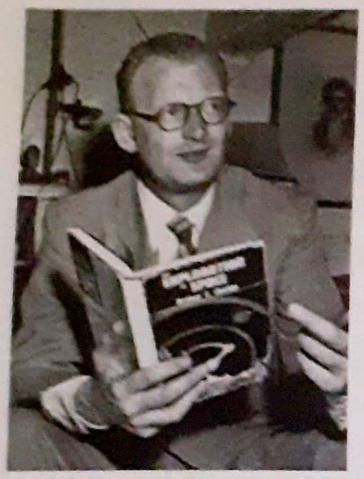
Short Story: A slight case of sunstroke by Arthur C. Clarke

Group Work - Reading Comprehension Activities

Date: _____

a) Read the short story *A slight case of sunstroke by Arthur C. Clarke* and check the vocabulary you do not know. Then, complete the following activities

b) Complete the author's biography with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.



Arthur C. Clarke _____ (be) one of the most important and influential figures in 20th century science fiction. He _____ (spend) the first half of his life in England, where he _____ (serve) in World War Two as a radar operator, before he _____ (emigrate) to Ceylon in 1956. He _____ (be) best known for the novel and movie 2001: A Space Odyssey, which he _____ (co-create) with the assistance of Stanley Kubrick.

Clarke _____ (be) a graduate of King's College, London where he _____ (obtain) First Class Honours in Physics and Mathematics. He _____ (be) Chairman of the British Interplanetary Society, a member of the Academy of Astronautics, the Royal Astronomical Society, and many other scientific organizations.

Author of over fifty books, his numerous awards _____ (include) the 1961 Kalinga Prize, the AAAS-Westinghouse science writing prize, the Bradford Washburn Award, and the John W. Campbell Award for his novel Rendezvous With Rama. Clarke also _____ (win) the Nebula Award of the Science Fiction Writers of America in 1972, 1974 and 1979, the Hugo Award of the World Science Fiction Convention in 1974 and 1980, and in 1986 _____ (become) Grand Master of the Science Fiction Writers of America. He _____ (be) awarded the CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in 1989.

c) Answer these questions about the story:

1- The year before, the Perivians had lost the annual football match against the Panagurans. How had the Panagurans made sure the referee was on their side? .....

.....

.....

2- The visitor bought a programme called the Special Victory Souvenir Issue:

a) What was strange about the name of the programme?.....

.....

b) How many Perivian soldiers had been given a free copy of the programme? .....

.....

c) What was the cover of the programme made of? .....

.....

3- Why was the referee not able to run quickly?.....

.....

4- A few seconds before half-time, the Perivians scored a goal:

a) What did the referee do? .....

.....

b) What did the crowd do? .....

.....

5- Who was left alone in the middle of the field? .....

.....

6- The visitor heard the sound of a bugle:

Scanned with CamScanner

a) What hurt the visitor's eyes? .....

.....

b) What happened to the referee? .....

.....

c) How had the Perivians made sure that they would win the game?.....

.....

d) True or False?

1- In Perivia, football is just a game. **T / F**

2- The main character planned to go to the match in advance and bought the ticket. **T / F**

3- The previous year, the Perivians invested more money on the game than the Panagurans. **T / F**

4- After the first goal, Perivia scored a great goal that was accepted by the referee but not by the opposite team. **T / F**

5- Somebody blew a bugle because they wanted to win the match and leave the referee out of the game. **T / F**

6- The match was very important for both teams because they were old rivals. **T / F**

7- Suddenly, the referee disappeared from the field. **T / F**

8- After the referee disappeared, the game was cancelled and there was a terrible battle in the middle of the football field. **T / F**

9- The main character and his friend knew what was going to happen and used their programmes. **T / F**

10- Each silver programme reflected the rays of the sun at the referee at the same time. **T / F**

e) Write a short summary of the story:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

f) What could have happened if the weather was not sunny? Imagine a different ending for the story: *I heard the sound of a bugle blowing. Then, I heard it again....*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

g) Read the definitions and find the correct word from the text:

1) (parag. 1) _____ : a person who admires somebody/something or enjoys watching or listening to somebody/something very much.

2) (parag. 2)_____ : a fight between armies, ships or planes, especially during a war; a violent fight between groups of people.

3) (parag. 4)_____ : what you earn by working or selling things, and use to buy things.

4) (parag. 6) _____: a plan of things that will be done or included in the development of something

5) (parag. 9) _____ : an area of land that is used for a particular purpose, activity or sport

Scanned with CamScanner

A SLIGHT CASE OF SUNSTROKE

I was a visitor in Perivia. It was the day of the annual football match between Perivia and Panagura. More than a hundred thousand fans were going to the game. I didn't want to go to watch it.

My friend told me about last year's match. It sounded more like a battle than a game of football. Perivia had lost the match. The Perivians said the referee had not done his job properly.

'Why didn't you give the referee a bribe?' I asked.

'We did,' my friend replied. 'We gave him a lot of money. But the Panagurans gave him much more.'

I changed my mind. I went to the match with my friend. The stadium was full of people. The police searched everyone.

The search at the entrance took a long time. The police were looking for dangerous weapons. I bought a programme. It was large, with a silver cover and it was called the Special Victory Souvenir Issue.

How do the Perivians know that they are going to win? I wondered. I began to read my programme. Among other things, it said that the fifty thousand Perivian soldiers in the stadium had free copies of the programme.

Who paid for those fifty thousand copies? I thought.

At last the game began. After half a minute, one of the Perivian players tripped up a Panaguran. The Panaguran fell to the ground. The referee did nothing.

This time, I thought to myself, the Perivians have paid a big enough bribe to the referee.

The players moved quickly down the field. The referee ran after them. He was running slowly. Suddenly I understood what was wrong. Have you ever seen a man trying to run when he is wearing a bullet-proof vest? I can tell you, it isn't easy! I began to feel sorry for the referee.

The game went on peacefully for a time. I began to feel disappointed. Then there was a fight between five players. A few minutes later, four of them were carried off the field.

When the game started again, the Panagurans immediately scored a goal. The crowd roared with rage. A moment later, the referee gave the Panagurans a free kick at goal. They scored: two nil to the Panagurans.

After the first angry roar, the crowd became very still. The silence was frightening. I felt very sorry for that referee. At that moment he was the most hated man in all Perivia.

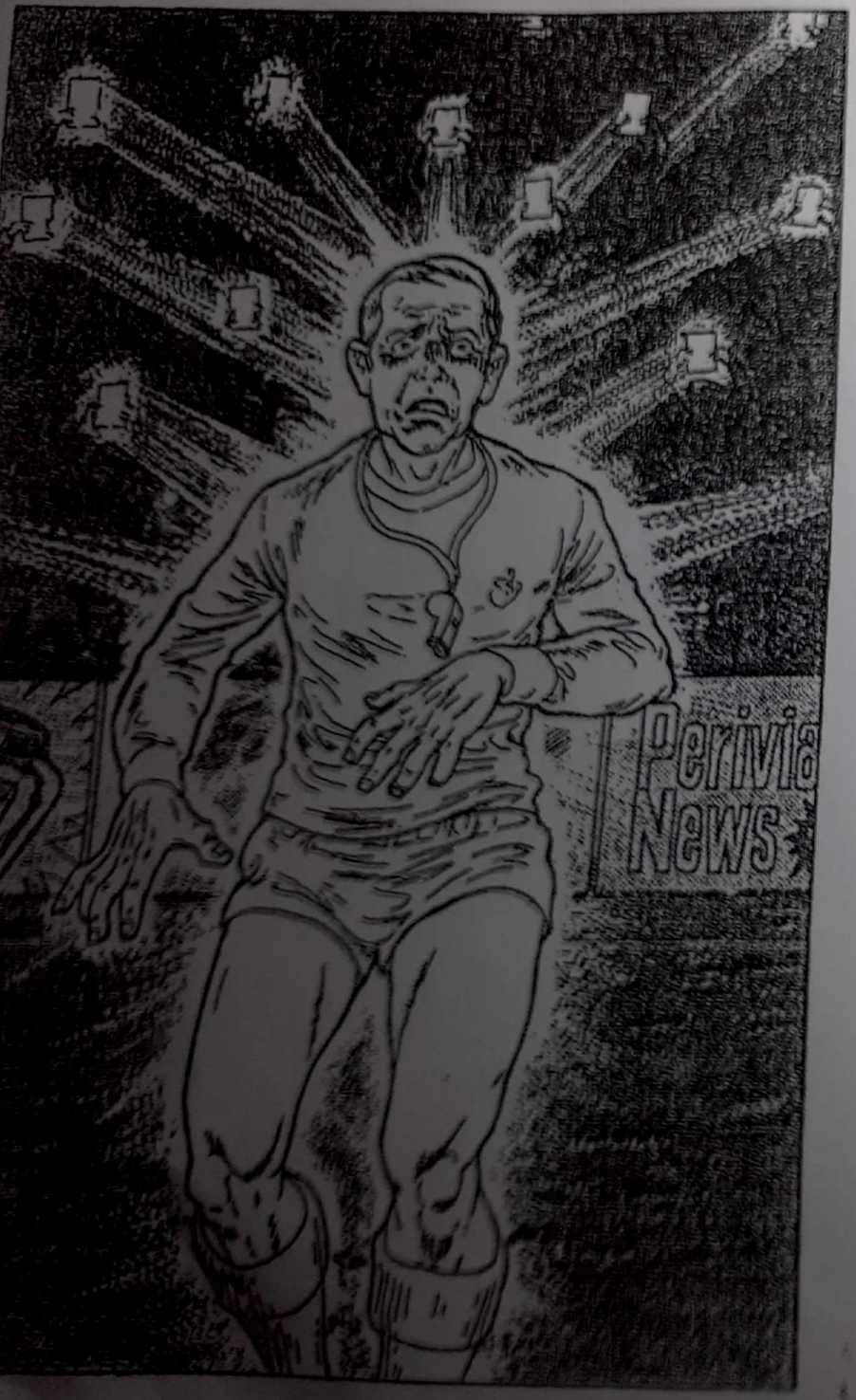
A few seconds before half-time, Perivia scored a beautiful goal. The referee blew the whistle. I couldn't believe what had happened. The referee had not allowed the goal. The crowd went mad. At last the police calmed them down. The two teams moved back to their own sides of the field. The referee stood all alone in the middle of the field.

I heard the sound of a bugle blowing. Then I heard it again. All at once, the crowd seemed to disappear in a sea of fire. The blinding light hurt my eyes. For a moment, I thought there had been an explosion.

I opened my eyes and looked up. Everything was exactly the same – except for one thing. One man had disappeared. There had been a referee in the middle of that football field. Now there was only a small pile of smoking ashes.

What had happened? I turned to my friend. He was shocked too. But he was looking down at the silver-covered programme on his knee. And then I understood.

Scanned with CamScanner



There is a lot of power in sunlight. A lot of heat can be reflected from a square of silver. At the sound of the bugle, those fifty thousand soldiers in the crowd had lifted up their programmes. Each programme had reflected the rays of the sun. They had reflected the rays of the sun at the referee.

The heat had burnt him to ashes.

Another referee came onto the football pitch. He did his job properly and the game ended peacefully. The score was 14 – 2 to Perivia. No one seemed sorry for the dead referee. In Perivia, football is a serious business.

1 The year before, the Perivians had lost the annual football match against the Panagurans. How had the Panagurans made sure the referee was on their side?
2 The visitor bought a programme called the Special Victory Souvenir Issue.
   (a) What was strange about the name of the programme?
   (b) How many Perivian soldiers had been given a free copy of the programme?
   (c) What was the cover of the programme made of?
3 Why was the referee not able to run quickly?
4 A few seconds before half-time, the Perivians scored a goal.
   (a) What did the referee do?
   (b) What did the crowd do?
5 Who was left alone in the middle of the field?
6 The visitor heard the sound of a bugle.
   (a) What hurt the visitor's eyes?
   (b) What happened to the referee?
   (c) How had the Perivians made sure that they would win the game?

Scanned with CamScanner