2. Childhood

Even when the bombs didn't drop, life was a struggle for Julia Lennon and her baby boy. Because of the war, food and clothing were sometimes hard to get. And money was another problem for Julia. She rarely had enough. For a short time, Alfred Lennon sent home some of his military pay. But Julia and her newborn son could not live on in. She had to go to work.

Julia did not have much education. Nor did she have any job training. That meant she could get only a very low-paying job. And so she took one as an usher in a movie theater. She also worked behind the candy counter.

While Julia worked, little John was looked after by Aunt Mimi. That was just wonderful for Mimi and her husband, George, a dairy farmer. They had no children of their own, and they adored their bright little nephew. Mimi loved taking John shopping and for walks in the park.

John had shining blond hair and bright eyes. He looked just like his mother. Julia and Mimi also looked very much alike. So the little boy also looked like Aunt Mimi. People who saw them together thought John was Mimi's son. That pleased her so much that she never bothered to tell them the truth. After a while, John thought of Aunt Mimi as a second mother.

At first, John spent weekdays with the Smiths. Weekends and nights, he was with his mother. But sometimes the weather was bad or Julia had to work late. And sometimes John had a cold. Then he would stay with his aunt and uncle. As time went on, he was staying less with his mother and more with his aunt and uncle.

Mimi and George gave John a great deal of love. Even so, it was confusing for him. Sometimes he lived in one place, sometimes in another. The youngster never knew where he would be from one day to the next.

Most of all, John missed having a father. Alfred Lennon did spend months at sea. But he could have come home several times, and he didn't. This was something John Lennon never talked about as he grew up.

The young John Lennon saw his father only once. John was five years old at the time. Alfred Lennon suddenly returned to Liverpool for a visit. He asked Julia if he could take John away for a few days. Alfred said that it would be nice for father and son to get to know each other. He wanted to take John to a friend's cottage in Blackpool, a popular place at the seashore. Julia wasn't sure, but she said yes.

Alfred and John were in Blackpool for two days when Julia came to their cottage. She wanted to take John back home. Alfred said no. He said he was going to leave England the next day and wanted to take John with him. Julia was angry, and there was a big argument. Then Julia and Alfred decided there was only one way to settle the argument. They called John into the room.

When John first saw his mother and father together, he was very happy. He had always dreamed of having a real family, all under the same roof. Then his dream was crushed. They told him he had to choose between Mommy and Daddy.

John was mixed up and sad. He looked at one parent, then at the other. At last, he whispered, "I'll stay with Daddy." Julia asked him if he was sure. John nodded.

Julia bent down and kissed John. Then she left. When she was almost at the end of the street, she heard "Mommy! Mommy! I changed my mind!" John ran to his mother and threw himself into her arms. They returned to Liverpool together.

On the trip back to Liverpool, Julia Lennon made a big decision. She knew her son needed a secure home. John also needed people who would be there all the time. Julia could only be a part-time parent. Aunt Mimi and Uncle George could be with him day and night. And they wanted John to live with them permanently.

From that day on, John Lennon lived full-time with the Smiths. Their home was a nice one, in a quiet suburb called Woolton. John had his own bedroom, facing the Smiths' garden. He spent many happy hours in his room. He liked to read, draw, and listen to the radio. Even as a young boy, John showed talent.

Aunt Mimi proudly remembered that John started to read when he was less than five years old. She told how he sat on his uncle's knee every evening. George read the local newspaper aloud, and the boy listened. Together, they spelled out the words in the headlines.

John learned to read this way. He also liked newspapers. For the rest of his life, he read as many newspapers as he could every day. This habit of reading helped John to learn many facts. He used a lot of these facts in the songs he wrote for the Beatles. For example, one of John's songs, "A Day in the Life," mentions "4,000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire." They were the number of street potholes John had read about in a local British newspaper.

John Lennon wrote songs about love and peace, war and politics, and everything else that interested him. The poetry of his songs' lyrics came from the places and memories of his childhood. John's song "Strawberry Fields Forever," for example, was based on a real place. Right around the corner from John's house in Liverpool was Strawberry Field. It was a Salvation Army home for orphaned children.

Every summer, there was a carnival in the Strawberry Field garden. Aunt Mimi took John there. They had ice-cream cones and played carnival games. John loved the memories of going to carnivals with Aunt Mimi. His song captures forever the feelings of those childhood days.

Today, there is a place in America called Strawberry Fields. It is in New York City's Central Park. It is right across the street from the building where John lived his last years. Yoko Ono, John's widow, helped create this lovely garden in his memory. Many people visit Strawberry Fields every year.

２　EXERCISES A (内容理解)

１　( )に適切な日本語を入れ、本文のあらすじを完成させなさい．

　ジョンが生まれてからも父親は不在で、ジュリアは(ア　　　　)仕事にしかつけず生活は苦しかった．ジョンは母の働く間(イ　　　　　)にあずけられた．

　ジョンが(ウ　　　　)歳のとき、父親がひょっこり家に立ち寄り、父子で数日間父の友人の(エ　　　　)で過ごすことになった．(オ　　　　)日後ジュリアがやって来た．ジョンは初めて(カ　　　 　)のでとてもうれしかったが、(キ　　　　　　　）の選択を迫られ、結局母といっしょにリバプールに戻った．ジュリアはジョンには(ク　　　　　　)が必要だとわかり(イ)に養育してもらうことにした．(ケ　　　　）のない(イ)にかわいがられ、郊外の静かな環境で暖かい家庭生活を送った．

　ジョンは利発で、毎晩(コ　　　　　)の上でいっしょに(サ　　　　)を読んで、幼いころから字を読むことを覚えた．また、ミミおばさんといっしょに家の近くの(シ　　　　　　　　　　)という名の(ス　　　　　)の庭で開かれる(セ　　　　　　)に行き、２人で楽しんだ．ビートルズ時代にジョンが作った曲の中には、このころの記憶やなつかしい思い出が歌詞に反映され、曲を(ソ　　　　　)豊かなものにしているものがある．

２　本文の内容に合うものにはT、合わないものにはFを書きなさい．

(1) People thought Mimi was John's mother because she looked just like Julia. ( )

(2) Alfred was usually away from home on board a ship, but he spent a few days with his wife and son several times. ( )

(3) John kept the habit of reading many newspapers every day till he died. ( )

(4) One of the Beatles' songs, "A Day in the Life", comes from the happy experience John had with Mimi in the Strawberry Field garden. ( )

２　EXERCISES B (文法・語い)

１　( )内の語句のうち正しいほうを選びなさい．

(1) This car is easy (ア．driving イ．to drive)．

(2) The plane flew back (ア．because イ．because of) the bad weather.

(3) I have two sisters. One lives in Tokyo and (ア．other イ．the other) lives abroad.

(4) I didn't do that! Someone (ア．else イ．other) did it.

２　日本文の意味に合うように、( )に１語入れなさい．

(1) 外はとても寒かったので、私は外出しなかった．

　　It was ( ) cold outside that I didn't go out.

(2) 見知らぬ人が私に、隣に座ってもよいかと尋ねた．

　　A stranger asked me ( ) he might sit next to me.

(3) １週間もしないうちに良くなるでしょう．

　　You will get well in ( ) than a week.

３　下線部の表現に注意して日本語に直しなさい．

(1) I want you to call me as soon as you can.

(2) He has not come, nor will he come.

４　(1)、(2)は他の３語と意味が著しく違う語を選びなさい．(3)～(6)は名詞形を書きなさい．

(1) aunt, uncle, usher, nephew ( )

(2) adore, miss, love, like ( )

(3) true ( ) (4) argue ( )

(5) decide ( ) (6) educate( )