

What does the description suggest about Jerome's attitude to love and marriage? What is Greene suggesting about the profession of chartered accountancy and the people who do this job? Could you rewrite this paragraph in a sentence, to expose what Greene is *actually* saying about Jerome? Do you agree with Greene's comments? What other professions tend to be associated with certain characteristics?

Look again at the paragraph [page 81] beginning 'Jerome worshipped his father...' Can you find another example of Greene's irony?

Guidance to the above literary terms, answer keys to all the exercises and activities, plus a wealth of other reading-practice material, can be found on the student's section of the Macmillan Readers website at: www.macmillanenglish.com/readers.

The Jilting of Jane

by H G Wells

About the author

Herbert George Wells is best known today for his 'scientific romances', a genre that we now call 'science fiction'. Books such as *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), *The War of the Worlds* (1898) and *The First Men on the Moon* (1901) are considered to be classics of the genre¹ and have often been dramatised for radio, TV and the cinema. In one famous episode, in 1938, the US film director and actor Orson Welles announced on the radio that the world was about to be invaded by aliens. He based his report on *The War of the Worlds*, and it was so realistic that it caused panic among US citizens. Orson had intended it as a joke, but later had to apologise to the public and to Wells himself.

Herbert George Wells was born in 1866 in Bromley, Kent in the south of England. He was one of four children. His parents had a shop and his father was a professional cricketer until he broke his leg. The shop was not very successful, money was short, and Wells was sent to a cheap and badly-run² private school. Wells educated himself mostly, and he read widely from the books in the library of Uppark, the large country house where his mother worked, first as a lady's maid and later as housekeeper³.

Aged 14, when his father's business failed, Wells worked as an apprentice⁴ to a draper⁵. He described his two years there as 'the most unhappy, hopeless period of my life.' He recorded this period in his book *Kipps* (1905), a vivid⁶ account of the lives of workers in the retail trade.

- 1 a particular style used in cinema, writing or art, which can be recognised by certain features
- 2 not well-managed or organised
- 3 someone whose job it is to clean someone else's house, and sometimes cook their meals
- 4 someone who works for a particular person or company, usually for low pay, to learn the type of work they do
- 5 someone who sells cloth and things made of cloth
- 6 clear and detailed

In 1883, Wells became a student and teacher at Midhurst Grammar School. He then obtained a scholarship to the Normal School of Science in London where he studied a range of subjects, including biology. However, he lost interest in his studies, and he left without a degree, in 1887. Wells taught in private schools for four years and in 1890 he finally gained a first-class degree in zoology. In the early 1890s, he became a freelance⁷ journalist and then began to write fiction. Despite his success as a writer of fiction, Wells always said that he was, above all, a journalist, with an interest in facts and the development of society.

In 1891, Wells settled in London and married his cousin, Isabel. The marriage was not a success. Wells left Isabel for one of his adult students, Amy Catherine Robbins, whom he married in 1895. Wells had many affairs with other women but Amy remained a supportive wife until her death in 1927.

Wells's first novel was *The Time Machine*, about a man who travels into the future and returns with incredible stories. Much of the atmosphere is achieved by carefully-studied technical details. The book is also a parody⁸ of English class division. Wells was very interested in politics. He was a member of the Fabian Society, which was founded in 1884. Its members were mostly left-wing, middle-class intellectuals who agreed with socialist ideas but rejected violent revolution⁹ and Communism. In 1905, Wells published *A Modern Utopia* in which he describes a world run by a group of wise men who eliminate 'useless' people. In the early 1920s, Wells was a candidate for parliament for the Labour party, but failed to win a seat.

Between 1924 and 1933, Wells lived mostly in France. In 1934, he had meetings with both Stalin, who left him disappointed, and Roosevelt. He tried without success to recruit them to his world-saving schemes.

Wells returned to London and lived there during World War II. His last book, *Mind at the End of its Tether* (1945) was not hopeful about man's future. He died in London in 1946. During his life he wrote nearly 50 novels, many short stories, and numerous articles and works of non-fiction.

7 not permanently employed by one company but sells their services to more than one company

8 a literary or musical work that copies a serious work in a humorous way

9 the overthrow of a government or political system, usually by force, replacing it with another system

About the story

*The Jilting*¹⁰ of *Jane* was first published in 1894 in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, an evening newspaper. In 1911, it was included in a collection of Wells's short stories, *The Country of the Blind and Other Stories*.

Background information

The draper's shop

Drapers' shops were very common at the time this story was written. They sold mostly cloth or things made of cloth, for people's homes. A lot of the customers were middle-class women who thought that it was very important that the people who served in the shop were polite and *gentlemanly*.

In the story, William is second porter¹¹ at a draper's shop and is then promoted to head porter. He begins to serve customers in the shop; his next promotion will make him an *assistant*. Wells, like his brothers, had worked in a draper's shop himself and experienced its boring routine when he was an apprentice. In his second year in the job, a new apprentice was employed who did some of the more boring jobs. Unfortunately, he also took on some of the tasks that had enabled Wells to escape occasionally from the shop.

Religion

At this time, the Church of England was the official Christian Church in England, as it is today. The reigning king or queen is its leader. Some of the Anglican priests (or *ministers*) had the title of Reverend. They sometimes held outdoor services for the workers after the official church services. In the story, the Reverend Barnabus Baux holds services on the street corner after evensong¹² on Sundays. This informal outdoor service seems to involve mostly hymn-singing and provides the young people with an opportunity to meet up and flirt with each other.

William's father is *Church* (of England) but William himself goes to chapel (a smaller church) and belongs to the Plymouth Brethren¹³,

10 *old-fashioned, formal*: to tell someone that you want to end your romantic relationship with them

11 someone in a station, airport, or hotel whose job is helping people with their bags and showing them where to go

12 the church service in the Anglican Church that people go to in the evening

13 *old-fashioned, religious*: an old word meaning *brothers*. Here, it refers to the male members of a religious group, the Plymouth Brethren

one of the nonconformist religions that grew up in the 18th century. These religions belonged to the Protestant Christian tradition but their churches and services were simpler than those of the Anglican Church.

Self-help books

One of the most widely-sold books in the 19th century was *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* (1861). It gives advice to housewives on cooking, etiquette¹⁴, entertaining and managing your servants.

In the story, Euphemia looks up the etiquette for Jane concerning wearing her engagement¹⁵ ring when serving dinner, in *Enquire Within* and *Mrs Motherly's Book of Household Management*. These titles were probably invented, but refer to the kind of books that were popular at the time.

William also consults a book which has been given to him by his manager. Jane describes it as *Smiles 'Elp (help) Yourself* and explains that it tells you how to *get on in the world*, or be successful. This shows that self-help books were as popular at the time as they are today.

Summary

It may help you to know something about what happens in the story before you read it. Don't worry, this summary does not tell you how the story ends!

The narrator of the story is a respectable middle-class man living in London with his wife Euphemia. They have several servants. Jane is one of their servants, and she has changed from a person who never stopped talking and singing, into a much quieter and more serious girl.

The reason for this change, is the fact that Jane has been jilted by her young man, William, to whom she has been engaged to be married for three years.

Most of what the narrator knows about William has come from his wife, who is friendly towards the servants. William is second porter at Maynard's, the drapers; after the head porter leaves, he is promoted and given more money. Soon, William is dressing more

14 *old-fashioned, formal*: a set of rules for behaving correctly in social situations

15 formal agreement between two people to be married, shown by the woman wearing a ring

smartly. Jane tells Euphemia that William is *a lot above* her. She reports that William is going to serve customers in the shop, and that if he does it well, he will become an assistant.

One Sunday, William does not come to the house to take Jane out, as he usually does. Jane asks permission to go out on the following two Sundays. She admits that William is going out with another girl, a milliner¹⁶, who also plays the piano. Jane has followed them and told the girl that she is engaged to William. The couple have ignored Jane.

On August Bank Holiday, William, his new girlfriend and the girl's mother visit a museum in South Kensington. Jane stops them in the street and claims her right to William. The three people threaten to have Jane arrested by the police, then escape the situation in a cab¹⁷. Euphemia tells Jane that William does not deserve her, and that he is not good enough for her. Jane admits that he is weak but blames his new girlfriend for taking him from her.

One day, Jane asks for permission to go to William's wedding. She takes with her some boots and shoes in a bag. When she comes back, she describes the wedding and admits that she threw a boot at the bride¹⁸, which in fact, hit William. She believes that she gave him a black eye¹⁹.

Pre-reading exercises

Key vocabulary

This section will help you familiarise yourself with some of the more specific vocabulary used in the story. You may want to use it to help you before you start reading, or as a revision exercise after you have finished the story.

Formal words and expressions

The narrator is a comfortably-off (quite wealthy), middle-class person. His words suggest he is well educated, and he views the events in his household from a distance and with ironic humour. He uses formal

16 *old-fashioned*: someone whose job is to make or sell hats

17 taxi

18 a woman who is getting married

19 a bruise on the skin around the eye as a result of being hit

words and expressions which emphasise his character. At times he can sound rather pompous. Many of the words that he uses are now also old-fashioned.

1 The list below gives meanings for some of the more unusual words, which will help you to follow the story.

accost to stop someone and speak to them, especially in a way that could make them feel embarrassed or annoyed
aggrieved feeling angry or unhappy because you think you have been treated in an unfair way
cardinal very important
discourse on to talk for a long time about a particular subject
fervour very strong feeling or enthusiasm
inalienable this refers to something which cannot be taken away from you or given to someone else
latterly recently
partake to be involved in an activity, share
reprehensible very bad and deserving to be criticised
singularly in a noticeable way, particularly
thus in this way
to be wont to do sthg to have a habit of doing something
to extort confidences to get private information from someone by using force or threats
with promptitude quickly, immediately

Informal words and expressions

In contrast to the formal language described above, there a number of informal or colloquial phrases in the story. These are nearly always used by Jane, in her conversations with Euphemia.

2 Look at these examples from the story. Can you guess what they mean?

'I believe Jane **keeps him in ties**.'

'He is **getting on**, Jane,' said my wife.

'William is **being led away**,' she remarked abruptly.

We do not know the details ... but only such fragments as poor Jane **let fall**.

She did, I think, go so far as **to lay hands on him**.

'I only threw that one. I **hadn't the heart** to try again.'

'It **serves me right**. I was stuck up about him.'

3 Match the phrases with their definitions.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 to keep someone in something | a) to think you are better than you are |
| 2 to get on | b) to attack someone physically |
| 3 to be led away | c) to pay for someone to buy something |
| 4 to let (something) fall | d) not to feel like doing something |
| 5 to lay hands on someone | e) to make progress |
| 6 (not) to have the heart do something | f) to make someone behave badly |
| 7 to be stuck up | g) to deserve something |
| 8 to serve someone right | h) to give someone information |

Spoken language

The way the author writes dialogue shows the class divisions which existed at the time. The conversations between the narrator and his wife are written in standard English. Jane's speech shows her own social status as a servant. The author uses non-standard spelling to represent her Cockney²⁰ accent and pronunciation.

Accent and pronunciation

4 Here are some of the things Jane says in the story. Look at the words in bold. Match them to the standard English words in the box below.

carriage madam gave bankrupt amethyst greengrocer an angel tumor aren't

- 1 His father was a **greengrosher**, **m'm**, and had a **chumor**, and he was **bankrup**' twice.
- 2 ...he is saving money to buy a ring – **hammyfist**.
- 3 I'm sure the master's a **hangel** when his pipe's alight.
- 4 Mr Maynard comes and talks to him quite friendly, when they **ain't** busy...
- 5 It was a real **kerridge** they had, not a fly.
- 6 **Gev** him a black eye, I should think

²⁰ the accent and dialect of English spoken by people from the East End of London

Non-standard English

5 Here are some of the non-standard features that we can see in Jane's speech. Look at these examples and rewrite them in standard English. We have done the first one for you, as an example.

1 Yes, m'm; and he don't smoke.

'Yes, madam, and he doesn't smoke.'

2 Smoking ... do make such a dust about.

3 It tells you how to get on in the world, and some what William read to me was lovely, ma'am.

4 Mr Maynard has took a great fancy to him.

5 It could not have been a very agreeable walk, Jane.

Not for no parties, ma'am.

Main themes

Before you read the story, you may want to think about some of its main themes. The questions will help you think about the story as you are reading it for the first time. There is more discussion of the main themes in the *Literary analysis* section after the story.

Respectability, class and social climbing

It is interesting to see what Jane thinks makes William respectable. She boasts that he does not drink alcohol or smoke. He goes to church and is a member of the Plymouth Brethren, a Christian group that did not follow all the traditions of the Anglican Church. He reads the self-help book that Mr Maynard gives him with great interest and is determined to get on – to make progress in his job. He tries hard to improve his way of speaking, as this is important when serving customers. He is promoted to head porter and then is given the chance to serve in the shop. Each time his wage goes up, William becomes more ambitious. The improvements in his condition are reflected in his new clothes and the fact that he leaves Jane, a servant, for a milliner who plays the piano, something that Jane wishes she could do, as it is a sign of greater education and culture.

6 As you read the story, ask yourself:

a) Why does Jane think William will be a *good match* for her?

b) Do you feel sorry for Jane? Why/why not?

H G Wells was very interested in class, and the ways it operated in society, valuing some people more than others. In this story, as in many others, he shows how social-climbing – trying to be wealthier, more respectable, more *accomplished* (having artistic skills such as playing the piano) and therefore more valued – touches everyone's lives and opinions. Wells shows that characters on all *rungs of the social ladder* judge each other on the basis of social, and class, rules and conventions. The narrator, for example, describes his wife's friendliness with the servants as *reprehensible*. But the servants also think some people are better than others, on the basis of jobs and money, as we can see from the following extract. Jane describes William to Euphemia:

His relatives are quite superior people, m'm. Not labouring people at all.

This is a good example of Wells's sense of irony – after all, Jane herself is a kind of 'labourer', working as a servant. She uses the word *papa* to refer to William's father, in an awkward attempt to use language usually used by upper-class people – Euphemia has to ask her to repeat herself:

'He goes to chapel,' said Jane. 'His papa²¹, ma'am—'

'His what, Jane?'

'His papa, ma'am'...

Wells even says that Euphemia '*didn't fancy him [William] much*' but took an interest in him because of signs of his respectability, such as his llama-skin umbrella. Jane herself is a social climber and a snob, looking down on others. She recognises this herself later in the story:

It serves me right. I was stuck up about him.

She can see that she considered herself better than other people because she was engaged to William.

7 As you read the story, look for other examples of class division and snobbery.

21 *old-fashioned*: a word meaning *father*, used in the past, particularly by the upper classes

Courtship / the conventions of romantic relationships

Jane is free to go out and meet young men, but she must follow certain rules when she meets William. The *mistress of the house*, her employer, Euphemia, asks if the young couple are engaged and Jane says that William is saving his money to buy a ring. Euphemia says that once they are *properly engaged* William may come and have tea in the kitchen on Sunday afternoons. Sunday is Jane's day off when she can *walk out* with William. She puts on her best clothes and one day she is wearing new, cotton gloves.

When William leaves Jane, she is furious²² and confronts him. When William is finally married, Jane goes against convention and waits outside the church for the married couple to appear. She then throws a boot at the bride, but hits William instead.

8 As you read the story, ask yourself:

- a) Was Jane aiming too high, socially, in wanting to marry William?
- b) Do you admire her for fighting in the street and throwing the boot?

22 extremely angry



The Jilting of Jane

by H G Wells

As I sit writing in my study, I can hear our Jane bumping her way downstairs with a brush and **dustpan**. She used in the old days to sing hymn tunes, or the British national song for the time being, to these instruments, but latterly she has been silent and even careful over her work. Time was²³ when I prayed with fervour²⁴ for such silence, and my wife with sighs for such care, but now they have come we are not so glad as we might have **anticipated** we should be. Indeed, I would rejoice²⁵ secretly, though it may be unmanly weakness to admit it, even to hear Jane sing 'Daisy'²⁶ or, by the fracture²⁷ of any plate but²⁸ one of Euphemia's best green ones, to learn that the period of brooding has come to an end.

Yet how we longed to hear the last of Jane's young man before we heard the last of him! Jane was always very free with her conversation to my wife, and discoursed admirably in the kitchen on a variety of topics – so well, indeed, that I sometimes left my study door open – our house is a small one – to partake of it. But after William came, it was always William, nothing but William; William this and William that; and when we thought William was worked out and exhausted altogether, then William all over again. The engagement lasted altogether three years; yet how she got introduced to William, and so became thus **saturated** with him, was always a secret. For my part, I believe it was at the street corner where the Rev. Barnabas Baux used to hold an

23 *old-fashioned, dialect*: in the past

24 *formal, literary, old-fashioned*: very strong feeling or emotion

25 *mostly religious*: to feel very happy about something, or to celebrate something in a happy way

26 a popular song at the time the story was written

27 *formal, medical*: break

28 *literary, old-fashioned*: except for

open-air service after evensong on Sundays. Young Cupids²⁹ were wont to **flit** like **moths** round the paraffin flare of that centre of High Church³⁰ hymn-singing. I fancy³¹ she stood singing hymns there, out of memory and her imagination, instead of coming home to get supper, and William came up beside her and said, 'Hello!' 'Hello yourself!' she said; and **etiquette** being satisfied, they proceeded to converse.

As Euphemia has a reprehensible way of letting her servants talk to her, she soon heard of him. 'He is *such* a respectable young man, ma'am,' said Jane, 'you don't know'. Ignoring the slur³² cast on her acquaintance, my wife inquired further about this William.

'He is second **porter** at Maynard's, the draper's,' said Jane, 'and gets eighteen shillings³³ – nearly a pound – a week, m'm; and when the head porter leaves he will be head porter. His relatives are quite superior people, m'm. Not labouring people at all. His father was a green-grosher, m'm, and had a chumor, and he was bankrup' twice. And one of his sisters is in a Home for the Dying. It will be a very good match for me, m'm,' said Jane, 'me being an **orphan** girl.'

'Then you are engaged to him?' asked my wife.

'Not engaged, ma'am; but he is saving money to buy a ring – hammyfist.'

'Well, Jane, when you are properly engaged to him you may ask him round here on Sunday afternoons, and have tea with him in the kitchen'; for my Euphemia has a motherly conception of her duty towards her maid-servants. And presently the amethystine³⁴ ring was being worn about the house, even with ostentation³⁵,

29 Cupid was the Roman god of love, commonly depicted as a baby boy with wings, carrying a bow and arrow, aiming for people's hearts, to make them fall in love

30 the part of the Anglican Church that emphasises tradition and church authority

31 *literary, old-fashioned*: to believe or imagine that something is true; also, to like or approve of

32 *literary, old-fashioned*: a remark that is intended to injure someone or damage their reputation

33 a small unit of money used in the UK until 1971

34 *unusual*: looking like amethyst, a valuable purple stone used in jewellery

35 *formal*: a show of something such as money, power, or skill that is intended to impress people

and Jane developed a new way of bringing in the joint³⁶ so that this gage was evident. The elder Miss Maitland was aggrieved by it, and told my wife that servants ought not to wear rings. But my wife looked it up in *Enquire Within* and *Mrs. Motherly's Book of Household Management*, and found no prohibition. So Jane remained with this happiness added to her love.

The treasure of Jane's heart appeared to me to be what respectable people call a very deserving young man. 'William, ma'am,' said Jane one day suddenly, with ill-concealed **complacency**, as she counted out the beer bottles, 'William, ma'am, is a teetotaller³⁷. Yes, m'm; and he don't smoke. Smoking, ma'am,' said Jane, as one who reads the heart, 'do make such a dust about. Beside the waste of money. And the smell. However, I suppose they got to do it – some of theme. ...'

William was at first a rather **shabby** young man of the ready-made black coat school of costume. He had watery grey eyes, and a complexion appropriate to the brother of one in a Home for the Dying. Euphemia did not fancy him very much, even at the beginning. His eminent respectability was **vouched for** by an alpaca³⁸ umbrella, from which he never allowed himself to be parted.

'He goes to chapel,' said Jane. 'His papa³⁹, ma'am—'

'His *what*, Jane?'

'His papa, ma'am, was Church⁴⁰; but Mr. Maynard is a Plymouth Brother, and William thinks it Policy⁴¹, ma'am, to go there too. Mr. Maynard comes and talks to him quite friendly when they ain't busy, about using up all the ends of string, and about his soul. He takes a lot of notice, do Mr. Maynard, of William, and the way he saves his soul, ma'am.'

Presently we heard that the head porter at Maynard's had left, and that William was head porter at twenty-three shillings a

36 a piece of meat

37 someone who never drinks alcohol

38 a South American animal like a llama; here, the soft cloth made from the animal's hair

39 *formal, old-fashioned*: a word meaning *father*, used in the past particularly by the upper classes

40 Church of England

41 a principle or set of ideas that you think is sensible or wise

week. 'He is really kind of⁴² over the man who drives the van,' said Jane, 'and him married, with three children.' And she promised in the pride of her heart to make interest for us with William to favour us so that we might get our parcels of drapery from Maynard's with exceptional promptitude.

After this promotion a rapidly increasing prosperity came upon Jane's young man. One day we learned that Mr. Maynard had given William a book. "Smiles' *Elp Yourself*,' it's called,' said Jane; 'but it ain't comic. It tells you how to get on in the world, and some what William read to me was lovely, ma'am.'

Euphemia told me of this, laughing, and then she became suddenly grave. 'Do you know, dear,' she said, 'Jane said one thing I did not like. She had been quiet for a minute, and then she suddenly remarked, 'William is a lot above me, ma'am, ain't he?'"

'I don't see anything in that,' I said, though later my eyes were to be opened.

One Sunday afternoon about that time I was sitting at my writing-desk – possibly I was reading a good book – when a something went by the window. I heard a startled exclamation behind me, and saw Euphemia with her hands clasped together and her eyes dilated. 'George,' she said in an awe-stricken⁴³ whisper, 'did you see?'

Then we both spoke to one another at the same moment, slowly and solemnly: 'A silk hat! Yellow gloves! A new umbrella!'

'It may be my fancy, dear,' said Euphemia; 'but his tie was very like yours. I believe Jane keeps him in ties. She told me a little while ago, in a way that implied volumes about the rest of your costume, 'The master do wear pretty ties, ma'am.' And he echoes all your novelties.'

The young couple passed our window again on their way to their customary walk. They were arm in arm. Jane looked exquisitely proud, happy, and uncomfortable, with new white cotton gloves, and William, in the silk hat, singularly genteel⁴⁴!

42 *spoken, colloquial, phrase 'kind of'*: used when you are talking about someone or something in a general way without being very exact or definite

43 *Mostly literary, old-fashioned*: feeling extremely impressed by something

44 *old-fashioned, formal*: trying to appear as if you belong to a higher social class

That was the **culmination** of Jane's happiness. When she returned, 'Mr. Maynard has been talking to William, ma'am,' she said, 'and he is to serve customers, just like the young shop gentlemen, during the next sale. And if he gets on, he is to be made an assistant, ma'am, at the first opportunity. He has got to be as gentlemanly as he can, ma'am; and if he ain't, ma'am, he says it won't be for want of trying. Mr. Maynard has took a great fancy to him.'

'He is getting on, Jane,' said my wife.

'Yes, ma'am,' said Jane thoughtfully; 'he is getting on.'

And she sighed.

That next Sunday as I drank my tea I interrogated my wife. 'How is this Sunday different from all other Sundays, little woman? What has happened? Have you altered the curtains, or rearranged the furniture, or where is the indefinable difference of it? Are you wearing your hair in a new way without warning me? I perceive a change clearly, and I cannot for the life of me say what it is.'

Then my wife answered in her most tragic voice, 'George,' she said, 'that William has not come near the place to-day! And Jane is **crying her heart out** upstairs.'

There followed a period of silence. Jane, as I have said, stopped singing about the house, and began to care for our brittle possessions, which struck my wife as being a very sad sign indeed. The next Sunday, and the next, Jane asked to go out, 'to walk with William,' and my wife, who never attempts to extort confidences, gave her permission, and asked no questions. On each occasion Jane came back looking flushed and very determined. At last one day she became communicative.

'William is being led away,' she remarked abruptly, with a catching of the breath, **apropos** of tablecloths. 'Yes, m'm. She is a milliner, and she can play on the piano.'

'I thought,' said my wife, 'that you went out with him on Sunday.'

'Not out with him, m'm – after him. I walked along by the side of them, and told her he was engaged to me.'

'Dear me, Jane, did you? What did they do?'

'Took no more notice of me than if I was dirt. So I told her she should suffer for it.'

'It could not have been a very agreeable walk, Jane.'

'Not for no parties, ma'am.'

'I wish,' said Jane, 'I could play the piano, ma'am. But anyhow, I don't mean to let her get him away from me. She's older than him, and her hair ain't gold to the roots, ma'am.'

It was on the August Bank Holiday⁴⁵ that the crisis came. We do not clearly know the details of the fray⁴⁶, but only such fragments as poor Jane let fall. She came home dusty, excited, and with her heart hot within her.

The milliner's mother, the milliner, and William had made a party to the Art Museum at South Kensington, I think. Anyhow, Jane had calmly but firmly accosted them somewhere in the streets, and asserted her right to what, in spite of the consensus of literature, she held to be her inalienable property. She did, I think, go so far as to lay hands on him. They dealt with her in a **crushingly** superior way. They 'called a cab.' There was a 'scene'⁴⁷, William being pulled away into the four-wheeler⁴⁸ by his future wife and mother-in-law from the **reluctant** hands of our discarded Jane. There were threats of giving her 'in charge'⁴⁹.

'My poor Jane!' said my wife, **mincing** veal⁵⁰ as though she was mincing William. 'It's a shame⁵¹ of them. I would think no more of him. He is not worthy of you.'

'No, m'm,' said Jane. 'He is weak.'

'But it's that woman has done it,' said Jane. She was never known to bring herself to pronounce 'that woman's' name or to admit her girlishness⁵². 'I can't think what minds some women must have – to try and get a girl's young man away from her. But

45 a public holiday when shops, businesses and banks are closed

46 *old-fashioned*: a fight or argument

47 a noisy argument or strong show of feelings in public

48 a taxi/cab with four wheels, pulled by horses

49 to have arrested by the police

50 meat from a young cow

51 shameful

52 being and behaving like a girl, not a lady

there, it only hurts to talk about it,' said Jane.

Thereafter⁵³ our house rested from William. But there was something in the manner of Jane's **scrubbing** the front doorstep or sweeping out the rooms, a certain **viciousness**, that persuaded me that the story had not yet ended.

'Please, m'm, may I go and see a wedding to-morrow?' said Jane one day.

My wife knew by instinct whose wedding. 'Do you think it is wise, Jane?' she said.

'I would like to see the last of him,' said Jane.

'My dear,' said my wife, **fluttering** into my room about twenty minutes after Jane had started, 'Jane has been to the boot-hole⁵⁴ and taken all the left-off boots and shoes, and gone off to the wedding with them in a bag. Surely she cannot mean –'

'Jane,' I said, 'is developing character. Let us hope for the best.'

Jane came back with a pale, hard face. All the boots seemed to be still in her bag, at which my wife **heaved** a premature⁵⁵ sigh of relief. We heard her go upstairs and replace the boots with considerable emphasis.

'Quite a crowd at the wedding, ma'am,' she said presently, in a purely conversational style, sitting in our little kitchen and scrubbing the potatoes; 'and such a lovely day for them.' She proceeded to numerous other details, clearly avoiding some cardinal incident.

'It was all extremely respectable and nice, ma'am; but her father didn't wear a black coat, and looked quite out of place, ma'am. Mr. Piddingquirk –'

'Who?'

'Mr. Piddingquirk – William that was, ma'am – had white gloves, and a coat like a **clergyman**, and a lovely chrysanthemum. He looked so nice, ma'am. And there was red carpet down, just like for gentlefolks⁵⁶. And they say he gave the clerk four

53 after a particular time that has been mentioned

54 a place like a cupboard for keeping boots and shoes

55 happening too soon

56 *old-fashioned*: people who come from families belonging to a high social class

shillings, ma'am. It was a real kerridge⁵⁷ they had – not a fly⁵⁸. When they came out of church there was rice-throwing⁵⁹, and her two little sisters dropping dead flowers. And some one threw a slipper, and then I threw a boot –'

'Threw a *boot*, Jane!'

'Yes, ma'am. Aimed at her. But it hit *him*. Yes, ma'am, hard. Gev him a black eye, I should think. I only threw that one. I hadn't the heart to try again. All the little boys cheered when it hit him.'

After an interval – 'I am sorry the boot hit *him*.'

Another pause. The potatoes were being scrubbed violently. 'He always *was* a bit above me, you know, ma'am. And he was led away.'

The potatoes were more than finished. Jane rose sharply with a sigh, and rapped⁶⁰ the basin down on the table. 'I don't care,' she said.

'I don't care a rap. He will find out his mistake yet. It serves me right. I was stuck up about him. I ought not to have looked so high. And I am glad things are as things are.'

My wife was in the kitchen, seeing to the cookery. After the confession of the boot-throwing, she must have watched poor Jane **fuming** with a certain **dismay** in those brown eyes of hers. But I imagine they softened again very quickly, and then Jane's must have met them.

'Oh, ma'am,' said Jane, with an astonishing change of note, 'think of all that *might* have been! Oh, ma'am, I *could* have been so happy! I ought to have known, but I didn't know... . You're very kind to let me talk to you, ma'am ... for it's hard on me, ma'am ... it's har-r-r-d –'

And I gather that Euphemia so far forgot herself as to let Jane sob⁶¹ out some of the fulness of her heart on a sympathetic shoulder. My Euphemia, thank Heaven, has never properly **grasped** the importance of 'keeping up her position.' And since

57 *pronunciation*: carriage (with roof)

58 an ordinary, simple two-person carriage without a roof pulled by horses

59 it is traditional to throw rice over the newly-married couple as they leave church

60 *old-fashioned*: to give a quick hard hit

61 *mostly literary*: to sob noisily while taking short breaths

that **fit** of weeping, much of the accent of bitterness has gone out of Jane's scrubbing and brush-work.

Indeed, something passed the other day with the butcher boy – but that scarcely belongs to this story. However, Jane is young still, and time and change are at work with her. We all have our sorrows, but I do not believe very much in the existence of sorrows that never heal.

Post-reading exercises

Understanding the story

- 1 Use these questions to help you check that you have understood the story.
 - 1 Who is telling the story?
 - 2 Who is Jane and why does the writer call her *our Jane*?
 - 3 What did Jane use to sing? What were her *instruments*?
 - 4 Why did the writer use to pray for silence? Does he want silence from Jane now?
 - 5 Who is William? How long was Jane engaged to him?
 - 6 How does the writer imagine that Jane and William first met?
 - 7 Where does William work?
 - 8 What does Jane wear to show that she is engaged?
 - 9 What does Euphemia give Jane permission to do after she is engaged?
 - 10 What does Euphemia think of William?
 - 11 What makes William respectable in Jane's eyes?
 - 12 What happens to William after he is promoted?
 - 13 What is the book that Mr Maynard gives William and what is it about?
 - 14 What is the comment Jane makes about William that Euphemia does not like?
 - 15 How does William demonstrate his new wealth?
 - 16 In what way is William going to be promoted in the future?
 - 17 Why is Jane *crying her heart out* one Sunday?
 - 18 Where does Jane go on the following two Sundays?
 - 19 How does Jane describe William's new girlfriend?
 - 20 How did the couple react when Jane told the girl she was engaged to William?
 - 21 What happens on August Bank Holiday?
 - 22 What advice does Euphemia give Jane?
 - 23 What does Jane take with her to William's wedding?
 - 24 What does Jane do at the wedding?
 - 25 How does Jane react after the wedding? What is Euphemia's attitude?
 - 26 Why is the writer optimistic about Jane's future?

Language study

Grammar

Multiple-clause sentences

In his longer, explanatory sentences, Wells uses a variety of ways to connect different clauses. For example, he uses conjunctions – words like *and*, *but*, *although* and *because*. He also uses punctuation such as dashes (–) to add information, and semi-colons (;) when the meaning of the clauses is closely connected.

1 Look at these examples from the story:

Jane was always very free with her conversation to my wife, and discoursed admirably in the kitchen on a variety of topics – so well, indeed, that I sometimes left my study door open – our house is a small one – to partake of it.

We can break this sentence down into several clauses:

*Jane was always very free with her conversation.
(She) discoursed admirably on a variety of topics.
I sometimes left my study door open to partake of it.
Our house is a small one.*

2 Now answer the questions.

- 1 Wells uses a dash – to include extra information in his sentence. Where could he have used brackets () instead of dashes?
- 2 Which conjunction does he use? Here is another example from the text:

But after William came, it was always William, nothing but William; William this and William that; and when we thought William was worked out and exhausted all together, then William all over again.

- 3 What type of punctuation does Wells use in this sentence?
- 4 Which conjunctions does he use?
- 5 Break the sentence down into separate clauses.

As Euphemia has a reprehensible way of letting her servants talk to her, she soon heard of him.

- 6 How many clauses are there in this sentence?

- 7 Which word is used to join the clauses? Could any other word(s) have been used?
- 3 **Join these clauses into single sentences using conjunctions and/or different punctuation. We have done the first one for you, as an example.**
- 1 I would like to attend the meeting. However, it's a little problematic.
I would like to attend the meeting; however, it's a little problematic.
- 2 Everybody was at the wedding. There were the Browns, the Pikes, the Collins family. Even Mr. Smith was there.
- 3 He is from quite a wealthy family. He never spends much on himself. He is very generous towards his friends.
- 4 I don't want them to stay with us. They could help us to paint the house. They always stay too long.
- 5 Rose is always very cheerful and positive. She has multiple sclerosis.
- 6 We tried everything. We looked in the drawers. We looked in the garage. We even looked in the attic. We could not find the papers anywhere.
- 7 Tim was watching TV. At the same time, Sue was studying.
- 8 Don't touch the paint. It's still wet!

Expressing purpose

The structure *so that* can be used to talk about purpose. In past sentences, *might* is occasionally used in a literary style. Look at these examples from the story:

And presently, the amethystine ring was being worn about the house, even with ostentation, and Jane developed a new way of bringing in the joint, so that this gage was evident.

And she promised in the pride of her heart to make interest for us with William to favour us so that we might get our parcels of drapery from Maynard's with exceptional promptitude.

4 Now answer the questions.

- 1 What does Jane do and why does she do it?
- 2 What does Jane promise to do? Why?
- 3 Which of these words could be used here instead of *might*: *could*; *should*; *may*; *would*; *can*?

Another way of expressing purpose is to use the infinitive of the verb. Here is an example from the story:

The next Sunday, and the next, Jane asked to go out 'to walk with William.

- 4 Which infinitive expresses purpose? Rewrite the sentence using *so that*.
- 5 **Rewrite the following sentences correctly, using the infinitive, or *could*, *should*, *may*, *would* or *can*.**
- 1 She asked permission for to attend the dance.
- 2 We ordered the new books well in advance so that we have them before Christmas.
- 3 I'm going to the dentist tomorrow have my tooth out.
- 4 Show me the brochure so that I could decide about our holiday.
- 5 The students worked hard all week so that they can have the weekend off.
- 6 Would you like to try the dress for see if it fits?
- 7 Sam punished his son so that the boy will behave less selfishly.
- 8 The babysitter is coming early so that we could go out.

Such and so

Such

The words *such* (a) and *so* are easy to confuse.

Such is commonly used **before adjective + noun**, to emphasise the meaning of the adjective:

He is such a respectable young man [page 106]

Wells also uses it in a more literary way, **before abstract nouns**. In modern English, *such* is used before nouns but usually when they are 'gradable' and can be emphasised, eg mess, excitement, chaos.

Time was when I prayed ... for such silence ... such care [page 105]

So

So is used **before nouns without adjectives**:

He looked so nice ...

I could have been so happy ...

It is also used **before adverbs**:

Jane ... discoursed ... so well

There is also a structure with *so* **followed by adjective + as + infinitive**:

And I gather that Euphemia so far forgot herself as to let Jane sob out some of the fullness of her heart on a sympathetic shoulder.

This structure is formal and not commonly used.

6 Complete the sentences with *so* or *such* (a/an)

- 1 He's an attractive man!
- 2 Do you have to be negative about everything?
- 3 She played the violin beautifully.
- 4 Would you be kind as to pass me the salt?
- 5 They have good taste in furniture.
- 6 We ate much that we felt ill.
- 7 He has many books!
- 8 I've never met delightful people.
- 9 There was noise last night that it woke me up.
- 10 There was chaos during the airport strike.

Literary analysis

Plot

- 1 Look at these events from the story and number them in the correct order.
 - a) Euphemia and her husband observe William in his new clothes.
 - b) Jane cries and says she could have been happy with William.
 - c) Jane follows William and is ignored by him and his girlfriend.
 - d) Jane puts old shoes and boots into a bag.
 - e) Jane throws a boot at William's bride.
 - f) Jane wears her engagement ring around the house.
 - g) Mr Maynard gives William a book.
 - h) William does not come to the house to take Jane out.
 - i) William escapes from Jane in a cab.
 - j) William is promoted to head porter.
- 2 In what way is the plot 'circular'? How does the writer describe Jane at the beginning and the end of the narrative?

Character

- 3 Here are some words to describe Jane. Do you agree with them? What evidence is there in the story? Complete the list below, giving an example for each adjective. We have done the first two for you, as examples.

brave – *for example, she follows William and challenges him in front of his girlfriend*

careless – *for example, she breaks things belonging to her employers*

tactful

opinionated

optimistic

trusting

self-respecting

respectable

naïve

proud

- 4 How would you describe the writer of the story? Think about his attitude to his wife, the servants and Jane's situation. What does the last paragraph of the story tell you about him?

- 5 How would you describe Euphemia? What is her relationship with:
a) her husband
b) the servants?

Narration

- 6 The story is written from the point of view of the master of the house, George. How would you describe his attitude to the events that occur?
- 7 Wells uses various devices to make it possible for his narrator to find out what is happening. For example, the first meeting between Jane and William is invented or imagined. Look at the last few paragraphs of the story (from *My wife was in the kitchen ...* [page 112]) and find more examples of George drawing conclusions or imagining events. Look for sentences containing these verbs: *fancy*, *imagine*, *gather*.
- 8 How does George know that Jane enjoys talking about different topics?
- 9 Is George always present at the conversations between Jane and Euphemia? Where does he get his information?
- 10 Is Wells sympathetic to his narrator? Is George always right in his interpretation of events?
- 11 How are differences in social class portrayed in the story?

Atmosphere

- 12 What is your impression of George and Euphemia's house and the way it is run? For example, is it calm or chaotic? Is it tidy or untidy? Is it quiet or noisy? Give reasons for your answer.
- 13 What kind of atmosphere is created in the conversations between Euphemia and Jane? How does Wells create this effect?
- 14 Is the story humorous, sad or a mixture of both? Has it got a happy ending?

Style

- 15 Wells's narrator, George, sometimes writes in long, rather formal sentences. What effect does this have? How does it affect your ideas about George?
- 16 Is the dialogue realistic? What do you think of the way Wells portrays Jane's accent and dialect?

- 17 The story is quite typical of the kind of story published in newspapers at the time. Why do you think this kind of story was popular?
- 18 Choose a scene and write some dialogue to accompany it, for example, the scene where William and Jane meet; one of the confrontations between Jane; William and the milliner; the scene at the wedding.

Guidance to the above literary terms, answer keys to all the exercises and activities, plus a wealth of other reading-practice material, can be found on the student's section of the Macmillan Readers website at:
www.macmillanenglish.com/readers.