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Class-XII

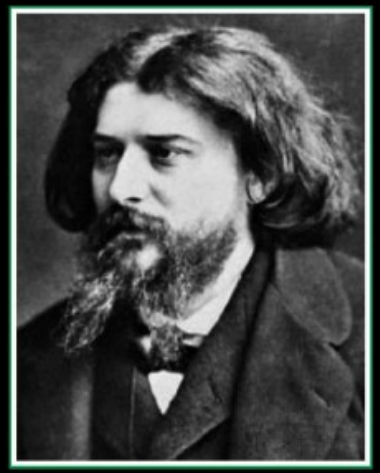
English

Flamingo

Chapter-1

The Last Lesson

Neha Rajvanshi



Alphonse Daudet

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dread : डरना
scolding : डांट

I started for school very late that morning and was in great dread of a scolding, especially because M. Hamel had said that he would question us on participles, and I did not know the first word about them. For a moment I thought of running away and spending the day out of doors. It was so warm, so bright!

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chirping : चहकना
sawmill : लकड़ी काटने का कारखाना
tempting : लुभावना
resist: विरोध करना





The birds were chirping at the edge of the woods; and in the open field back of the sawmill the Prussian soldiers were drilling. It was all much more tempting than the rule for participles, but I had the strength to resist, and hurried off to school.

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bulletin : समाचार
draft : प्रारूप



When I passed the town hall there was a crowd in front of the bulletin-board. For the last two years all our bad news had come from there — the lost battles, the draft, the orders of the commanding officer — and I thought to myself, without stopping, "What can be the matter now?"

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blacksmith : लोहार
apprentice : प्रशिक्षण लेने वाला

Then, as I hurried by as fast as I could go, the blacksmith, Wachter, who was there, with his apprentice, reading the bulletin, called after me, "Don't go so fast, bub; you'll get to your school in plenty of time!" I thought he was making fun of me, and reached M. Hamel's little garden all out of breath.

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bustle: हलचल / शोर

rapping: खटखटाना

Usually, when school began, there was a great bustle, which could be heard out in the street, the opening and closing of desks, lessons repeated in unison, very loud, with our hands over our ears to understand better, and the teacher's great ruler rapping on the table. But now it was all so still!

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count on : निर्भर होना
commotion : शोरगुल

I had counted on the commotion to get to my desk without being seen; but, of course, that day everything had to be as quiet as Sunday morning. Through the window I saw my classmates, already in their places, and M. Hamel walking up and down with his terrible iron ruler under his arm.

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blushed : शर्म से लाल
frightened : भयभीत

I had to open the door and go in before everybody. You can imagine how I blushed and how frightened I was.

But nothing happened. M. Hamel saw me and said very kindly, "Go to your place quickly, little Franz. We were beginning without you."

I jumped over the bench and sat down at my desk.

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frilled : झालरदार
embroidered: कशीदाकारी
inspection : निरीक्षण
solemn: गंभीर



Not till then, when I had got a little over my fright, did I see that our teacher had on his beautiful green coat, his frilled shirt, and the little black silk cap, all embroidered, that he never wore except on inspection and prize days. Besides, the whole school seemed so strange and solemn.

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But the thing that surprised me most was to see, on the back benches that were always empty, the village people sitting quietly like ourselves; old Hauser, with his three-cornered hat, the former mayor, the former postmaster, and several others besides.

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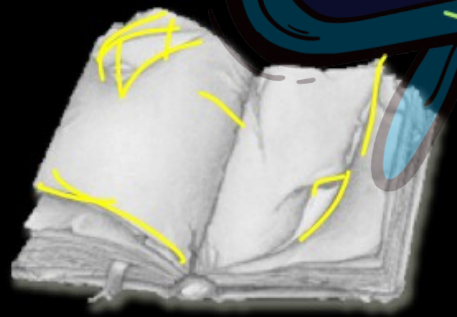
primer: प्राथमिक पुस्तक
spectacles : चश्मा
mounted : सीधे बैठना
grave : गंभीर



Everybody looked sad; and Hauser had brought an old primer, thumbed at the edges, and he held it open on his knees with his great spectacles lying across the pages. While I was wondering about it all, M. Hamel mounted his chair, and, in the same grave and gentle tone which he had used to me, said, "My children, this is the last lesson I shall give you.

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thunderclap : बिजली की कड़क
wretches: उदास, अभागे

The order has come from Berlin to teach only German in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine.

The new master comes tomorrow. This is your last French lesson. I want you to be very attentive."

What a thunderclap these words were to me! Oh, the wretches; that was what they had put up at the town-hall!

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hardly : मुश्किल से
nuisance : बेकार

My last French lesson! Why, I hardly knew how to write! I should never learn any more! I must stop there, then! Oh, how sorry I was for not learning my lessons, for seeking birds' eggs, or going sliding on the Saar! My books, that had seemed such a nuisance a while ago, so heavy to carry, my grammar, and my history of the saints, were old friends now that I couldn't give up.

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cranky : चिड़चिडे

And M. Hamel, too; the idea that he was going away, that I should never see him again, made me forget all about his ruler and how cranky he was.

Poor man! It was in honour of this last lesson that he had put on his fine Sunday clothes, and now I understood why the old men of the village were sitting there in the back of the room.

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recite : सुनाना

It was because they were sorry, too, that they had not gone to school more. It was their way of thanking our master for his forty years of faithful service and of showing their respect for the country that was theirs no more. While I was thinking of all this, I heard my name called. It was my turn to recite.

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dreadful : भयानक

What would I not have given to be able to say that dreadful rule for the participle all through, very loud and clear, and without one mistake? But I got mixed up on the first words and stood there, holding on to my desk, my heart beating, and not daring to look up. I heard M. Hamel say to me, "I won't scold you, little Franz;