

UNIT 2

The Caliph and the Gardener

James Baldwin (1924 - 1987)

Students Learning Outcomes:

On the completion of this unit, the students will be able to:

- scan to answer short questions.
- skim text to have general idea of text.
- analyze story elements; characters, events, setting, plot, theme, tone, point of view.
- write an essay on a general subject.
- write a research report.
- evaluate to comment orally on the presentation of peers against a pre-developed student / teacher criteria.
- identify, recognize the function and use of perfect participles.

Pre-reading:

- What kind of story comes to your mind by reading the title of this story?

There was once a caliph of Cordova whose name was Al-Mansur. One day a strange merchant came to him with some diamonds and pearls which he had brought from beyond the sea. The caliph was so well pleased with these jewels that he bought them and paid the merchant a large sum of money.

The merchant put the gold in a bag of purple silk which he tied to his belt underneath his long cloak. Then he set out on foot to walk to another city.

It was midsummer, and the day was very hot. As the merchant was walking along, he came to a river that flowed gently between green and shady banks.

He was hot and covered with dust. No one was near. Very few people ever



came that way. Why should he not cool himself in the refreshing water?

He took off his clothes and laid them on the bank. He put the bag of money on top of them and then leaped into the water. How cool and delicious it was!

Suddenly, he heard a rustling noise behind him. He turned quickly and saw an eagle rising into the air with his moneybag in its claws. No doubt, the bird had mistaken the purple silk for something good to eat.

The merchant shouted. He jumped out of the water and shouted again, but in vain. The great bird was high in the air and flying towards the far-off mountains with all his money.

The poor man could do nothing but dressed himself and went sorrowing on his way.

A year passed by and then the merchant appeared once more before Al-Mansur. "O Caliph", he said, "here are a few jewels which I had reserved as a present for my wife, but I have met with such a bad luck that I am forced to sell them. I pray that you will look at them and take them at your own price."

Al-Mansur noticed that the merchant was very sad and downcast. "Why, what has happened to you?" he asked. "Have you been sick?"

Then the merchant told him how the eagle had flown away with his money.

"Why didn't you come to us before?" he asked. "We might have done something to help you. Toward what place was the eagle flying when you last saw it?"

"It was flying toward the Black Mountains", answered the merchant.

The next morning the caliph called ten of his officers before him. "Ride at once to the Black Mountains", he said. "Find all the old men that live on the mountains or in the flat country around, and command them to appear before me one week from today".

The officers did as they were bidden. On the day appointed, forty gray-bearded, honest old men stood before the caliph. All were asked the same question. "Do you know of any person who was once poor but who has lately and suddenly become well-to-do?"

Most of the old men answered that they did not know of any such person. A few said that there was one man in their neighborhood who seemed to have had some sort of good luck.

This man was a gardener. A year ago, he was so poor that he had scarcely clothes for his back. His children were crying for food, but lately everything had changed for him. Both he and his family dressed well; they had plenty to eat; he had even bought a horse to help him carry his produce to market.

The caliph at once gave orders for the gardener to be brought before him the next day. He also ordered that the merchant should come at the same time.

The next day before noon, the gardener was admitted to the palace. As soon as he entered the hall, the caliph went to meet him. "Good friend", he said, "if you should find something that we have lost, what would you do with it?"

The gardener put his hand under his cloak and drew out the very bag that the merchant had lost.

"Here it is, my lord", he said.

At the sight of his lost treasure, the merchant began to dance and shout with joy.

"Tell us", said Al-Mansur to the gardener, "tell us how you came to find that bag?"

The gardener answered: "A year ago, as I was spading in my garden, I saw something falling at the foot of a palm tree. I ran to pick it up and was surprised to find that it was a bag full of bright gold pieces". I said to myself, "This money must belong to our master, Al-Mansur. Some large bird has stolen it from his palace."

“Well, then”, said the caliph, “why did you not return it to us at once?”

“It was this way”, said the gardener: “I looked at the gold pieces, and then thought of my own great necessities. My wife and children were suffering from the want of food and clothing. I had no shoes for my feet, no coat for my back. So, I said to myself, ‘My lord Al-Mansur is famous for his kindness to the poor. He will not care; So I took ten gold pieces from the many that were in the bag.’”

“I meant only to borrow them. I put the bag in a safe place, saying that as soon as I could replace the ten pieces, I would return all to my lord, Al-Mansur. With much hard labor and careful management, I have saved only five little silver pieces. But, as I came to your palace this morning, I kept saying to myself, When our lord Al-Mansur learns just how it was that I borrowed the gold, I have no doubt that in his kindness of heart he will forgive me the debt.”

Great was the caliph's surprise when he heard the poor man's story. He took the bag of money and handed it to the merchant.

“Take the bag and count the money that is in it,” he said. “If anything is lacking, I will pay it to you.”

The merchant did as he was told. “There is nothing lacking,” he said, “but the ten pieces he has told you about; and I will give him these as a reward.”

“No”, said Al-Mansur, “It is for me to reward the man as he deserves.”

Saying this, he ordered that ten gold pieces be given to the merchant in place of those that were lacking. Then he rewarded the gardener with ten more pieces for his honesty.

“Your debt is paid. Think no more about it”, he said.

About the Author

James Baldwin (1924-1987)

was a novelist, essayist, playwright, poet, and social critic, and one of America's foremost writers. His eloquence and passion on the subject of race in America made him an important voice, particularly in the late 1950's and early 1960's, in the United States and, later, through much of Western Europe.



1) Answer the following questions.

- i) Why did the merchant leap into the water?
- ii) Why did the eagle fly with the moneybag of the merchant?
- iii) Where did the eagle fly to?
- iv) Why did the caliph call for old men of mountains?
- v) Where did the gardener find the money bag?
- vi) How many gold pieces had the gardener spent and why?
- vii) What kind of a man was the gardener?
- viii) Which character of the story do you like?
- ix) If you were the gardener, what would you do with the money lost by the merchant?
- x) What is the main theme of the story?

2) Fill in the blanks.

- i) The merchant leaped into _____.
(a) sand (b) water (c) earth (d) mud
- ii) The eagle was flying towards the _____.
(a) red mountains (b) sea
(c) black mountains (d) villages
- iii) Forty grey-bearded _____ old men stood before the Caliph.
(a) dishonest (b) coward (c) honest (d) aged
- iv) The merchant appeared before the Caliph after _____.
(a) ten years (b) one year
(c) two years (d) five years
- v) The gardener spent only _____.
(a) ten gold coins (b) ten gold rings
(c) ten pieces of gold (d) ten cubes of gold

Elements of a Story

A story has following elements:

Elements of a Story	
Characters	The people or animals in the story.
Events	Incidents or happenings in the story.
Setting	Time and place of the story.
Plot	What happens in the story? Beginning → Middle → End
Theme	The lesson or message of the story.
Tone	The writer's attitude (way of thinking and feeling) towards the subject and characters.
Point of view	The characters' opinions and beliefs, likes and dislikes.

Activity

Read the story, “The Caliph and the Gardener”, and analyze and discuss the elements of story with examples from the story.

Writing Skills

Research Report

A research report gives information about a topic. Each paragraph has a main idea and detailed sentences that tell more about the topic.

Sample research report

Earth has had the same water for billions of years. Plants, animals and people all use it. Yet earth doesn't run out of water because the same water is used over and over again. It is recycled.	Main idea Supporting details
Water is used in many ways. The roots of plants draw water from the soil. Animals drink water and bathe in it. So do people.	Main idea Supporting details

Activity

Write a research report about "Dinosaurs" by following these steps.

1. Collect information about dinosaurs from library, use internet etc.
2. Write down the information as outline.
3. Write down your main idea in a sentence.
4. Then write supporting sentences to prove your main idea.

Essay Writing

Following are some important tips for essay writing:

- i) Selection of topic.
- ii) Brainstorming ideas.
- iii) Preparation of an outline of ideas.
- iv) Writing thesis statement.
- v) Writing the introduction.
- vi) Writing the body of essay.
- vii) Writing the conclusion.

Activity

Select a topic of your choice, and write a general essay of at least 250 words.

Oral Communication

Activity

Comment on the presentation given by your classmate in the previous unit about "Human Rights and the Last Address of the Hazrat Muhammad (ﷺ)".

Use the following criteria.

- (a) How was the topic introduced?
- (b) Was he/she able to give details to support his topic?
- (c) How was his/her confidence?
- (d) Did he/she conclude the presentation well?
- (e) Did he/she have a good eye contact with the audience?
- (f) How did he/she answer the questions of audience?

The Perfect Participle

The perfect participle indicates completed action. It is formed by putting the present participle "having" before the past participle.

Examples:

- i) Having completed his homework, Ahmed went to attend the debate contest.
- ii) Having improved her English language, Saima qualified for a job.
- iii) Having delivered the message, Hassan left for Karachi.

Activity

Rewrite the following sentences replacing the underlined parts with a perfect participle. *For example:*

- We switched off the lights before we went to bed.
Having switched off the lights, we went to bed.
- i) He has worked till late hours, so he is exhausted now.
- ii) She filled the washing machine and switched it on.
- iii) Maria had travelled from Karachi to Quetta, therefore she overslept in the morning.
- iv) Since I had not seen Ali for ages, I did not recognize him.
- v) Saleem had not ridden a horse for a long time, and found it very difficult to keep in the saddle.