

Frances Hunter
Simplicity
Even more easy questions!

Worksheet by:
Keith Tankard
Knowledge4Africa.com

"Yes, I know. I walk to the green places. I've seen the sun come up at Zoo Lake."

Her answer took him seriously and affirmed his desire. He began to play aloud with possibilities. "I've enough money saved for a second-hand caravan. Terry, my son-in-law, could tow it out and we could spend a day or a weekend looking for the right place. It would need to be near enough to a town so as I could go in and draw my pension and do the shopping."

He fell silent, thinking of buses and walking on a dirt road with the passing cars churning up the dust and his chest catching and heaving.

She remained still with an air of timelessly waiting for him while he mourned his dream alone.

Then, her voice recalled him, "I'm on a pension too," and continued as if she had read his thoughts, "I could bring the pensions and groceries from the town." She went on looking him full in the face and he searched for guile, sounding for a shifting of shadows in the depths of the clear-water eyes.

"What are you saying?"

"I'm saying I could come with you. I used to work as a nurse-aid. You're not well. I could look after you."

He felt weak, dazed by the unreality, the impact of her statements, and the pull of his revived vision of pure air in the grove with the splash of running stream on stones mingled with his distrust.

"What do you want with an old man like me!" The words were torn out of him. Faces turned in his direction and in the corners of his eyes white uniforms halted in their progress. She continued to look at him directly, impassively, her small square jaw tilted up to his face, eyes fixed patiently on his, seeming not to blink in their waiting.

More gently he asked, "What do you want with me?"

She sighed. "My parents and my brother don't want me to come round when there are visitors so I don't go at all, but I miss them. I want to belong to you."

1. When the old man first saw the girl, he thought she was a young man.

- Why did he think that? (2)
- Why did she pretend to be a man? (4)

2. "Her answer took him seriously and affirmed his desire."

- What does the narrator mean by this? (2)

3. The man was desperate to get out of the city and into the country.
 - Why was he desperate? (4)
 - Why would it be a good idea for the girl to join him? (4)
 - Mention three factors which make him hesitate to accept her offer. (3)

4. The title of the story, "Simplicity", can refer to two things: the girl and the circumstances.
 - Explain how the title can refer to either the girl or to the circumstances. (4)

5. What evidence is there in the extract that the girl is not like other people.
 - Note: Your own words are required here. Do not merely quote. (4)

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