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I remember going to the British Museum one day to read about a treatment for some slight illness which I believed I had. I think it was hay fever. I got the book and read the fragment I came to read and then I began turning the leaves and studying other diseases. I don't remember which was the first I read about but I soon realised I had them all.

I sat for a moment, frozen with horror; and then, in despair, I again turned over the pages. I came to typhoid fever, must have had it for months without knowing it. I wondered what else I had got; turned to Blight's disease and was relieved to find I had only a modified version so I might live for years. I read through the whole book and the only disease I decided I didn't have was housemaid's knee.

I went to my doctor. He is an old friend of mine, and feels my pulse, and looks at my tongue and talks about the weather and I thought I would be doing him a favour by going to him now. "What a doctor wants," I thought, "is practice. He shall have me. He will get more practice out of me than out of seventeen hundred of your ordinary patients with only one or two illnesses each."

So I went straight up to him and he said, "Well, what is the matter with you?" I told him it would be easier for me to tell him what was *not* the matter with me. I said I didn't have housemaid's knee. I said I had every other illness. And then I told him how I came to discover it all.

Then he looked at me, took hold of my wrist, counted the pulse and continued the examination. After that, he sat down and wrote out a prescription. He folded it up and gave it to me and I put it in my pocket and went out.

I did not open it. I took it to the nearest chemist's, and handed it in. The man read it, and then handed it back saying that he didn't have the things I needed. "Are you a chemist?" I said in surprise. "I am," he replied. "If I was a grocer and a family hotel combined, I might be able to help. But being only a chemist makes it impossible."

I looked at the prescription and read it slowly. It ran:

*1 lb beefsteak with 1 pt bitter beer every 6 hours. 1 ten-mile walk every morning. 1 bed at 11 sharp every night. And don't stuff up your head reading things you don't understand.*

I followed the directions, with the happy result – speaking for myself, that my life was saved and is still going on.

(adapted from *Three Men in a Boat* by Jerome K Jerome)

1. The author went to the British Museum because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. he was interested in history.
  - B. he wanted to study books about medicine.
  - C. he wanted to find information on one particular illness.
  - D. he didn't trust his doctor's diagnosis.
2. After reading the book he thought that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. he suffered from less illnesses than he had previously thought.
  - B. he was perfectly healthy.
  - C. he was going to die soon.
  - D. he suffered from almost all possible illnesses.
3. He thought he was doing his doctor a favour because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. treating him would give the doctor a lot of experience.
  - B. his doctor didn't have many patients.
  - C. he was going to have to pay his doctor a lot of money.
  - D. he knew the doctor wanted to see him.
4. During the examination \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the doctor looked very worried.
  - B. the doctor laughed at what the man had told him.
  - C. the doctor pretended to treat his illnesses seriously.
  - D. the doctor refused to give him any medicines
5. The chemist couldn't help the author because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. the medicines were very rare.
  - B. the doctor had not prescribed any medicines.
  - C. he thought the man was joking.
  - D. he was not a real chemist
6. The overall tone of the text is \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. serious.
  - B. sad.
  - C. humorous.
  - D. critical.



## 26

### THE GENTLEMAN THIEF

I once heard someone say that people who make fake documents do their work much more carefully than people who make real ones. So I suppose the best con artists do their best to look more respectable than truly respectable people. Jonathan Wilde had charm and intelligence: in fact, he was a hit with the ladies. He also knew how to read the times he lived in. In eighteenth century England, people were terrified of crime. Industry started to grow very quickly at that time. This made towns and cities grow bigger very quickly. Many people from the country had to go to look for work in them because their small family businesses couldn't compete with the bigger fish. The modern police force hadn't yet been created, so these growing towns and cities were full of crime.

Wilde used people's fear of crime. His gang robbed people at night and he offered to get people's things back for them if they gave him money for his work. He also helped the authorities to catch a lot of criminals (his rivals and former partners in crime). He was like a mafia boss: he created a heroic image for himself to cover up his criminal activity. He was known as the "gentleman thief".

You can't call today's con artists "gentlemen"! Many of them trick old people into giving them money. Some con artists in Germany use the "nephew trick". They look for old-fashioned first names in telephone directories. They then call old people, saying that they are younger relatives who need money quickly. The trick often works because it's harder for older people to be sure who they are talking to on the telephone. What's more, older people often don't tell other people that they have problems with this. Sometimes they feel embarrassed about it, sometimes they worry that they might have Alzheimer's Disease and sometimes they're afraid of being put in an old people's home. The con artist and the victim meet each other at a bank. The victim takes the money out and gives it to the con artist. These people move around the country very quickly and are in organised gangs. Many of the gang

bosses are in Poland: people on the Polish-German border tell them about police operations.

Even the best con artists aren't always lucky. For example, Wilde was executed. And you can't trick all old people. A clever old lady in Germany recently caught two "relatives" with the help of the police.

1. Jonathan Wilde \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. was a politician.
  - B. was not very intelligent.
  - C. was not very nice.
  - D. was popular with women.
2. In 18<sup>th</sup> century England \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. a lot of people had to move to big cities.
  - B. there wasn't a lot of crime.
  - C. the industry was not well developed
  - D. there were a lot of small businesses.
3. Jonathan Wilde \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. cooperated with the police.
  - B. was a real gentleman.
  - C. was a real hero.
  - D. gave money to the poor.
4. Con artists in Germany pretend they \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. have a lot of money.
  - B. want to give some money away.
  - C. are related to their victims.
  - D. have health problems.
5. Older people are easier to trick because they \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. have problems with using computers.
  - B. live alone.
  - C. have old-fashioned names.
  - D. might have health problems.
6. Jonathan Wilde \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. was never caught.
  - B. moved to another country.
  - C. was killed.
  - D. was caught by an old lady.

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*This week Rob reports on his trip on the highest railway in the world.*

After enjoying the colonial charm of Peru's old towns and cities, I decided it was time to go for the big one. A journey on the highest railway in the world through the Andes Mountains and a climb up Machu Picchu. This is a really high mountain and the views then are amazing.

I arrived at the station early in the morning because I thought there would be lots of tourists waiting for tickets. I really hoped there wouldn't be too many of them on the train. They always talk loudly to each other and never really look at things. I was lucky this time. There were just one or two other travellers. They looked more interested in their books than anything else.

The carriage was full. Each seat was full and some people had animals with them. There weren't any dogs, just chickens and a couple of goats. Some of the people sat silently, others talked quietly to each other in Quechua(\*). I looked out of the window. The train moved slowly through the beautiful scenery. There were green mountains everywhere I looked. I felt like I was in a dream and I didn't want the dream to end.

After many hours of travelling, the train finally arrived at the station near Machu Picchu. It was getting dark, so I found a bed for the night in the youth hostel. My room was basic: there was only a bed, a chair, a small table and a reading lamp. But it was comfortable. I fell asleep with my book on Peru in my hands.

The next day, I woke up early to get ready for my climb. The weather was perfect for climbing. Unfortunately, I forgot to chew coca leaves. The local people chew these leaves because it helps them not to feel dizzy high up in the mountains. As I climbed up the mountain, I felt dizzy and dizzy. In the end, I felt so bad that I fainted! A doctor woke me up and took me back down the mountain. He told me to rest for a couple of days. He also said I could climb the mountain with him when I felt better. We're going tomorrow. I can't wait!

(\*) *Quechua is a Native Indian language spoken in South America.*

1. Rob arrived at the station early because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. he wanted to avoid crowds.
  - B. he wanted to chat with other tourists.
  - C. he wanted to choose a good seat on the train.
  - D. he didn't want to miss the train.
2. In the carriage \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. there weren't many people.
  - B. there were people with dogs and other animals.
  - C. some people talked in English.
  - D. no one talked in English.

3. When he looked out of the window \_\_\_\_\_  
A. he saw the scenery he saw in a dream.  
B. he saw Machu Picchu.  
C. there was amazing scenery around him.  
D. he couldn't see anything because of the train moving too fast.
4. After arriving at the station \_\_\_\_\_  
A. it was already dark.  
B. he rented a room.  
C. he went to climb up Machu Picchu.  
D. he was very tired.
5. Before he went for a hike \_\_\_\_\_  
A. it started to rain.  
B. he checked the weather forecast.  
C. he made some preparations.  
D. he felt dizzy.
6. The local people \_\_\_\_\_  
A. never chew coca leaves high up in the mountains.  
B. chew coca leaves because they don't want to feel dizzy.  
C. only chew coca leaves when they feel dizzy.  
D. chew coca leaves not to feel sleepy.
7. Up in the mountains he \_\_\_\_\_  
A. lost consciousness.  
B. felt very good  
C. met some local people  
D. met a friend who was a doctor.

GIA SƯ CHUNG CÚ

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