

The Inventor

You can't learn to be an inventor-

Today things are invented by engineers, mechanics, technicians architects, but not by inventors

There used to be inventors, like Edison. He invented the electric light bulb and the gramophone- he built the first power station in the world and invented the first film camera.

In 1931 he died.

Without him we would have no electric light bulbs.

You see how important inventors are.

The last one died in 1931.

In 1890 an inventor was born but nobody knows about him now, because this is a time when there are no more inventors;

Since 1931, when Edison died, this inventor was all on his own.

He didn't know he was on his own because he lived far from the town and never saw anyone. He never talked to anyone- He just sat and drew plans and did calculations. Then he tore them all up and started again. He went to bed early and got up early- he worked the whole day long.

He never read newspapers, never got post and didn't even know that you could listen to the radio.

Then one evening, after 40 years, he invented his big invention. He worked day and night, checking his plans and his calculations.

He decided to go to town now. But the town had really changed. Instead of horses there were cars, there were escalators in the shops and the trains were not steam trains anymore.

But the inventor understood everything very quickly- he saw a phone and said "Aha" he saw a fridge and said: "Aha"

When he saw red and green lights he understood that you wait when it's red and go when it's green

When the light was red he turned to man who was waiting and said:

"Excuse me, I've made a great invention" and the man said: "Good? can I help you" and then the light went green. The inventor had forgotten how to speak to people; he no longer knew how to say to people "what lovely weather!" and "can you tell me the time please." All he could say was: "I've made a great invention".

He had invented a machine so people could see things that are far away.

He spread out his plans on the floor of the tram between people's legs and shouted: "Look, I have invented a machine so you can see things that are far away."

The people laughed and some one said: "He's invented television!"

The inventor was angry- he went into a cafe and had a coffee- he told his neighbour about his invention. The man pointed to television in the corner of the cafe.

He asked: " Shall I turn it on?"

The inventor did not want to look at it- he got up and left the cafe. He didn't say 'goodbye' to the man. He even left his invention plans on the table.

Went across the town, he didn't stop when the lights were red and the drivers hooted at him and put their fingers to their foreheads.

The inventor never went back to the town again.

He went back home and went on inventing just for himself.

He took a sheet of paper and wrote: THE CAR on it.

Then he drew plans and did calculations until he had invented the car.

He worked for weeks and months and, one by one, he invented the escalator, the telephone and the refrigerator.

And each time he made an invention he tore up the plans and said: " It already exists".

You have to be ~~xxxx~~ a real inventor to invent things that already exist.

pre-teach: inventor/ light bulb / to die/ plans/ calculations /
 escalators/ fridge/ steam train/ to spread out/ laugh/
 angry/ to hoot/ to tear up/ -

The inventor

RANK ORDER

intelligence
childishness
friendlessness
obsession
satisfaction
unsociability
inner life
obstinacy
puritanism
hate of self
individuality
social pressure
~~XXXXXXXX~~
hard work
isolation
madness
waste of time
narrowness
friendlessness.

Questions on the Inventor story

1. What did the man in the cafe tell his wife when he went home that night?
2. Is it deeply useful to invent things that have already been invented?
3. What did the inventor look like?
4. What kind of house did the inventor live in?
5. What is the underlying ~~message~~ theme of this story, for you?
6. How old was the inventor's house?
7. Where did the inventor get his living from?
8. Why did the inventor no longer know how to speak to people?
9. Do you know anybody like this man?
10. What colour were the walls of the inventor's room?
11. What kind of father would the ~~inventor~~ inventor make?
12. Why did the inventor finally decide to go to town?
13. What sort of town ~~is~~ ^{did} you imagine as you listened to the story?
14. Was the inventor an ~~and~~ anti-social man?
15. If the inventor was a ~~Muslim~~ Muslim, how many wives would he have?
16. Was this man a lunatic?
17. In what ways, if any, did you sympathise with the inventor?
18. Why did the inventor get angry in the cafe?
19. How did the story begin?
20. Did the story happen for you in England, your own country or somewhere else?
21. Which of the new things the inventor saw in the town did he probably find most revolutionary?
22. Why did this man want to invent things?
23. ~~Were~~ ^{Were} there any roses in the inventor's garden.
24. If the inventor had had hobbies, what might they have been?
25. What sort of relationship do you imagine the inventor having had with his parents?
26. Where did the inventor get his living from?
27. What is the symbolic meaning of the story?
28. Did the inventor grow potatoes?
29. How old was the inventor?
30. Do you have to be a genius to invent things that already exist?
31. What do you know about the author of this story, Pieter Bicksel?
32. Why are there traffic lights in town?
33. Why did the inventor often tear up his plans.
34. How did he feel when he went into ~~the~~ town?
35. If the inventor was an animal what sort of animal would he be?
36. Is this a kids' story?
37. What sort of weather was it when the inventor went to town?
38. Do you think Mo liked this story? Why/ why not?
39. Do you like listening to stupid stories in foreign languages?
40. What was the weather like when the inventor went into town?
41. Was he wearing a tie that day, or his usual pyjamas?