

Llengua i literatura anglesa I
impartida pels professors Pere Gifra i Anna Asián

The lawyer arrived at his office at twelve o'clock. Like every morning, he had gone out for his breakfast and when he returned he found the mail on the table. He sat down the armchair and passed his fingers between his hair. He looked at the window. The rain fell down slowly. He didn't like the wet days, the rain and the fog remembered him England and he didn't want to think in it. Then he looked at the table again and took the letters with his right hand. He read the names that were written down. *Mr. Marshall... he may have problems again with his son. Frederica Bottini... ¿hasn't she got the American nationality yet?... Schatz...* Suddenly the mechanical movement of his hands stopped and he left all the letters on the table. Only Schatz' letter remained on his hands. *Why only Schatz? Schatz what...?* He stared the back of the yellow folder. "Schatz" was hand-written on it. It seemed to had been written by a child. Finally he tore the folder and took out the letter. It was a notebook-squared paper. It was hand-written, too. He unfolded it.

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29th January 1932

Dear Sir Lawyer,

I am Schatz, Schatz Lazarsfeld. I am ten years old and I am writing to you because I have a problem. I have a big problem. Last week I was in bed because I had an influenza. I arrived nearly at a hundred and two degrees (Fahrenheit) but I thought that I was going to die. I thought a lot about death and about the things I have and I was going to leave. All this last week I have been worried about the future of my own stuff and I realised that without a testamentary it would be lost. I have heard that you do testamentaries so I have decided to write to you how I want to share my things if I ever die.

First of all I want to begin with my money hidden in my moneybox under the pillow. I would like to give it to my father. I would also to give him my plastic gun and my whistle because of his love for hunting quails. Finally, I think my father should have as well my reading books about Pirates, Police or Cowboys. My football ball and my sports props are for Patrick, my neighbour, who's always asking me to borrow him. On the other hand, I don't want to give him my baseball ball signed by Mike Peters because he doesn't support Boston team. Instead, I want to give this ball to John, that guy from Iowa that I met when I was at school in France. Then I want my French books to be for Patrick's Grandfather since he is the only person I know who speaks French as well as Frenchman do. My comic stripes are for Patrick, too, while my small cars are for Jimmy, the guy who lived in the other side

of the river. And my black small teddy is for Claude because she is the only person that picks him up when he falls on the floor while I am sleeping. I want to give her the family's photograph I have on my bedside table given that she always has tears her when looking at it. It shows my mother, who was her small sister, my father and a baby that is, I, when I was very, very, very small.(...)"

Suddenly someone knocked at the door.

- I'm working. Don't disturb me.- The lawyer told to his secretary. He looked at the window again. The rain had stopped and people walked without their umbrellas. Then he continued to read the letter again.

"(...) There is Biggie, too. It's the Irish setter that my father gave me for my last birthday. Biggie is just a pet but not an object I could give to anyone. I think it must go with the person its wants so I hope it would like stay home with Dad. However I want to give Biggie a present. I want one of the balls I have given to Patrick to be for Biggie. I don't mind if the ball is the oldest and ugliest: I am sure that Biggie will destroy it with its teeth (Biggie always destroys everything).

There is Mathilda, too. She is my girlfriend and I have to give her something very important. I want to leave her my drawings, and my golden chain. I always wear it but I hope someone will take it from me if something happens to me. And my watch has to be for her as well. The letters she used to write me when I was in France are hidden in a box buried five steps from the biggest oak is in the garden. This box also contains my silver ring and my butterfly collection. I hope it won't be difficult to find it next. If this happened, call Martin, the gardener, help because he helped me to hide it last summer. All these things I wished that were offered to Mathilda. And still there are all my clothes. Relative to trousers and shirts I think they will suit my cousin Vinny, from Seattle, well. I haven't seen him for a long time but the last time I saw him he was as tall as I am. If my shoes suit him well it doesn't matter to me to give them to him. The only things that I don't want to give him are the scarf and the gloves that Uncle Pete brought me last week. I would prefer to give them to Tom because his father doesn't earn enough money to buy him warm clothes and he is always cold. If my cousin Vinny agrees I think that Tom could also get my new pair of winter boots and the black coat.

At the moment, I don't remember anything else to give. If something more is left, give it to Daddy, and he will know what to do with it. I hope nobody gets angry with me because of forgetting him. I only want to thank you for your kindness, and I hope that if death comes to me my wishes will be respected. Now you know them.

Yours faithfully.

P.S.: If you have to be paid, you should ask my father for some of the money that I have in my moneybox."

The lawyer finished reading the letter with a smile on his face. He was thinking about that poor child worried about death. Schatz was only a child but there was something in him that made the lawyer think of him like an adult person. He couldn't imagine how Schatz had got his address. He thought that this poor child deserved an answer. He began to write it when he realised that he didn't have Schatz' address. He looked at the folder, and the letter, again but there was no address. How could Schatz have obtained his address? He didn't know. He began to think of his clients but he didn't know any Lazarsfeld. He tried to forget Schatz but he couldn't avoid thinking. He wanted to do something for this poor child. Suddenly he had an idea. He could send this letter to his friend Ernest. Ernest was a writer and perhaps he could know how to arrive to Schatz. And, if not, at least Ernest would have something to write about.

Some months later Ernest Hemmingway published *Winner Take Nothing*. It was a compilation of short stories and there was one of these short stories about a boy who, through a misunderstanding, underwent a shattering experience...