

The Never-Never Nest

Characters: JACK, Jill (his wife), Nurse and Aunt Jane

Scene: The lounge of JACK and JILL'S Villa at New Hampstead. The essential furniture consists of a table on which are writing materials, and two chairs. As the curtain rises the lounge is empty, but JACK and JILL come immediately, followed by AUNT JANE.

Jill : And this is the lounge.

Aunt Jane : Charming! Charming! Such a cosy little room! And such pretty furniture.

Jack : (*modestly*) We like it, you know, handy place to sit in and listen to the radiogram.

Aunt Jane : Oh, have you got a radiogram as well as a car and a piano?

Jack : Why, of course, Aunt Jane. You simply must have a radio set nowadays.

Jill : And it's so nice for me when Jack's away at business. I even make him move it into the kitchen, so that I can listen to it while I cook.

Jack : Sit down, Aunt Jane, You must be tired-and we've shown you everything now.

Jill : What do you think of our little nest, Aunt Jane?

Aunt Jane : I think it's wonderful, my dears. The furniture-and the car-and the piano-and the refrigerator and the radio-what's it- it's wonderful, really wonderful!

Jack : And we owe it all to you.

Aunt Jane : Yes, Jack, that's what's worrying me.

Jack : Worrying you, Aunt Jane?

Aunt Jane : Yes. That cheque I gave you for your wedding present-it was only two hundred pounds, wasn't it? I- didn't put two thousand by mistake?

- Jill** : Why, no, Aunt Jane. What on earth made you think that?
- Aunt Jane** : (*relieved*) Well, that's all right. But I still don't altogether understand. This house-it's very lovely-but doesn't it cost a great deal for rent?
- Jack** : Rent? Oh, no, we don't pay rent.
- Aunt Jane** : But, Jack, if you don't pay rent, you'll get turned out-into the street. And that would never do. You've Jill and the baby to think of now, you know.
- Jack** : No, no, Aunt Jane. You misunderstood me. We don't pay rent because the house is ours.
- Aunt Jane** : YOURS?
- Jill** : Why, yes; you just pay ten pounds and it's yours.
- Jack** : You see, Aunt Jane, we realized how uneconomic it is to go on paying rent year after year, when you can buy and enjoy a home of your own for ten pounds-and a few quarterly payments, of course. Why be Mr. Tenant when you can be Mr. Owner?
- Aunt Jane** : I see. Yes, there's something in that. Even so, you must be getting on very well to keep up a place like this.
- Jill** : Oh, he is, Aunt Jane. Why, only last year he had a five shilling rise-didn't you, Jack?
- Jack** : (*modestly*) Of course that was nothing, really. I'm expecting ten this Christmas.
- Aunt Jane** : (*suddenly*) Jack! I've just thought of something. That car-is it yours?
- Jill** : Of course it's ours.
- Aunt Jane** : All yours?
- Jack** : Well, no, not exactly all.
- Aunt Jane** : How much of it?
- Jill** : Oh, I should say the steering wheel-and one of the tyres -- and about two of the cylinders. But don't you see, that's the wonderful thing about it.
- Aunt Jane** : I don't see anything wonderful about it.

Jill : But there is, Aunt Jane. You see, although we could never buy a car outright, we can enjoy all the pleasures of motoring for a mere five pounds down.

Aunt Jane: And the rest by easy instalments, I suppose.

Jill : Exactly.

Aunt Jane: Exactly. And what about the radio-what's it?

Jack : Well, that's the-

Aunt Jane: And the piano?

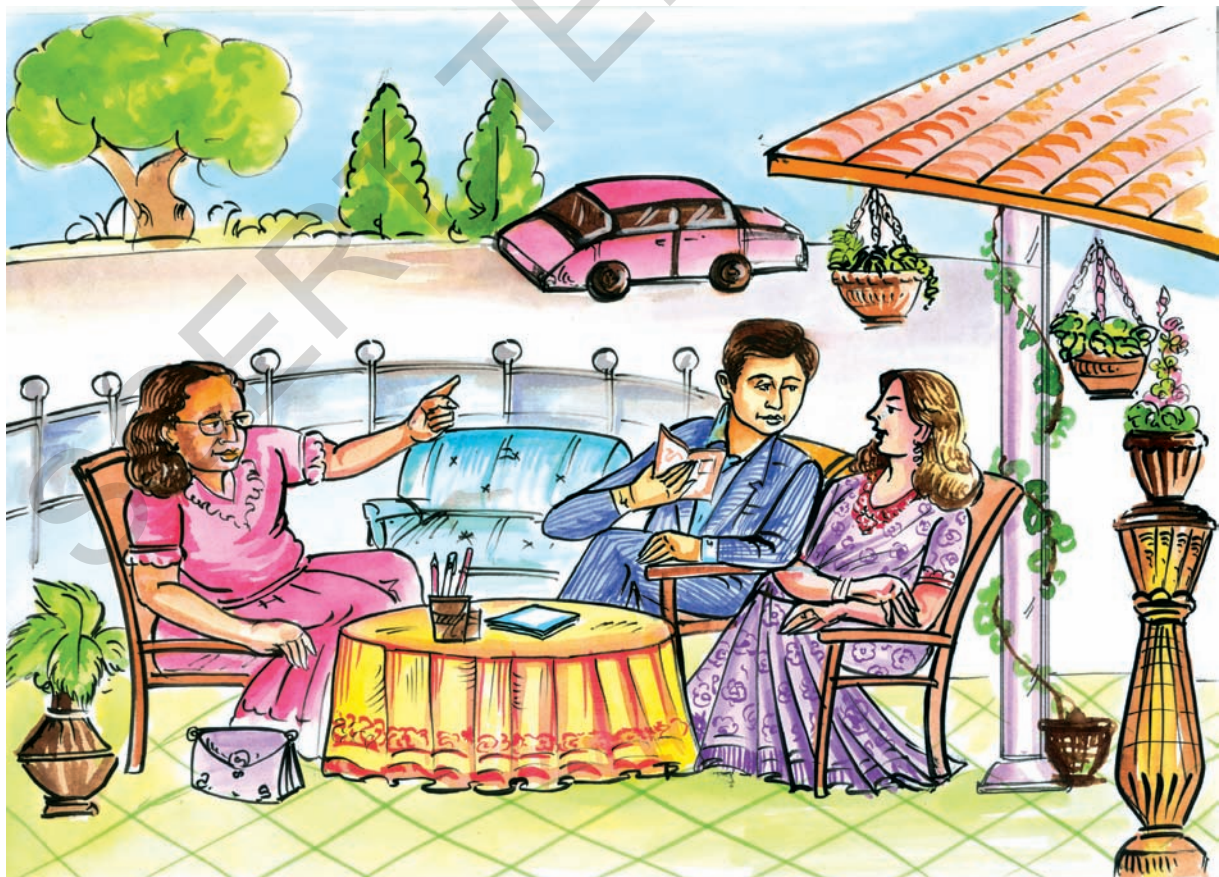
Jill : Well, of course-

Aunt Jane: And the furniture?

Jack : I-I'm afraid so-

Aunt Jane: I suppose all you own is this leg. (*She points to one*)

Jill : Well, no, as a matter of fact, it's that one. (*She points to another.*)



Aunt Jane: And the rest belongs to Mr. Sage, I suppose?

Jill : Er-Yes.

Aunt Jane: Well. I'm not going to sit on-Mr. Sage's part for any one. (*She stands up.*)
Now, tell me, how much do all these instalments come to?

Jack : Well, actually-*(He takes out his pocket-book and consults it.)*- actually to seven pounds eight and eight pence a week.

Aunt Jane: Good heavens! And how much do you earn?

Jack : As a matter of fact-er-that is-six pounds.

Aunt Jane: But that's absurd! How can you pay seven pounds eight and eight pence out of six pounds?

Jack : Oh, that's easy. You see, all you have to do is to borrow the rest of the money for the payments from the Thrift and Providence Trust Corporation.

Jill : They're only too glad to loan you any amount you like, on note of hand alone.

Aunt Jane : And how do you propose to pay that back?

Jack : Oh, that's easy, too. You just pay it back in instalments.

Aunt Jane : Instalments! *(She claps her hand to her forehead and sinks back weakly into the chair. Then realises that she is sitting on Mr. Sage's piece and leaps to her feet again with a little shriek.)*

Jack : Aunt Jane! Is anything the matter? Would you like to lie down?

Aunt Jane : Lie down? Do you suppose I'm going to trust myself in a bed that belongs to Mr. Sage, or Marks and Spencer, or somebody? No, I am going home.

Jill : Oh, must you really go?

Aunt Jane : I think I'd better.

Jack : I'll drive you to the station.

Aunt Jane : What! Travel in a car that has only one tyre and two thingummies! No thank you-I'll take the bus.

Jack : Well, of course, if you feel like that about it....

Aunt Jane : (*relenting a little*) Now, I'm sorry if I sounded rude, but really I'm shocked to find the way you're living. I've never owed a penny in my life-cash down, that's my motto and I want you to do the same. (*She opens her handbag.*) Now look, here's a little cheque I was meaning to give you, anyway. (*She hands it to Jill.*) Suppose you take it and pay off just one of your bills- so that you can say one thing at least really belongs to you.

Jill : (*awkwardly*)Er-thank you. Aunt Jane. It's very nice of you.

Aunt Jane : (*patting her arm*)There! Now I must be going.

Jack : I'll see you to the bus anyway.

Jill : Good-bye, Aunt Jane-and thanks so much for the present.

Aunt Jane : (*kissing her*) Good-bye, my dear.
(*She and Jack go out. Jill looks at the cheque and exclaims 'Ten pounds!'*
Then she hurries to the table, addresses an envelope, endorses the cheque
and slips it inside with a bill which she takes from the bag and seals the
envelope. Then she rings the bell. In a moment the nurse comes in with the
baby in her arms.)

Jill : Oh, nurse. I want you to run and post this for me. I'll look after baby while you're gone.

Nurse : Certainly, madam. (*She hands the baby to Jill, takes the letter, and goes.*)
(*A second later Jack comes in again.*)

Jack : Well, she's gone! What a tartar! Still, she did leave us a bit on account-how much was it?

Jill : Ten pounds.

Jack : (*with a whistle*) Phew! That's great! We can pay off the next two months on the car with that.

Jill : I-I'm afraid we can't-

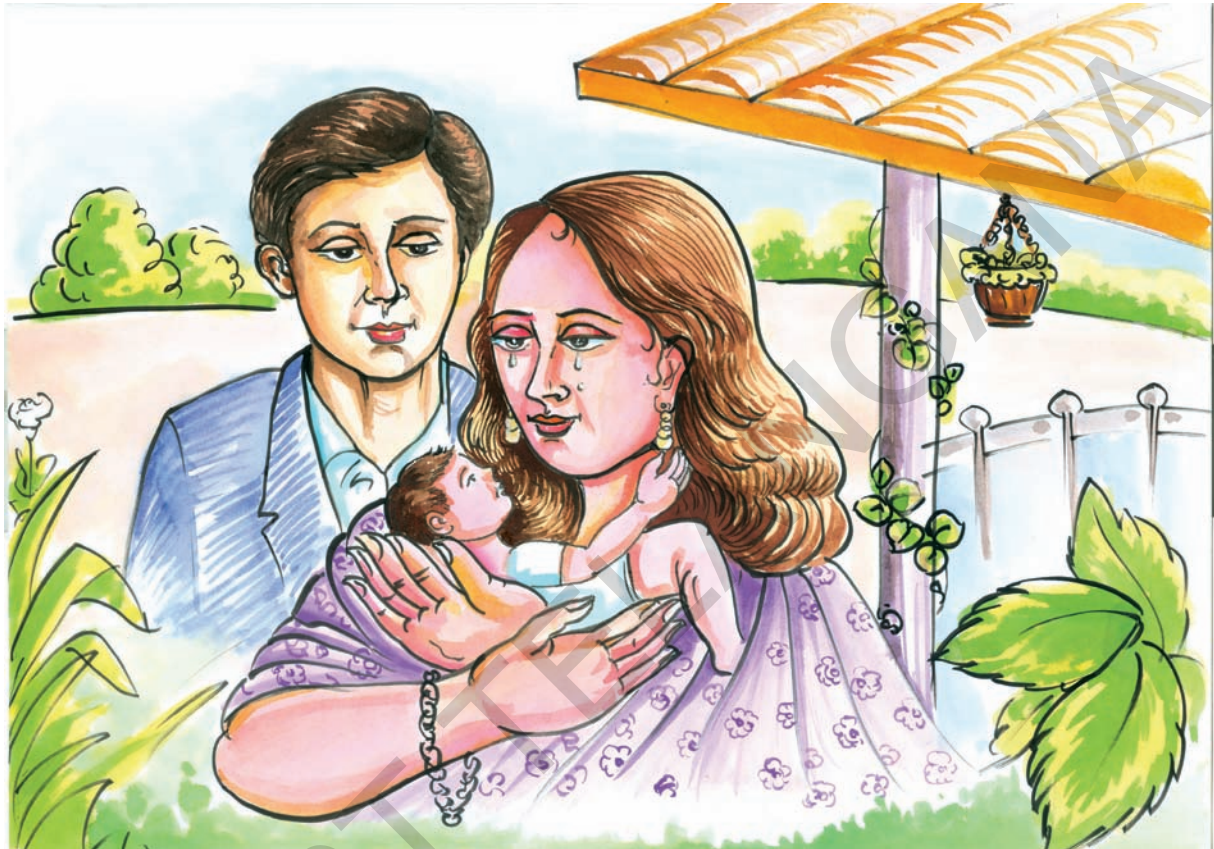
Jack : Why ever not?

Jill : You see, I-I've already sent it off for something else. Nurse has just gone to post it.

Jack : Well that's all right. Who have you sent it to?

Jill : Dr. Martin.

Jack : Dr. Martin! What on earth possessed you to do that?



Jill : (*nearly in tears*) There! Now you're going to be angry with me.

Jack : I'm not angry! But why waste good money on the doctor? Doctors don't expect to get paid anyway.

Jill : (*sobbing a little*) But-but you don't understand -

Jack : Understand what?

Jill : Why; just one more instalment and BABY'S REALLY OURS! (She is holding out the infant, a little pathetically, as we black out.)

- *Cedric Mount*

Glossary

villa (<i>n</i>)	:	small house standing in its own garden
cosy (<i>adj.</i>)	:	warm and comfortable
shriek (<i>n</i>)	:	a high loud cry
exclaim (<i>v</i>)	:	speak with strong feelings
thingummy (<i>n</i>)	:	a word used in spoken English, when the name of an object has been forgotten
tartar (<i>n</i>)	:	an irritable, hard to cope with person
pew (<i>interj.</i>)	:	expression of tiredness, shock or relief

Comprehension

I. Answer the following questions.

1. Aunt Jane thought that she had given away 2000 pounds instead of 200 pounds? What made her think so?
2. What surprised Aunt Jane most? Why?
3. "And the piano? ... And the furniture?" What do these questions suggest?
4. Would you buy so many things if you were Jack? Why?
5. Who do you think first understood Aunt Jane? Substantiate your answer.
6. What would you have done with the 10 pounds if you were Jack/Jill?
7. Did your parents buy anything by an easy instalment scheme? Do you support or oppose this scheme? Why?
8. Write a critical review of the play, 'The Never-never Nest' bringing out the point of view of the writer.

Oral Activity

Your dream mobile is on sale at a never before discount. Your earnings are just enough to manage life. If the shop offers an instalment facility, will you buy it?

In groups, talk about the advantages and disadvantages of instalment schemes.

Writing Activity

Buying things by easy instalments keeps you permanently in debt. Write your points in favour /against the proposition.

Afterwards, work in pairs and have a debate in the class.

Project Work

I. Influence of technical gadgets on human relations.

Visit five houses in your neighbourhood and collect the information in the given format related to human relations i.e. spending quality time with the members of the family and friends, sharing and caring. Analyse the information and write a report by adding your opinion on how the modern gadgets are influencing human relations and present it before the class.

Sl. No	Type of Gadgets	Human relations before the accessibility	Human relations after the accessibility
1	Television		
2.	Mobile phones		
3.	Computer/ Internet		

Self Assessment

How well have I understood this unit?

Read and tick (✓) in the appropriate box.



Indicators	Yes	Somewhat	No
Reading: I read and comprehended the text:			
A. The Journey			
B. Another Woman			
C. The Never-Never Nest			

Indicators	Yes	Somewhat	No
Vocabulary: I was able to . . .			
• pick out all the compound words from the story and group them under the headings.			
• fill in the blanks to make hyphenated compound words.			
• fill in the blanks with the missing parts of the compound words.			
• put the reduplicatives under proper headings.			
• answer the questions using reduplicative words.			
Grammar: I was able to			
• comment on the use of simple past/ past perfect tense.			
• identify the tense and give reasons for the use of that tense.			
Writing: I was able to			
• write an essay on the adverse effects of education.			
Study Skills:			
I was able to identify the type of intelligence that my friends and I belongs to.			
Listening and Speaking:			
I listened to the story and was able to answer the questions.			
I was able to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of instalment schemes.			
I was able to write down my points in favour / against the proposition 'buying things on instalments keeps you permanently in debt.			
Project Work:			
I was able to collect the information and write a report on how the modern gadgets are influencing human relations and present it before the class.			