

## Chapter 1

# *A Day's Wait* ERNEST HEMINGWAY



### A PRE-READING

#### 1. *Think Before You Read*

Answer the following questions before you read the story:

1. What do you know about Ernest Hemingway's life and writings?
2. Which of his novels or short stories have you read?
3. What do you think the title of the story means?
4. What makes parents more or less sensitive to their children's fears?
5. Are parents always sensitive to their children's fears?
6. Why do children sometimes hide their fears from their parents?

## 2. *Literary Term: Point of View*

Eyewitnesses to accidents or crimes often describe what they saw in very different ways. People see situations from their own perspectives. In “A Day’s Wait,” Hemingway chose to write the narrative from the father’s **point of view** (the “I” of the story). Imagine the events of the story from a different character’s point of view.

## 3. *Idioms and Expressions*

Note the following idioms and expressions that appear in the story:

**got a headache** had a pain in one’s head

**took the boy’s temperature** used a thermometer to measure fever

**made a note** wrote something down

**take it easy** relax

**we make** we create

## B THE STORY

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) is a well-known writer whose works are read all over the world. Like Mark Twain, he is regarded as a representative American writer.

Born in a suburb of Chicago, Hemingway began writing in high school, and after graduation he worked as a reporter. During World War I, Hemingway tried to join the army but was turned down because of his age. Instead, he volunteered as an ambulance driver for the Red Cross. In Italy, he was injured by a mortar shell and sent home. He was only eighteen years old.

Hemingway’s life was an adventurous one in which he challenged nature and the dangers of war. He fought in the Spanish Civil War, was a correspondent in World War II, and ran with the bulls in Pamplona. He was an amateur boxer, avid hunter, and record-holding deep-sea fisherman.

Hemingway lived in Paris, the Florida Keys, and Cuba before settling in Idaho. After a period of failing health, he committed suicide by shooting himself. His father had also killed himself with a gun.

The story “A Day’s Wait” exemplifies Hemingway’s style: The sentences are clearly and sparsely written; the dialogues are short and to the point. Hemingway’s heroes appear to be strong and unemotional, but they are also sensitive. Under the macho, brave exterior is a scared little child. Thus, the character becomes more human and believable.

# A Day's Wait

HE CAME into the room to shut the windows while we were still in bed and I saw he looked ill. He was shivering, his face was white, and he walked slowly as though it ached to move.

"What's the matter, Schatz?"

"I've got a headache."

"You better go back to bed."

"No. I'm all right."

"You go to bed. I'll see you when I'm dressed."

But when I came downstairs he was dressed, sitting by the fire, looking a very sick and miserable boy of nine years. When I put my hand on his forehead I knew he had a fever.

"You go up to bed," I said, "you're sick."

"I'm all right," he said.

When the doctor came he took the boy's temperature.

"What is it?" I asked him.

"One hundred and two."

Downstairs, the doctor left three different medicines in different colored capsules with instructions for giving them. One was to bring down the fever, another a purgative, the third to overcome an acid condition. The germs of influenza can only exist in an acid condition, he explained. He seemed to know all about influenza and said there was nothing to worry about if the fever did not go above one hundred and four degrees. This was a light epidemic of flu and there was no danger if you avoided pneumonia.

Back in the room I wrote the boy's temperature down and made a note of the time to give the various capsules.

"Do you want me to read to you?"

"All right. If you want to," said the boy. His face was very white and there were dark areas under his eyes. He lay still in the bed and seemed very detached from what was going on.

I read aloud from Howard Pyle's *Book of Pirates*; but I could see he was not following what I was reading.

"How do you feel, Schatz?" I asked him.

"Just the same, so far," he said.

I sat at the foot of the bed and read to myself while I waited for it to be time to give another capsule. It would have been natural for him to go to sleep, but when I looked up he was looking at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely.

"Why don't you try to go to sleep? I'll wake you up for the medicine."

"I'd rather stay awake."

After a while he said to me, "You don't have to stay in here with me, Papa, if it bothers you."

"It doesn't bother me."

"No, I mean you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you."

I thought perhaps he was a little lightheaded and after giving him the prescribed capsules at eleven o'clock I went out for a while.

It was a bright, cold day, the ground covered with a sleet that had frozen so that it seemed as if all the bare trees,

the bushes, the cut brush and all the grass and the bare ground had been varnished with ice. I took the young Irish setter for a little walk up the road and along a frozen creek, but it was difficult to stand or walk on the glassy surface and the red dog slipped and slithered and I fell twice, hard, once dropping my gun and having it slide away over the ice.

We flushed a covey of quail under a high clay bank with overhanging brush and I killed two as they went out of sight over the top of the bank. Some of the covey lit in trees, but most of them scattered into brush piles and it was necessary to jump on the ice-coated mounds of brush several times before they would flush. Coming out while you were poised unsteadily on the icy, springy brush they made difficult shooting and I killed two, missed five, and started back pleased to have found a covey close to the house and happy there were so many left to find another day.

At the house they said the boy had refused to let anyone come into the room.

"You can't come in," he said. "You mustn't get what I have."

I went up to him and found him in exactly the position I had left him, white-faced, but with the tops of his cheeks flushed by the fever, staring still, as he stared, at the foot of the bed.

I took his temperature.

"What is it?"

"Something like a hundred," I said. It was one hundred and two and four tenths.

"It was a hundred and two," he said.

"Who said so?"

"The doctor."

"Your temperature is all right," I said. "It's nothing to worry about."

"I don't worry," he said, "but I can't keep from thinking."

"Don't think," I said. "Just take it easy."

"I'm taking it easy," he said and looked straight ahead. He was evidently holding tight onto himself about something.

"Take this with water."

"Do you think it will do any good?"

"Of course it will."

I sat down and opened the Pirate book and commenced to read, but I could see he was not following, so I stopped.

"About what time do you think I'm going to die?" he asked.

"What?"

"About how long will it be before I die?"

"You aren't going to die. What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, yes, I am. I heard him say a hundred and two."

"People don't die with a fever of one hundred and two. That's a silly way to talk."

*... what time do you think I'm going to die?" he asked.*

"I know they do. At school in France the boys told me you can't live with forty-four degrees. I've got a hundred and two."

165 He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o'clock in the morning.

170 "You poor Schatz," I said. "Poor old Schatz. It's like miles and kilometers. You aren't going to die. That's a different thermometer. On that thermometer thirty-seven is normal. On this kind it's ninety-eight."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely," I said. "It's like miles and kilometers. You know, like how 175 many kilometers we make when we do seventy miles in the car?"

"Oh," he said.

180 But his gaze at the foot of the bed relaxed slowly. The hold over himself relaxed too, finally, and the next day it was very slack and he cried very easily at little things that were of no importance.

## C AFTER READING

### 1. *Comprehension*

Answer these questions to determine how well you understood the story.

1. In what season does the story take place?
2. How does the father know his son is sick?
3. Why doesn't the boy pay attention to the book his father is reading to him?
4. Where does the father go while his son is resting in bed?
5. What is the boy waiting for?
6. How much time passes from the beginning of the story until the end?
7. Why does the boy cry easily the next day?

### 2. *Vocabulary*

The following vocabulary words appear in Hemingway's story. Write the appropriate word(s) in each sentence.

flushed

capsule

covey

commenced

detached

lightheaded

sleet

pirates

quail

poised

bank

prescribed

varnished

shivering

1. The man, drenched by the rain, stood \_\_\_\_\_ in his wet clothes.
2. The little boy was too worried about his temperature to listen to stories of \_\_\_\_\_ and hidden treasure.
3. She felt \_\_\_\_\_ from the hot weather and lack of water.
4. Schatz's doctor \_\_\_\_\_ the medicine in \_\_\_\_\_ form.
5. The weather forecaster predicted a winter storm with snow and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. They \_\_\_\_\_ the antique furniture to protect it.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ sat hidden in the bushes.
8. The hunter \_\_\_\_\_ his prey out of the woods.
9. The diver stood \_\_\_\_\_ at the edge of the diving board.
10. She sat apart from the other students feeling \_\_\_\_\_ and lonely.
11. At the signal from the instructor, the students \_\_\_\_\_ to take the exam.
12. An old, gnarled tree stood on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the river.

### 3. *Grammar: Articles*

The English articles include *a*, *an*, and *the*. *The* is the **definite** article; it is used with nouns that refer to something or someone definite or specific. *A* and *an* are **indefinite** articles; they are used with nouns that refer to something or someone that is not specific or known about.

The indefinite articles *a* and *an* are used with singular nouns only. The definite article *the* can be used with a singular or plural noun.

Sometimes, singular nouns sound plural, for example, *news*, *family*, *orchestra*, and *army*. It is important to remember that such nouns still take a singular verb, so that subject and verb agree.

Look at the following sentences:

The **news** of his rescue is a relief.  
The **family** next door is **coming** for dinner.  
The **orchestra** rehearses every day.  
An **army** needs equipment.

*Intangible or abstract nouns* Nouns such as *love, life, hope, beauty, and hate* do not use any article when they are referred to in a general sense. For example,

INCORRECT: The life is unpredictable.

CORRECT: **Life** is unpredictable.

*Using articles* When we refer to a noun the first time, we use *a* or *an*. Thereafter, since the identity of the noun is established, we use the definite article *the*. For example,

There is **a** large elm tree in the park. **The** tree is more than a hundred years old.

#### ■ Application

Write the correct articles in these sentences. For some sentences, there is more than one correct article.

1. I read \_\_\_\_\_ book *The Color Purple* before I saw \_\_\_\_\_ movie.
2. The house has \_\_\_\_\_ beautiful garden. Would you like to sit in \_\_\_\_\_ garden?
3. \_\_\_\_\_ police found \_\_\_\_\_ kidnapped child.
4. He bought \_\_\_\_\_ expensive car, and he washes \_\_\_\_\_ car every week.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ bank was closed because it was \_\_\_\_\_ holiday.
6. I didn't have \_\_\_\_\_ stamp, so I couldn't mail \_\_\_\_\_ letter.
7. She asked \_\_\_\_\_ waiter to bring her \_\_\_\_\_ menu.
8. Did you submit \_\_\_\_\_ application for \_\_\_\_\_ credit card?



#### 4. Grammar: Prepositions

Prepositions, which occur frequently in English, act as bridges or connections between their objects and other words in a sentence. A preposition always has an object – a noun or pronoun. The preposition plus its object is called a **prepositional phrase**. Prepositional phrases may occur anywhere in a sentence. At the beginning of a sentence, the prepositional phrase is usually followed by a comma. Here are some examples of prepositional phrases:

The story **of her recovery** is an inspiration.

We saw the clouds **above the mountain**.

**After the summer**, we will visit France.

*Using prepositions* The following are some frequently used prepositions:

about	below	in	through
above	by	into	to
after	down	of	under
among	during	off	up
around	for	on	with
at	from	over	without

The prepositions *in* and *on* are often confused. When we are discussing time, *on* refers to a specific date. These, for example, are correct:

I was born **on** April 5, 1950.

I was born **in** April; or I was born **in** 1950.

#### ■ Application

Write the correct prepositions in the sentences below. For some sentences, there is more than one correct preposition.

1. The man \_\_\_\_\_ the car looked suspicious.
2. He gave some money \_\_\_\_\_ the beggar.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ the meeting, we went \_\_\_\_\_ the cafeteria  
\_\_\_\_\_ lunch.
4. As he stepped \_\_\_\_\_ the street, he heard the screeching sound  
\_\_\_\_\_ brakes.



5. He was heartbroken \_\_\_\_\_ her betrayal, but he hoped he would fall \_\_\_\_\_ love again.
6. They jogged \_\_\_\_\_ the park \_\_\_\_\_ the rain.
7. We celebrate Independence Day \_\_\_\_\_ July 4.
8. Are you taking a trip \_\_\_\_\_ January?

Often, a preposition consists of a group of words. The following are typical examples:

in front of	because of	by means of	according to
next to	in place of	in order to	in spite of

#### ■ *Application*

Use the preceding prepositions (groups of words) in the following sentences:

1. We played the game \_\_\_\_\_ the rules.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ his disability, he graduated with honors.
3. He used chopsticks \_\_\_\_\_ a fork.
4. It was hard to see the stage because the man \_\_\_\_\_ me wore a hat.
5. He turned up the volume \_\_\_\_\_ hear the music better.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ a hidden camera, the police were able to trap the terrorist.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ the blizzard, travelers were stranded at the airport.
8. He enjoyed sitting \_\_\_\_\_ the window and watching the children play.

Note: The omission of prepositions is a common error. If you read your sentences aloud, often you will hear the mistake and correct it yourself. Trust your ear for the language!

## Using Articles and Prepositions

### ■ Application

For this exercise you need to combine the various things you have just learned. Use appropriate articles and prepositions to complete the following sentences:

1. He came \_\_\_\_\_ room to shut \_\_\_\_\_ windows while we were still in bed.
2. When I put my hand \_\_\_\_\_ his forehead, I knew he had \_\_\_\_\_ fever.
3. Downstairs, \_\_\_\_\_ doctor left three different medicines \_\_\_\_\_ different colored capsules \_\_\_\_\_ instructions \_\_\_\_\_ giving them.
4. Back \_\_\_\_\_ room, I wrote \_\_\_\_\_ boy's temperature down and made \_\_\_\_\_ note \_\_\_\_\_ time to give \_\_\_\_\_ various capsules.
5. It was \_\_\_\_\_ bright, cold day, \_\_\_\_\_ ground covered \_\_\_\_\_ sleet.
6. I took \_\_\_\_\_ young Irish setter \_\_\_\_\_ little walk \_\_\_\_\_ road.
7. People don't die \_\_\_\_\_ fever \_\_\_\_\_ one hundred and two.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ school \_\_\_\_\_ France, \_\_\_\_\_ boys told me you can't live \_\_\_\_\_ forty-four degrees.

## D THINKING ABOUT THE STORY

### 1. *Sharing Ideas*

Discuss the following questions with a partner, in a small group, or with the whole class:

1. Describe the relationship between the boy and his father. Are they close? How do they communicate? Is there a mother in this family? Where is she?
2. Why doesn't Schatz tell his father that he is afraid?
3. How does the father sense Schatz's fear?
4. How does Hemingway portray the boy and the father?
5. Choose another title for the story.