

Unit 22

St. JOHN GREEN ERVINE

Progress

A Play in One Act

By the end of the unit, the students will be able to:

- read a text to
 - make connections between characters, events, motives and causes of conflicts in texts across cultures.
 - distinguish between flexible and inflexible characters.
 - describe how a character changes over the course of story.
 - express justification for change in character.
- recognize genres of literature e.g. fiction, nonfiction, poetry, legend, one act play, etc.
- analyze the conflict in a story or literary selection.
- explore options to resolve the conflict.
- propose another resolution.
- identify and describe the function of set design, dialogue, soliloquies, and asides in one act plays.
- analyze story/ one act play elements: characters, events, setting, plot, theme, tone, point of view.
- identify the speaker or narrator in a selection.
- recognize the author's purpose and point of view and their effects on the texts.
- identify universal themes present in literature across all cultures.
- use summary skills to extract salient points and develop a mind map to summarize a text.
- recognize and use varying intonation patterns as aids in spoken and written discourse to show attitude.
- use active voice and passive voice appropriately in speech and writing according to required communicative functions.
- use various reference sources to refine vocabulary for interpersonal academic workplace situation including figurative, idiomatic and technical vocabulary.

PROGRESS

A Play in One Act

CHARACTERS

PROFESSOR HENRY CORRIE, D.Sc.

MRS. MELDON (his sister)

Hannah (a servant)

SCENE

The scene of the play is laid in the study room of Professor Henry Corrie in a remote village in the North of England on a spring day in the year 1919. The room is tidy enough, with the tidiness of a house dominated by a bachelor who is dominated by his work rather than by domestic comfort; and on the large table near the centre of the room there is a litter of scientific apparatus employed by Professor Corrie in the experiment in which he is now engaged. On the walls of the room are a number of diagrams, showing sections of very large bombs. There is a model of a big bomb on a stand underneath one of these diagrams. There are sectional diagrams of aeroplanes and airships to be seen, also fairly large models of aeroplanes and airships. -

Professor Henry Corrie, aged between fifty and sixty, is sitting at the centre table watching a chemical process in a large retort. He has cold, humourless eyes, and his mouth, if it were not concealed by a thickish beard, would be seen to have cruel lines about it. He does not, however, impress the casual visitor as a cruel man-indeed, he seems to be a harmless, kindly, inconsequent person; completely absorbed, of course, in his work. It is when he is angry that something of his cruelty is observable-- he is inclined to utter wolfish snarls if he is thwarted or hindered in any way. But the most certain sign of his fundamentally cruel character is his scientific work. Nothing is of greater importance to him than that. A human being is of less consequence to him than the success of even a minor experiment. He regards the retort very closely, muttering to himself as he does so. Sometimes his mutterings are of satisfaction, sometimes of anxiety, once of rage that turns again to satisfaction. A knock is heard on his study door, but he does not hear it. It is repeated. He leans forward to glance more closely at the retort, and then, with a shout of pleasure, rises up and contemplates it. The knock is heard for the third time.

CORRIE: (bending over the retort and ending the experiment).

Ah, at last, at last ! By Heaven. I've done it at last. (A very loud knock on the door. He turns round in a puzzled fashion). Eh? Oh, oh!

Teacher's Guideline:

Explain to the students different genre of literature e.g. fiction, non-fiction, legend, once act plays, etc.

Come in Come in (The door opens, and an elderly servant enters).

SERVANT. Mrs. Meldon . . .

CORRIE. Yes, yes, Hannah, what is it?

HANNAH. Mrs. Meldon wants to know whether you'll come downstairs to tea or have it up here?

CORRIE. Has she got back?

HANNAH. Yes, sir. She expected you to meet her at the station, sir. She waited a long time in the cold then got Marshall to drive her up.

CORRIE. I meant to go, but I was busy, and then forgot. But she's quite capable of coming home by herself.

HANNAH. Yes, sir. Will you come downstairs to tea sir, or have it up here!

CORRIE. The drawing room's so cold! ... Tell Mrs. Meldon I'll have it up here. I've news for her. Tell her I've good news for her. My experiment is ended, and it's a success.

HANNAH. Is it, sir?

CORRIE. Yes but it's no use telling you about it. You wouldn't understand.

HANNAH. No, sir,

CORRIE. But I'm a proud man, Hannah. Perhaps you'll understand that. Go and tell Mrs. Meldon,

HANNAH. Yes, sir.

CORRIE. Don't forget to tell her that my experiment is a success. Or no you'd better not tell her, I'll do that myself. You're sure to make a mess of it. She'll be as pleased as I am.

HANNAH. She's not very happy today, sir.

CORRIE. Not happy! Why? I'm happy, aren't I?

HANNAH Well, you see, sir, it's three years ago today since her son was killed in the War....

CORRIE (almost forgetting his grievance). Oh, yes! I'd forgotten that! Of course, one cannot keep on thinking about these things.

HANNAH. She does, sir.

CORRIE. I'm sorry. I didn't meet her at the station. But I had to attend to my experiment, Hannah. I wish she wouldn't dwell on Eddie's death. It's not right for the living to think so much of the dead. She's woman, of

course, and a mother — a bereaved mother. We must make allowances, Hannah. That's all. Now if we tell her about my successful experiment, how would that do?

HANNAH. (dubiously). I don't suppose it would make her feel any worse than she is now, sir.

CORRIE. Well, tell her to come up here and have her tea with me. See? And I'll tell her about my experiment.

HANNAH. Very good, sir. (She turns to go)

CORRIE. Oh! . . . and Hannah, tell her I'm very sorry. I couldn't meet her at the station. That'll break the ice a bit. Then when she realises how important my work is, and how much depends on it, she'll be all right.

HANNAH. Very good, sir. (She goes towards the door. Then she stops, and turns towards him). She really isn't happy, sir. Her nerves aren't at all right. You see, she can't forget. sir!

(But the Professor is back at his table, intently regarding his experiment, and, except for a grunt, he does not reply. Hannah goes out. The Professor makes some calculations on paper, and then sits back in his chair regarding them with delight. His manifestations of joy are interrupted by the entrance of his sister, Mrs. Meldon, aged about forty three. She is dressed in black, partly because she is a widow, but chiefly because of her son's death. She is a sensitive-looking woman, now plainly suffering deeply from her memories, but her nervous sensibilities give her a strength on occasions which is hardly credible. She is not a fretful, complaining woman who behaves as if she were the only person in the world who . . . had suffered a bereavement, and when, in the course of the play, she speaks of her loss she does so with grave and beautiful dignity).

MRS. MELDON. HENRY!

CORRIE. Eh! (Turning). Oh, my dear Charlotte, I'm sorry I did not meet you at the station! . . .

MRS. MELDON. (Seating herself by the fire). It doesn't matter, Henry. Only I thought you were coming — you said you would — and I waited a long time in the cold! . . .

CORRIE. Yes, I'm sorry about that, but you see, I was busy Charlotte,

I've succeeded at last. I've got just exactly what I wanted Charlotte. Absolutely the thing. This will bring fame and fortune to me. I shall be rich now, but more than that, I shall be famous. My name will live for ever. When I saw how well the experiment going. I said to myself, "Charlotte won't really expect me to meet her just when everything's going so right, after all, she's grown up woman and she knows the way home as well as I do"! So I didn't go. I stayed here and did my work. I know you'd understand. And it's a success. Charlotte, the greatest and most wonderful success I've ever had.

MRS. MELDON. Oh, yes.

CORRIE. (dashed) Well, you don't seem very excited about it. MRS. MELDON. Of course, I'm glad it's a success, Henry, whatever it is, but, you see, you've never told me anything about it.

CORRIE. No, that's true. I've always believed in keeping secrets to myself. Tell no one anything until you are obliged to, that's my principle. No one knows that I have been working at this thing-except myself. The secret of successful invention, Charlotte, is reticence! But now, I can tell you what it is. The component parts are still my secret and will remain such until I can get a binding offer from some Government! . . .

MRS. MELDON. MELDON, Government? Is it a Government matter?

CORRIE. I should think it is. I shall offer it first to the British Government, of course, but if they won't pay my price, I'll offer it to somebody else. Too many inventors have been let down by the British Government, Charlotte. But they will not let me down. No, I can take care of myself. But then, when they hear what my invention is, they'll jump at it.

MRS. MELDON. Will they?

CORRIE. Of course, they will, though you're quite justified in feeling skeptical about them. It was very hard to get them to use tanks in the war very hard. Those cavalry generals had to be forced to use them. They ought to be horse-knackers instead of soldiers. And tin hats, too! Look, what a time it was before that damned War Office could be persuaded to use 'em! . . . But I'm sorry, Charlotte. I ought not to be talking about the War to you — especially to-day.

MRS. MELDON. I don't mind, Henry. And after all, the War Office isn't the War! CORRIE. No, that's true.

MRS. MELDON. What is your invention, Henry?

CORRIE. Ah, Charlotte! There's something interesting to talk about.

(Hannah enters with a tea-tray).

HANNAH. Here's the tea, sir.

CORRIE. Damn! Oh, all right. Put it down there. (Hannah arranges the tea-tray in front of Mrs. Meldon. The Professor, meantime, is back at his table and his retort and his formulae. Now and again he exclaims to himself).

MRS. MELDON. Has everything been all right, Hannah?

HANNAH... Yes, ma'am. Gage, the gardener, brought up the wreath you ordered for the War Memorial, ma'am. I've got it in the kitchen now. Shall I fetch it for you?

(And then Hannah, having finished with the teatable, goes out).

MRS. MELDON. Come and have your tea. Henry!

CORRIE. All right!

(But he does not stir).

MRS. MELDON. Come along, Henry!

CORRIE. Eh? Oh, all right! In a minute!

MRS. MELDON. Your tea will get cold if you don't come now!

CORRIE. (getting up and coming to the tea-table). Oh, 'how women do fuss! Your sex is most extraordinary, Charlotte. Always willing to break off things for other things. No application. No concentration. No capacity for complete, impersonal devotion. That's why no women have ever been great artists or scientists. Because they will not forsake everything and follow — well whatever it is they ought to be following!

(Hannah returns, carrying a bunch of flowers to which a label is attached),

HANNAH. Here it is, ma'am.

CORRIE. What is that?

MRS. MELDON. (taking the flowers from Hannah). I ordered it from Gage to put on the War Memorial. It's for Eddie!...

CORRIE. Oh, yes, yes!

MRS. MELDON. I shall take it down there after tea. Will you come with me?

CORRIE. I'd like to, of course, but I really must finish up these things.

MRS. MELDON. Very well, Henry. (to Hannah). Thank you Hannah. I'll keep the flowers here.

(Exit Hannah).

MRS. MELDON. (to her brother). They are very beautiful, aren't they, Henry?

CORRIE. Oh, Yes! Quite nice! You know, Charlotte, this invention of mine . . .

MELDON. Will you have some more tea, Henry?

CORRIE. (vaguely). Oh-h-h! (Then definitely). Yes, Half a cup.

(He hands the cup to her, and she fills it and returns to him while the following speeches are uttered).

CORRIE. I was saying this invention of mine will revolutionise warfare.

MRS. MELDON. Will it abolish warfare?

CORRIE. Abolish war! . . . My dear Charlotte, don't be childish!

MRS. MELDON. I'm very interested in that subject. It seems to me more important than anything else in the world, Henry. You don't realise how deeply women like me feel about this . . . this organised butchery of boys. Look at me! I had a husband and a son when the War began. I had neither when it was over. I am most lonely woman . . . cruelly alone! . . .

CORRIE. (a little annoyed by what seems to him sentimental harping on one string). I know, of course, that the War hit you very badly, Charlotte what with Eddie being killed and Tom taking his death so badly!

MRS. MELDON. Tom died of a broken heart, Henry. That may sound sentimental and unscientific to you, but it's true. I sometimes wonder why I was not granted the mercy of death why I should be compelled to live on alone! . . .

CORRIE. Oh, come, come. Charlotte! No, no, not alone! You're happy enough with me, aren't you? Your only brother! . . .

MRS. MELDON. You're not a very good substitute for a son, Henry!

CORRIE. Well no, I suppose not but still there's no need for despair. Let me tell you about my invention.

(He puts his cup down and prepares to explain).

MRS. MELDON. Will you have some more tea?

CORRIE. No, thanks ! Now, Charlotte, when I say that war ought to be revolutionised, I mean that it ought to be made more expeditious. The War we've just had lasted for a ridiculous period. Five years — or nearly five years. Perfectly preposterous. It ought not to have lasted more than five weeks.

MRS. MELDON. Have you invented a means of restricting the duration of wars?

CORRIE. Well — yes, I think you might put it like that. What the combatants ought to aim at, in war, is to get the first blow in so hard that the other side immediately succumbs to it.

MRS. MELDON. I see.

CORRIE. That means that the weapons of war must be made immeasurably more horrible and devastating than they now are.

MRS. MELDON. More horrible! Is that possible?

CORRIE. Yes. Oh, yes! We haven't yet reached the limits of horror in war. Oh, dear me, no!

MRS. MELDON. My son was nineteen, Henry, and he was killed in a fight of which he knew very little. That seems to me a horrible thing!

CORRIE. Oh, a mother's feelings, of course, but look at the matter from a broad point of view. Put your own feelings aside . . . ?

MRS. MELDON. I can't do that, Henry. The whole War for me comes down to this one thing, that my son, a boy new from school, was taken away from me, just when his life was beginning to open out, and killed. I'm not a clever woman, Henry. I can only feel things as they touch me and mine. Eddie was my only son, my darling, my heart's joy! I expected so much from him and he's gone, and there's nothing . . . nothing . . . nothing!

CORRIE. (Being very gentle with her). Yes, I know, Charlotte, but you really ought not to dwell too much on your sorrow. It isn't good for you. You ought to take broad point of view. Imagine yourself a statesman!

MRS. MELDON. If Eddie had been a statesman, he would not have gone to the War. He would have compelled some other person to go.

CORRIE. Oh, now, don't be bitter. Charlotte; don't be bitter!

MRS. MELDON. My dear Henry, I'm beyond being bitter. Do you

know what I discovered today?

CORRIE. No.

MRS. MELDON. You know I've never really known how Eddie died. I found out today.

CORRIE. I wish you wouldn't think so much about it,

MRS. MELDON. (With sudden passion). I must think about it. I can't help thinking about it! . . . I met a young man in town today who had been in the same battalion as Eddie, and he told me about it. Poor lad, it slipped out before he realised that I hadn't known before! . . .

CORRIE. People oughtn't to talk so much about the War. Much better forget about it.

MRS. MELDON. (Recovering herself). You remember the C.O. of the battalion wrote to me and said that Eddie had been killed by a piece of shell and that he had been buried behind the line somewhere?

CORRIE. Yes, I remember.

MRS. MELDON. That comforted me very much. It made things easier to think that he wasn't... mutilated... that even when he was killed he was still my dear and beautiful boy . . . a soldier, buried by soldiers in a soldier's grave! . . . But he wasn't buried, Henry!

CORRIE. Wasn't buried?

MRS. MELDON. No! There was nothing to bury. The shell came and... and... there was nothing. (They are silent for a moment or two). Don't you think that is horrible, Henry? There was no decency in his death! . . . Oh, my God! My God! You tell me to take a broad point of view about that! My son! They'd been in a little, shallow trench, Eddie and his men, sitting there for eight days and nights, waiting and waiting and waiting, and then a shell came right into the middle of a group of them and destroyed them... utterly destroyed them. Five of them... nothing left . . . nothing left!

(She sits back in her chair and both of them are silent. Then the professor goes to his table and sits down before his papers and retorts).

MRS. MELDON. What is your invention, Henry?

CORRIE. Oh, I think we'd better not talk about it! You're upset! That chap ought not to have told you about Eddie.

MRS. MELDON. He thought I knew. What is your invention?

CORRIE. I'll tell another time.

MRS. MELDON. I'd like to know now. Something to make war more expeditious! To end it quickly!

CORRIE. (Swinging round to her). Really, Charlotte, this is the most humanitarian invention. I don't believe, mind you, that wars will ever end. No. We're altogether too pugnacious, we human beings. So the only thing to do, then, is to make war so horrible that no nation will engage in one unless absolutely driven to it. That's where I come in. I'm going to make war horrible, really horrible!

MRS. MELDON. Yes.

CORRIE. I've got something here, Charlotte... the formula for a bomb that will make war not only stupendously horrible, but will end it almost as quickly as it began.

MRS. MELDON. On that table?

(She rises and goes to him).

CORRIE. Yes, I've made tests and I've worked out the formula with mathematical precision, and I've discovered a combination of gases and explosives that will obliterate thousands at once. Thousands!

MRS. MELDON. Thousands?

CORRIE. Yes.

MRS. MELDON. Obliterate them . . . just like Eddie.

CORRIE. Oh, my dear Charlotte, you really must not be so morbid. We've got to deal with the world of fact, and if this country is going to maintain her position in world, she will have to use every device she can employ to keep her there. I consider that I'm performing highly patriotic act in offering this discovery to my country. Now, listen! By means of my formula, we can make a bomb, a big bomb, not one of those little footling wings the Germans used to drop on London, but an enormous bomb, full of corrosive gas, which will be dropped from a powerful aeroplane or airship — that has not been settled yet — but it's not really my job. Now, then the next war breaks out! . . .

MRS. MELDON. The next war?

CORRIE. Yes. I should say we'd have another in twenty or thirty years, wouldn't you? Not more than fifty, anyhow. Well, when it comes, our ultimatum will consist of a number of airships or aeroplanes dropping these big bombs on the country with which we're at war — just the way the Japanese declared war on the Russians by blowing their ships to pieces. Only ours will be much more effective than that. The Japs only sank a few ships. We'll utterly obliterate whole cities, perhaps a whole nation.

MRS. MELDON. Yes.

CORRIE. When this bomb falls, the explosion will devastate a wide tract of the district in which it falls, and at the same time will release a powerful spreading gas, without colour or smell, which will spread over a wide area and poison every person who inhales it. They won't know that they've inhaled it until they see their bodies rotting. And nothing will save them then! With a single bomb we could wipe out the population of a city as big as Manchester. Single bomb, Charlotte!

MRS. MELDON. But that would mean everybody—men and women and children.

CORRIE. Oh, yes. After all, now-a-days, there is no logical distinction between a civilian and a soldier. What's the difference between the girl who makes munitions and the man who uses them in the trenches? You know, Charlotte, it's a terrific thought, to think, that I can sit here at this table, with a formula written out on those sheets of paper which will enable a few men to go up into the air and wipe out a whole city. And I'm the only man in the world who knows how to do it.

MRS. MELDON. Aren't there men like you in other countries using their brains for the same purpose?

CORRIE. Yes, but I don't imagine anyone will discover so powerful a weapon as this. If I had made this discovery in 1914, the War would have been over before the end of that year, and there probably wouldn't be any Germans left now. They'd be an extinct race.

MRS. MELDON. Perhaps an enemy of this country might make a similar discovery, Henry, and use it on us.

CORRIE. We'll have to take the risk of that. Anyhow, my discovery will be available to our people and if a war does come a long, we've only got to

get our bomb dropped on them before they get theirs dropped on us and the trick's done.

MRS. MELDON. I suppose it was someone like you who invented the kind of shell that destroyed Eddie... that obliterated him!

CORRIE. (Rising and patting her on the shoulder). Now, now, don't go back to that subject, Charlotte. Come over here by the fire, and try to take a more cheerful view of life.

MRS. MELDON. Cheerful view! My dear Henry, I sometimes wonder whether, in spite of your cleverness, you aren't really the stupidest man on earth.

CORRIE. Oh, come!

MRS. MELDON. I'm not clever. It seems odd that I should be your sister, a quite ordinary, commonplace woman, with nothing in my life but my love for my husband and my son. But when I hear you telling me to take a broad statesman-like view of my son being blown to pieces, I begin to think that you're a fool. Henry just a dull, unimaginative, bloodless fool. And when you ask me to rejoice because you've invented a bomb that will destroy a whole city in a few minutes, I think you're... you're mad-wickedly, horribly mad.

CORRIE. My dear Charlotte!

MRS. MELDON. One moment. Henry, I want you to try and realise my point of view, the point of view of an ordinary woman without any pretensions. Think of Eddie as I think of him!...

CORRIE. This isn't good for you.

MRS. MELDON. Oh yes, it is. I go back now to the very beginning, and I think of Tom and me, very young and foolish, I suppose, but very happy, too, Henry; and our queer pleasure and fright when we knew that Eddie was coming. And I think, too, of myself, sometimes at night, awake, with Tom lying asleep beside me. And how I thought about the little child I was going to bear him, and how I loved it and loved him for being its father, and how sure I was that it would be a boy! I was frightened, too, sometimes, because I thought I might die and never know my son, who would grow up and have no knowledge of me. And then he was born, such a dear little, clutching child, so terribly dependent on me. Tom was very pleased and proud, but never so pleased and proud as I was. We both

watched him grow — you know how handsome he was!

CORRIE. Yes, he was a good-looking lad.

MRS. MELDON. And we made plans for him. He was to be great and liked people did like him; even you liked him, Henry, didn't you?

CORRIE. Yes, I . . . I liked him. He was an attractive boy. But don't you think.

MRS. MELDON. And then he was ill. You remember how we all thought that he would die, and Tom, poor Tom, who never could express himself very aptly, went about as if he were stunned. I can't tell you what I thought then, Henry, I just can't tell you, but oh! I prayed for him, Henry — prayed for him so that my whole mind was a prayer. Well, he got better, and seemed to grow stronger, and at school he did very well. I can see now, the first time he played in a cricket match, very pleased with his blazer, and how excited he was when he came to tell me that he had made ten runs. Ten runs he made, my little son, in his first cricket match. All the other boys of his age were very respectful to him, and I was so glad when he let me walk about with him, just as if he hadn't had a triumph. And Tom was frightfully pleased too, and gave him a sovereign! . . . (Her tears overcome her and she raises her hands to her lips in a gesture of grief).
My little boy! . . .

CORRIE. This is distressing you, my dear. Don't talk about it anymore.

MRS. MELDON. (Recovering herself). He hadn't been at Oxford long when the War began, and then he went off and enlisted. We didn't know whether to be proud of him or to be angry with him, but chiefly we were proud I loved him in his clumsy uniform and his great rough boots, just as much as I loved him later on officer's uniform. And when he went off to France tried to be worthy of my son and not to cry. It frightfully hard to smile, Henry, but I did smile. I felt that was what Eddie would wish me to do, not to shame him before the other people, and so I smiled and made a little silly joke about the fear of the Germans when they heard of his arrival. But I was in terror, Henry, and all the time that he was away I was in terror. The sight of a telegraph messenger made my heart sink! . . . And then he came home on his first leave, and my little son wasn't my little son any more, but a strangely grown man, young to look at, but full of

extraordinary knowledge. I felt shy with him. He'd seen so much and knew so much. And then I think I felt prouder of him than ever before, because he was a man and I could depend upon him. We were very happy during that leave, Henry, so happy that I hardly had time to be miserable because it would so soon be over, and when he went back, although I cried a little when he wasn't looking, I didn't mind so much as I thought I should, because I persuaded myself to believe that he wouldn't be killed. When he had his second leave and was a captain, I was sure that he would come home to me, quite safe. Even Tom, who had always felt we should lose him, began to believe that he'd come home again. But he didn't. Immediately when he got back to France, he had to go into the line, and eight days later, he was killed just obliterated, as you say, by men who had never seen him, who didn't even know that they'd killed him. And all my years of love and hope and desire and pain — gone! I'd nursed him and cared for him and taught him little lessons and been proud of him — and then in a moment my beautiful son was . . . obliterated. Henry! (There is a slight pause while she recovers herself). You see, don't you, Henry, that I can't take a broad view of that. I can only see my son's body mutilated and destroyed. That's all.

CORRIE. Well, of course, I quite see your point of view, Charlotte. It is hard, I admit that. But we have to keep our feelings under control. And after all, there's the consolation that Eddie did his duty to his country. I dare say he accounted for a good many Germans!

MRS. MELDON. That doesn't comfort me, Henry. I can't get any pleasure out of the thought that some poor German woman is suffering just as I'm suffering. No, Henry, I feel that I would want to take sides with her against men like you! CORRIE. Men like me!

MRS. MELDON. Yes. People with broad views. Because you're such fools. Someone like me, not clever, creates a beautiful thing like my son, and you, with all your cleverness can only destroy it. That's why I think your cleverness can only destroy if you're a fool, Henry.

CORRIE (*nettled*). Well, of course, Charlotte, with your views. I can hardly expect you to appreciate my work but I fancy that my countrymen, if they

have any sense. Will know how to value me. Will make my name known to the most ignorant man in the country. People will talk about the Corrie bomb. Just as they used to talk about the Mills bomb during the War. I shall have to ask for a large lump sum in payment of the invention, because a royalty wouldn't pay me at all. Mills got a royalty on each of his bombs, but then they were small and hundreds of thousands of them were used. My bombs will be big, and one of them will suffice for a city. Yes, I shall have to ask for a large lump sum. Now that they're spending several million pounds on a battleship that is generally believed to be useless, I'm entitled to ask for a very large sum for my bomb which will certainly decide the war. I wonder how much I ought to ask for? Charlotte, how much ought I to ask for? They won't give me what it's worth; that's absolutely certain. They might pay a quarter of a million. Charlotte, what would you ask for if you were me?

MRS. MELDON. I should ask for my son.

CORRIE. Now, now, now, Charlotte, not again, please. Not again. We must think of the future, not of the past. I don't want to ask for too much, because I shan't get it, and I don't want to ask for too little, though I'll probably get that anyhow. What do you think Charlotte? Do you think it would be better to let them name a price.

MRS. MELDON. I don't know.

CORRIE. Well, you might take a little interest in the matter. It's very important to me. They ought really to give me a title too. Supposing I say a couple of hundred thousand pounds and peerage!

MRS. MELDON. Why not say thirty pieces of silver?

CORRIE. (Thoroughly angry). Really, Charlotte, you're insufferable! You're absolutely insufferable! I put up with a great deal from you because you're in distress, but there are limits to endurance, you know. You haven't congratulated me, even perfunctorily, and you've made yourself and me thoroughly miserable by this... this moaning over what can't be helped. You've even made Hannah miserable. My dear Charlotte, I'm talking to you now for your good. You really ought not to let your mind dwell on things in the way you do. It isn't good for you, and it's very unpleasant for me and for others who associate with you. Your boy was killed — so were other people's

boys—but we can't spend the rest of our lives in lamentation. I have my work to do!...

MRS. MELDON. Your bomb?

CORRIE. Yes.

MRS. MELDON. Which will make the bodies of men and women and little children rot if it does not blow them to pieces.

CORRIE. The fortune of war, my dear Charlotte. After all, what does it matter to a man whether he is blown to pieces by a bomb or stabbed to death by a bayonet? As a matter of fact, the bomb is the more merciful of the two. It isn't any use being sentimental about these things. The purpose of war is killing, and the side which kills the most people in the shortest time is going to win the wars of the future. My bomb will enable those who possess it to conduct a war in a rapid and efficient fashion. No reasonable person can deny that I have performed a service to my country in inventing this bomb for its use, and even you, if you were not distracted by what you heard this morning, and the fact that this is the anniversary of Eddie's death, would agree with them...

MRS. MELDON. No one but you knows the secret of your invention, Henry?

CORRIE. No not that I am aware of.

MRS. MELDON. If you were to destroy your invention, never reveal its secrets, thousands of boys like Eddie might live without fear of being destroyed?

CORRIE. Oh, I don't know. It's fantastic thought, that, but there's nothing in it. Other people will invent things even deadlier than my bomb.

MRS. MELDON. But, Henry, if you were to suppress your invention!

CORRIE. Suppress it!

MRS. MELDON. Yes, if you were to destroy your formula, and people were to know what you'd done, perhaps you'd do a great deal to change people's hearts! ...

CORRIE. My dear Charlotte, most sensible people would think I'd gone off my head. A few cranks and religious maniacs might praise me, but the average person would think I was a fool besides being damned unpatriotic.

MRS. MELDON. Henry, I beg you to destroy your invention.

CORRIE. You what?

MRS. MELDON. I beg you to destroy it. Let that be your memorial to Eddie!

CORRIE. My dear Charlotte. I begin to believe that grief has unhinged your mind. Destroy my invention!

MRS. MELDON. Your bomb will destroy life. Henry, I beg of you to destroy it! ...

CORRIE. Rubbish, woman, rubbish.

MRS. MELDON. Then I will destroy it for you ...

(She goes to the table where the retorts are, and turns the table over so that the retorts are smashed).

CORRIE. What the hell are you doing?

MRS. MELDON. I'm destroying your foul invention.

CORRIE. (laughing harshly). That won't destroy it.

I got it all in my head. All that you've done, Charlotte. is make a mess on my floor. Damned silly, I call it.

(He stoops down and begins to clear up the mess).

MRS. MELDON. (standing behind him). It's all in your head?

CORRIE. Of course it is. Anybody but a fool of a woman would have realised that. Making a confounded mess like this! ...

MRS. MELDON. It's all in your head?

CORRIE. Yes, yes. Don't keep on repeating yourself, but come and help to clear up this mess you've made.

MRS. MELDON. Henry, won't you do what I ask you?

CORRIE. Don't be a fool. (looking round). Give me that cloth over there so that I can mop up this stuff.

(He continues to collect the pieces of broken glass, etc. while she goes towards the table where the cloth is. When she reaches the table, she sees a long knife lying there, and half unconsciously, she picks it up and looks

CORRIE. (Impatiently). Hurry up. What on earth are you doing?

MRS. MELDON. I'm looking at something — this knife!

CORRIE. Well, you can look at it afterwards. Fetch the cloth now. Here's Eddie's wreath under the table. You've made a mess of it, too.

MRS. MELDON. Eddie's wreath.

(She comes towards him, the knife is in her hand).

CORRIE. Yes.

MRS. MELDON. If you were to give up your invention, Henry, I wouldn't mind about the wreath. Your offering would be better than mine.

CORRIE. Well, I shan't. Give up my invention for a lot of damned sentiment ? Not likely!

MRS. MELDON. It'll destroy life, Henry.

CORRIE. What's that got to do with it? Give me that cloth.

(He snaps it out of her hand, but does not see the knife in her other hand).

MRS. MELDON. You won't destroy it, Henry?

CORRIE. (almost in a snarl). No,

MRS. MELDON. (raising the knife above him). Then I ...

(With a queer moan of despair, she drives the knife into his back. He sways a moment, uttering a choking sound, and then, clutching at the air, he pitches forward on to his face. She stands above him, looking down on his body in a dazed way. She is crying hysterically and suddenly she stoops and picks the broken wreath she holds it to her breast, and stares distractedly in front of her).

MRS. MELDON. Eddie, dear, I had to, I had to, Eddie !

CURTAIN

About the author:

Saint John Greer Ervine, was born on Dec. 28, 1883, Belfast, Ireland and died on Jan. 24, 1971, London, England. He is a British playwright, novelist, and critic. Ervine's best-known plays are *Mixed Marriage* (1911), *Jane Clegg* (1913), and *John Ferguson* (1915). After World War I, Ervine settled in London and became a drama critic for *The Observer*. He wrote books on drama as *The Organized Theatre* (1924) and *The Theatre in My Time* (1933). His later plays comedies such as *The First Mrs. Fraser* (1928), a rousing London success; *Robert's Wife* (1937), and *Private Enterprise* (1947). Ervine also wrote biographies of William Booth, Oscar Wilde, and George Bernard Shaw. His novels include *Francis Place*, *The Tailor of Charing Cross* (1912) and *Alice and a Family* (1915).

Glossary and Notes

dominated by completely under the influence or control of
sections drawings which demonstrate the way pieces of machinery, etc., are made, by showing what they would look like if they were cut open along various lines.

airships lighter-than-air aircraft, supported in flight by a single gas-bag--or a series of gasbags arranged in a streamlined, fabric covered, rigid framework-containing a light gas, normally hydrogen or helium.

cruel lines about it The lines of a face are those noticeable folds in the skin which always develop as a person grows older. Quite often they are created by the person's usual expression which, of course, tends to reflect his usual feelings and, consequently, his character. 'Cruel lines in the face are lines which suggest cruelty of character. "about" is here used in the meaning of 'around'.

casual visitor visitor without any special interest in the people of the house
inconsequent not at all methodical in his thinking about ordinary day-to-day affairs.
snarls angry noises like those of a savage animal
retort vessel with a small outlet in which chemical, or combination of chemicals, may be heated.

a bereaved mother a mother who has lost through death, a child. (A person may be said to be 'bereaved' who has lost, through death, any near relative---such as a child, parent or partner in marriage).

make allowances to make allowances' is to remember that somebody whose behaviour annoys you has certain reasons for behaving in this way,

break the ice make her begin to feel more friendly.

manifestation of joy behaviour which shows great happiness,

dressed in black throughout Europe and America black clothes are worn to show that one is mourning a person's death.

nervous sensibilities deeply sensitive feelings. ("Nervous' often means timid or frightened but here it means sensitive or sharply aware).

credible believable.

fretful easily irritated and in the habit of complaining

binding offer offer of which the terms cannot be broken.

been let down been given promises which have later been broken.

jump at it accept the offer quickly and eagerly.

tanks heavily armoured fighting vehicles moving not on wheels but on two endless belts of steel and capable of crossing almost any type of ground. They were a British invention of the First World War and the British generals of that time have been widely criticised for not making a greater use of them.

horse-knackers slaughterers of old horses.

tin hats (slang) steel helmets to protect soldiers' heads in battle.

ma'am madam.

wreath large ring of flowers and/or leaves placed on a grave or monument as a mark of respect for the dead.

war memorial monument erected in memory of those who died in a war. Every town in Britain erected a war memorial after the First World War

oh, how women do fuss! an exclamation at the business of women at their readiness to get excited about unimportant things Note how 'No' is used to add a little more energy to the verb in an exclamation of this kind do is spoken with great emphasis

impersonal devotion giving one's thought and energy completely to a

single task without any allowance for one's personal feelings or the personal feelings of anybody else.

organised butchery planned and deliberate killing. 'Butchery' is a strong word, expressive of horror, because it normally refers to the slaughter of animals,

harping on one string constantly talking about the same subject (and being as boring as harp-player would be who played the same note all the time).

taking his death so badly being so greatly shocked and grieved by his death.

expeditious speedy.

recovering herself regaining control over her emotions

piece of shell fragment from an exploding artillery shell

the line the line of fortified and occupied positions facing the enemy.

swinging round to her turning swiftly round to face her.

humanitarian of such a nature as to relieve human suffering.

pugnacious disposed to fight.

formulae description of a combination of chemical elements,

stupendously horrible immensely and amazingly horrible.

with mathematical precision with the exactness of mathematical calculation.

obliterate destroy so completely that not a trace is left.

morbid unhealthy in thought and imagination.

footling absurdly ineffective.

corrosive gas gas which eats away substances through chemical action.

ultimatum final message that severe action will be on certain proposals are not accepted. (What Prof. Corrie is infact, saying is that their would be not ultimatum the aggression would take the enemy completely by surprise, the attack taking the place of the ultimatum that usually proceeds a declaration of war).

the Japanese... the Russians there was a war between Japan and Russia in 1904 and 1905 which began with a surprise attack by Japanese navy upon the Russian navy.

inhales it breathes it in.
distinction difference.
munition military weapons, ammunition, equipment and stores.
oh, come! exclamation showing disagreement.
pretension claims (to importance or to a particular skill or intelligence).
frightfully (colloquial) greatly.
sovereign gold coin, worth twenty shillings in circulation until the First World War.

clumsy awkward looking. (A thing is said to be clumsy when it is awkward in shape or weight, A person is said to be clumsy when he moves about or handles things in an awkward, unskillful way).

mutilated horribly damaged.

accounted for killed.

nettled made rather angry.

Mills bomb a small hand-grenade, named after its inventor, used in both World Wars, It exploded after being thrown and its casing, rather similar in appearance to a small pine-apple, would burst into separate pieces of metal which would fly out with great force and kill or wound anybody they struck within several yards of the explosion.

royalty payment made in proportion to the quantity or number of times, used or sold (usually employed with reference to payments made to authors or to landowners from whose property minerals are extracted).

lump sum sum paid in one single installment.

thirty pieces of silver The reward paid to Judas Iscariot for betraying Jesus Christ. The phrase is often used to describe a bribe given to a traitor, (Mrs. Meldon, of course, is thinking of her brother as a traitor not to his country but humanity is general).

insufferable impossible to endure.

perfunctorily briefly and unenthusiastically.

anniversary same date of something which happened in a previous year.

fantastic strange and hard to believe or realize.

cranks person with unusual views which ordinary people disagree with.

religious maniacs persons whom the use of the phrase regards as having gone mad on account of their violently-held religious views.

unhinged your mind made you lose your reason.

mom up remove a mess, particularly a spill liquid, using a piece of cloth or a mop (which commonly consists of a stick to the head of which is attached a bundle of thin rags or piece of coarse strings).

plunges forward falls heavily forward.

hysterically uncontrollably, because of violent emotions.

distractedly in a manner showing very great distress and confusion of mind.

Reading Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. What is the significance of the title of the play 'Progress'?
2. What is the central idea of the play 'Progress'?
3. Describe the climax of the play 'Progress' in few lines.
4. What is one act play? illustrate it with examples from the play 'Progress'?
5. What is plot? Write down the plot of the play 'Progress'.
6. Write the character sketch of Mrs. Meldon.
7. Draw the character of Prof. Corrie as despiser/hater of humanity.
8. What type of mother is Mrs. Meldon? Illustrate through her character that themes of literature are universal and exist across all cultures and societies.
9. Was Mrs. Meldon justified in killing her brother? Give your considered view.
10. What was the cause of quarrel between Mrs. Meldon and Prof. Corrie?
11. Contrast the characters of Mrs. Meldon and Prof. Corrie, highlighting the dominant traits of their personalities.
12. What is the conflict in the play 'Progress'? How is it resolved?
13. Suggest another ending for the play 'Progress'.
14. True progress means "The destroying of the means of destruction". Elaborate this statement in light of the play 'Progress'.

15. How was Eddie killed?
16. Describe the physical and mental conditions of Mrs. Meldon after the death of her son Eddie.
17. Why does Mrs. Meldon hate war?
18. What is Mrs. Meldon's view about war?
19. What is Prof. Corrie's view about war?
20. Bring out the ideological conflict between Mrs. Meldon and Prof. Corrie.

Reading Comprehension

- A. Write a detailed summary of St. JOHN GREEN ERVINE's 'Progress'.
- B. Re-write 'Progress' as narrative/story, using omniscient third person as point of view. You can also suggest another ending to your narrative/story.

Oral Communication

Act out some of the evocative dialogues between Mrs. Meldon and Prof. Corrie, using proper intonation and stress patterns.

Vocabulary and Grammar

Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks with words related to medicine. Use the words in brackets to form a new word that fits into each blank. You can consult any authentic source if you don't know the meaning of these words.

Thanks to modern medicine there are many new _____ (TREAT) for diseases which, in the past, were _____ (CURE). Many childhood _____ (ILL), for example, have disappeared. This is due to the use of vaccinations.

_____ (MEDICINE) advances have also changed the way surgical operations are performed. These are less _____ (PAIN) for the patient than they used to be. But, _____ (FORTUNATE), in Third World countries, a high number of _____ (INFECTION) diseases are still

common because of overpopulation and poor _____ (LIFE) conditions. Malnutrition, which is caused by _____ (SUFFICIENT) food, is one of the many problems which can _____ (THREAT) children's lives in these countries. With today's technology, there is no reason that a _____ (SOLVE) to these problems should be beyond our _____ (CAPABLE).

GRAMMAR

A. Active and passive voice – Crime Story

1. The police _____ just _____ (announce).
2. That the Bank _____ (rob) yesterday.
3. Two men _____ (enter) the bank at 4.30 with guns in their hands.
4. Customers and bank clerks _____ (ask) to lie down on the floor and one of the bank clerks _____ (make) to fill the robbers' bags with money.
5. After that the two men _____ (leave) the bank quickly.
6. The police officer Nawab Ali says that more than 200,000 rupees _____ (steal) yesterday, but nobody _____ (injure).
7. Nawab Ali believes that the robbers _____ (find) soon.
8. The bank _____ (close) since yesterday.

B. Ask questions about the robbery.

1. What time _____ the two men _____ the bank? (enter) **At 4.30.**
2. What _____ the customers and bank clerks _____ to do? (ask)
They were asked to lie down on the floor.
3. What _____ one of the clerks _____ to do? (make)
To fill the robber's bags with money.
4. How much money _____ by the robbers? (steal)
More than 200,000 rupees.
5. _____ anybody _____? (injure)
No, nobody has been injured.
6. How long _____ the bank _____? (close)
It will be closed for two days.



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S#	Statement	Remarks
1.	Overall the book is interesting and user friendly.	
2.	The language and content of the book is age / grade appropriate and the content is free of grammatical and punctuation errors.	
3.	Content is supported with examples from real life / culture.	
4.	Contents / texts are authentic and updated.	
5.	Pictures / diagrams / graphs / illustrations are informative, relevant and clear if not, then identify them.	
6.	Activities, projects and additional work is suggested for reinforcement of concepts.	
7.	Assessment achievements are thought provoking and comprise cognitive, psychomotor and effective skills.	
8.	The textbook is easy to be covered within academic year.	

Page No.	Observation/comments	Suggested amendment along with rationale

General Remarks:

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