearts of the cold clouds. The birds have stopped singing, and the dying day takes her last breath. From the dark woods, the grey shadows chase away the light. Night folds her black wings above the darkening world. Then we stop our little boat in a quiet corner and put up our tent. We cook and eat our simple supper. We chat pleasantly and in the pauses of our talk, listen to the river singing. And we sit there, while the moon throws her silver arms around the river. We say 'Goodnight' and fall asleep beneath the stars.

'What if it rains?' asked Harris.

Harris has no understanding of poetry. Harris never feels emotional. If Harris's eyes fill with tears, it is because Harris has been eating raw onions or has put too much hot sauce on his meat.

This time, however, his realistic view of the matter was **valuable**. Camping out in rainy weather is not pleasant.

\* \* \*

Picture this scenario:

It is evening. You are soaking wet, there is two inches of water in the boat, and everything is **damp**. You find a place in the banks<sup>1</sup> that is not as wet as others. You land, and the two of you try to put up the tent. It

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<sup>1</sup> bank: the side of a river, canal, etc. and the land near it

is soaked and heavy and keeps falling on you. The rain is pouring down on you all the time.

After pushing and pulling for ten minutes under the pouring rain, struggling to put the tents up, you and your friend Bill end up in a big fight, blaming each other. Your other friend Jim, who is soaked from head to toe because he has been trying to tie the boat to a tree, arrives and asks you why the tent isn't up yet. You get into a fight with him, too.

At last, somehow the tent is up, and you bring the things from the boat. It is hopeless to **attempt** to make woodfire because of the rain, so you light the spirit stove and sit around that.

Rainwater is the main item of your diet at supper. The bread is two-thirds rainwater, there is plentiful rainwater in the beefsteak pie, and the jam, the butter, the salt and the coffee have all **combined** with it to make soup.

You go to bed and fall asleep. You dream that an elephant is sitting on your chest, and a volcano has exploded and thrown you down to the bottom of the sea. You wake up in the dark, trying to understand what the problem is. It is not a volcano, so it must be a thief or a murderer. Somebody else seems to be in trouble, too. You can hear his faint cries. You struggle **desperately**, hitting out right and left with arms and legs, and at last you find your head in the fresh air. Two feet away you see a figure, waiting to kill you. Then, you realise it's your friend Jim.

'Oh, it's you,' he says, **recognising** you at the same moment.

'Yes,' you answer, rubbing your eyes. 'What happened?'

‘The stupid tent has blown down, I think,’ he says. ‘Where’s Bill?’

Then you start shouting for Bill, and the ground beneath you starts shaking. You hear a muffled voice.

‘Get off my head, will you?’ the voice says.

And Bill gets out, hurt and upset, and in an unnecessary **aggressive** mood. He believes that the whole thing has been done on purpose.

In the morning, you are all quiet owing to the **severe** cold you caught in the night.

\* \* \*

Picturing this scenario helped us immediately decide that we would sleep outside when the weather was good and at a hotel when it was wet.

Having settled the sleeping arrangements, the only thing to discuss was what we were going to take with us, but we left that to the next day.

On the following evening, we came together again to discuss our plans.

‘Now the first thing to settle is what to take with us,’ said Harris. He turned to me and said, ‘Now, J., you get a piece of paper and write down.’ Then he turned to George and said, ‘And George, you get the grocery catalogue.’

Harris is like that. He always takes the responsibility off his own shoulders and puts it on somebody else’s shoulders.

He **reminds** me of my Uncle Podger. When Uncle Podger had a job to do at home, things would get crazy. I’m sure you never saw so much

chaos in your life. For example, a picture had to be put up in the sitting room.

‘Who’s going to put it up?’ Aunt Podger would ask.

‘Oh, you leave that to me. Don’t you worry about that. I’ll do that,’ Uncle Podger would say.

And he would take off his coat and begin. He would send the maid to buy some nails, and then he would send one of the boys after her to tell her what size to get. And then gradually, he would call everyone in the house.

‘Now you go and get my hammer, Will,’ he would shout. ‘And you bring me the ruler, Tom. And I’ll need the stepladder, and I should have a kitchen chair, too. And, Jim! You run around to Mr. Goggles and tell him, ‘Father sends his kind regards and hopes your leg’s better, and will you lend him his spirit level?’ And Maria, don’t go because I’ll need somebody to hold me the light. When the maid comes back, she must go out again for a bit of cord. And Tom! Where’s Tom? Tom, you come here. I need you to hand me the picture.’

And then he would lift the picture and drop it, and it would come out of the frame. He would try to save the glass and cut himself. Then he would jump around the room, looking for his handkerchief. He could not find it because it was in the pocket of the coat that he had taken off.



*When Uncle Podger had a job to do at home, things would get crazy.*

He did not know where he had put the coat. All the house had to go looking for his coat.

‘Doesn’t anybody in the house know where my coat is? I never saw a group of people like you. Six of you! And you can’t find a coat that I put down five minutes ago!’

Then he would get up and realise that he had been sitting on the coat.

‘Oh, you can stop looking now! I’ve found it myself. It’s a better idea to ask the cat to find anything.’

Half an hour was spent tying his finger with the handkerchief. Then a new glass was bought for the frame, and the tools and the ladder and the chair and the candle were brought. He would try once again to put the picture up, while the whole family would stand around him in a semicircle, ready to help. Two people would hold the chair, the third would help him get on it and hold him there, the fourth would give him the nail, and the fifth would pass him the hammer. He would then drop the nail.

And we would all have to go down on our knees to look for it, while he would stand on the chair, **complaining**.

‘I wonder if I’ll stand here all evening?’ he would ask.

The nail would be found at last, but now the hammer would be lost. We would find it for him, and then he would lose sight of the mark he had made on the wall. Each of us had to get up on the chair, beside him, and try to find it.

When the mark was finally found, Uncle Podger would put the nail on it. With the first blow of the hammer, he would smash his thumb and drop the hammer on somebody’s toes.

‘The next time you are going to hammer a nail into the wall, please let me know so that I can make plans to spend a week with my mother,’ Aunt Maria would say.

‘Oh! You women, you worry too much about everything,’ Uncle Podger would reply. ‘I like doing such jobs in the house.’

And then he would have another try, and finally the nail would go into the wall, together with the hammer. Then, we had to do it all over again until a new hole was made. About midnight, the picture would be up—not straight and ready to fall.

‘There you are,’ Uncle Podger would say. ‘I don’t understand why some people bring a professional to do an easy job like this.’

So, as I told you, Harris is just like my Uncle Podger.

The first list we made was thrown away. It was clear that a boat large enough to take all of the things on the list could not go in the Thames River.

‘You know,’ said George. ‘We must not think of the things we could do with, but only of the things we cannot do without.’

George can be quite **sensible** sometimes.

‘We won’t take a tent,’ he said. ‘We will have a boat with a cover. It is simpler and more comfortable.’

It seemed like a good idea, so we agreed.

He added that we must take a rug for each of us, a lamp, some soap, a brush and a comb, a toothbrush each, a basin, some toothpaste, a shaving set, and three big towels for swimming.

Then we started talking about how much we liked swimming.

‘It is so pleasant to wake up in the boat in the fresh morning and



jump into the clear river,' said George.

'There's nothing like a swim before breakfast to get you hungry,' said Harris. 'It always gives me a good appetite.'

'Well, if it's going to make you eat more than you usually do,' said George, turning to Harris, 'then I'm against you going swimming.'

For clothes, George said two suits would be sufficient, as we could wash them ourselves in the river when they got dirty. We asked him if he had ever tried washing shirts and trousers in the river. He said he hadn't, but he had known a few people who had, and it was easy. Harris and I thought he knew what he was talking about, so we believed that three young men who had no experience in washing clothes could really clean their suits in the river Thames with a bit of soap.

Then we discussed food.

'Begin with breakfast,' said George. 'We need a frying pan, a teapot, and a kettle, and a spirit stove. No oil.'

Harris and I agreed.

One time we had taken the oil-stove on the boat. It was like living in an oil shop all week. The paraffine oil leaked. We kept it in the front of the boat and from there it leaked down and covered the whole boat and everything on its way. It leaked into the river and ruined the scenery and the atmosphere. Sometimes a westerly oily wind blew, and at other times an easterly oily wind. The air smelled like paraffin oil. And the oil leaked up and ruined the sunset and the moonbeams.

At the end of that trip, we took an oath. We promised never to take paraffin oil with us in a boat ever again.

For other breakfast things, George suggested eggs, which were easy

to cook, cold meat, tea, bread and butter, and jam. For lunch, he said we could have biscuits, cold meat, bread and butter, and jam, but no cheese. Cheese is like oil; it wants the whole boat to itself. It goes through the boat and gives everything else a cheesy flavour. You can't tell if you're eating an apple pie or sausage.

For supper, George suggested meat pies and fruit pies, cold meat, tomatoes, fruit, and green stuff. For drink, we would take lemonade and plenty of tea.

So, before we said goodbye that evening, we had made a list of the things to be taken, and a long one it was.

The next day, which was Friday, we got them all together and met in the evening to pack. We moved the table against the window, put everything in a pile in the middle of the floor, and sat round and looked at it.

I said I'd do the packing.

I'm rather proud of my packing skills. Packing is one of those many things that I feel I know more about than any other living person. (I am surprised sometimes at how many of these subjects there are.) I told George and Harris that they'd better leave the packing to me. They agreed immediately. George spread himself on a chair and opened a book, and Harris put his legs up on a table and started whistling.

This was not my **intention**. I had intended to be the person in charge and for them to follow my instructions. I would be bossing them around, saying, 'Oh, you!' 'Here, let me do it.' 'There you are, simple enough!' The way they behaved **irritated** me.

However, I did not say anything, but started the packing. It turned out to be a longer job than I thought it was going to be. At last I finished packing the bag, sat on it, and strapped it.

‘Aren’t you going to put the boots in?’ said Harris.

And I looked around and realised I had forgotten to put them. Harris is like that. He didn’t say a word until I got the bag shut and strapped it. And George laughed, of course. They do make me so mad sometimes.

I opened the bag and packed the boots in, and then just as I was going to close it, a horrible idea occurred to me. Had I packed my toothbrush?

My toothbrush is a thing that makes my life a **misery** when I’m travelling. I get the feeling that I haven’t packed it and wake up in the middle of the night, get out of bed and search for it. In the morning, I pack it before I use it and have to unpack it again to get it, and it is always the last thing I remove out of the bag. I use it and forget it in the bathroom and have to run upstairs at the last moment before I leave the house. I then have to carry it in my pocket to the railway station, wrapped in my pocket handkerchief.

So, on that day, I had to remove every single thing from the bag, and of course I could not find it. I looked through the whole thing, so it was now all in a chaotic state. Of course, I found George’s and Harris’s toothbrushes eighteen times over, but I couldn’t find mine. I put the things back one by one, and while I did that, I held everything and shook it. Finally, I found my toothbrush inside a boot. I repacked once more.

When I had finished, George asked if I had put the soap. I said I didn’t care if the soap was in, and I slammed the bag and strapped it. It was now 10 p.m., and now the food needed to be packed. Harris said we were leaving in less than 12 hours’ time and thought that he and George should pack the food. I agreed and sat down.

They were quite confident in the beginning and intended to show me how to do it. I made no comment and waited. I looked at all those

plates, and cups, kettles, bottles, and jars, pies, tomatoes, and cakes and thought that things would soon get exciting.

They started by breaking a cup. Then, Harris packed the strawberry jam on top of a tomato and squashed it. They had to pick out the tomato with a teaspoon. Then it was George's turn, and he stepped on the butter. I didn't say anything, but I went and sat on the edge of the table and watched them. It irritated them more than anything I could have said. It made them nervous and excited. They stepped on things, couldn't find the things they needed, put heavy things at the top and crushed the pies. They spilled salt on everything.

Oh, and the butter! After they had got it off George's slipper, they tried to put it in the kettle. It wouldn't go in, and later it wouldn't come out. They scraped it out at last and put it on a chair. Harris then sat on it, and it got stuck to him. They looked for the butter all over the room.

'I swear I put it on a chair,' said George, staring at the empty chair.

'I saw you do it a minute ago,' said Harris.

'Most extraordinary thing!' said George.

'So mysterious!' said Harris.

Then George saw the butter stuck on Harris's back.

'Here it is!' he exclaimed.

'Where?' asked Harris, turning around.

'Don't move,' said George, going after him.

And they got it off and put it in the teapot.

My dog Montmorency, of course, was in it the whole time. Montmorency's goal in life is to get in the way and be shouted at. If he

is somewhere he is not wanted, and if he can bother people and make them mad, then he feels **satisfied**. To get somebody to trip and fall over him and swear at him is his highest aim.

He came and sat down on things just when they were needed. Whenever George or Harris reached out their hand to pick something up, he thought they wanted to touch his cold, wet nose. He put his leg into the jam, he **pretended** that the lemons were rats and killed three of them.

The packing finally finished at 12.50. We were all ready for bed.

‘What time do you want me to wake you up?’ asked George.

‘Seven,’ said Harris.

‘No—six,’ I said. ‘I want to write some letters before we leave.’

Harris and I had a little argument over it.

‘Wake us at 6.30, George,’ we said at last.

George didn’t reply, and we found that he had been sleeping for some time.

\* \* \*

It was Mrs. Poppers that woke me up the next morning.

‘Do you know that it’s nearly nine o’clock, sir?’ she asked.

‘Nine o’what?’ I cried.

‘Nine o’clock,’ she replied through the keyhole.

I woke Harris.

‘I thought you wanted to get up at six,’ he said.

‘So did I,’ I answered. ‘Why didn’t you wake me?’

‘How could I wake you when you didn’t wake me?’ he replied. ‘Now we won’t get on the water until twelve.’

We argued in this way for the next few minutes, when we were interrupted by a snore by George. The man who had said he would wake us was lying on his back, with his mouth wide open.

Harris and I ran to him and threw the covers off and shouted in his ear. He woke up.

‘What’s the matter?’ he asked.

‘Get up, you fathead!’ yelled Harris. ‘It’s quarter to ten.’

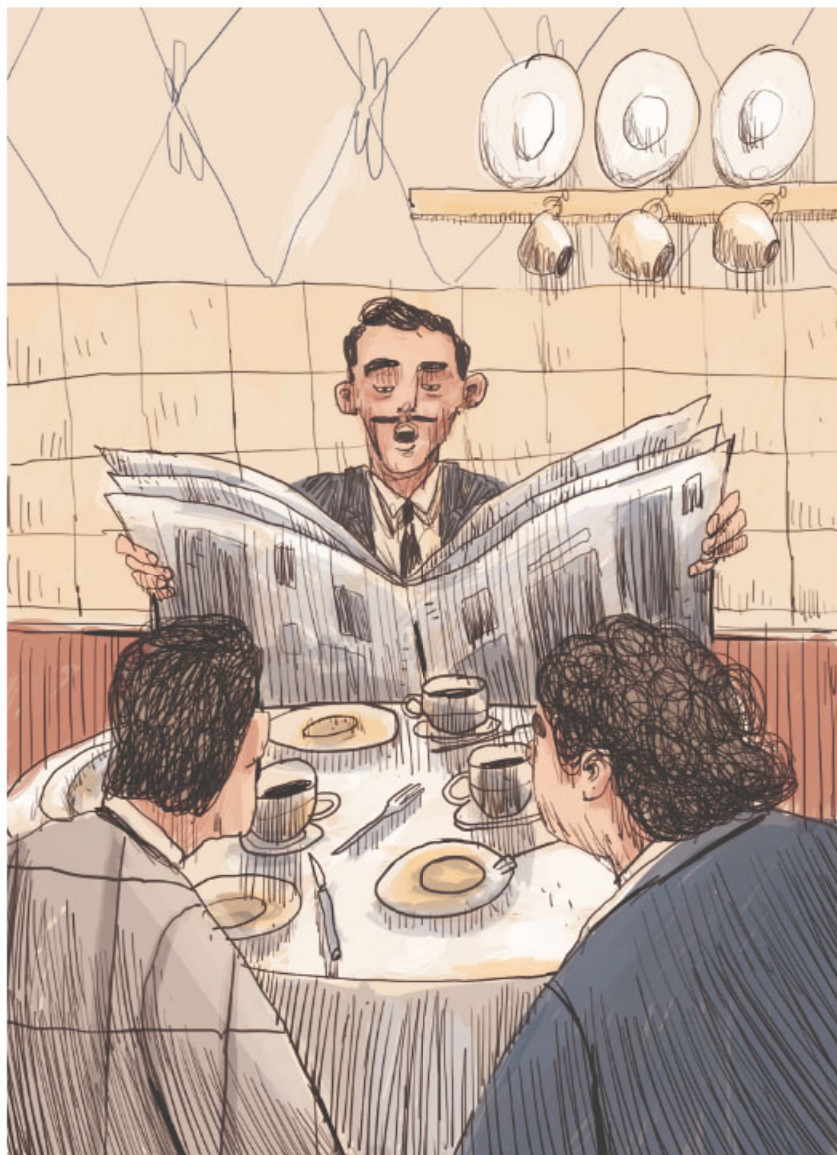
Half an hour later we had finished dressing. We remembered we had packed the toothbrushes and the brush and comb in the bag, so we had to go downstairs and take them out. Finally, we were ready.

We went downstairs to have breakfast. George got hold of the newspaper and read us the boating accidents and the weather forecast. There was going to be ‘rain, cold, wet to fine weather,’ and ‘occasional local thunderstorms, east wind.’

Of all the silly, irritating stupidity that we suffer from, I think the weather forecast is the most annoying one. It tells you exactly what happened yesterday or the day before, and the opposite of what is going to happen today.

\* \* \*

I remember one holiday that was completely ruined by the weather report of the local newspaper. ‘Heavy showers, with thunderstorms,’ it said on Monday, so we gave up our picnic and stayed indoors all day, waiting for the rain. We watched people passing in coaches happily as the sun shone, and not one cloud could be seen.



*George got hold of the newspaper and read us the boating accidents and the weather forecast.*

‘Ah!’ we said, as we stood looking at them through the windows. ‘They’re going to come home soaking wet.’

We lit the fire and got our books. By twelve o’clock the sun was pouring into the room, and it became so hot that we asked ourselves when the heavy showers and thunderstorms were going to begin.

‘Ah! They’ll come in the afternoon,’ we said to each other. ‘Those people will get so wet.’

And late in the afternoon with still no sign of rain, we told ourselves that the rain would come down all at once. Those people would get caught on their way back home. But not a drop fell that day.

The next morning, we read that it was going to be a ‘warm, fine day, with much heat.’ And we dressed in light clothes and went out. Half an hour later, it started to rain hard, and a bitterly cold wind came, and they continued all day. We all came back home with colds and rheumatisms.

So, that’s why I never trust the weather forecast.

\* \* \*

It was a very bright and sunny morning when George read us about ‘rain, cold, thunderstorms,’ so we did not take it very seriously. Seeing that he could not make us unhappy, he went to work.

Harris and I finished eating and carried our luggage to the door and waited for the cab.

There seemed a lot of luggage when we put it all together. A big bag, a small handbag, some rugs, four raincoats, a few umbrellas, a melon in a bag, some grapes in another bag, and a frying pan.



It did look a lot, and we started to feel a little **ashamed** of it. No cab came by, but the boys in the street got interested.

Biggs's boy came first. (Biggs is our greengrocer, and he employs the most badly-behaved boys in his shop.) Biggs's boy came walking, and he looked like he was in great hurry. Then he saw Harris and me, and Montmorency, and the things. He stopped and stared at us. Shortly afterwards, the grocer's boy passed.

'Hey, number 42's moving,' said Biggs's boy.

The grocer's boy came and stood next to Biggs's boy. Then the boy from the boot-shop stopped and joined them.

'They are not going to starve, are they?' said the boy from the boot-shop.

'You would take a thing or two with you,' said the grocer's boy, 'if you wanted to cross the Atlantic in a small boat.'

By this time, a small crowd had gathered, and people were asking each other what the matter was. Some said it was a wedding and Harris was the bridegroom. The others said it was a funeral.

At last, an empty cab turned up. Packing ourselves and our belongings into it, we drove away, as the crowd cheered after us.

We got to Waterloo Station at eleven and asked where the eleven-five train started from. Of course, nobody knew; nobody at Waterloo Station ever knows where a train is. The porter who took our things thought it would go from platform number two, while another porter said he had heard that it would go from number one. The station master, on the other hand, said it was number three.

We went upstairs and asked the traffic controller, who told us that someone had just told him the train would go from number four. We went to platform four, but the authorities said our train wasn't leaving from there.

After asking five more people and going from platform to platform with all of our luggage, we finally got on the train and went to Kingston.

Our boat was waiting for us at Kingston just below the bridge. We got on the boat and put our luggage. Harris, Montmorency and I took the boat out onto the water, which was going to be our home for the next two weeks.



## ACTIVITIES

**A. Word Search: Find the 7 key words from the chapter. The definitions are given below.**

O	E	P	D	N	I	M	E	R	E
Q	S	Z	R	V	O	X	P	T	B
S	I	L	O	E	P	Z	A	C	S
J	N	R	U	E	T	T	D	F	U
S	G	I	C	X	I	E	X	U	F
W	O	T	F	R	M	Y	N	D	F
K	C	C	R	Q	P	R	P	D	E
O	E	I	Y	L	Y	T	Y	D	R
H	R	X	H	A	Z	X	B	N	C
A	T	T	E	M	P	T	T	D	S

- (v) make an effort, try
- (v) think something will happen; wait for it to happen
- (v) annoy or anger
- (v) behave as if something is true when it is not
- (v) know, remember, notice
- (v) cause to remember
- (v) be in pain

**B. True or False?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The doctor believed J. was seriously ill.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. George spoke like a doctor because he used to study medicine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Harris was realistic, while George and J. were romantic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Uncle Podger was able to put up the picture frame in a very short time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Harris and J. trusted George when he said it was easy to wash clothes in the river.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. After a bad experience with paraffin oil, the three friends decided never to take it in a boat.

**C. Write the synonyms of the words in bold in the blanks.**

1. When J. read about the illnesses, he **understood** that he had them all.  
\_\_\_\_\_d
2. The three friends decided to take a trip to a **faraway** place for a rest.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. J. **said no** to Harris's idea of a sea voyage. \_\_\_\_\_ed
4. George suggested taking a boat up the river because the **continuous** change of scenery would be good for them. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Uncle Podger would **speak unhappily** about the family not being helpful when he was trying to put up a picture frame. \_\_\_\_\_
6. When J. said he would do the packing, his real **goal** was to give orders to Harris and George. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Harris and J. were somewhat **embarrassed** of the size of their luggage as they waited for a cab. \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Who said this?**

1. 'I don't understand why some people bring a professional to do an easy job like this.' \_\_\_\_\_
2. 'Well, if it's going to make you eat more than you usually do, then I'm against you going swimming.' \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
3. 'Do you know that it's nearly nine o'clock, sir?' \_\_\_\_\_
4. 'How could I wake you when you didn't wake me?' \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Discuss the following questions.**

1. Why did J. think his toothbrush makes his life a misery?
2. According to J., what was Montmorency's main purpose in life?
3. Did J. believe in weather forecasts? Why/Why not?
4. What do you think about the three men? Who do you like/dislike so far? Explain.

## GLOSSARY

### Chapter 1

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**aggressive** (adj) behaving in an angry and violent way towards another person

**ashamed** (adj) feeling bad because others know that you have done something wrong or embarrassing

**attempt** (v) to try to do something, especially something difficult

attempt (n)

**combine** (v) to join or come together to form a single thing or group

**complain** (v) to say that something is wrong or unsatisfactory

complaint (n)

**constant** (adj) happening all the time, repeatedly; continuous

**damp** (adj) slightly wet, often in an unpleasant way

**desperately** (adv) in a way that shows you have little hope and are ready to try anything to change a situation

desperate (adj)

**examine** (v) to look at somebody or something closely, to see if there is anything wrong or to find the cause of a problem

**expect** (v) to think or believe something will happen or someone will arrive

**intention** (n) something that you want and plan to do

intend (v)

**irritate** (v) to make someone angry or annoyed

**misery** (n) great unhappiness

miserable (adj)

**pretend** (v) to behave as if something is true when you know that it is not, especially to make other people believe something that is not true

**object** (v) to say that you disagree with or oppose something

objection (n)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jerome K. Jerome (1859-1927) was an English novelist and playwright. Jerome had a difficult childhood as his parents were falling into financial ruin and it left its mark on him. He left school at the age of 14 and worked as a railway clerk. He had a number of other occupations including journalism, acting, and school teaching, and a number of disappointments with the rejections of many short stories and satires he wrote. His first book, *On the Stage—and Off*, was published in 1885, but it was with the publication of his next book, *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow* (1886) that he achieved success.

Despite his difficult circumstances, he kept his humour and wrote the half-factual, half-fictional tale of a riverboat trip up the Thames, *Three Men in a Boat*, (1889). The story was inspired by his honeymoon and based on himself and two real-life friends, George Wingrave and Carl Hentschel. *Three Men in a Boat* was an instant success. He earned a reputation as a humourist and he was encouraged to devote his full efforts to writing. From 1892 to 1897 he was a coeditor of *The Idler*, a monthly magazine that he had helped found.

Jerome's many other works include *Three Men on the Bummel* (1900) and *Paul Kelter* (1902), an autobiographical novel. He also wrote a number of plays. A book of Jerome's memoirs, *My Life and Times*, was published in 1926.

### Sources

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