

# THE BEST INVESTMENT I EVER MADE

Archibald Joseph Cronin

## I. Read the following paragraph from the story 'The Best Investment I ever Made' and answer the questions

On the second day, out from New York, while making the round of the promenade deck, I suddenly became aware that one of the passengers was watching me closely, following me with his gaze every time I passed. I wanted to rest, to avoid the tedium of casual and importunate ship-board contacts. I gave no sign of having noticed the man.

Yet there was nothing importunate about him. On the contrary, he seemed affected by a troubled, rather touching diffidence. He was in his early 40s, rather short in build, with a fair complexion and clear blue eyes. His thin hair had begun to recede from his forehead. His dark suit, sober tie and rimless spectacles gave evidence of a serious and reserved disposition. At this point the bugle sounded for dinner, and I went below.

1. Who are the main characters mentioned in this passage?
2. Where did they start the journey from?
3. Identify the word which means 'a public place for walking' from the passage.
4. What did the author notice while making the round of promenade deck?
5. Which expression shows that the fellow traveller is watching the narrator?
6. Find out the synonym of the word 'boredom' from the passage.
7. Did the narrator like importunate contacts?
8. Pick out the word from the passage which means 'asking for many things many times in a way that is annoying'
9. Which sentence tells that narrator did not like importunate contacts?
10. Why did the author give no sign of having noticed the man?
11. What did the narrator do when he notice the stranger looking at him?
12. Find out the antonym of the word 'confidence ' from the passage?
13. How did the narrator describe the man?
14. Pick out the word from the passage which means 'the natural qualities of a person's character'.
15. Choose the most appropriate meaning of the word 'sober' from the bracket.  
(very bright, colourful, plain and not bright, expensive)

## Answers

1. The narrator and a fellow passenger.
2. They started their journey from New York.
3. Promenade.
4. He noticed that one of the passengers was watching him closely.
5. Following me with his gaze.
6. Tedium.
7. No, the narrator did not like importunate contacts.
8. Importunate.
9. I wanted to rest to avoid the tedium of casual and importunate ship-board contacts.
10. Because he did not like importunate contacts.
11. He gave no sign of having noticed the man.
12. Diffidence.
13. The man was in his early 40s, rather short in build, with a fair complexion and clear blue eyes. His thin hair had begun to recede from his forehead. His dark suit, sober tie and rimless spectacles, gave evidence of a serious and reserved disposition.
14. Disposition.
15. Plain and not bright.

## II. Read the following paragraph from the story 'The Best Investment I ever Made' and answer the questions

On the following forenoon, I again observed my fellow voyager watching me earnestly from his deck chair. Now a lady was with him, obviously his wife. The situation by this time had begun to intrigue me. I discovered from my steward that they were Mr and Mrs John S\_ from a small suburb of London. When another day passed without event, I began to feel certain that Mr S\_ would remain too shy to carry out his obvious desire to approach me. However, on our final evening at sea Mrs S\_ decided the matter. With a firm pressure on his hand and a whispered word in his ear, she urged her husband towards me as I passed along the deck.

Excuse me, Doctor, I wonder if I might introduce myself.' He spoke almost breathlessly, offering me the visiting card he held in his hand and studying my face to see if the name meant anything to me. Then, as it plainly did not, he went on with the same awkwardness. 'If you could spare a few minutes... my wife and I would like to have a word with you.'

A moment later I was occupying the vacant chair beside them. Haltingly he told me that this had been their first visit to America. It was not entirely a holiday trip. They had been making a tour of the New England states, inspecting many of the summer recreational camps for young people there. Afterwards, they had visited settlement houses in New York and other cities to study the methods employed in dealing with cases of backward, maladjusted and delinquent youth.

1. What made the narrator notice the fellow voyager the next day?
2. Pick out the word from the passage which means 'to make a person very interested to know about something'.
3. What information did the steward give the doctor about the man?
4. When did he finally decide to approach the doctor?
5. Pick out from the passage the expression that shows the nervousness of the man?
6. What did the man request the narrator?
7. Complete the sentence
  - a. If you spare a few minutes,.....
  - b. If you spared a few minutes,.....
  - c. If you had spared a few minutes,.....
8. 'I observed my fellow voyager'. Begin the sentence with 'My fellow voyager'.
9. Which country is referred to as 'New England States'?
10. What was the purpose of their journey?
11. 'It was not entirely a holiday trip'. What is 'it'?
12. Which word in the passage means "stopping and starting often"?
13. Why did they visit the settlement house?
14. Identify the word from the passage that means 'having mental and emotional problems that lead to unacceptable behaviour'.
15. Pick out one word of 'showing a tendency to commit crimes' from the passage.
16. Who were the settlement houses meant for?

## Answers

1. Because the fellow voyager and his wife were watching him earnestly from the deck.
2. Intrigue
3. The steward informed him that they were Mr and Mrs John from a small suburb of London.
4. Mrs John urged her husband towards him with a firm pressure on his hand and a whispered word in his ear as he passed along the deck.
5. Breathlessly/ Awkwardness.
6. The man requested the narrator to spare a few minutes for him and his wife.
7.
  - a. I will be happy.
  - b. I would be happy.
  - c. I would have been happy.

8. My fellow voyager was observed by me.
9. America.
10. For inspecting many of the summer recreational camps for young people there.
11. A visit to America.
12. Haltingly.
13. To study the methods employed in dealing with cases of backward, maladjusted and delinquent youth.
14. Maladjusted.
15. Delinquent.
16. The settlement houses were meant for the backward, maladjusted and delinquent youth.

**III. III. Read the following paragraph from the story 'The Best Investment I ever Made' and answer the questions**

I was a young doctor at the time and had just set up a practice in a working-class district of London. On a foggy November night, towards one o'clock, I was awakened by a loud banging on the door. Hurriedly, I threw on some clothes and went downstairs. It was a sergeant of police, in dripping helmet and cape, mistily outlined on the doorstep. A suicide case, he told me abruptly, in the lodgings around the corner-I had better come at once. We walked the short distance in silence, even our footsteps muffled by the fog, and turned into the narrow entrance of an old building. As we mounted the creaking staircase, my nostrils were stung by the sick- sweet odour of illuminating gas. On the upper storey the agitated landlady showed us to a bare little attic where, stretched on a narrow bed, lay the body of a young man.

1. Who did bang the door?
2. Why did Sergeant come to meet A. J. Cronin?
3. Where was the suicide attempt made?
4. Where was the young doctor practising?
5. What smell did Dr. Cronin get while mounting the staircase of the old building?
6. Identify the word from the passage which means 'to make a sound less clear'.
7. Find out one word of 'a room or space just below the roof of a house'.

**Answers**

1. The sergeant banged the door.
2. He came to tell him about a suicide case.
3. In the lodging around the corner.
4. He was practising in a working class district of London.

5. Sick-Sweet odour of illuminating gas.
6. Muffled
7. Attic

**IV. Read the following paragraph from the story ‘The Best Investment I ever Made’ and answer the questions**

Although apparently lifeless, there remained the barest chance that the youth was not quite beyond recall. With the sergeant's help, I began the work of resuscitation. For an entire hour we laboured without success. Despite our most strenuous exertions, it appeared useless. Then, as we were about to give up, completely exhausted, there broke from the patient a shallow, convulsive gasp. Half an hour of redoubled efforts and we had the youth sitting up, gazing at us dazedly. Slowly he seemed to be realizing the horror of his situation.

As he regained his strength, he told us his story. His parents were dead. An uncle had found him a position as clerk in a London solicitor's office. He had been in the city only six months. Utterly friendless, he had fallen victim to the loose society of the streets, had made bad companions and like a young fool, eager to taste pleasure far beyond his means, had begun to bet on horses. Soon he had lost all his small savings, had pledged his belongings and owed the book-maker a disastrous amount. In an effort to recoup, he had taken a sum of money from the office safe for a final gamble that, he was assured, was certain to win. But this last resort had failed. Terrified of the prosecution that must follow, sick at heart, sunk in despair, he had shut himself in his room and turned on the gas.

1. What did the doctor do to save the life of the young man?
2. Did the young man die?
3. What did the young man tell doctor about him when regained his consciousness?
4. Identify the word which means 'the act of bringing someone back to consciousness'.
5. How long did they do the work of resuscitation?
6. What sign gave the doctor a hope?
7. What happened after half an hour of effort?
8. Where was the young man working?
9. Who helped him to find a job?
10. How long did he work in the solicitor's office?
11. How did he lose his money?
12. What did he do to gain back his money?
13. Where did he get the money for final gambling?
14. Did he succeed in the final gamble?
15. Why did the young man commit suicide?

16. Pick out the word from the passage which means 'to get back an amount of money that you have spent or lost'.
17. Identify the word which means 'the process of conducting legal proceedings against someone accused of a crime'.

### **Answers**

- 1.The doctor began the work of resuscitation with help of sergeant.
- 2.No, the young man did not die.
- 3.The young man told his story.
- 4.Resuscitation
- 5.One and a half hours.
- 6.A shallow, convulsive gasp from the patient.
- 7.The young man came back to life
- 8.He was working as clerk in a London solicitor's office.
9. His uncle helped him.
- 10.He worked there for six months.
11. He had made bad companions, had begun to bet on horses and ruined his life.
12. He had taken a sum of money from the office safe for a final gamble.
13. From the office safe.
14. No, he did not succeed.
15. He had taken a sum of money from the office safe for a final gamble but he had failed. Terrified of the prosecution he committed suicide.
- 16.Recoup
- 17.Prosecution

### **V. Read the following paragraph from the story ‘The Best Investment I ever Made’ and answer the questions**

A long bar of silence throbbed in the little attic when he concluded this halting confession. Then, gruffly, the sergeant asked how much he had stolen. Seven pounds ten shillings - the answer sounded pitiful. For this paltr paltry sum he had almost thrown away his life.

There was a pause. The three of us, the sergeant, the landlady and me, as the sole witnesses of the near tragedy, had the same unspoken thought in our minds. We decided to give the young man a fresh start.

The sergeant, at considerable risk to his job, resolved to make no report upon the case, so that no court proceedings would result. The landlady offered a month's free board until he should

get upon his feet again. While I, making perhaps the least contribution, came forward with seven pounds ten shillings for him to put back in the office safe.

The ship moved on through the still darkness of the night. There was no need of speech. With a tender gesture Mrs S had taken her husband's hand. And as we sat in silence, I could not but reflect that it was the best investment I had made in my life. It had paid me no dividends in worldly goods, but had turned out to be immensely profitable. It stood out against all the bad investments I had made throughout the years-those foolish speculations for material gain, producing only anxiety, disappointment and frustration.

1. How much had the young man stolen from the office safe?
2. Who were the witnesses of the tragedy?
3. Pick out a word from the passage which means 'in a rough and unfriendly manner'.
4. What did they decide?
5. How did the sergeant help him?
6. what did the landlady do to help him?
7. What was the doctor's contribution?
8. What was the unspoken thought in the minds of the three?
9. Complete the sentence suitably
  - a. If the sergeant file the case,.....
  - b. If the sergeant filed the case,.....
  - c. If the sergeant had filed the case,.....
10. Why does the author say that it was the best investment he had ever made?

## Answers

1. Seven pounds ten shillings.
2. The Sergeant, the landlady and A. J Cronin.
3. Gruffly.
4. They decided to give the young man a fresh start.
5. The sergeant resolved to make no report upon the case.
6. The landlady offered a month's free board until he regain his health.
7. The doctor gave him the money to put back in the safe.
8. To give the young man a fresh start.
9.
  - a. the young man will be arrested.
  - b. the young man would be arrested.
  - c. the young man would have been arrested.
10. The author's timely action helped the man to change his bad ways.

## **VI. Attempt a CHARACTER SKETCH of Mr. John, the solicitor, in 'The Best Investment I Ever Made'.**

Mr. John was a successful solicitor for the past fifteen years. Moreover he was a director of a charitable organization, devoted to the rehabilitation of girls and boys from city slums. He visited settlement houses in New York and other cities, to study the methods employed with backward, maladjusted and delinquent youth. He was always assisted by his wife. He took derelict adolescents from juvenile courts and placed them in healthy environment. They were given training in vocations to lead a happy life. He too had such a past life, which acted as an inspiration. He too was a gambler, who had even robbed money from his office safe. When he lost it, he tried to commit suicide. All the past experiences helped him pave the way for the upliftment of the delinquent youth. All the traumas which he faced in his life made him a rescuer for the youth. He turned them to good and useful citizens, which was indeed a great responsibility to the society.

## **VII. Attempt a CHARACTER SKETCH of the doctor in the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made'.**

The doctor in the story The Best Investment I Ever Made is a peculiar character. He seems to be a little introvert and prefers not to befriend people during his journeys which is evident from the way he avoids the looks of Mr. John when he tries to get the doctor's attention. But he is a good human being. He stayed positive when he tried to the young man's life after that suicide attempt. And when there was a decision to help the young man he gave the boy money to be put back in the office safe. The doctor after sowing the seeds of virtue in the mind of the man leaves the scene and resumes his life's journey. And at last when he understands the value of his deed he says that it was the best investment he ever made in his life.

## **VIII. Attempt a CHARACTER SKETCH of the wife of Mr. John in the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made'.**

The wife of Mr. John in the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made' is a loving and caring wife who stands with her husband. She became his partner in dealing with the backward, maladjusted and delinquent youth. When he told her the turning point in his life she starts working with him and in 15 years they could save hundreds of youngsters and their families. She travels with him in his voluntary service for youth welfare. It would have become difficult for Mr. John to pick derelict adolescents from the juvenile courts and without her this would have been lot more for Mr. John.



**IX. Make an imaginary DIARY entry made by the young man, on the day he was saved from death.**

London

14 -03-1924, Wednesday

Oh! The blackest Wednesday of my life. Why did I do so? What had come over me? Really, a foolish decision indeed! If they had not come, I would have been dead. Look at them how good all the three of them were. The sergeant..... I can't imagine, he.... Did not register a case, and the Land lady one month's boarding free..... how will I thank her. And that doctor he too..... gave me that sum which I took from the safe. How good were they all to me. And I foolish ..... no more betting on horses... Ah! What a relief now, I have to start my life new and happy and no gambling. May Lord bless all three of them. Feeling sleepy.....

**X. A. J. Cronin pens down his thoughts in his DIARY about the unexpected incidents on the ship. Prepare his DIARY.**

**OR**

**A. J. Cronin never thought that he would meet that young man again who he had saved from death twenty five years ago. It was a boosting experience for him to know how the young man was changed over the time. Imagine that he writes about the meeting in his DIARY. What would be the likely diary entry.**

28 December

Monday, 10 pm

How awesome the day was! I just could not believe myself. I was very much excited. It was all messed up in the beginning. The couple staring at me made my nerves wreck. But a couple of days later I understood that they were eager to talk with me. What began as a very usual conversation took a twist. I was taken down the memory lane. With much hesitation he revealed that I was the doctor who had given him a new life. I could not believe my eyes. Twenty five years back I had rescued him from a tragedy and now he is before me, a vibrant young man ready to head societal missions. My eyes welled up. I never knew that I would live up to witness such a great transformation. May God bless him to live long and continue changing other's lives.

**XI. The young man Mr. John was too excited to see Mr. Cronin who gave him a rebirth. He writes his thoughts in a DIARY. Prepare a similar one.**

19 May

Monday 10 PM

Today was the most unexpected day in my life. After a long gap of 25 years I was blessed to meet my saviour. I was so happy that I was too shy to approach him. I hesitated several times. But my wife insisted me. Rather she took the initiative to break the ice. I spoke everything with much intensity. He was listening to us. I could never believe what was happening. I saw Mr. Cronin's face blooming up. Yes. It was a dream come true moment for me. I really wanted to thank him for giving me this most beautiful life. We sat still because I felt I have no words left in me to express my gratitude. Oh God! Give this wonderful man a long and peaceful life.

**XII. DIARY of A. J. Cronin/ The Sergeant/ Landlady (after saving the Young man Mr. John from Suicide attempt)**

5 August

Friday

Oh! an unforgettable day. Today I feel my life has got a new meaning. So happy that I could save the young man. Poor fellow..He tried to end himself for seven pounds ten shillings. He should never have forgotten that life on earth is the most valuable gift. How pitiful is his condition! Without work or money. Can I help him? Yes I shall try my level best. Why are these young men doing all these? Addicted to drugs and lost in bad company they live without any commitments to the society. We have to do something to save these people. Anyway thank god for bringing me here on time.

**XIII. The young man felt happy after regaining his life from the suicide attempt. Prepare a DIARY that he would have written that day.**

**OR**

**The young man in the anecdote ‘The best Investment I Ever Made’ has a wonderful escape from death. Later after his recovery, he writes down his feelings in his diary. Prepare the likely DIARY entry.**

Thank God. I got my life back. How silly I was trying to kill myself only for seven pounds ten shillings. Now I realize the value of god-gifted life. I am sure the doctor, the sergeant and the

landlady are the agents of God. What if they hadn't come on time? I just cannot think. It is all because of my uncontrolled and lavish life. I wasted everything in vain. I should thank the landlady for allowing me to stay here without rent. The sergeant is also great for not reporting my case. But the doctor has given me a rebirth. I have learnt a lesson. Here after my life is for people like me who need to be healed in mind and body.

**XIV. A J Cronin was extremely happy by the incident he had in the ship. He writes a letter to his friend. Prepare a similar LETTER.**

Dublin

10.10.1924

Dear George,

I am really happy to write this letter to you. Last week during my journey to America, I came across a very special couple on board. I was a little irritated at their staring initially, but later I came to know that they were very eager to talk with me. I was slowly getting attracted to them and finally I gave in. With much hesitation they told me about the projects they are into.

Repeatedly he asked me if I remembered him. The man reminded me of an incident that took place a few years back. I saved the life of a young man, who had tried to commit suicide. He had stolen money to pay his debts due to his wayward life. I gave him the money to repay his debts so that he could begin his life afresh. It took me some time to realize that the same young man stood before me as a transformed guy. A small investment that I made on that man has transformed him and through him hundreds of youngsters and their families were saved. I feel that it was the best investment that I have ever made in my life. Hope you would feel the same reading this letter. Convey my love and regards to everyone.

Yours lovingly

Cronin

**XV. Write a NEWSPAPER REPORT on the attempted suicide of the young man.**

**CLERK ATTEMPTS SUICIDE**

Staff Reporter, London: A young man aged 21 attempted suicide in a suburb in London. The land lady found the man unconscious from the nauseating smell that emerged from cooking gas. When contacted with the doctor, he was brought back to life after one hour of strenuous resuscitation. He said he robbed seven pounds shillings from the office safe. Addicted to gambling and after suffering heavy loss financially, and terrified of prosecution and ill fame, the man attempted so. The man is in observation in the City Hospital, and is said to be out of danger.

**XVI. The transformation of Mr. John appears in a newspaper. Prepare a NEWSPAPER REPORT on the same.**

**A PRICELESS INVESTMENT**

Staff Reporter, Cardross: The crew and the shipmates on board a ship here narrated the story of a young man named Mr. John and his unbelievable transformation. He was a suicide survivor 25 years before and was miraculously saved by A. J. Cronin. He was also given the money to repay his debts by the kind doctor. Overwhelmed by the kindness bestowed on him by a stranger, the young man had undergone a quick attitude change. He gave up his past lifestyles and has become a real contributor to the society. He now works as a social worker specializing on maladjusted and delinquent youth. He was given a warm reception on board the ship along with A J Cronin.

**XVII. Prepare a NEWS PAPER REPORT about Mr. and Mrs. John and the work that they are doing.**

**A REBIRTH TO REGAIN LIVES**

Staff Reporter, New York: The world of selfishness is bowing before Mr. and Mrs. John, a couple who have chosen to live for others. We can frequently see them in the summer recreational camps for young people. They visit settlement houses to study the methods to deal with backward maladjusted youth. They have been offering selfless service for 15 years in the field of youth welfare. Professionally Mr. John is a solicitor but as the director of charitable institutions his life is devoted to the welfare of boys and girls from the slums. They not only rescue them but also give training in handicraft, rehabilitate them and bring them back to life. It is reported that Mr John got inspiration from a doctor who once saved his life after a suicidal attempt. Hearing about this noble work many eminent persons have offered their support to the mission.

**XVIII. A short function to congratulate Mr. John is going to be held in the ship. You are one of the shipmates who are asked to deliver a SPEECH. Attempt a similar speech.**

The most respected writer A J Cronin, the hero of the day Mr. John, his wife, ladies and gentlemen,

This is a very special moment for all of us because as we know we are gathered here for a special reason. The couple sitting just in front of us is really on a mission. Their purpose of this voyage is different from ours. Now let me tell you that we are going to witness a rare moment in the life of these wonderful people. We are always proud of doing this and that but let me confess, that this achievement is beyond everyone's cup. Being humane and sympathetic may sometimes sound easier, but changing someone's life is way tough. Mr. A. J. Cronin has proved that our values are still alive. Twenty five years back he has helped this young man and now he is an accomplished social worker who wholeheartedly embarked on a mission of taking care of maladjusted and delinquent youth.

At this blessed moment I take full liberty to congratulate these outstanding people for their endeavours. I extend my heartfelt wishes to Mr. A. J. Cronin as well. Once again I wish Mr. John, the real hero for becoming a model to be emulated for the generations to come. Thank you everyone for a memorable day.

**XXIX. Based on the lesson 'The Best Investment I Ever Made'. Write a SPEECH on the grave issue of drugs and its use among youth.**

Respected teachers and my dear friends,

Today I am before you to express my deep concern over the grave issue of drugs and its use specially among youth. I know pretty well that our school campus has never been a hub for drug dealers and users. But at the same time I am too concerned about the condition of thousands of boys and girls who fall victim to this drug monster.

Drugs and addiction continue to plague the conscience of our society even at this era where people boast of novel inventions and newer gadgets that make life more comfortable. My dear friends, let me take you to the grim world of those people who have lost everything they value due to drug addition. Drugs are those stimulants when used at a milder level increases up your energies, and yet a little more of it makes one dull and passive and withdrawn. A greater amount may lead

eventually to one's death. Drugs, when mixed with blood controls the whole body. Brain seems to dysfunction and the person may not be able to fulfill even his daily chores. Right and wrong, day and night are alike to them. Once a person becomes addictive, his demand for drugs increases and ends up in searching for more. He reaches a state where he feels he couldn't survive without drugs. Drugs are introduced mostly by friends and relatives. It's an invitation that tests one's integrity, faith, bravery and sometimes it would come as a temporary solution to ease out a troubled mental state.

So selecting friends is far more important. Many of the addicts said that it was their friends who urged them to taste it. Some did it for adventure. In both cases a victim ends up in losing his family, relationship, and his future altogether.

The de-addiction centres help them to overcome from the clutches of drugs. But it is also a very difficult task. It takes months and in some cases years to get cured from drug addiction. The societal attitude towards the drug addicts remain unchanged even after they come back to normalcy. They are denied decent jobs and aren't welcome at a joyous function. As a result they tend to become withdrawn and show signs of psychic preoccupations. Some commit suicide and others turn anti-socials. Very few, with the love and assurance showered on them by their friends and family survive. We have learned the story of a young man who fell into bad company which led him to commit suicide but was fortunately saved by Cronin. It was the timely advice and interference of the doctor that changed his mind. He became a contributing member of the society in a short span of time.

Hence my dear friends, I would like to warn you never to take this fatal mistake of playing with your life. There may be thousands of friends but finally it's your body that you are going to assault. If you enjoyed, you also have to endure the pains. There is only one life, remember no drugs have ever solved any of men's problems. Prevention is always better than cure.

Thank you for your patient listening.

**XX. A. J. Cronin noticed a man staring at him for long. Prepare a CONVERSATION between him and the couple.**

Mr. John : Excuse me doctor, may I introduce myself? Can you spare a few minutes with me?

A. J. Cronin : I think we are meeting for the first time.

Mr. John : Yes. Please have a look at my visiting card.

A. J. Cronin : Oh ! OK. Sorry I can't recollect you.

Mrs. John : This is our first visit to U.S. We are here to visit camps for young people.

A. J. Cronin : Oh great ! How long have you been working in the field of youth welfare?

Mr. John : 15 years. I am a solicitor but more interested in the charitable organization for boys and girls from the slums.

A. J. Cronin : What kind of work are you doing here?

Mr. John : We try to heal the maladjusted youth and rehabilitate them.

A. J. Cronin : Your work is really praise worthy. What brought you to this field?

Mr. John : It is you sir who brought me back to life. My life is your gift.

A. J. Cronin : Me? But how?

Mr John : I am the same person whom you saved years ago from a suicide.

A. J. Cronin : My God ! It's you? I am really happy to see you again.

**XXI. One night A. J. CRONIN was suddenly awakened by a sergeant. Prepare a CONVERSATION between A . J. Cronin and the sergeant of police.**

**OR**

**“On a foggy November night, towards one o'clock, I was awakened by a loud banging on the door”. Imagine and write the CONVERSATION the sergeant and the doctor would make on the occasion.**

Cronin : Who is knocking there?

Sergeant : Mr. Cronin, I am the sergeant of police. Sorry to disturb you.

Cronin : Its OK. But what brought you here?

Sergeant : There is a suicide case in one of the lodgings around the corner.

Cronin : Who is it?

Sergeant : A young man.

Cronin : Has he been hospitalized?

Sergeant : No sir. He is still there.

Cronin : What is his condition now?

Sergeant : I think he is sinking.

Cronin : Then we shall hurry up.

**XXII. Prepare CONVERSATION between A. J. Cronin and the young man after his coming back to life.**

Young man : I am so thankful to you sir for rescuing me.

A J Cronin : Thank God. But why did you do this?

Young man : I had no other way. I had lost everything.

A J Cronin : What happened to you?

Young man : After my parent's death I was working as a clerk. Then I started to be in bad company, betting on horses, living lavishly.

A J Cronin : So you lost your wealth, didn't you?

Young man : Yes. So I took a sum of money from the office safe for gambling.

A J Cronin : You shouldn't have done it. Did you win?

Young man : No. I lost it and was afraid of the punishment. So I decided to commit suicide.

A J Cronin : Poor fellow. Don't worry. We can find a solution, but promise you won't repeat it.

Young man : Sure sir. I have learned the value of life.

**XXIII. Prepare a WRITE UP on the anecdote 'Best Investment I Ever Made' by A. J. Cronin.**

Once A. J. Cronin , the famous Scottish novelist and Physician was travelling by a ship on his way from New York. Then he saw a man in his early forties and his wife. From his appearance Cronin assumed that he was a serious character. Mr. John wanted to speak to Cronin. But he was too shy to approach him. At last, his wife pushed him forward and he spoke to Cronin.

He told Cronin that he visited settlement houses in New York and other cities to study the methods of dealing with the backward, maladjusted and delinquent youth. He also told that he was a solicitor and also director of a charitable organization. Cronin understood from their talk they took adolescents from juvenile courts, placed them in healthy environment to heal them in mind and body. And they were sent back into the world with new aspirations and hopes. Cronin asked him what had directed his life into that channel. At this he revealed his story when he was saved by A. J. Cronin. Cronin had then started medical practice in a working class district of London. One November night a sergeant of police called him to attend a suicide case. They reached the lodge and learned that a young man had turned on the gas. When Cronin saw the man he was almost lifeless. He and the sergeant tried for about an hour and saved the man.

He told that his parents were dead, and his uncle found him a job as a solicitor's clerk. Being friendless, he fell a victim to the loose society and made bad companions. He began to bet on horses and lost his savings. His debts increased. To recoup them he had taken a sum of money from the office safe for gambling. But that resort too failed. Afraid of prosecution and dishonour he sank in despair and shut himself in a room and turned the gas.

Hearing this story, Cronin, the land lady and the sergeant decided to help that youth. Cronin gave him seven pounds, ten shillings to put back in the office safe. The sergeant promised not to report the case and land lady offered a month's free boarding.



It was that help which became a turning point in the young man's life and changed him. So Mr. Cronin confesses to us that, it was the best investment he had made in his life. All other investments were foolish and only for material benefits. This anecdote has a great message. A wise and a gentle help made by the three people made a great impact in a man's life. He later became a messiah sent by lord in making the loose life of many children into worthy ones. Also that some selfless helps made by others can perform miracles and can change a human life positively.

**XXIV. Prepare a WRITE UP on how far the title is appropriate to the story 'Best Investment I Ever Made' ?**

The Best Investment I Ever Made is penned by the much celebrated Scottish writer A. J. Cronin. Cronin shares one of his personal experiences with the readers through this story. The title of the story is 'The Best Investment I Ever Made'. Usually we associate material gain with the word investment, obviously an underlying hope of profit lingers with the term investment and it may mean different things to different people. But the story by Cronin has a differently conceived meaning because it wasn't anything related with money or profit. The author's personal integrity and the values he had imbibed right from the beginning of his life made him what he was.

A doctor by profession, he rescued a suicide survivor and took pity on him. He helped the victim with the money he needed to repay his debts. The doctor after sowing the seeds of virtue in the mind of the man leaves the scene and resumes his life's journey little knowing about the transformation he had made in the mind of the young man. The once wayward young man had undergone a drastic change in his attitude and lifestyle that he had really become a contributing member of the society. The money Cronin had put in was to repay the debts the young man had. But it had really opened his otherwise blind eyes. The man had become an active social worker specializing on maladjusted and delinquent youth.

The author was happy beyond words because this was an investment that he could never have won even if he had put lakhs of money into share markets. So the title is too apt.

**XXV. The best investment in life is not money but values. Prepare a WRITE UP substantiating this view with the help of the story The Best Investment I Ever Made by A. J. Cronin.**

## THE VALUABLE INVESTMENT

A J Cronin, a well-known writer of novels, inspires us with a touching story “The Best Investment I Ever Made”. Once while he was travelling in a ship he found a man watching him anxiously many times. At first he felt annoyed. Later the couple came to him and introduced themselves as Mr. and Mrs. John. They have been working among derelict youth for 15 years, rehabilitating them and bringing them back to life. He became interested in the story. Then they told him that he was the inspiration for them. They reminded him of an incident that happened years ago. Years ago at midnight he was woken up from sleep by a Sergeant who came to him to inform about a suicide case in a nearby lodging. When he reached there the room was filled with the smell of a gas. At first he thought he was dead. Any way with the sergeant’s help he tried to revive him to consciousness. After half an hour of redoubled efforts they succeeded in rescuing him. He told them that he was a clerk in an office. Lost in bad company and luxuries he had wasted all his wealth. He took money from the office for gambling which he couldn't replace. Being desperate he tried to commit suicide.

A. J. Cronin learnt from him that he had taken only seven pounds and ten shillings. So he gave him that money, the Sergeant promised not to report the case and the landlady offered one month's free lodging till he got a new job. Thus the young man regained his life. He had given him only a small amount but the investment was more than that. He had given him a rebirth which the young man utilized for giving rebirth to many young men. Mr John has realized from his own experience that life on earth is the most valuable of god's gifts. This he imparts to thousands of youth. Here investment is also the values we imbibe in our lives, that would remain the best for ever. So A. J. Cronin's statement is really meaningful and valid.

**XXVI. Imagine the doctor is reporting the suicide incident to his friends. Prepare the NARRATIVE.**

## UNFORGETTABLE INCIDENT

Today is an unforgettable day in my life. While I was sleeping at night a Sergeant came to me and informed me about a suicide case in a nearby lodging. We hurried to the spot. When I reached there the room was filled with the smell of a gas. I found a young man lying on a narrow bed. At first I thought he was dead. Any way with the sergeant’s help I tried to revive him to consciousness. But I found it was useless. When we were about to return I heard a quick breath from him. After half an hour of redoubled efforts we succeeded in rescuing him.

He told us that he was a clerk in an office. Lost in bad company and luxuries he had wasted all his wealth. Then once he took from the office some money for gambling which he couldn't

replace. Being desperate he tried to commit suicide. Later I learnt from him that he had taken only seven pounds and ten shillings. So I gave him that money, the Sergeant promised not to report the case and the landlady offered one month's free lodging till he got a new job. Thus the young man regained his life.

### XXVII. Fill in the blanks with suitable phrasal verbs

1. While Dr. Cronin was walking on the deck he .....(a)..... a young man. The man wanted to.....(b).....something to Cronin. Usually the doctor doesn't.....(c).....ship board contacts. So he deliberately.....(d).....from the young man.

[Turned away, Came across, Went through, Put across, Put up with]

2. Mr. John decided to.....(a).....his bad habits that ruined him. He and his wife have set up an organisation to.....(b)..... delinquent youth. He.....(c).....the narrator who saved his life years ago. The narrator tried to.....(d).....his request in the beginning. But finally they started to.....(e).....better with each other.

[give up, come across, turn down, look after, get on]

3. I woke up when I heard a loud banging on the door. I.....(a).....some clothes and went down stairs. A sergeant of police was waiting for me outside he.....(b).....to the next apartment. When we.....(c).....in the apartment we.....(d).....a terrible scene. A young man was lying unconscious.

[set out, put on, came across, turned up]

### Answers

- |    |                |               |                |                |           |
|----|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1. | a. came across | b. put across | c. put up with | d. turned away |           |
| 2. | a. give up     | b. look after | c. came across | d. turn down   | e. get on |
| 3. | a. put on      | b. set out    | c. turned up   | d. came across |           |

## XXVIII. Complete the given conversation suitably

1. Mr John : Hello good afternoon sir  
Cronin : .....(a).....  
Mr John : You are Dr. A. J. Cronin,.....(b).....?  
Cronin : Yes, I am. But I am sorry I can't recall you.  
Mr John : You.....(c).....lived in London for some years, hadn't you?  
Cronin : Yes  
Mr John :.....(d).....?  
Cronin : Yes, Now I remember the boy who tried to commit suicide.  
Mr John : If you weren't there at that time,.....(e).....  
Cronin : That was my duty  
Mr John : I owe my life to you sir

### Answers

1. a. Good afternoon  
b. aren't you?  
c. Had  
d. Do remember me now?  
e. I would die
2. Landlady: sergeant!  
Sergeant: .....(a).....?  
Landlady: The young man is dying, sir  
Sergeant: He tried to commit suicide,.....(b).....?  
Landlady: Yes. He closed the door and let loose the gas and set fire.  
Sergeant: .....(c).....?  
Landlady: No. I don't know why he did it. You better.....(d).....  
Sergeant: If there is a doctor nearby.....(e).....  
Landlady: Please bring a doctor quickly. It look as if.....(f).....  
Sergeant: OK. I will go immediately.

### Answers

2. a. What happened  
b. didn't he?

- c. Do you know why he did this?
- d. call a doctor
- e. I will call him
- f. he is dying

**XXIX. When Mr. John met Dr. A J Cronin unexpectedly on the ship, he talked to his wife about many past things that had happened in his life. Construct/Complete their conversation suitably.**

- Mr. John : Darling, look at the gentleman walking along the deck.
- Mrs. John : Why?.....(a).....?
- Mr. John : He is Dr. A J Cronin, whom I've been in search of for the past 25 years.
- Mrs. John : Why? What's so special about him?
- Mr. John : There is something special about him. If he hadn't helped me then,.....(b).....  
(alive now)
- Mrs. John : Don't create suspense. Please tell me everything in detail.
- Mr. John : It's a long story. We had better.....(c).....
- Mrs. John : Ok, we can sit somewhere here.
- Mr. John : I want to meet and talk to him, but I'm very tensed.
- Mrs. John : Don't worry; I'll also come with you. Let's go to him now,.....(d).....?
- Mr. John : Yes, thank you dear!

**Answers:** a) who is that?      b) I wouldn't have been alive now.    c) sit and talk.  
d) shall we?

**XXX. Supply the missing words**

1. He ....(a).... his wife had been active....(b)....the past fifteen years....(c)....the field of youth welfare. He was....(d).... profession, a solicitor, found time....(e)..... act as director of charitable organisation.  
[ to, by, and, in, for]
2. As he spoke .....(a)..... real feeling, I got.....(b).....vivid picture .....(c).....the work these people were doing. They took derelict adolescents from the juvenile courts.....(d)..... placing them ...(e)...a healthy environment, healed them in mind and body and sent them back.....(f).....the world.  
[into, and, a, of, in, with]

3. I was a young doctor.....(a).....the time and had just set up a practice.....(b).....a working class district.....(c)..... London. ....(d)..... a foggy November night, I was awakened.....(e)..... a loud banging on the door  
[by, on, at, in, of]

### Answers

- |    |         |        |       |        |       |         |
|----|---------|--------|-------|--------|-------|---------|
| 1. | a. and  | b. for | c. in | d. by  | e. to |         |
| 2. | a. with | b. a   | c. of | d. and | e. in | d. into |
| 3. | a. at   | b. in  | c. of | d. on  | e. by |         |

### XXXI. There are some mistakes in the following sentences. Correct them.

- On the second day, out from new york (a), while making the round of the promenade deck, I suddenly became aware that one of the passengers were (b) watching me close (c), following me with his gaze every time I passed. I wanted to resting (d), to avoid the tedium of casual and importunate ship-board contacts. I gave no sign of having notice (e) the man.
- I am(a) a young doctor at that time and had just set up a practice in a working-class district of London. On a foggy November night, I was awake(b) by a loud banging on the door. Hurriedly I throw(c) on some clothes and go(d) downstairs.
- A moment later I were (a) occupying the vacent (b) chair beside them. Halting (c) he told me that this had been their first visit to america (d). It was not entirely a trip holiday (e)

### Answers

- |    |             |             |              |            |                 |
|----|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1. | a. New York | b. was      | c. closely   | d. rest    | e. Noticed      |
| 2. | a. was      | b. awakened | c. threw     | d. went    |                 |
| 3. | a. was      | b. vacant   | c. haltingly | d. America | e. holiday trip |

### XXXII. Answer the questions

1. Mr John : “ Do you remember me?”  
Cronin : “I can't recall you”.  
  - a. What did Mr. John ask?
  - b. What was Cronin's reply?
2. Cronin : “ What do you want?”  
Mr John : “ I want to talk to you”.  
  - a. Cronin asked Mr John.....
  - b. Mr John replied that.....
3. Mr John : I took a sum of money from the office safe.  
Cronin : I will give you the amount.  
  - a. What did Mr John tell?
  - b. What was his reply?

### Answers

- 1.a. Mr John asked Cronin whether he remembered him.  
b. Cronin replied that he couldn't recall him.
2. a. Cronin asked Mr John what he wanted.  
b. Mr John replied that he wanted to talk to him.
3. a. Mr John told that he had taken a sum of money from the office safe.  
b. Cronin replied that he would give him the money.

### XXXIII. Pick out the noun phrase, verb phrase and prepositional phrase from the following

1. I was a young doctor in a working class district of London.
2. They took derelict adolescents from the juvenile courts.
3. They had been making a tour of the New England states.

### Answers

1. Noun phrase - I  
Verb phrase - was a young doctor

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Prepositional phrase | - in a working class district<br>- of London |
| 2. Noun phrase       | - They                                       |
| Verb phrase          | - took derelict adolescents                  |
| Prepositional phrase | - from the juvenile courts                   |
| 3. Noun phrase       | - They                                       |
| Verb phrase          | - had been making a tour                     |
| Prepositional phrase | - of the New England states.                 |

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Drug abuse is a grave issue in the society nowadays. Your school is conducting an awareness programme on this issue. Prepare a **NOTICE** for the programme.
2. After the night incident, imagine that Dr. A J Cronin, working as the city medical officer, decides to conduct an awareness class on 'The Abuse of Drugs' for the workers and employees of the London city. Prepare a **NOTICE** for him.
3. As part of observing anti-tobacco day in your school, the English club has decided to present a skit based on the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made'. Prepare a **NOTICE** to invite the students to the programme.
4. Write a short **profile** of A J Cronin using the details given below.

Born	: 19 July 1896 Cardross, Scotland
Education	: MD from University of Glasgow
Spouse	: Agnes (A medical student)
Occupation	: Physician, Novelist
Great works	: The Citadel
Honours	: National Book Award (US)
Special Interest	: Travelling
Death	: 1981 Switzerland

5. The narrator in the anecdote 'The Best Investment I Ever Made' on reaching home narrates to his wife the touching story of the young man Mr Johns. Prepare the **narrative** in 120 words. You may begin like this.



6. The best investment of A J Cronin costs him only seven pounds and ten shillings. Yet it had a lifelong impact on the young man in the anecdote 'The Best Investment I Ever Made'. Prepare a **WRITE UP** on the strange and mysterious ways of life in about 60 words.
7. The best investment in life is not money but values. Substantiate this view in the light of the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made'.
8. After meeting Mr. John for a second time, Cronin makes a call to his wife to tell about the strange meeting. Prepare their **CONVERSATION**.
9. Children and youth are the easy victims of the loose society in a city. The young man in the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made' was one among them. Prepare a short **SPEECH** on the topic 'Drug addiction and alcoholism among the youth' to be delivered in the school Assembly.
10. Mr. John was saved by the landlady, sergeant and the doctor in the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made'. Imagine that the story appears in a local news paper. Prepare the **NEWSPAPER REPORT**.
11. After his wonderful recovery the young man in the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made' feels extremely guilty. He decides to write a letter to the young doctor who saved his life expressing his remorse and thankfulness. Prepare the likely **LETTER**.
12. Imagine that you are asked to write a letter appreciating Mr. John for his selfless service to humanity. What would be the likely **LETTER**.
13. John in the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made' writes a letter to his friend after his meeting with the narrator. Prepare the likely **LETTER**.
14. Imagine the narrator in the story 'The Best Investment I Ever Made' writes about his meeting with Mr and Mrs John in his diary. Write the likely **DIARY** entry.