

6th Standard English

The Old-Clock Shop

It was Christmas Eve. The shoppers were going home. However, the lights were still burning in the old-clock shop. Its owner was dear. His name was Ray. He was working on a clock.

The work being over, Ray stood up. Just then two men entered his shop. One of them was in his twenties. The other man was about fifty years of age. Ray looked at them.

The youngman remained at the door. The old man came to the counter. There was no friendliness in his eyes. This made Ray think that the visitor was not really a shopper. Ray offered him a notepad and a pencil. By making signs, Ray told him that he was deaf and dumb. The surprised old man turned back and said something to his young companion.

In the meantime Ray had seen that the man had a gun in his pocket. Obviously they had come to rob Ray of his money. Controlling his anger, Ray wrote on the notepad, "May I help you ?." The old man now looked into Ray's eyes and smiled. It was a cruel mocking smile. Ray wrote again, "Have you come to pick up a clock or watch ?" With gestures, Ray told him that he gave loans to the needy against their watches. Ray was not a pawnbroker. Yet he could not say 'no' to the needy. When they placed old watches or clocks before him, he loaned more than he should.

This seemed to give the old man an idea. He showed his wrist watch and wrote on the paper. "How much will you give me for it?" Ray saw that it was a cheap watch. Yet he felt it could help both of them to get out of a bad situation. In this sense it had great powers. So he asked the man, "How much do you need for it?" The reply came back : "Whatever it's worth."

Ray gave the man a fifty dollar note. The man was thankful. It was at this moment that the unfriendly face of the visitor became truly friendly. Both of them knew that the watch was not worth that much. Before leaving, the man wrote, "I will be back to pick it up as soon as I can. Merry Christmas!"

Thus the story ended peacefully. As if pleased by this situation, all the clocks in the shop rang to announce the half hour. All the three men present there felt the message. The message was "Peace on earth, goodwill towards all."