

The Girl on the Bench

She sat on the same bench every evening, book in hand, always at the edge of the playground. Passersby often speculated — was she waiting for someone? Escaping from something? Or simply observing life unfold?

Despite her quiet presence, she had become a fixture, an unofficial landmark. Children ran past her; teenagers whispered theories. A local jogger, curious after months of silent nods, finally stopped. "Is it good?" he asked, glancing at her book. She smiled. "It's the third time I've read it." He nodded and continued on, mildly amused.

Two days later, she was gone. In her place, wedged into the bench's wooden slats, was a handwritten note:

"We all want to be noticed. Thank you for seeing me."

What remained wasn't her name or her story — just the echo of presence, and the realisation that sometimes, acknowledgement is more powerful than answers.

Comprehension Questions

1. What was unusual about the woman's daily habit? _____
2. How did the community respond to her presence? _____
3. What motivated the jogger to speak to her? _____
4. Why is the note significant? _____
5. What does the ending suggest about human connection? _____
6. What is meant by "the echo of presence"? _____
7. Do we know for sure what happened to her? Why or why not? _____

Vocabulary: Expressions & Idioms

Match the word/phrase from the story with its meaning:

Word/Phrase	Meaning
become a fixture	A. Something that makes you think deeply
unfold	B. Happen or develop naturally over time
mildly amused	C. To be a regular or familiar part of a place
whispered theories	D. Quietly invented explanations or ideas
presence	E. The state of being there
realisation	F. A soft feeling of surprise or entertainment
be noticed	G. To be seen, acknowledged
acknowledgement	H. Recognition or expression of awareness
echo of presence	I. A lingering sense that someone <i>was</i> there
thought-provoking (added)	J. Stimulating reflection or reconsideration

Use the Vocabulary

Choose 5 expressions and use them in original sentences related to:

- books
- people you see
- volleyball or public moments

Grammar Focus: Nominalisation

Explanation:

Nominalisation is the process of turning verbs or adjectives into nouns. It is common in formal, academic, and abstract writing — and is excellent for storytelling.

Verb/Adjective Nominalised Form

realise	realisation
acknowledge	acknowledgement
recognise	recognition
observe	observation
decide	decision
act	action
appear	appearance
know	knowledge
aware	awareness

Example:

- Verb: *He acknowledged her.*
- Nominalised: *His **acknowledgement** meant a lot to her.*

Grammar Exercise 1 – Transform the Sentences

Transform using nominalisation:

1. He realised she was gone. → His _____ was immediate.
2. They acknowledged her efforts. → Their _____ was sincere.

3. She decided to leave. → Her _____ surprised everyone.
 4. He acted without thinking. → His _____ caused confusion.
 5. The crowd recognised his work. → The _____ was unexpected.
 6. We observed her routine. → Our _____ was accurate.
 7. She appeared calm. → Her _____ was deceiving.
 8. They became aware of her story. → Their _____ came too late.
 9. I know she meant well. → My _____ changed the situation.
 10. He spoke kindly. → His _____ was appreciated.
-

Grammar Exercise 2 – Fill in the Gaps

Use the correct nominalised form from the box below:

realisation, observation, appearance, knowledge, decision, awareness, acknowledgement, recognition, action, presence

1. Her sudden _____ at the meeting surprised us.
2. The coach's _____ of her skills boosted her confidence.
3. His _____ of the mistake came too late.
4. We appreciated her quiet but constant _____.
5. Without full _____, the debate was one-sided.
6. The captain's _____ of the players' efforts was heartfelt.
7. Her _____ to leave shocked the team.
8. The referee's quick _____ changed the match.
9. Their growing _____ of injustice led to protests.
10. His calm _____ was mistaken for indifference.