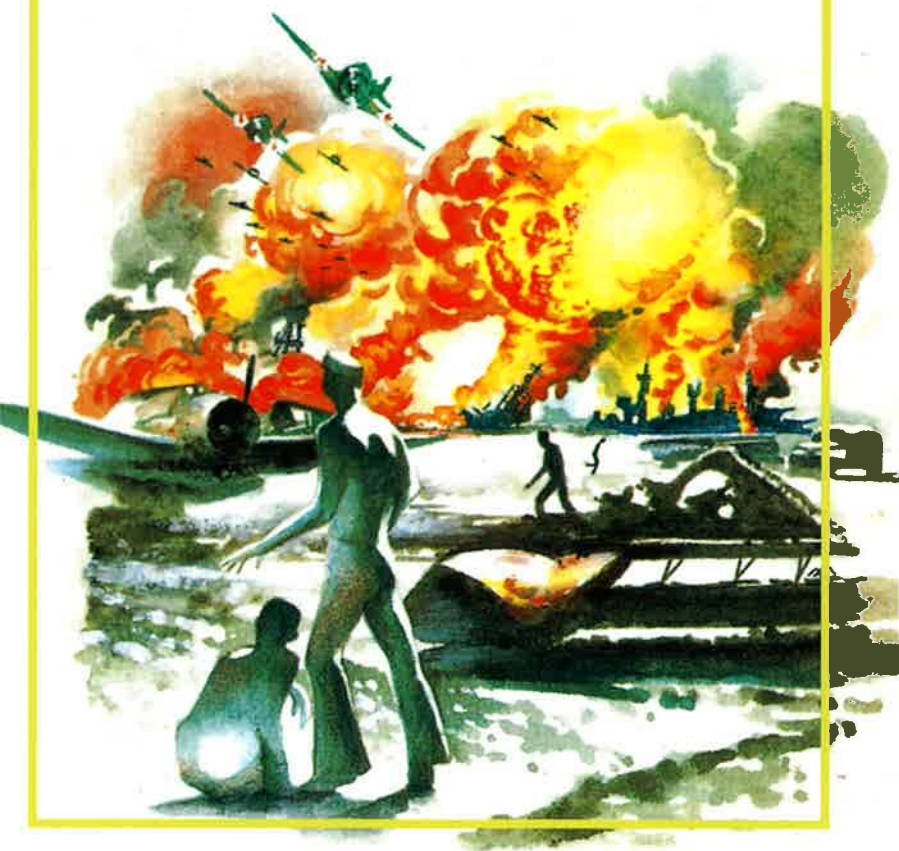


Stanford House Classics - Elementary

PEARL HARBOR

Catherine Wrenn

literature analysis and response



PEARL HARBOR

A Waking Nightmare

Catherine Wrenn

Luke's summer vacation plans are ruined when he learns that he must leave New York and spend a month by the sea with his aunt, uncle and aged grandfather.

But when a telegram arrives announcing the death of Grandpa's old friend Tommy, a World War II veteran, the old man is prompted to recount a wartime adventure that shocks and astonishes his grandson...

AMERICAN SPELLING



Stanford House

THE START OF SUMMER

The sun filtered in through the half-drawn curtains at Luke's bedroom window. The boy lay fast asleep; it had been a late night last night, everybody from school had been at the party, celebrating the end of exams and the start of summer.

Suddenly, a ringing noise broke the silence. Luke put out his hand and brought it down heavily on the little alarm clock that danced on his bedside table.

"That's shut *you* up!" he smiled to himself. No more alarm clocks, no more school bells, no more homework or studying for two glorious months.

A CHANGE OF PLAN

Luke sat with his feet on the kitchen table, swigging¹ juice from a huge carton.

"Why are you up so early?" asked his mother, taking the carton from him and pushing his feet to the floor.

"I've got lots to do," replied Luke, "I'm meeting Leo and some of the others: we've decided to enter the district rap competition at the end of August, and we need to start practicing. And that's not all: Rocky's forming a band, and he wants me to be on drums!"

Luke stuffed² his muffin³ into his mouth and started doing a fast drumming action in the air, his arms flailing⁴.

"Well, before you make too many plans," said his mother, "I've got some news for you. Your father and I have been called to Europe on business for a month. I've been in touch with Bill and Barbara in Ocean City and you're going there for a few weeks."

Luke's face fell. "Mom, you must be joking. Ocean City? There's nothing for me to do there, it's full of old folk⁵ and kids⁶ on holiday. You know I can't stand the place. Aunt Barbara and Uncle Bill never go anywhere either, they're always at home with Grandpa."

1. Look at the page opposite and find all the verbs given in the simple past tense. List them in the appropriate columns, giving the infinitive forms. The first two have been done for you.

REGULAR PAST

filtered – to filter

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IRREGULAR PAST

lay – to lie

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2. Look at the list of adjectives below and circle the ones that best describe how you feel on the first day of your school holidays.

excited • bored • tired • miserable • happy •
cross • depressed • energetic •
delighted • disappointed • pleased

Can you think of any other adjectives to describe your feelings at the start of the school holidays?

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1. **swigging:** *drinking in large quantities.*
2. **stuffed:** *pushed.*
3. **muffin:** *a round, bread-like cake.*
4. **flailing:** *waving wildly.*
5. **old folk:** *old people.*
6. **kids:** (slang) *children.*

“Yes, your grandfather will be delighted¹ to see you again,” Luke’s mother began.

“Well I won’t be delighted to see him,” replied Luke rudely, “he’s just an old fossil²!”

Luke’s mother sighed. “It’s all fixed. I’m sorry to spoil your plans Luke, but I’m afraid you can’t stay at home alone for a whole month. You’re just not old enough.”

But Luke did not hear her, he was already stamping upstairs to his bedroom.

ARRIVING IN OCEAN CITY

Three days later, Luke sat miserably on his huge backpack at Ocean City Greyhound³ terminal, his personal stereo plugged into his ears. He was waiting for Uncle Bill to arrive and thinking crossly about all his friends at home, and all the things they were planning to do in the next few weeks... without him. It just was not fair!

Luke was not looking forward to this month in Ocean City. He had liked the place when he was a little kid. All small children like seaside resorts with fairgrounds, circuses and all the usual attractions. But Luke was fourteen now, and he wanted to spend his time doing other things. He liked street art, but here they would soon call the cops⁴ if you set to work with a can of spray paint. He also loved rap and rollerblading, but those were not the sort of things that vacationers⁵ in Ocean City seemed to like.

Luke thought about his relatives and sighed audibly. Barbara and Bill were kind enough, but they were not exactly wild⁶. Grandpa had actually been quite fun in his younger days, always ready for an hour’s baseball in the yard. But now he just sat in a chair all the time, mumbling⁷ to himself in a low voice. He did not seem

3. Read the brief passage below and fill in the spaces using the verbs given in brackets.

During his summer vacation, Luke usually (spend) a lot of time with his friends.

He (listen) to loud music and (play) his drums.

He (not/get up) early. In the evening, he often (go) to concerts and he (get) home very late.

He (never/start) his homework until the very last week!

4. How about you? Complete the passage below using adverbs of frequency like: sometimes, always, never, often, usually.

During my summer holidays, I
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1. **delighted:** very happy.
2. **fossil:** the impression of a prehistoric plant or animal, hardened in rock (used colloquially to refer to a person who is old and old-fashioned).
3. **Greyhound:** long distance bus service.
4. **cops:** (slang) police.
5. **vacationers:** tourists, holiday-makers.
6. **wild:** (slang) exciting, fun.
7. **mumbling:** speaking indistinctly.

to know what day of the week it was half the time, and Luke was certain his Grandfather did not realize that we would now entered a new century!

Just at that moment, Luke felt a hand fall on his shoulder. With a start, he turned and looked up. It was Uncle Bill. Luke turned off his music and pulled the earphones from his ears.

“I was shouting to you from the parking lot,” said his uncle, laughing, as they made their way to the car, “are you deaf or something? It must be all that loud music you kids seem to like nowadays. You know, it’ll probably do you good to have a quiet holiday by the sea!”

Luke’s heart sank as he got in next to Uncle Bill.

GRANDPA

As the car pulled up in front of the house, Luke could see his grandfather in the garden. The old man was sitting in a white wicker¹ chair with a blanket² over his knees. Aunt Barbara had placed a cup of tea and a plate of cookies on a table beside him. Both were untouched. He appeared to be reading the newspaper that lay folded in his lap³, but when Luke looked more closely, he could see that the old man was asleep.

Bill noticed the direction of Luke’s gaze⁴.

“He spends most of his time asleep nowadays,” he told his nephew. “Asleep or thinking about old times. He’s rather weak, you know,” he went on, “we don’t really like leaving him at home alone.”

Luke felt depressed. He was beginning to realize that a month here was going to seem a very long time indeed.

“What about Josie, that girl who used to live next door to you, is she around this summer?” Luke asked his uncle, hopefully.

“I’m afraid not,” Bill replied, “that family moved away six months ago, and the house is still empty.”

5. Solve these anagrams to find the names of relatives (family members). The first one has been done for you.

- TUNA aunt
- TAARHRGFNDE
- RSSIET
- RTMOEH
- RDTHUAGE
- LNEUC
- RBOHTRE
- ONS
- NWEEPH
- SNRGDNOA

6. Write a brief description of your oldest relative.

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- 1. wicker: flexible twig or shoot, used to weave baskets, chairs etc.
- 2. blanket: a cover made from wool.
- 3. lap: the front of a person who is sitting down (from waist to knees).
- 4. gaze: fixed stare.