1. Bright Lights

Charlie Chaplin was born in London in 1889. Both his mother and father were music hall artists, performing in variety shows in theatres in and around London. They were not very rich and not very poor. Charlie had an elder brother called Sydney, four years older than he, and they all lived together in three rented rooms.

The trouble was that Charlie's father drank too much. This led to other problems, and a year after Charlie's birth his parents separated. It was a sad beginning for Charlie. After that, he and Sydney lived with their mother, who loved and cared for them.

As Charlie was still small, his mother often took him with her to the theatre in the evenings. This he liked. It was certainly better than being at home alone. He would stand in the wings and watch the performers, dreaming of someday becoming a great performer himself. And that is how, one evening, Charlie came to perform for the first time on the stage when he was only five years old. This is how it happened.

Charlie's mother was performing in a small theatre in Aldershot, south of London. Many in the audience were soldiers from the big army camp nearby. Rough and noisy, they liked to jeer and laugh at the performers' mistakes. The performers hated coming to Aldershot.

As Charlie listened in the wings, the audience began to jeer and boo. Charlie froze. His mother's voice had never been strong, and now it had cracked and gone into a whisper. She kept on trying to sing, but her efforts were in vain. As the noise from the audience increased, his mother was made to walk off the stage. When she came into the wings she was very upset. She argued with the stage manager. She wanted to go back onto the stage again, but he would not let her.

Then the stage manager looked at Charlie. He had once seen him singing in front of his mother's friends. The next thing Charlie knew, the manager was leading him by the hand onto the stage. Suddenly he was standing all alone on centre stage, before a glare of footlights and faces in smoke.

The audience became hushed. The last thing they were expecting was to see a very young boy appear on the stage. In the hush, Charlie began to sing a well-known song called "Jack Jones," which he had learnt from his mother.

Half-way through the song, a shower of money poured onto the stage. Immediately Charlie stopped singing. He said that he would pick up the money first and sing afterwards. The audience laughed. Then the stage manager came on with a handkerchief and helped pick up the money. Charlie, thinking he was going to keep it for himself, said so to the audience, who laughed even more. The manager then walked off the stage with the money, followed very closely by Charlie. Everyone thought this was a big joke, and laughter filled the theatre.

But Charlie was not joking. He really thought the manager was planning to keep the money for himself. So he followed the stage manager off, and did not return to the stage until he saw the money placed safely in his mother's hands.

After that, he really enjoyed himself. He felt quite at home on the stage. And when his mother finally came to carry him off, everyone in the theatre began to clap. She bowed and looked happy. Charlie, too, was elated with his success. So ended Charlie's first appearance on the stage.

EXERCISES (1)

Ａ　（　）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．

チャーリー・チャップリンは1889年、（ア　　　　）で生まれた．彼の両親は（イ　　　　）の芸人だった．

　チャーリーが初舞台を踏んだのは（ウ　　　）歳のときであった．母親の（エ　　　　）が出なくなり舞台を続けられなくなったので、舞台主任がチャーリーをその穴埋めに使うことを思いついた．チャーリーは母親から習い覚えた歌を歌うと、その途中で（オ　　　　）が次々と舞台に投げられた．チャーリーはのびのびと舞台をつとめ、最後に（カ　　　　）に連れられて退場すると、劇場中の人々が拍手を送った．

Ｂ　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) Charlie was one year old when his parents separated. ( )

(2) When his mother could not sing any more on the stage, she wanted Charlie to take her place. ( )

(3) When Charlie stopped singing and picked up the money, the audience jeered at him. ( )

(4) Both Charlie and his mother felt very happy after his first appearance on the stage. ( )

Ｃ　日本文の意味に合うように、（ ）に適語を入れなさい．

(1) 困ったことに雨が降りだした．

The ( ) was that it began to rain.

(2) そのようにして私は問題を解きました．

That is ( ) I solved the problem.

(3) 彼は決してうそをつかない人だ．

He is the ( ) person to tell a lie.

(4) 彼女に会って初めて、すてきな人だとわかりました．

I didn't know she was nice ( ) I met her.