



## The Oyster and the Pearl (Play)

**Text type:** One-Act play

**Theme:** Soft skills

**Subthemes:** Patience, perseverance, character development

**In this unit the students will be able to**

- Analyse and present complex ideas and issues in a short drama.
- Ask and answer questions of personal relevance, information and a variety of communicative purposes. Apply the use of rhetorical questions for a range of audiences.
- Perform a drama/ role play/ play script showing different roles and scenarios
- Read, view and analyse a variety of reading grade-appropriate and high-interest books and texts from print and non-print sources: Play
- Write multiple paragraphs essays/stories; multi-stanza poems or playscript using mechanics of correct writing.
- Write a dialogue between multiple people, giving narration/background in brackets, using conventions of the director's notes. Use vocabulary, tone and style appropriate to the context and relationship between the addresser and addressee.
- Analyse how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- Examine how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text. Critique the plot development with respect to different aspects of the story.
- Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- Write a descriptive composition (giving physical description and characteristics/traits of a person/object/place moving from general to specific), using correct punctuation and spelling, by using the process approach - brainstorming, mind mapping, and writing a first
- Write multiple paragraphs of free writing for fluency, creativity, brainstorming or pleasure.

## The Oyster and the Pearl (Play) By William Saroyan

### CHARACTERS:

HARRY VAN DUSEN, a barber  
 CLAY LARRABEE, a boy on Saturday  
 VIVIAN McCUTCHEON, the new  
 schoolteacher  
 CLARK LARRABEE, Clay's father  
 MAN, a writer  
 ROXANNA LARRABEE, Clay's sister  
 GREELEY, Clay's pal  
 JUDGE APLEGARTH, a  
 beachcomber  
 WOZZECK, a watch repairer



*(Harry Van Dusen's barber shop in O.K.-by-the-Sea, California, population 909. It's an old-fashioned shop, crowded with stuff not usually found in barber shops...Harry himself, for instance. He has never been known to put on a barber's white jacket or to work without a hat of some sort on his head.*

*On the walls, on the shelves, are many odds and ends, some apparently washed up by the sea, which is a block down the street: shells, rocks, pieces of driftwood, a life jacket, rope, sea plants. There is one old-fashioned chair.*

*When the play begins, Harry is seated in the chair. A boy of nine or ten named Clay Larrabee is giving him a haircut. Harry is reading a book, one of many in the shop.)*

CLAY: Well, I did what you told me, Mr. Van Dusen. I hope it's all right. I'm no barber, though. You want to look at it in the mirror?(He holds out a small mirror.)

HARRY: No thanks. I remember the last one.

CLAY: I guess I'll never be a barber.

HARRY: Maybe not. On the other hand, you may turn out to be the one man hidden away who will bring merriment to the tired old human heart.

CLAY: Who? Me?

HARRY: Why not?

CLAY: Merriment to the tired old human heart? How do you do that?

HARRY: compose a symphony, paint a picture, write a book, invent a philosophy.

CLAY: Not me! Did you ever do stuff like that?

HARRY: I did.

CLAY: what did you do?

HARRY: Invented a philosophy.

CLAY: What's that?

HARRY: A way to live.

CLAY: What way did you invent?

HARRY: The take-it-easy way.

CLAY: That sounds pretty good.

HARRY: All philosophies sound good. The trouble with mine was, I kept forgetting to take it easy. Until one day. The day I came off the highway into this barber shop. The barber told me the shop was for sale. I told him all I had to my name was eighty dollars. He sold me the shop for seventy-five, and threw in the haircut. I've been here ever since. That was twenty-four years ago.

CLAY: How old were you then?

HARRY: Old enough to know a good thing when I saw it.

CLAY: What did you see?

HARRY: O.K.-by-the-Sea, and this shop. (He gets out of the chair, goes to the hat tree, and puts on the hat hanging there.)

CLAY: I guess I'd never get a haircut if you weren't in town, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY: Nobody would, since I'm the only barber.

CLAY: I mean, free of charge.

HARRY: I give you a haircut free of charge, you give me a haircut free of charge. That's fair and square.

CLAY: Yes, but you're a barber. You get a dollar a haircut.

HARRY: Now and then I do. Now and then I don't.

CLAY: Well, anyhow, thanks a lot. I guess I'll go down to the beach now and look for stuff.

HARRY: I'd go with you, but I'm expecting a little Saturday business.

CLAY: This time I'm going to find something real good.

HARRY: The sea washes up some pretty good things, doesn't it?

CLAY: It sure does, except money.

HARRY: What do you want with money?

CLAY: Things I need.

HARRY: What do you need?

CLAY: I want to get my father to come home again. I want to buy Mother a present...

HARRY: Now, wait a minute, Clay. Let me get this straight. Where is your father?

CLAY: I don't know. He went off about a month ago.

HARRY: What do you mean, he went off?

CLAY: He just picked up and went off.

HARRY: Did he say when he was coming back?

CLAY: No. All he said was, Enough's enough. He wrote it on the kitchen wall.

HARRY: Enough's enough?

CLAY: Yeah. We all thought he'd be back in a day or two, but now we know we've got to find him and bring him back.

HARRY: How do you expect to do that?

CLAY: Well, we put an ad in the paper.

HARRY: (Opening the paper) This paper? But your father's not in town. How will he see an ad in this paper?

CLAY: He might see it. Anyhow, we don't know what else to do. We're living off the money we saved from the summer we worked, but there isn't much left.

HARRY: The summer you worked?

CLAY: Yeah. Summer before last, just before we moved here, we picked cotton in Kern County. My father, my mother, and me.

HARRY: (Indicating the paper) What do you say in your ad?

CLAY: (Looking at it) Well, I say ... 'Clark Larrabee. Come home. Your fishing tackle's in the closet safe and sound. The fishing's good, plenty of perch, and bass. Let bygones be bygones. We miss you. Mama, Clay, Roxanna, Rufus, Clara. 'Do you think if my father reads it, he'll come home?

HARRY: I don't know, Clay. I hope so.

CLAY: Yeah. Thanks a lot for the haircut, Mr. Van Dusen. (Clay goes out. Harry takes off the hat, and begins to shave. A pretty girl comes into the shop, closing a colorful parasol.)

HARRY: Miss America, I presume.

THE GIRL: Miss McCutcheon.

HARRY: Harry Van Dusen.

THE GIRL: How do you do?

HARRY: (Bowing) Miss McCutcheon.

THE GIRL: I'm new here.

HARRY: You'd be new anywhere. Surely you don't live here.

THE GIRL: As a matter of fact, I do. At any rate, I've been here since last Sunday. You see, I'm the new teacher at the school.

HARRY: You are?

THE GIRL: Yes, I am.

HARRY: How do you like it?

THE GIRL: Well, as a matter of fact, I want to quit and to San Francisco. But at the same time I have a feeling I ought to stay. What do you think? Shall I go, or shall I stay?

HARRY: Depends on what you're looking for. I stopped here twenty-four years ago because I decided I wasn't looking for anything any more. Well, I was mistaken. I was looking, and I've found exactly what I was looking for.

THE GIRL: What's that?

HARRY: A chance to take my time. What are you looking for, Miss McCutcheon?

THE GIRL: Well....

HARRY: I mean, besides a husband...

THE GIRL: I'm not looking for a husband. I expect a husband to look for me.

HARRY: That's fair.

THE GIRL: I'm looking for a chance to teach.

HARRY: That's fair too.

THE GIRL: But this town! ... The children just don't seem to care about anything - whether they get good grades or bad, whether they pass or fail. On top of that, almost all of them are unruly. The only thing they seem to be interested in is games, and the sea. That's why I'm on my way to the beach now. I thought if I could watch them on a Saturday, I might understand

them better.

HARRY: Yeah, that's a thought.

THE GIRL: Nobody seems to have any sensible ambition. It's all fun and play. How can I teach children like that? What can I teach them?

HARRY: English.

THE GIRL: of course.

HARRY: (Drying his face) Singing, dancing, cooking...

THE GIRL: Cooking? ... I must say I expected to see a much older man.

HARRY: Well. Thank you!

THE GIRL: Not at all.

HARRY: The question is: Shall you stay, or shall you go back to San Francisco?

THE GIRL: Yes.

HARRY: The answer is: Go back while the going's good.

THE GIRL: Why?

HARRY: (After a pause). You're too good for a town like his.

THE GIRL: I am not!

HARRY: Too young and too intelligent. Youth and intelligence need excitement.

THE GIRL: There are kinds of excitement.

HARRY: Yes, there are. You need the big-city kind. There isn't an eligible bachelor in town.

THE GIRL: You seem to think all I want is to find a husband. She sits almost angrily in the chair and speaks very softly.) I'd like a poodle haircut if you don't mind, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY: You'll have to get that in an Francisco, I'm afraid.

THE GIRL: Why? Aren't you a barber?

HARRY: I am.

THE GIRL: Well, this is your shop. It's open for business. I'm a customer. I've got money. I want a poodle haircut.

HARRY: I don't know how to give a poodle haircut, but even if I knew how, I wouldn't do it.

THE GIRL: Why not?

HARRY: I'm sorry, Miss McCutcheon. In my sleep, in a nightmare, I would not cut your hair. (The sound of a truck stopping is heard from across the street.)

THE GIRL: (Softly, patiently, but firmly) Mr. Van Dusen, I've decided to stay, and the first thing I've got to do is change my appearance. I don't fit into the scenery around here.

HARRY: Oh, I don't know - if I were a small boy going to school, I'd say you look just right.

THE GIRL: You're just like the children. They don't take me seriously, either. They think I'm nothing more than a pretty girl who is going to give up in despair and go home. If you give me a poodle haircut I'll look more - well, plain and simple.

I plan to dress differently, too. I'm determined to teach here. You've got to help me. Now Mr. Van Dusen, the shears, please.

HARRY: I'm sorry, Miss McCutcheon. There's no need to change your appearance at all. (Clark Larrabee comes into the shop.)

HARRY: You're next, Clark. (Harry helps Miss McCutcheon out of the chair. She gives him an angry glance.)

THE GIRL: (whispering) I won't forget this rudeness, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY: (Also whispering) Never whisper in here. People misunderstand. (Loudly) Good day, Miss.

(Miss McCutcheon opens her parasol with anger and leaves the shop. Clark Larrabee has scarcely noticed her.)

HARRY: Well, Clark, I haven't seen you for a long time.

CLARK: I'm just passing through, Harry. Thought I might run into Clay here.

HARRY: He was here a little while ago.

CLARK: How is he?

HARRY: He's fine, Clark.

CLARK: I've been working in Salinas. Got a ride down in a truck. It's across the street now at the gasoline station.

HARRY: You've been home, of course?

CLARK: No, I haven't.

HARRY: Oh?

CLARK: (After a slight pause) I've left Fay, Harry.

HARRY: You got time for a haircut, Clark?

CLARK: No thanks, Harry. I've got to go back to Salinas on that truck.

HARRY: Clay's somewhere on the beach.

CLARK: (Handing Harry three ten-dollar bills.) Give him this, will you? Thirty dollars. Don't tell him I gave it to you.

HARRY: Why not?

CLARK: I'd rather he didn't know I was around. Is he all right?

HARRY: Sure, Clark. They're all O.K. I mean...

CLARK: Tell him to take the money home to his mother. (He picks up the newspaper)

HARRY: Sure, Clark. It came out this morning. Take it along.

CLARK: Thanks. (He puts the paper in his packet.) How've things been gone with you, Harry?

HARRY: Oh, I can't kick. Two or three haircuts a day. A lot of time to read. A few laughs. A few surprises. The sea. The fishing. It's a good life.

CLARK: Keep an eye on Clay, will you?

HARRY: Sure.

CLARK: Yeah, well.... That's the first money I've been able to save. When I make some more, I'd like to send it here, so you can hand it to Clay, to take home.

HARRY: Anything you say, Clark. (There is the sound of the truck's horn blowing)

CLARK: Well.... (He goes to the door) Thanks, Harry, thanks a lot.

HARRY: Good seeing you, Clark. (Clark Larrabee goes out. Harry watches him. A truck shifting gears is heard, and then the sound of the truck driving off. Harry picks up a book, puts his hat on again, sits down in the chair and begins to read. A man of forty or so, well-dressed comes in.)

THE MAN: Where's the barber?

HARRY: I'm the barber.

THE MAN: Can I get a haircut, real quick?

HARRY: (Getting out of the chair) Depends on what you mean by real quick.

THE MAN: (Sitting down) Well, just a haircut then.

HARRY: (Putting an apron around the man) O.K. I don't believe I've seen you before.

THE MAN: No. They're changing the oil in my car across the street. Thought I'd step in here and get a haircut. Get it out of the way before I get to Hollywood. How many miles is it?

HARRY: About two hundred straight down the highway. You can't miss it.

THE MAN: What town is this?

HARRY: O.K. -by-the-Sea.

THE MAN: What do the people do here?

HARRY: Well, I cut hair. Friend of mine named Wozzck repairs watches, radios, alarm clocks, and sells jewelry. Imitation stuff mainly.

THE MAN: Factory here? Farms? Fishing?

HARRY: No. Just the few stores on the highway, the houses further back in the hills, the church, and the school. You a salesman?

THE MAN: No, I'm a writer.

HARRY: What do you write?

THE MAN: A little bit of everything. How about the haircut?

HARRY: You got to be in Hollywood tonight?

THE MAN: I don't have to be anywhere tonight, but that was the idea. Why?

HARRY: Well, I've always said a writer could stop in a place like this, watch things a little while, and get a whole book out of it, or a play.

THE MAN: Or if he was a poet, a sonnet.

HARRY: Do you like Shakespeare's?

THE MAN: They're just about the best in English.

HARRY: It's not often get a writer in here. As a matter of fact you're the only writer I've had in here in twenty years, not counting Fenton.

THE MAN: Who's he?

HARRY: He gets out the weekly paper. Write the whole thing himself.

THE MAN: Yeah. Well.... How about the haircut?

HARRY: O.K.

(Harry puts a hot towel around the man's head. Miss McCutcheon, carrying a cane chair without one leg, comes in. With her is Clay with something in his hand, a small boy named Greeley with a bottle of sea water, and Roxanna with an assortment of shells).

CLAY: I've got an oyster here, Mr. Van Dusen.

GREELEY: Miss McCutcheon claims there's not a big pearl in it.

HARRY: (looking at Miss McCutcheon) Is she willing to admit there's a little one in it?

GREELEY: I don't know.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Mr. Van Dusen, Clay Larrabee seems to believe there's a pearl in this oyster he happens to have found on the beach.

CLAY: I didn't happen to find it. I went looking for it. You know Black Rock, Mr. Van Dusen?

Well, the tide hardly ever gets low enough for a fellow to get around to the ocean side of it, but a little while ago it did, so I went around there and I found this oyster.

HARRY: I've been here twenty-four years, Clay, and this is the first time I've ever heard of anybody finding an oyster on our beach - at Black Rock, or anywhere else.

CLAY: Well, I did, Mr. Van Dusen. It's shut tight, it's alive, and there's a pearl in it, worth at least three hundred dollars.

GREELEY: A big pearl.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Now, you children listen to me. It's never too soon for any of us to face the truth. The truth is, Clay, you want money because you need money. The truth is also that there is no pearl in the oyster.

GREELEY: How do you know? Did you look?

MISS McCUTCHEON: No, but neither did Clay, and in as much as only one oyster in a million has a pearl in it, truth favors the probability that this is not the millionth oyster...

CLAY: (stubbornly) There 's a big pearl in the oyster.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Mr. Van Dusen, shall we open the oyster and show the children that there is no pearl in it?

HARRY: In a moment, Miss McCutcheon. And what's that you have.

MISS McCUTCHEON: A chair, as you can see.

HARRY: How many legs does it have?

MISS McCUTCHEON: Three of course. I can count to three, I hope.

HARRY: What do you want with a chair with only three legs?

MISS McCUTCHEON: I'm going to bring to things from the sea the same as everybody else in town.

HARRY: But everybody else in town doesn't bring things, from the sea - just the children, Judge Applegarth, Fenton Lockhart and myself.

MISS McCUTCHEON: In any ease, the same as the children, Judge Applegarth, Fenton Lockhart, and you. Judge Applegarth? Who's he?

HARRY: He judged sheep at a county fair one time, so we call him Judge.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Sheep?

HARRY: Well, I wouldn't care to call a man like Arthur Applegarth a sheep judge.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Did he actually judge sheep, as you prefer to put it, at a county fair - one time?

HARRY: Nobody checked up. He said he did.

MISS McCUTCHEON: So that entitled him to be called Judge Applegarth?

HARRY: It certainly did.

MISS McCUTCHEON: On that basis, Clay's oyster has a big pearl in it because he says so, is that it?

HARRY: I didn't say that.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Are we living in the Middle Ages, Mr. Van dusen?

GREELEY: No, this is 1953, Miss McCutcheon.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Yes, Greeley, and to illustrate what I mean, that's water you have in that bottle, Nothing else.

GREELEY: Sea water.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Yes, but nothing else.

GREELEY: No, but there are little things in the water. You can't see them now, but they'll show up later. The water of the sea is full of things.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Salt, perhaps.

GREELEY: No, living things. If I look hard I can see some of them now.

MISS McCUTCHEON: You can imagine seeing them. Mr. Van Dusen, are you going to help me or not?

HARRY: What do you want me to do.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Open the oyster of course, so Clay will see for himself that there's no pearl in it. So he'll begin to face reality, as he should, as all of us should.

HARRY: Clay, do you mind if I look at the oyster a minute?

CLAY: (Examining the oyster) Clay...Roxanna...Greeley...I wonder if you'd go to Wozzeck's. Tell him to come the first chance he gets, I'd rather he open this oyster. I might damage the pearl.

CLAY, GREELEY, AND ROXANNA: O.K., Mr. Van Dusen.

(They go out.)

MISS McCUTCHEON: What pearl? What in the world do you think you're trying to do to the minds of these children? How am I ever going to teach them the principles of truth with an influence like yours to fight against?

HARRY: Miss McCutcheon. The people of O.K. -by-the-Sea are all poor. Most of them can't afford to pay for the haircuts I give them. There's no excuse for this town at all, but the sea is here, and so are the hills. A few people find jobs a couple of months every year North or South, come back half dead of homesickness, and live on next to nothing the rest of the year. A few get pensions. Every family has a garden and a few chickens, and they make a few dollars selling vegetables and eggs. In a town of almost a thousand people there isn't one rich man. Not even one who is well-off. And yet these people are the richest I have ever known. Clay doesn't really want money, as you seem to think. He wants his father to come home, and he thinks money will help get his father home. As a matter of fact his father is the man who stepped in here just as you were leaving. He left thirty dollars for me to give to Clay, to take home. His father and his mother haven't been getting along.

Clark Larrabee's a fine man. He's not the town drunk or anything like that, but having four kids to provide for he gets to feeling ashamed of the showing he's making, and he starts drinking. He wants his kids to live in a good house of their own, wear good clothes and all the other things fathers have always wanted for their kids. His wife wants these things for the kids, too. They don't have these things, so they fight. They had one too many fights about a month ago, so Clark went off - he's working in Salinas. He's either going to keep moving away from his family, or he's going to come back. It all depends on - well, I don't know what. This oyster maybe. Clay maybe. (Softly) You and me maybe. (There is a pause. He looks at the oyster. Miss McCutcheon looks at it, too.)

Clay believes there's a pearl in this oyster for the same reason you and I believe whatever we believe to keep us going.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Are you suggesting we play a trick on Clay?

HARRY: Well, maybe it is a trick. I know Wozzeck's got a few pretty good-sized cultivated pearls.

MISS McCUTCHEON: You plan to have Wozzeck pretend he has found a pearl in the oyster, is that it?

HARRY: I plan to get three hundred dollars to Clay.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Do you have three hundred dollars?

HARRY: No Quite.

MISS McCUTCHEON: What about the other children who need money? Do you plan to put pearls in oysters for them, too? Not here. Everywhere. This isn't the only town in the world where people are poor, where fathers and mothers fight, where families break up.

HARRY: No, it isn't, but it's the only town where I live.

MISS McCUTCHEON: I give up. What do you want me to do?

HARRY: Well, could you find it in your heart to be just a little less sure about things when you talk to the kids - I mean, the troubled ones? (71) You can get clay around to the truth easy enough just as soon as he gets his father home. (Arthur Applegarth comes in.)

HARRY: Judge Applegarth, may I present Miss McCutcheon?

THE JUDGE: (Removing his hat and bowing low) An honor, Miss.

MISS McCUTCHEON: How do you do, Judge?

THE JUDGE: We are honored to have you. The children, the parents, and - the rest of us.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Thank you, Judge. (To Harry, whispering) I'll be back as soon as I change my clothes.

HARRY: (Whispering) I told you not to whisper.

MISS McCUTCHEON: (Whispering) I shall expect you to give me a poodle haircut.

HARRY: (Whispering) Are you out of your mind?

MISS McCUTCHEON: (Aloud) Good day, Judge.

THE JUDGE: (Bowing) Good day, Miss. (While he is bent over he takes a good look at her knees, calves, ankles, and sandals. Miss McCutcheon goes out. Judge Applegarth looks from the door to Harry.)

THE JUDGE: She won't last a month.

HARRY: Why not?

THE JUDGE: Too pretty. Our school needs an old battle-ax, not a bathing beauty. Well, Harry, what's new?

HARRY: Just the teacher, I guess.

THE JUDGE: You know, Harry, the beach isn't what it used to be - not at all. I don't mind the competition we're getting from the kids. It's just that the quality of the stuff the sea's washing up isn't good any more.

HARRY: I don't know. Clay Larrabee found an oyster this morning.

THE JUDGE: He did? Well, one oyster doesn't make a stew, Harry. On my way home I'll drop in and let you see what I find.

HARRY: O.K., Judge. (The Judge goes out. Harry comes to life suddenly and becomes business-like.) Now, for the haircut! (He removes the towel he had wrapped around the writer's head.)

THE MAN: Take your time.

HARRY: (He examines the shears, clippers, and combs.) Let's see now. (The writer turns and watches. A gasoline station attendant comes to the door.)

THE ATTENDANT: (To the writer) Just wanted to say your car's ready now.

THE MAN: Thanks. (The attendant goes out.) Look, I'll tell you what. How much is a haircut?

HARRY: Well, the regular price is a dollars. It's too much, though, so I generally take a half or a quarter.

THE MAN: (Getting out of the chair) I've changed my mind. I don't want to haircut after all, but here's a dollar just the same. (He hands Harry a dollar, and he himself removes the apron.)

HARRY: It won't take a minute.

THE MAN: I know.

HARRY: You don't have to pay me a dollar for a hot towel. My compliments.

THE MAN: that's O.K. (He goes to the door.)

HARRY: Well, take it easy now.

THE MAN: Thanks. (He stands a moment, thinking, then turns.) Do you mind if I have a look at that oyster?

HARRY: Not at all.

(The writer goes to the shelf where Harry has placed the oyster, picks it up, looks at it thoughtfully, puts it back without comment, but instead of leaving the shop he looks around and then sits down on a chair in the corner, and lights a cigarette.)

THE MAN: You know, they've got a gadget in New York that anybody can give anybody else a haircut with.

HARRY: They have?

THE MAN: Yeah, there was a full-page ad about it in last Sunday's Times.

HARRY: Is that where you were last Sunday?

THE MAN: Yeah.

HARRY: You've been doing a lot of driving.

THE MAN: I like to drive. I don't know, though - those gadgets don't always work. "Besides, there's something to be said for going to a barber shop once in a while. No use putting the barbers out of business.

HARRY: Sounds like a pretty good article, though.

THE MAN: (getting up lazily) Well, it's been nice talking to you.

(Wozzeck, carrying a satchel, comes in, followed by Clay, Roxanna, and Greeley.)

WOZZECK: What's this all about, Harry?

HARRY: I've got an oyster I want you to open.

WOZZECK: That's what the kids have been telling me.

ROXANNA: He doesn't believe there's a pearl in the oyster, either.

WOZZECK: Of course not! What foolishness!

CLAY: There's a big pearl in it.

WOZZECK: O.K., give me the oyster. I'll open it. Expert watch repairer, to open an oyster!

HARRY: How much is a big pearl worth, Louie?

WOZZECK: Oh, a hundred. Two hundred, maybe.

HARRY: A very big one?

WOZZECK: Three, maybe.

THE MAN: I've looked at that oyster, and I'd like to buy it. (To Clay) How much do you want for it?

CALY: I don't know.

THE MAN: How about three hundred?

GREELEY: Three hundred dollars?

CLAY: Is it all right, Mr. Van Dusen?

HARRY: (He looks at the writer, who nods.) Sure it's all right. (The writer hands Clay the money.)

CLAY: (Looking at the money and then at the writer) But suppose there isn't a pearl in it?

THE MAN: There is, though.

WOZZECK: Don't you want to open it first?

THE MAN: No, I want the whole thing. I don't think the pearl's stopped growing.

CLAY: He says there is a pearl in the oyster, Mr. Van Dusen.

HARRY: I think there is, too, Clay; so why don't you just go on home and give the money to your mother?

CLAY: Well.... I knew I was going to find something good today! (The children go out. Wozzeck is bewildered.)

WOZZECK: Three hundred dollars! How do you know there's a pearl in it?

THE MAN: As far as I'm concerned, the whole thing's a pearl.

WOZZECK: (A little confused) Well, I got to get back to the shop, Harry.

HARRY: Thanks for coming by.

(Wozzeck goes out. The writer holds the oyster in front of him, and looks at it carefully, turning it in his fingers. As he is doing so, Clark Larrabee comes into the shop.)

CLARK: We were ten miles up the highway when I happened to see this classified ad (81) in the paper. (He hands the paper to Harry and sits down in the chair.) I'm going out to the house, after all. Just for the weekend of course, then back to work in Salinas again. Two or three months, I think I'll have enough to come back for a long time. Clay come by?

HARRY: No, I've got the money here.

CLARK: O.K. I'll take it out myself, but first let me have the works - shave, haircut, shampoo, massage.

HARRY: (Putting an apron on Clark) Sure thing, Clark. (He bends the chair back, and begins to lather Clark's face. Miss McCutcheon, dressed neatly, looking like another person almost, comes in.)

MISS McCUTCHEON: Well?

HARRY: You look fine, Miss McCutcheon.

MISS McCUTCHEON: I don't mean that. I mean the oyster.

HARRY: Oh, that! There was a pearl in it.

MISS McCUTCHEON: I don't believe it.

HARRY: A big pearl.

MISS McCUTCHEON: You might have done me the courtesy of waiting until I had come back

before opening it.

HARRY: Couldn't wait.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Well, I don't believe you, but I've come for my haircut. I'll sit down and wait my turn.

HARRY: Mr. Larrabee wants the works. You'll have to wait a long time.

MISS McCUTCHEON: Mr. Larrabee? Clay's father? Roxanna's father? (Clark sits up)

HARRY: Clark, I'd like you to meet our new teacher, Miss McCutcheon.

CLARK: How do you do?

MISS McCUTCHEON: How do you do, Mr. Larrabee. (She looks bewildered.) Well, perhaps some other time then, Mr. Van Dusen. (She goes out. Clark sits back. Judge Applegarth stops at the doorway of the shop.)

THE JUDGE: Not one thing on the beach, Harry. Not a blessed thing worth picking up and taking home. (Judge Applegarth goes on. The writer looks at Harry.)

HARRY: See what I mean?

THE MAN: Yeah. Well....so long. (He puts the oyster in his coat pocket.)

HARRY: Drop in again any time you're driving to Hollywood.

THE MAN: Or away. (He goes out.)

CLARK: (after a moment) You know, Harry, that boy of mine, Clay....well, a fellow like that, you can't just go off and leave him.

HARRY: of course you can't, Clark.

CLARK: I'm taking him fishing tomorrow morning. How about going along, Harry?

HARRY: Sure, Clark. Be like old times again.

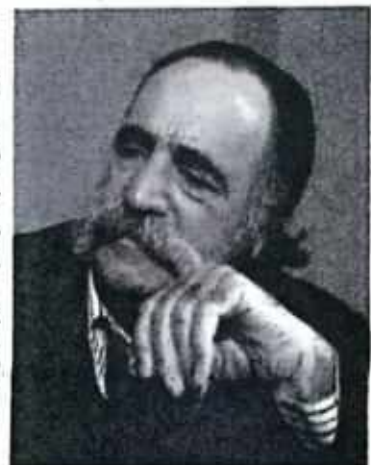
(There is a pause.)

CLARK: What's all this about an oyster and a pearl?

HARRY: Oh, just having a little fun with the new teacher. You know, she came in here and asked me to give her a poodle haircut? A poodle haircut! I don't remember what a poodle dog looks like, even.

### About the Writer:

William Saroyan (August 31, 1908 - May 18, 1981) was an Armenian-American novelist, playwright, and short story writer. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1940 and an Academy Award in 1943 for Best Story for "The Human Comedy." Known for writing about Armenian immigrant life in California, particularly Fresno, Saroyan's notable works include "The Time of Your Life," "My Name Is Aram," and "My Heart's in the Highlands." His short story collections "Inhale Exhale" (1936) and "The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze" (1941) are considered significant cultural documents of the American West Coast in the 1930s.



## 1. Glossary

Given below are the difficult words from the unit. Look at their meanings and use these words in your own sentences.

| Words        | Meaning                                             |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| merriment    | joy and fun.                                        |
| symphony     | a long piece of music for an orchestra.             |
| philosophy   | a way of thinking about life.                       |
| bygones      | things that happened in the past.                   |
| parasols     | light umbrellas used for shade.                     |
| unruly       | not well-behaved.                                   |
| ambition     | a strong desire to achieve something.               |
| eligible     | suitable or qualified.                              |
| despair      | loss of hope.                                       |
| imitation    | something that looks like the real thing but isn't. |
| poet         | a person who writes poems.                          |
| sonnet       | a type of poem with 14 lines.                       |
| illustrate   | to show or explain with examples.                   |
| reality      | the way things actually are.                        |
| principles   | basic rules or beliefs.                             |
| influence    | the power to change or affect someone or something. |
| homesickness | feeling sad because you are away from home.         |
| cultivated   | grown or raised under controlled conditions.        |
| pensions     | money paid to retired people.                       |
| trick        | a clever or deceptive act.                          |

## 2. Reading and Critical Thinking Skills

A. Read the play carefully and answer the questions given below:

- i. What is Harry Van Dusen's philosophy of life?
- ii. Why does Clay Larrabee want to find money?
- iii. What message did Clay's father leave on the kitchen wall?
- iv. How does Harry view his life in O.K.-by-the-Sea?
- v. What dilemma does Miss McCutcheon face regarding her stay in the town?
- vi. How does Harry describe the people of O.K.-by-the-Sea?
- vii. What does Miss McCutcheon think about the children she teaches?
- viii. Why does Clay believe there is a pearl in the oyster?

- ix. What does Harry plan to do to help Clay with the oyster?
- x. How does Miss McCutcheon react to Harry's plan about the oyster?
- xi. What does Harry suggest might be the reason for Clay's belief in the pearl?
- xii. How does Harry propose to give Clay \$300?
- xiii. What are the main themes of the play?
- xiv. Write a character sketch of Harry Van Dusen and Clay Larrabee.
- xv. Do you think there was a pearl in the oyster? Yes, or no? Give reasons for your answer.

### 3. Vocabulary and Grammar

#### A. Changing Questions in Direct Speech to Indirect Speech

**WH-Questions:** Wh- questions are the ones that start with question words like *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *whose*, etc. When changing a wh- question from direct to indirect the following points need to be kept in mind:

|                                                   | Direct speech                      | Indirect Speech                |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Remove Quotation Marks and Question Marks:</b> | She asked, "Where are you going?"  | She asked where I was going.   |
| <b>Change Pronouns:</b>                           | He asked, "What are you doing?"    | He asked what I was doing.     |
| <b>Change Verb Tense:</b>                         | She asked, "Where is he?"          | She asked where he was.        |
| <b>No Use of 'That':</b>                          | She asked, "When will you arrive?" | She asked when I would arrive. |

**Yes/No Questions:** These questions can be answered with a simple yes/no and do not require a particular answer. These questions usually start with an auxiliary verb or a modal. When changing these question from direct to indirect the following points need to be kept in mind:

|                                                  | Direct Speech                        | Indirect Speech                     |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Use 'if' or 'whether'</b>                     | He asked, "Are you coming?"          | He asked if I was coming.           |
| <b>Remove Quotation Marks and Question Marks</b> | She asked, "Do you like chocolate?"  | She asked if I liked chocolate.     |
| <b>Change Pronouns</b>                           | He asked, "Can you help me?"         | He asked whether I could help him.  |
| <b>Change Verb Tense</b>                         | They asked, "Did you see the movie?" | They asked if I had seen the movie. |

Other changes that need to be made are as follows:

## PLACE & TIME

| Direct Speech | Reported Speech                   |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| today         | that day                          |
| now           | then / at the moment              |
| yesterday     | the day before                    |
| ... days ago  | ... days before                   |
| last week     | the week before                   |
| next year     | the following year                |
| tomorrow      | the next day<br>the following day |
| here          | there                             |
| this          | that                              |
| these         | those                             |
| ago           | previously / before               |
| tonight       | that night                        |

## TENSE CHANGE

| Direct Speech  | Reported Speech |
|----------------|-----------------|
| will           | would           |
| can            | could           |
| must / have to | must or had to  |
| may / might    | might           |
| should         | should          |
| ought to       | ought to        |

**Q. Convert the following direct questions into indirect questions:**

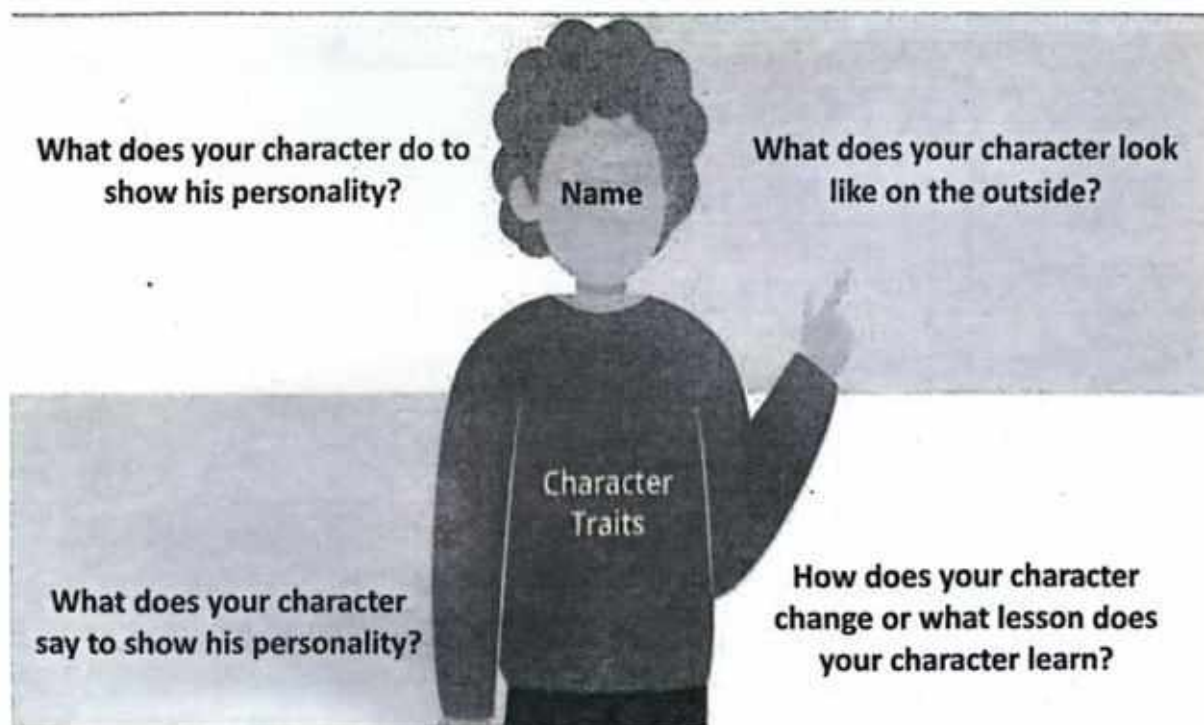
1. "Where do you live?" she asked.
2. "Are you coming to the party?" he asked.
3. "What time does the train arrive?" they asked.
4. "Did you finish your homework?" the teacher asked.
5. "Why are you crying?" he asked.
6. She said, "Do you have any share in this firm?"
7. He said, "What do you want me to do?"
8. He said to me, "Will you listen to me?"
9. The teacher said, "Whose book is this?"
10. They said, "Have you ever visited Murree Hills?"
11. She said to me, "Can I see you tomorrow?"
12. He said to me, "What is the matter?"

## 4. Oral Communication Skills

**1. Character Traits Discussion:**

- Divide the class into 4 small groups.
- Each group discusses the main traits of Harry Van Dusen, Miss McCutcheon, Clay Larrabee and the man (writer) based on their actions and dialogues in the play.

- Encourage groups to use specific examples from the text.
- After 10 minutes, bring the class together and have each group present their findings.
- Facilitate a class discussion comparing and contrasting the views of each group.



## 2. Alternate Ending Enactment:

- Divide the class in 2-3 groups. Ask them to think of another ending of the play. What if the oyster was opened and there was or was not a pearl in it? Help the students to brainstorm their ideas, write their dialogues for that ending and enact it in front of the class.

## 5. Writing Skills

### 1. Narrative Writing:

Write the plot of the play "The Oyster and the Pearl" in a short story form. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, reflection to develop events, and/or characters. Help students use a variety of techniques (transitional devices) to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

### 2. Essay Writing:

The main theme of the play was hope, community, and the pursuit of happiness. It shows how a man's selfless act can change the life of a whole family. Write a similar incident where a selfless act by someone save/helped someone you know.

3. Write a dialogue between two friends about importance of hardwork and having a positive mindset.

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Aneela Naseer, MPhil in Education from the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), holds master's degrees in Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and English Literature from the University of Punjab, Lahore, along with a Master's in Educational Planning and Management (EPM) from Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), Islamabad. With a wealth of experience in academia, she is serving as Principal at Islamabad Model School For Girls, NIH, Chak Shahzad, Islamabad, and has taught English in well reputed institutions such as Fauji Foundation Model Schools and Army Public Schools. Aneela has contributed significantly to curriculum review, development, and teacher training initiatives with the Federal Directorate of Education, Islamabad, and National Curriculum Council. She worked on curriculum-based Assessment during her roles as Desk Officer English and Deputy Director at the National Education Assessment System. Aneela Naseer's expertise encompasses English language teaching, curriculum development, teacher training, and educational management, underpinned by strong communication and leadership skills



### Sadia Malik

Currently working as an Associate Professor (English) in Islamabad Model College for Girls, F-8/1, Islamabad, Ms. Sadia Malik has been teaching English literature and Language for the last 25 years. She has done M.Phil. Linguistics from Air University. Her area of research is phonetics and phonology. She has a Master's Degree in English Literature from Punjab University with a Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). She has also done Masters in Educational Planning and Management (EPM). In addition, she has been involved in curriculum development and Teachers' Training. She is the Master Trainer for Teachers' CPD Training and a co-coordinator for the Foundational Learning Policy programme, 2024 at Federal Directorate of Education, Islamabad. She has been a curriculum and textbook reviewer of National Curriculum Council (NCC), Islamabad for English since 2017. She is also the author for English textbooks published by National Book Foundation, Islamabad. She has moderated important events successfully, including Career Expo, 2023 organized by the ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training.

