

Факультет иностранных языков
Специальность «Перевод и переводоведение»
Английский язык

ВСТУПИТЕЛЬНЫЙ ЭКЗАМЕН

Текст № 20

1. Прочитайте текст и подготовьтесь к пересказу и беседе по его содержанию, ответьте на вопросы по тексту.

THE STORY-TELLER

By Saki, adapted.

The afternoon was hot and it was stuffy in the railway carriage. The passengers were a small girl, a smaller girl and a small boy. Their aunt occupied one corner seat, and the further corner seat on the opposite side was occupied by a bachelor¹ who was a stranger to their party.

Most of the aunt's remarks addressed to the children seemed to begin with "Don't", and nearly all of the children's remarks began with "Why?" The bachelor kept silent. "Don't, Cyril², don't!" exclaimed the aunt as the boy began smacking the cushions³ of the seat. "Come and look out of the window."

The child moved reluctantly to the window. "Why are those sheep being driven out of that field?" he asked.

"I expect they are being driven to another field where there is more grass," said the aunt weakly.

"But there is lots of grass in that field," protested the boy.

"Perhaps the grass in the other field is better," suggested the aunt.

"Why is it better?" came the expected question.

The bachelor scowled⁴. He was a hard, unsympathetic man, the aunt decided in her mind. "Come over here and listen to a story," she said.

The children moved to her end of the carriage without enthusiasm. Evidently they did not think her to be a good story-teller. In a low, confidential⁵ voice,

¹ Bachelor – ['bætʃələ] холостяк

² Cyril ['sir(i)l]- (муж) Сирил

³ Cushion – ['kʌʃən] - подушка

⁴ The bachelor scowled [scaul] – Холостяк сердито нахмурился

⁵ Confidential – доверительный (тон)

interrupted by loud questions from her listeners, she began an uninteresting story about a little girl who was good, and made friends with everyone, and was finally saved from a mad bull by people who admired her because she was good.

“Wouldn’t they have saved her if she hadn’t been good?” demanded the bigger of the girls. It was exactly the question that the bachelor had wanted to ask.

“Well, yes,” admitted the aunt lamely⁶,” but I don’t think they would have run quite so fast to help her if they hadn’t liked her so much.”

“It’s the stupidest story I’ve ever heard,” said the girl.

“I didn’t listen after the first bit, it was so stupid,” said Cyril.

The smaller girl said nothing, she was singing to herself.

“You don’t seem to be a success as a story-teller,” said the bachelor suddenly.

“Perhaps you would like to tell them a story,” said the aunt.

“I can,” said the bachelor. “Once upon a time,” he began. “there was a little girl called Bertha, who was extraordinarily good.”

The children’s interest began at once to die. All stories seemed dreadfully alike, no matter who told them.

“Was she pretty?” asked the bigger girl.

“Not as pretty as any of you”, said the bachelor,” but she was horribly good.”

The word horrible in connection with goodness was a new idea. It made the interest come back.

“Bertha was so good,” continued the bachelor, “that she won several medals for goodness, which she always wore, pinned on to her dress. There was a medal for obedience, another medal for punctuality, and the third for good behaviour. They were large metal medals and they clinked against one another as she walked.

When the Prince of the country heard about Bertha’s goodness he allowed her once a week to walk in his park. It was a beautiful park, so it was a great honour for Bertha. There were lots of little pigs of all colours in the park running all over

⁶ Lamely – неуверенно, без особой убежденности

the place, ponds with colourful fish, trees with beautiful birds and other delightful things. Bertha walked about the park enjoying herself.

A big wolf came into the park to see if it could catch a fat little pig for its supper. It saw Bertha. Bertha saw the wolf too. She began to wish she had never been allowed to come into the park. She started to run as hard as she could and the wolf came after her. She managed to reach a shrubbery of myrtle bushes⁷ and hid herself in the thickest bush. She was trembling with fear, and as she trembled the medal for obedience clinked against the medals for good behaviour and punctuality. The wolf heard them clinking. It jumped into the bush, dragged Bertha out and ate her up. All that was left of her were her shoes and the three medals for goodness.”

“The story began badly,” said the smaller girl, “but it had a beautiful ending.”

“It’s the most beautiful story I’ve ever heard,” said her sister.

“It’s the only beautiful story I’ve ever heard,” said Cyril.

“A very improper story to tell to young children,” said the aunt.

“At least it kept them quiet for ten minutes, which was more than you were able to do,” said the bachelor.

TEXT 20

THE STORY-TELLER

Questions:

1. Who were the passengers of the railway carriage? How did they behave?
2. Did the aunt manage to answer the boy’s question satisfactorily?
3. What made the bachelor say to the aunt: “You don’t seem to be a success as a story-teller”?
4. How did the children’s attitude to the bachelor’s story change?
5. How did Bertha find herself in the Prince’s park? What happened to her there?
6. Did the children like the story? Why? Did their aunt?

⁷ a shrubbery of myrtle [ˈmɜːtl] bushes – заросли мирта