

talk  
to  
me!

LET'S TALK EMPOWERMENT. LET'S TALK ENGLISH

# Beehive

## 7. Packing

by

### Jerome K Jerome

#### 1. Summary

This is a humorous extract from Jerome K Jerome's novel, "Three Men in a Boat". Jerome, Harris, George, and their dog, Montmorency, decided to go on a holiday. Jerome thought that he was an expert at packing and asked his friends to leave the packing to him. Then the amusement started. Jerome packed the bag and shut it, only to find that he had left out something important, and had to open the bag again to put it in. Then he shut the bag only to find he had to open it again to pull out something he needed. Harris and George decided they would pack the food items, but they were really clumsy! The dog added to the confusion while they were packing. They finally finished the packing, and fell asleep, exhausted.

#### 2. Vocabulary

1. **Pride myself on** – am proud of  
I **pride myself on** my cooking and can cook up a delicious meal in an hour.
2. **Impressed** – feeling of admiration or respect for someone; also told with emphasis  
My father was **impressed** by my ability to solve difficult maths problems.  
The teacher **impressed** on all the students, that they must get to school on time.
3. **Entirely** – completely  
This is **entirely** true – all religions are respected in our country.
4. **Fell into** – accepted  
Everyone **fell into** the idea that it would be better to meet the next day.
5. **Uncanny** – strange, weird  
I had an **uncanny** feeling that someone was watching me from behind those curtains.
6. **Easy-chair** – a big soft comfortable chair with arms  
My grandmother was lying back in her **easy-chair**.

7. **Cocked** – raised at an angle, not straight  
He **cocked** his legs on the table and sat at ease.
8. **Intended** – desired, showed interest  
He had **intended** to meet me, but we could not meet because he fell ill.
9. **Boss** - to supervise, to dominate, tend to instruct irritatingly  
I wish you would stop **bossing** me around.
10. **Potter about** – move about aimlessly doing some unimportant things  
I was perfectly happy just **pottering** about and doing silly little jobs in my flat.
11. **Irritated** – made somebody angry, annoyed  
I get really **irritated** when he keeps repeating himself.
12. **Loll** – sit or stand, lazily  
The teacher told the students not to **loll** around and to begin their assignment quickly.
13. **Messing about** – spending time doing things that are not important, without any particular purpose or plan  
The young man was just **messing about** the room and not doing any work.
14. **Slaving** – working very hard at something  
After **slaving** for hours I managed to finish all my homework.
15. **Superintend** – be responsible for the management or arrangement  
Sunil's wife **superintended** the huge party at his home.
16. **Energetic** – full of energy  
He was feeling **energetic** early in the morning.
17. **Strapped** – tied with straps  
My bag was **strapped** so that it would not open.
18. **Senseless** - with no good or useful purpose  
Sharing your ATM PIN with that man was a **senseless** thing to do.
19. **Make me so wild** – make me very angry  
His habit of clearing his throat continuously, **makes me so wild**.
20. **Haunts** – to repeatedly give trouble  
That ache in my knee **haunts** me continuously during winter.

21. **Misery** – great unhappiness  
I could not bear to see the **misery** of the poor homeless people sleeping on the pavement in winter.
22. **Perspiration** – a salty watery waste product that leaves the body through the skin  
People have a lot of **perspiration** during the summer season.
23. **Every mortal thing** – every living thing; though, in the story, it has been used by the author to mean everything  
**Every mortal thing** must be treated with the same respect.
24. **Rummaged** – searched  
Naresh **rummaged** through his bag, but he could not find the key of the locker.
25. **Chaos** – a state of total confusion with no order  
There was total **chaos** in the house when my mother fell sick.
26. **Reigned** – ruled over  
Emperor Ashoka **reigned** over a large part of India thousands of years ago.
27. **Slammed** – made something shut very loudly  
He **slammed** the book down angrily on the table.
28. **Tobacco pouch** – a small bag that holds tobacco, which is used for smoking  
He took out his **tobacco pouch** and filled his pipe with tobacco.
29. **Hamper** – large basket for carrying food  
The picnic **hamper** contained a lot of delicious food like cakes, parathas and sweets.
30. **Exception** – someone or something that is not included in a rule, group, or list  
I like all kinds of music with the **exception** of loud Hindi film music.
31. **Squashed** – to crush something into a flat shape  
Bruno, the dog, sat on the cake and **squashed** it.
32. **Trod on** – stepped on  
She **trod on** the phone by mistake and broke it.
33. **Nervous** – worried and anxious  
Sunita was very **nervous** about her board exams.

34. **Upset** – to push or knock something out of its usual position, usually by accident, especially causing it to fall  
While setting the dish down on the table, she **upset** the glass of water.
35. **Kettle** – a container for boiling water that has a lid, handle, and spout and is made of metal.  
She put the **kettle** on the fire for boiling water for tea.
36. **Scrape** – to remove an unwanted covering or a top layer from something using a sharp edge or something rough  
Before we paint the chair we have to **scrape** away the old paint on it.
37. **Oath** – a promise, especially that you will tell the truth in a law court  
Before starting the Olympic Games, all the athletes have to take an **oath** that they will take part in the games fairly.
38. **Extraordinary** – very unusual, special, unexpected or strange  
He told us the **extraordinary** story of how he sailed across the world all alone.
39. **Mysterious** – strange, not known, or not understood  
A **mysterious** man suddenly came out of the bushes and wanted to talk to us.
40. **Indignantly** – angrily  
When my mother saw the mess in my room, she shook her head **indignantly**.
41. **Spinning round** – to quickly turn your own or someone else's body to face in the opposite direction  
**Spinning round**, the thief, quickly left the room when he saw my mother enter it.
42. **Roared** – made a long, loud, deep sound  
The animal **roared** in anger and pain when it was hit by a bullet.
43. **Be sworn at** – to utter a curse or use abusive language  
I was very angry when I was sworn at by the drunk man.
44. **Squirm** – to wriggle  
When I held the baby, she **squirmed** constantly.
45. **Particularly** – especially, or more than usual  
I didn't **particularly** want to go to the party, but my mother forced me to go.

46. **Nuisance** – something or someone that annoys you or causes trouble for you  
The noise from the wedding party was a **nuisance** and we could not sleep.
47. **Stumble** – to step awkwardly while walking or running and fall or about to fall  
Please make sure that you do not **stumble**, as the path is very uneven here.
48. **Curse** – to say rude words about something or someone because you are angry  
I asked the man not to **curse** the dog needlessly as it was not its fault.
49. **Accomplishing** – fulfilling or achieving something  
We should work hard to **accomplish** our goals.
50. **Conceit** – pride in oneself  
It was her **conceit** that stopped her from admitting that she was wrong.
51. **Unbearable** – too painful or unpleasant for you to continue to experience  
The pain was so **unbearable** that I started screaming loudly.
52. **Laboured** – did something with a lot of effort  
She **laboured** up the hill with the heavy bags.
53. **Fixed belief** – strong, unshakeable feeling of being certain that something exists or is true  
He had a **fixed belief** that if he prayed everyday, God would make him pass the exam.
54. **Worried** – disturbed  
My niece **worried** the happy baby and he started crying loudly.
55. **Pretended** – behaved as if something is true when you knew it was not, especially in order to deceive people or as a game  
The child **pretended** that he was a lion on the prowl in the jungle.
56. **Encouraged** – made someone more likely to do something, or made something more likely to happen  
We were **encouraged** to solve the problem on our own.
57. **Reflection** – thinking deeply about something.  
On **reflection** of my behaviour, I felt that I had made a lot of mistakes.

58. **Comfort** – to make someone feel better when they are sad or worried  
I tried to **comfort** the child, but he continued crying for his mother.
59. **Tossed** – to throw something, here – to throw a coin in the air and guess which side will land face up; used to make decisions  
The umpire **tossed** the coin to decide which team would bat first.
60. **Row** –fight or a quarrel.  
Sunil got into a **row** with his boss, because he was late getting to work every day.
61. **Split the difference** – to agree on a midway point between two points, in this case 6.30 because it was halfway between six and seven  
They came to an understanding that they would **split the difference** in cost between them.
62. **Tumble** – to fall quickly and without control  
She lost her footing and **tumbled** down the stairs.

### 3. Questions

- I. Discuss in pairs and answer each question below in a short paragraph (30 – 40 words).
1. How many characters are there in the narrative? Name them. (Don't forget the dog!).
  2. Why did the narrator (Jerome) volunteer to do the packing?
  3. How did George and Harris react to this? Did Jerome like their reaction?
  4. What was Jerome's real intention when he offered to pack?
  5. What did Harris say after the bag was shut and strapped? Why do you think he waited till then to ask?
  6. What "horrible idea" occurred to Jerome a little later?
  7. Where did Jerome finally find the toothbrush?
  8. Why did Jerome have to reopen the packed bag?
  9. What did George and Harris offer to pack and why?

- 10. While packing the hamper, George and Harris do a number of foolish and funny things. Tick the statements that are true.**
- (i) They started with breaking a cup.**
  - (ii) They also broke a plate.**
  - (iii) They squashed a tomato.**
  - (iv) They trod on the butter.**
  - (v) They stepped on a banana.**
  - (vi) They put things behind them, and couldn't find them.**
  - (vii) They stepped on things.**
  - (viii) They packed the pictures at the bottom and put heavy things on top.**
  - (ix) They upset almost everything.**
  - (x) They were very good at packing.**
- II. What does Jerome say was Montmorency's ambition in life? What do you think of Montmorency and why?**
- III. Discuss in groups and answer the following questions in two or three paragraphs (100 –150 words)**
- 1. Of the three, Jerome, George and Harris, who do you think is the best or worst packer? Support your answer with details from the text.**
  - 2. How did Montmorency 'contribute' to the packing?**
  - 3. Do you find this story funny? What are the humorous elements in it? (Pick out at least three, think about what happens, as well as how it is described.)**



#### 4. Grammar

##### I. Match the words/phrases in Column A with their meanings in Column B.

A	B
1. slaving	(i) a quarrel or an argument
2. chaos	(ii) remove something from inside another thing using a sharp tool
3. rummage	(iii) strange, mysterious, difficult to explain
4. scrape out	(iv) finish successfully, achieve
5. stumble over, tumble into	(v) search for something by moving things around hurriedly or carelessly
6. accomplish	(vi) complete confusion and disorder
7. uncanny	(vii) fall, or step awkwardly while walking
8. (to have or get into) a row	(viii) working hard

##### II. Use suitable words or phrases from Column A above to complete the paragraph given below.

##### *A Traffic Jam*

During power cuts, when traffic lights go off, there is utter \_\_\_\_\_ at crossroads. Drivers add to the confusion by \_\_\_\_\_ over their right of way, and nearly come to blows. Sometimes passers-by, seeing a few policemen \_\_\_\_\_ at regulating traffic, step in to help. This gives them a feeling of having \_\_\_\_\_ something.

##### III. Look at the sentences below. Notice that the verbs (italicised) are all in their bare form.

- Simple commands:
  - i. *Stand* up!
  - ii. *Put* it here!
  
- Directions: (to reach your home)
 

*Board* Bus No.121 and *get down* at Sagar Restaurant. From there *turn* right and *walk* till you reach a book shop. My home is just behind the shop.

- **Dos and don'ts:**
  - Always *get up* for your elders.
  - Don't *shout* in class.
  
- **Instructions for making a fruit salad:**

***Ingredients***

- Oranges - 2
- Pineapple - one large piece
- Cherries - 250 grams
- Bananas - 2

Any other fruit you like

***Wash*** the fruit. ***Cut*** them into small pieces. ***Mix*** them well. ***Add*** a few drops of lime juice. ***Add*** sugar to taste. Now ***add*** some cream (or ice cream if you *wish* to make fruit salad with ice cream.)

1. Now work in pairs. Give
  - (i) two commands to your partner.
  - (ii) two do's and don'ts to a new student in your class.
  - (iii) directions to get to each other's houses.
  - (iv) instructions for moving the body in an exercise or a dance, or for cooking something.
  
2. The table below has some proverbs telling you what to do and what not to do. Fill in the blanks and add a few more such proverbs to the table.

<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>
(i) <i>Save for a rainy day.</i>	(i) <i>Don't cry over spilt milk.</i>
(ii) <i>Make hay while the sun shines.</i>	(ii) <i>Don't put the cart before the horse</i>
(iii) _____ before you leap	(iii) _____ a mountain out of a mole hill.
(iv) _____ and let live.	(iv) _____ all your eggs in one basket.

## 5. Writing

You have seen how Jerome, George and Harris mess up their packing, especially of the hamper. From their mistakes you must have thought of some dos and don'ts for packing. Can you give some tips for packing by completing the paragraph below?

First pack all the heavy items, especially the ones you don't need right away.

Then . . .

Here are some words and phrases you can use to begin your sentences with:

- Then
- Next
- Now
- Remember
- Don't forget
- At last/ Finally

## 6. Speaking

Look at this sentence.

"I told George and Harris that they *had better* leave the whole matter entirely to me."

The words *had better* are used

- in an advice or suggestion:  
You *had better* take your umbrella; it looks like rain.
- in an order  
You *had better* complete your homework before you go out to play.
- as a threat  
You *had better* leave or I'll have you arrested for trespass!

When we speak, we say *you'd/I'd/he'd better*, instead of *you had better*, etc.

Work in pairs to give each other advice, orders or suggestions, or even to threaten each other. Imagine situations like the following:  
Your partner

1. hasn't returned a book to the library.
2. has forgotten to bring lunch.

3. **hasn't got enough change for bus fare.**
4. **has found out a secret about you.**
5. **has misplaced your English textbook.**