

JUNE 1999

PROVINCIAL EXAMINATION

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

ENGLISH 12

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Insert the stickers with your Student I.D. Number (PEN) in the allotted spaces above and on the **back** cover of this booklet. **Under no circumstance is your name or identification, other than your Student I.D. Number, to appear on this booklet.**
2. Ensure that in addition to this examination booklet, you have a **Readings Booklet** and an **Examination Response Form**. Follow the directions on the front of the Response Form.
3. **Disqualification** from the examination will result if you bring books, paper, notes or unauthorized electronic devices into the examination room.
4. All multiple-choice answers must be entered on the Response Form using an **HB pencil**. Multiple-choice answers entered in this examination booklet will **not** be marked.
5. For each of the written-response questions, write your answer in **ink** in the space provided in this booklet.
6. When instructed to open this booklet, **check the numbering of the pages** to ensure that they are numbered in sequence from page one to the last page, which is identified by

END OF EXAMINATION.

7. At the end of the examination, place your Response Form inside the front cover of this booklet and return the booklet and your Response Form to the supervisor.

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ENGLISH 12 PROVINCIAL EXAMINATION

	Value	Suggested Time
1. This examination consists of five parts:		
PART A: Editing Skills	10	10
PART B: Reading Comprehension	21	35
PART C: Poetry	20	30
PART D: Prose	25	50
PART E: Composition	24	55
	Total: 100 marks	180 minutes

- Electronic devices, including dictionaries and pagers, are **not** permitted in the examination room.
- The **Readings Booklet** contains the prose and poetry passages you will need to answer certain questions on this examination.
- The time allotted for this examination is **three hours**. *Use your time wisely.* Adequate writing space has been provided for average-sized writing. Do not attempt to determine the length of your answers by the amount of writing space available.

PART A: EDITING SKILLS

Total Value: 10 marks

Suggested Time: 10 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS: The following passage has been divided into numbered sentences which may contain problems in grammar, usage, word choice, spelling, or punctuation. One or more sentences may be correct. No sentence contains more than one error.

If you find an error, select the underlined part that must be changed in order to make the sentence correct and record your choice on the Response Form provided. Using an HB pencil, completely fill in the circle that corresponds to your answer. If there is no error, completely fill in circle D (no error).

CONTENTMENT IN THE GARDEN

1. In the 1990s, in the midst of the complex demands of life, we all look for
(A) (B)
ways to bring ourself some peace of mind. (D) no error
(C)

2. Several traditional methods of relaxation are popular: listening to classical
(A) (B)
music, taking afternoon naps, and watching daytime television.
(C) (D) no error

3. For some, a quiet corner with an entertaining book is the answer, for others,
(A) (B)
working in the garden has the same effect. (D) no error
(C)

4. Such activities as digging in the earth, planting seeds, and to water the soil soothe
(A) (B) (C)
frazzled nerves. (D) no error

5. Pat Kelly, respected horticulturist, comments, “whenever I need some relief from
(A) (B)
stress, I head for the garden.” (D) no error
(C)
6. Among the many sensations Kelly enjoys is the fragrant smell of roses, the sweet
(A) (B)
taste of raspberries, and the smooth texture of plums. (D) no error
(C)
7. Although the grass requires frequent cutting. Many gardeners choose
(A) (B)
non-motorized lawnmowers to prevent noise and air pollution. (D) no error
(C)
8. As well as offering a peaceful sanctuary, the backyard garden provides a
(A)
habitat for alot of nature’s creatures. (D) no error
(B) (C)
9. Depending on whether it is winter or summer, many varieties of birds fill the
(A) (B)
branch’s of the trees. (D) no error
(C)
10. Mischievous squirrels, their fluffy tails flying behind them, were not so
(A) (B)
cute, however, when they uproot the spring bulbs. (D) no error
(C)

PART B: READING COMPREHENSION

Total Value: 21 marks

Suggested Time: 35 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS: Read “The Finicky Shark” on pages 1 to 3 in the **Readings Booklet**. Select the **best** answer for each question and record your choice on the Response Form provided.

11. Paragraph 1 contains examples of
- A. simile.
 - B. contrast.
 - C. allusion.
 - D. imagery.
12. In paragraph 3, “unpalatable” means that people are
- A. easy prey.
 - B. flavourful.
 - C. unappetizing.
 - D. hard to swallow.
13. In paragraph 4, the word “genteel” means
- A. civil.
 - B. skillful.
 - C. vicious.
 - D. competitive.
14. Paragraph 13 suggests that the great white shark is
- A. beyond control.
 - B. becoming endangered.
 - C. dominating the oceans.
 - D. suffering overpopulation.
15. In paragraph 15, Dr. Murphy suggests that people should
- A. protect the shark.
 - B. fear killer sharks.
 - C. eliminate the species.
 - D. admire the health of the shark.

16. In paragraphs 16 to 20, the negative descriptions of sharks in popular fiction are likely
- A. factual.
 - B. objective.
 - C. understated.
 - D. exaggerated.
17. At long range, the great white shark locates its prey through its
- A. keen ears.
 - B. sensitive nose.
 - C. lateral-line organs.
 - D. aerodynamic shape.
18. Great white sharks may reject birds as food because birds
- A. move too fast.
 - B. are too muscular.
 - C. lack sufficient fat.
 - D. are covered in feathers.
19. The title of the article suggests that the shark
- A. frightens people.
 - B. will eat anything.
 - C. is particular about its food.
 - D. preys only on small creatures.
20. The main purpose of the article is to
- A. criticize.
 - B. frighten.
 - C. persuade.
 - D. entertain.
21. The audience intended for this article likely is
- A. ecologists.
 - B. vacationers.
 - C. marine biologists.
 - D. the general public.

The Finicky Shark
(pages 1 to 3 in the **Readings Booklet**)

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the space provided in this booklet for written-response questions. Write your answers in **ink**. You may quote **or** paraphrase. Complete sentences are **not** required in this section.

1. From paragraphs 1 to 8, state **two** of the myths people believe about the great white shark, and **quote** a phrase that **contradicts** the myth.

a) Myth #1: _____ (1 mark)

Quotation: _____

_____ (1 mark)

b) Myth #2: _____ (1 mark)

Quotation: _____

_____ (1 mark)

2. The author uses a number of stylistic techniques to deliver his message. Referring to paragraphs 9 to 20, name **two** of these techniques and give an example of each.

a) Technique #1: _____ (1 mark)

Example: _____

_____ (1 mark)

b) Technique #2: _____ (1 mark)

Example: _____

_____ (1 mark)

3. From paragraphs 23 and 24, identify **two** ways the great white shark's teeth are suitable for devouring its prey.

a) _____
_____ (1 mark)

b) _____
_____ (1 mark)

PART C: POETRY

Total Value: 20 marks

Suggested Time: 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the poem “Detail” on page 4 in the **Readings Booklet**. Select the **best** answer for each question and record your choice on the Response Form provided.

22. Line 6, “gone wild and wormy” is an example of
- A. dissonance.
 - B. alliteration.
 - C. internal rhyme.
 - D. understatement.
23. Line 16, “little golden bells” is an example of
- A. paradox.
 - B. metaphor.
 - C. apostrophe.
 - D. onomatopoeia.
24. Line 19, “but I make no parable of them” suggests the speaker is
- A. indifferent to the apple tree itself.
 - B. annoyed that others don’t notice the apples.
 - C. angry with the farmer for abandoning the farm.
 - D. indifferent to others who don’t notice the apples.
25. Line 25, “when wind blew down the sun” is an example of
- A. symbol.
 - B. hyperbole.
 - C. oxymoron.
 - D. metonymy.
26. Line 26, “and earth shook like a cold room” contains an example of
- A. irony.
 - B. simile.
 - C. synecdoche.
 - D. personification.

27. The tone of this poem is

- A. bitter.
- B. joyful.
- C. reflective.
- D. despairing.

28. This poem is

- A. didactic.
- B. narrative.
- C. dramatic.
- D. descriptive.

29. The form of this poem is

- A. an ode.
- B. a sonnet.
- C. free verse.
- D. blank verse.

Detail
(page 4 in the **Readings Booklet**)

INSTRUCTIONS: In paragraph form, answer questions 4 and 5 in the space provided. Write in **ink**. The mark for your answer will be based on the appropriateness of the example(s) you use as well as the adequacy of your explanation and the quality of your written expression.

4. In paragraph form and with reference to the poem, discuss the tree as a symbol of nature's durability. **(6 marks)**

5. In paragraph form and with reference to the poem, tell what we learn about the speaker.

(6 marks)

OVER

PART D: PROSE

Total Value: 25 marks

Suggested Time: 50 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the story entitled “A Business Relationship” on pages 5 to 9 in the **Readings Booklet**. Select the **best** answer for each question and record your choice on the Response Form provided.

30. In deciding to get married, Carl and Olga considered themselves to be
- A. practical adults.
 - B. loving helpmates.
 - C. desperate misfits.
 - D. romantic teenagers.
31. Since becoming ill, Carl spent much of his time
- A. fishing.
 - B. sleeping.
 - C. caring for livestock.
 - D. repairing equipment.
32. In paragraph 14, the phrase “against all habit” suggests that
- A. Olga was addicted to coffee.
 - B. Olga did not really like coffee.
 - C. Olga usually got straight to work.
 - D. Carl and Olga usually took their time at breakfast.
33. Carl refused to go to the hospital because
- A. he was afraid.
 - B. it was expensive.
 - C. it was too far away.
 - D. the farm would be neglected.
34. In paragraph 21, the word “rancour” means
- A. disgust.
 - B. confusion.
 - C. arrogance.
 - D. resentment.

35. Carl sometimes went fishing to
- A. earn extra money.
 - B. avoid doing chores.
 - C. relax after a day's work.
 - D. provide a change in their diet.
36. Carl and Olga were both embarrassed by
- A. their poverty.
 - B. being praised.
 - C. living on a farm.
 - D. their small house.

A Business Relationship
(pages 5 to 9 in the **Readings Booklet**)

INSTRUCTIONS: In paragraph form, answer questions 6 to 8 in the space provided. Write in **ink**. The mark for your answer will be based on the appropriateness of the example(s) you use as well as the adequacy of your explanation and the quality of your written expression.

6. In paragraph form and with reference to the story, discuss the appropriateness of the title. **(6 marks)**

8. In paragraph form and with reference to the story, trace the evidence that supports the likelihood that Olga will stay on the farm after Carl dies. (6 marks)

PART E: COMPOSITION

Value: 24 marks

Suggested Time: 55 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS: Using standard English, write a coherent, unified, multi-paragraph composition of 300-500 words on the **topic** below. In your composition, you may apply any effective and appropriate method of development which includes **any combination** of exposition, persuasion, description, and narration.

Use the page headed **Organization and Planning** for your rough work. Write your composition in **ink** on the pages headed **Finished Work**.

9. Write a multi-paragraph composition on the topic below. Your response may draw upon any aspect of your life: your reading, your own experiences, the experiences of others, and so on.

Topic: Being Unique

OVER

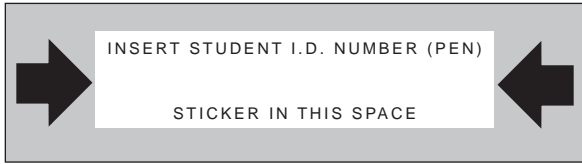
Organization and Planning

FINISHED WORK

Topic: Being Unique

OVER





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Score for
Question 1:

1. _____
(4)

Score for
Question 8:

8. _____
(6)

Score for
Question 2:

2. _____
(4)

Score for
Question 9:

9. _____
(24)

Score for
Question 3:

3. _____
(2)

Score for
Question 4:

4. _____
(6)

Score for
Question 5:

5. _____
(6)

Score for
Question 6:

6. _____
(6)

Score for
Question 7:

7. _____
(6)

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READINGS BOOKLET
JUNE 1999

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PART B: READING COMPREHENSION

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following passage and answer the questions on pages 4 to 7 of the examination booklet.

The Finicky Shark

by William J. Broad

- 1 Few animals have the power to frighten people into the cold terror of being eaten alive. But the great white shark does so effortlessly. Its reputation for blood lust is rooted in images of jaws gleaming with rows of razor-sharp teeth, their edges nicely serrated to ease the job of tearing through bone and flesh.
- 2 Nature's great killing machine grows to lengths of six metres or more and is often viewed as crude and mindlessly malevolent, feeding just as heartily on humans as on fish, seals, whales and sea lions.
- 3 But new research is challenging that notion and shedding light on the hidden life of the great white, revealing a finicky eater that may find people unpalatable.
- 4 Though it is pitiless with prey, lunging and slashing in red-stained water, the species can be quite civil among its own. Scientists have found what appears to be a ritualized competition over kills in which two great whites will forego attacking one another for a genteel bout of slapping tails on the sea's surface. The biggest splash decides the winner.
- 5 Such finesse stands in stark contrast to the raw violence among many predators, which can engage one another in bloody fights to the death.
- 6 Over all, scientists say, great whites have been badly misunderstood, wrongly making them the demons of movies and nightmares. Some research has even found evidence that the killers, when thwarted in feeding, get visibly frustrated and agitated, perhaps even sad and dejected.
- 7 "We're dispelling the myths and learning a lot about how they really live," said Dr. A. Peter Klimley, a biologist at the University of California Bodega Marine Laboratory in Bodega Bay, California, who is a prominent expert on the infamous shark.
- 8 "They're not stupid feeding machines," he said. "They're exquisitely adapted."
- 9 Dr. Douglas J. Long, a fish scientist at the California Academy of Sciences who studies great whites, said the new insights, while substantial, still leave a greater number of riddles.
- 10 "For instance," Long said, "we know virtually nothing about how and where they mate."
- 11 Even as scientists seek to unravel the great white's biology, behaviour and ecology, a political push is accelerating to protect the beast. The top predator of the sea, it appears to be declining in numbers because of assaults by sport fishermen as well as commercial interests serving a growing international market for white-shark jaws and teeth.

- 12 California, South Africa and Australia have taken steps to try to save the great white and other states and countries are considering such conservation efforts.
- 13 “Its numbers will inevitably dwindle unless prudent controls are enacted,” Dr. Richard Murphy, a marine ecologist at the Cousteau Society in Chesapeake, Virginia, wrote in *Great White Sharks*, a collection of scientific reports published late last year by Academic Press.
- 14 “In addition to being increasingly rare,” Murphy said, “they are majestic pre-eminent participants in a complicated food web which we, as yet, only partially understand.”
- 15 “The willingness and ability of humans to protect the killer,” Murphy said, “are indicators of the economic, political and sociological health of our own species.”
- 16 The mythology of terror surrounding the great white is even wider and more ominous than the shark’s jaws are in real life. In *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, Jules Verne tells how Professor Aronnax was taken by Captain Nemo for a global submarine tour, the two men finding themselves face to face with some of the razor-toothed giants during an underwater walk.
- 17 “The blood froze in my veins,” the professor said, “as silver bellies and huge mouths bristling with teeth rushed out of the darkness.”
- 18 After a narrow escape, the professor later told his companions of reports that fishermen had cut open the stomachs of great white sharks and found a buffalo head, a whole calf and “a sailor still in uniform.”
- 19 More recently, the beast achieved fame as the villain of *Jaws*, the best-selling book by Peter Benchley and the blockbuster movie by Steven Spielberg. Both featured a marauding great white that terrorized swimmers near crowded beaches.
- 20 The great white is “firmly ensconced in the pantheon of sea monsters,” Richard Ellis wrote in *Monsters of the Sea* (Knopf, 1994). “It is the largest predatory fish in the world,” he said, “with some specimens weighing as much as a full-grown rhinoceros.”
- 21 Sharks are ancient animals, long predating the dinosaurs and myriad types of modern creatures. *Carcharodon carcharias*, or “ragged tooth” in scholarly Latin, is found in temperate waters throughout the world’s seas. To find prey, it has acute sensors known as lateral-line organs that apparently can detect disturbances in seawater at ranges of 1,500 metres or more.
- 22 Closer to a victim (exactly how close is uncertain), its keen ears can hear thrashing, its sensitive nose can sniff blood, and its eerie black eyes can spy flesh. Powerful muscles send it lunging.
- 23 The triangular teeth grow to lengths of five or more centimetres and are extraordinarily strong. Three layers of enamel crisscross in different directions so the teeth can better withstand impact as well as twisting and bending. If a tooth is lost, a replacement directly behind it will rotate forward in a day or so. New teeth are constantly being formed in this replacement process.
- 24 Judging from stomach contents, the beast can indeed devour prey whole, including other sharks and sea lions. Though one of its nicknames is “man-eater” (another is “white death”), no one knows for certain whether people are in fact a preferred food.

- 25 Preliminary research suggests they are not. Klimley said white sharks might spit out humans, birds and sea otters because their bodies lack the energy-rich layers of fat possessed by animals like seals and whales.
- 26 “If they ingest something that’s not energetically profitable, then they’re stuck with that for a few days of slow digestion,” he said. “Fat has twice the energy value of muscle.”
- 27 Klimley noted three recent attacks along the northern California coast near Bodega Bay in which people had been quickly let go.
- 28 “Can you imagine?” he said. “These sharks are seizing people and holding them very gingerly to make this decision. They strike and hold and release—and that’s for big sharks, three or four metres long.”
- 29 Worldwide, great white sharks attack people four or five times a year, perhaps killing one of them.

PART C: POETRY

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following poem and answer the questions on pages 8 to 11 of the examination booklet.

Detail

by Al Purdy

1 The ruined stone house
has an old apple tree
left there by the farmer
whatever else he took with him
5 It bears fruit every year
gone wild and wormy
with small bitter apples
nobody eats
even children know better
10 I passed that way on the road
to Trenton twice a month
all winter long
noticing how the apples clung
in spite of hurricane winds
15 sometimes with caps of snow
little golden bells
And perhaps none of the other
travellers looked that way
but I make no parable of them
20 they were there and that's all
For some reason I must remember
and think of the leafless tree
and its fermented fruit
one week in late January
25 when wind blew down the sun
and earth shook like a cold room
no one could live in
with zero weather
soundless golden bells
30 alone in the storm

PART D: PROSE

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the following selection and answer the questions on pages 12 to 16 of the examination booklet.

A Business Relationship

by W.D. Valgardson

- 1 Olga woke up just before dawn. Even so, Carl was already up, huddled before the stove, his winter jacket pulled close around his shoulders. Although he was intent on splicing a broken cable, as soon as Olga entered, he looked up.
- 2 Ever since he had become sick, he had been unable to keep warm. His feet were constantly cold. Around the house, he wore two pairs of heavy wool socks inside his slippers. Lately, the growing pain had made him so restless that he was unable to sleep more than two or three hours at a time.
- 3 “I never heard you get up,” she said. For the past week he had been sleeping on the chesterfield. Neither of them liked the arrangement, but, more and more, the chores had become Olga’s responsibility and they both knew that if she was going to do them herself, she needed to get her sleep.
- 4 “It’s all right. I had some work to do.”
- 5 “I’ll make some fresh coffee,” she offered, bustling forward and taking the pot from the stove. “That’s bitter from standing all night. Would you like some cinnamon toast?”
- 6 He shook his head. He no longer ate or drank much except coffee.
- 7 Olga busied herself with her breakfast. She was a large, rawboned woman with a pink, hearty face and big hands and feet. She had a high forehead and a round chin which, like her cheeks, was always red. Carl had found her ten years before in the personal column of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, where she was crammed into sixteen words—*Lady, 32, good character, cook, housekeeper, religious, wants to meet man of similar age. Object matrimony.*
- 8 Writing was difficult for Carl but he managed two short letters about himself. Then, the preliminaries over, he boarded the Saturday-morning bus to Winnipeg. They met over a cup of tea in her landlady’s shabby parlor. The air had been sour with stale grease and her landlady hid behind the door. Although they could not see her, her asthmatic breathing had rasped back and forth across their nervous conversation. Because Carl kept milk cows, he was only able to stay until shortly before departure time for the afternoon bus. The visit was unsatisfactory for both of them but it had to do. Before he left, they had reached an agreement. They both knew what to expect out of their relationship. They were not a couple of romantic teenagers. He was to provide her with a husband and home while she was to be a housekeeper and helpmate.
- 9 There were no children or relatives to explain to so they were married exactly two weeks later. She wore her good striped green dress and a large hat decorated with paper carnations. He wore his black suit, which smelled of mothballs and dust. The minister’s wife and the janitor were their witnesses.

- 10 She brought her belongings with her in a suitcase and a cardboard box that had originally held twenty-four cans of Campbell's soup. While they waited for the evening bus, they ate bacon and eggs in the depot coffeeshop. At Eddyville, the bus stopped in front of the drugstore. From there it was a mile to Carl's house. She was unused to the country and as they started off down the road she had become more and more afraid.
- 11 Although he had not been a large man even then, during the last few months he seemed to be constantly shrinking. Every morning, more bone showed. His loss of flesh was like a constant erosion around the roots of trees. His black hair had stiffened to the texture of dry grass. His eyes had begun to cloud, as though a thin layer of calcium was settling over them, and his nose and mouth had grown more prominent.
- 12 While she ate, Carl worked the strands of wire together, joining the pieces so tightly that they would be inseparable. He could never stand to be idle and lately, as he had had to give up more and more of the heavy work, he had taken to repairing small pieces of equipment.
- 13 The kitchen was just big enough for the two of them but it was bright and cheerful. When she had come, Carl was living in the kitchen and bedroom. She had opened the living and dining room and had cleaned and arranged until she was satisfied. He had made no objection. She had painted the kitchen cupboards white and the walls light yellow. Around the edges of the cupboard, she had stenciled red poppies.
- 14 Now, against all habit, she lingered over her breakfast, taking a second cup of coffee that she did not want. There was a sudden squeal from below, which she immediately identified as coming from the sump-pump. In ten years, she had come to know the house and land so well that it was as though she had never lived anywhere else. Since she had married, she had never returned to Winnipeg, not even to visit.
- 15 The yellow house sitting on the curve, a spruce tree set at each side of the entrance to the driveway, the wild grass cropped to a lawn by their dozen sheep and seven cows, made up her entire life. Once or twice a month, they went together to Eddyville for bingo on a Wednesday. Saturdays, if they needed groceries, she walked into town to the Co-op. Sundays, they went to church.
- 16 Crowded between a dirt road and the lake, their half-mile of land was only a thousand feet at its widest point but it was big enough for them. Behind the house, there was a narrow path that angled down to the dock where a green skiff was moored.
- 17 "It may not be much," he had said when they first stood on the road together in the growing dusk, studying the fading house and barn and listening to the cattle moving softly along the fence, "but it's *ours*." She never forgot that.
- 18 She knew nothing of the country but she learned as quickly as she could. From the moment she put her ad in the paper, she was determined to see that whoever agreed to have her would never have reason to regret his decision. Olga had added a dozen each of chickens and ducks and a brace of geese. Besides taking care of the house, she helped with the chores. She planted a vegetable garden, gradually expanding it each year until it provided them with vegetables and fruit from one year's end to the next. The year before last, they had a few dollars to spare and Carl had brought her marigolds and snapdragons to add to her border of wildflowers.

- 19 “You should let me take you to the hospital,” she said quietly.
- 20 His eyes rested on her, then he went back to splicing the cable, his thin hands moving with practised familiarity.
- 21 “We’ve got two thousand dollars. Do you know what a day in the hospital costs? Fifty dollars, maybe seventy-five dollars. And then there’s the doctor and the medicine.” He said it evenly, without rancour or bitterness but with a puzzled tone as if unable to understand how lying in bed could cost so much.
- 22 She knew there was no use trying to explain. Like most people who had to work hard for everything, he was careful with his money. She did not blame him. For ten dollars’ worth of fish, he had often gone out at dawn and stood all morning in a lurching, choppy sea, pulling nets from the bitter water. When he came back, he returned to farm chores that lasted into the evening.
- 23 “Everything is in your name. The two thousand dollars is in the metal foot-locker.” They had been over it all before but she listened without reminding him. “The title to the farm is in the top drawer and the money to pay the taxes.” He paused, thinking ahead. “The worst will be when the cows are calving. You won’t get much rest. Maybe,” he added momentarily unsure of himself, “you’ll not want to stay by yourself. There are a lot of heavy chores.”
- 24 “I should feed the cows,” she answered but she did not move.
- 25 “You can’t do all the work and look after me at the same time.”
- 26 She, like him, was a realist. She knew her own limits. “Yes,” she agreed, “I can’t do both.”
- 27 “The black cow always has trouble with its calf. The vet from Eddyville will cost a few dollars but you’ll need him.”
- 28 “What about the boat and nets?”
- 29 As he considered the question, he sat with his mouth pursed. “Sell them. You won’t use them and every season they sit, they lose value.”
- 30 She knew he was right but she wished she could have kept the boat. Sometimes, in nice weather, she had gone with him to his nets and they had eaten lunch together. Rocking gently on a vast silver plain, they seemed, at those times, to be the only two people on earth.
- 31 “I’ll put up a sign in the Co-op store and the skating rink.”
- 32 He nodded with approval.
- 33 She knew he was worried about money and she wanted him not to worry so she said, “If I need more, I can get a job cleaning the school or the bank. It isn’t hard work and it only takes a couple of hours a day.”
- 34 “Good.” He nodded his head in approval. “They are not the best jobs but you have to be practical.”

- 35 They both liked to be practical but sometimes it was difficult. During Olga's first week on the farm, a woman had come to the door with chickens for a dollar fifty each. She had thought they were a wonderful bargain and bought four. She had roasted one for their supper but when she tried to cut it, the knife slid off the breast. Carl had managed to hack off a piece but no amount of chewing would soften it. They had eaten leftover cabbage rolls for supper. The next day, she had stewed the chicken for eight hours.
- 36 From time to time, Carl had come to ask if the chicken was cooked. His asking made her feel terrible but then she realized he was teasing and they had started to laugh. Ever since then, it had been their own private joke. Whenever she cooked chicken, he would ask if she was sure that it was ready and prod it gently with a fork before carving it.
- 37 "Maybe you'll prefer to go back to the city," he said. "It'll be lonely."
- 38 She had thought about the sad, grey room that had made her desperate enough to advertise in the paper, desperate enough to expose herself to the ridicule of the world, and wished she had some way to explain what it meant to have her own pots and pans, her own kitchen, her own husband. Having always had a place of his own, he could not, she knew, ever really understand what it had been like to have to live in other people's rooms.
- 39 After a while she replied, "I'd rather be here. There are the animals and the garden. Eddyville is close enough for me to walk. If the roads are muddy, I can take the tractor."
- 40 They fell silent again, then more to himself than her, he said, "Jimmy, the Englishman, you know, the one I've told you about. He lived beside where I pull up my boat for the winter. He got sick and before it was finished, everything was gone. His wife had to live on welfare."
- 41 He had finished the cable. He pulled it tight, inspecting it to see that there were no loose strands. Satisfied, he coiled it and carefully put it in a box at his feet. She liked the fact that he was tidy and picked up after himself.
- 42 "The garden was good this year," he remarked. "You've learned to make a good garden. No one would ever know you hadn't come from the country."
- 43 She flushed with pride.
- 44 He lifted himself up from the seat of his chair with one hand and craned to look out the window. He was not a carpenter but when she had mentioned that she would like to be able to look out as she worked at the counter, he had put in a window right away.
- 45 "It's really nice to have that window," she said. "The light is good for working."
- 46 He ducked his head, the way he did when he was embarrassed. "You need to feed the cows. They can't wait any longer."
- 47 She got up and put her mug in the sink.
- 48 "I'm going," he informed her, "to the marsh for some hay." He pulled on his rubber boots then, as if it was an afterthought, and added, "I'll see if I can shoot a mallard for tomorrow's supper. If I'm a little bit late, don't worry."

- 49 “I won’t,” she lied. “Are you going right away?”
- 50 “Yes. It’s already late.” He hesitated at the door and she thought he was going to say something more but then he quickly went out. The tractor started with a roar. When she looked, he was turning out of the yard. She watched until he jolted out of sight behind a thicket of leafless poplars.
- 51 She went outside and saw that both pitchforks were leaning against the fence. The sky was clear and the air brisk. The blue dome of the sky went on forever. She thought that this was wrong, that it should have been grey and cloudy with a cold drizzle. The sun was too bright to look at directly so she stood watching it from an angle, wishing she could reach up and hold it in place with her bare hands, but then she heard the cows shuffling impatiently in the barn and, since there was no one else to do the work, she went to pitch them hay from the loft.

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