3. Love's Magic

Without his mother, Charlie had to make his own life. Little by little he taught himself to act, especially pantomime which he enjoyed. By the age of nineteen he was doing very well and audiences really enjoyed his performances.

One evening Charlie was standing in the wings, waiting to perform. A girls' song-and-dance group were doing their number on the stage. Charlie noticed one of the girls. Their eyes met and she smiled. She had large brown eyes, a slim figure, a shapely oval face, a nice mouth and beautiful teeth. Charlie was stunned. When she came off the stage, she asked him to hold her mirror while she fixed her hair. She told him her name was Hetty Kelly. He looked at her closely and his mind was made up. Two days later he asked her for a date, and they arranged to meet the following Sunday at four o'clock.

Sunday was a perfect summer's day. Charlie put on a smart dark suit and a nice tie, and carried a black ebony cane. Shortly before four o'clock he went to wait for her, but as he had only seen her on the stage with make-up on, he could not remember her face clearly. Was she really pretty? Would she come? Charlie felt very nervous.

At exactly one minute past four, a young girl got off a tram-car, came his way and stopped before him. She was without make-up on and looked more beautiful than ever. She wore a simple sailor hat and a blue coat with brass buttons, with her hands deep in her overcoat pockets. "Here I am," she said.

To see her standing there was quite a shock for Charlie. He could think of nothing to say or do.

"Let's take a taxi," he said. "Where would you like to go?"

"Anywhere."

"Then let's go to the West End for dinner."

"I've had dinner," she said calmly.

"Let's talk about it in the taxi," said Charlie.

He took her to the Trocadero, an elegant restaurant with romantic music. He tried to persuade her to eat, but she would only have a sandwich.

Meanwhile, Charlie ordered a full-course meal for himself, although he did not feel hungry. There were several knives and forks and spoons of different sizes in front of him. He had no idea which to use, but he pretended to be quite familiar with them. He very much wanted to make himself attractive to her.

After the Trocadero she decided to go home. The night was beautiful and they walked along the Thames Embankment. Hetty talked about this and that, but Charlie felt he was in Paradise and hardly noticed what she was saying. Later, on his way home, he felt so happy that he gave all the money in his pocket to some poor men who slept near the Thames.

They met again the following morning at seven o'clock, because Hetty had rehearsals at eight o'clock. Her house was about two miles from the underground station, and together they walked there hand in hand. For Charlie that was a magic morning.

This went on for three mornings. But on the fourth morning Hetty's manner changed. She greeted him coldly and would not hold his hand.

"Don't you love me any more?" Charlie asked.

"You expect too much," she said. "After all I am only fifteen and you are four years older than I am."

"But do you love me?" he asked her again and again.

"I don't know."

"Would you marry me?" he asked.

"I am too young."

"Well, if you have to marry someone, will it be me?"

"I don't know ... I like you ... but ---"

"But you don't love me," said Charlie, with pain in his heart.

They had reached the entrance to the underground.

"I think we'd better part and never see each other again," he said, wondering what she would say.

She was silent.

He took her hand and patted it tenderly. "Goodbye, it's better this way."

"Goodbye," she answered. "I'm sorry."

As she disappeared into the underground, Charlie felt a terrible emptiness in his heart.

EXERCISES (3)

Ａ　（　）内の正しいほうを選び、本文のあらすじを完成させなさい．

チャーリーは　(ｱ)（独学／演劇学校）で演技の勉強、特に　(ｲ)（ダンス／パントマイム）を習得し、19歳で人気者になっていた．

　ある日、　(ｳ)（ショーガール／喜劇女優）のヘティー・ケリーと出会い、デートの約束をした．　(ｴ)（おしゃれな／くだけた）かっこうをして彼女を待っていると彼女が現れ、　(ｵ)（化粧をした／素顔の）彼女も美しいと思った．そしてレストランで食事をしてからテムズ川の河岸通りを歩いた．彼は　(ｶ)（有頂天になり、彼女の話を聞いていなかった／彼女の悩みに耳を傾けた）．しかし数日後、彼女の態度は変わり、彼は失恋してしまった．

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 saw Hetty for the first time at the station. ( )

(2) Charlie made up his mind to have a date with Hetty the moment he saw her. ( )

(3) Since he didn't know how to use a knife and fork, Charlie ordered a sandwich. ( )

(4) Hetty refused Charlie's proposal of marriage because he did not have enough money. ( )

Ｃ　日本文の意味に合うように、（ ）に適語を入れなさい．

(1) 彼は今までにないほどよく勉強している．

He is working harder than ( ).

(2) 彼女はラケットをわきにかかえてやってきた．

She was coming ( ) a racket under her arm.

(3) 何と言ってよいかわからなかった．

I had no ( ) what to say.

(4) 何をしているのだろうと思いながら、私はその子に話しかけた．

I spoke to the boy, ( ) what he was doing.