**“Barney” - Will Stanton**



**AUGUST 30TH.**

We are alone on the island now, Barney and I. It was something of a jolt to have to sack Tayloe after all these years, but I had no alternative. The petty vandalisms I could have forgiven, but when he tried to poison Barney out of simple malice, he was standing in the way of scientific progress. That I cannot condone.

I can only believe the attempt was made while under the influence of alcohol, it was so clumsy. The poison container was overturned and a trail of powder led to Barney's dish. Tayloe's defence was of the flimsiest. He denied it. Who else then?

**SEPTEMBER 2ND.**

I am taking a calmer view of the Tayloe affair. The monastic life here must have become too much for him. That, and the abandonment of his precious guinea pigs. He insisted to the last that they were better-suited than Barney to my experiments. They were more his speed, I'm afraid. He was an earnest and willing worker, but something of a clod, poor fellow. At last I have complete freedom to carry on my work without the mute reproaches of Tayloe. I can only credit his violent antagonism toward Barney to jealousy. And now that he has gone, how much happier Barney appears to be!

I have given him complete run of the place, and what sport it is to observe how his newly awakened intellectual curiosity carries him about. After only two weeks of glutamic acid treatments, he has become interested in my library, dragging the books from the shelves, and going over them page by page. I am certain he knows there is some knowledge to be gained from them had he but the key.

**SEPTEMBER 8TH.**

For the past two days I have had to keep Barney confined, and how he hates it. I am afraid that when my experiments are completed I shall have to do away with Barney. Ridiculous as it may sound there is still the possibility that he might be able to communicate his intelligence to others of his kind. However small the chance may be, the risk is too great to ignore. Fortunately there is, in the basement, a vault built with the idea of keeping vermin out, and it will serve equally well to keep Barney in.

**SEPTEMBER 9TH.**

Apparently I have spoken too soon. This morning I let him out to frisk around a bit before commencing a new series of tests. After a quick survey of the room he returned to his cage, sprang up on the door handle, removed the key with his teeth, and before I could stop him, he was out the window. By the time I reached the yard I spied him on the coping of the well, and I arrived on the spot only in time to hear the key splash into the water below. I own I am somewhat embarrassed. It is the only key. The door is locked. Some valuable papers are in separate compartments inside the vault. Fortunately, although the well is over forty feet deep, there are only a few feet of water in the bottom, so the retrieving of the key does not present an insurmountable obstacle. But I must admit Barney has won the first round.

**SEPTEMBER 10TH.**

I have had a rather shaking experience, and once more in a minor clash with Barney. I have come off second-best. In this instance I will admit he played the hero's role and may even have saved my life.

In order to facilitate my descent into the well I knotted a length of three-quarter-inch rope at one-foot intervals to make a rude ladder. I reached the bottom easily enough, but after only a few minutes of groping for the key, my flashlight gave out and I returned to the surface. A few feet from the top I heard excited squeaks from Barney, and upon obtaining ground level I observed that the rope was almost completely severed. Apparently it had chafed against the edge of the masonry and the little fellow, perceiving my plight, had been doing his utmost to warn me.

I have now replaced that section or rope and arranged some old sacking beneath it to prevent recurrence of the accident. I have replenished the batteries in my flashlight and am now prepared for the final descent. These few moments I have taken off to give myself a breathing spell and to bring my journal up to date. Perhaps I should fix myself a sandwich as I may be down there longer than seems likely at the moment.

**SEPTEMBER 11TH.**

Poor Barney is dead and soon I shell be the same. He was a wonderful ratt and life without him is knot worth livving. If anybody reeds this please do not disturb anything on the island but leeve it like it is as a shryn to Barney, espechilly the old well. Do not look for my body as I will caste myself into the see. You mite bring a couple of young ratts and leeve them as a living memorial to Barney. Females-no males. I sprayned my wrist is why this is written so bad. This is my laste will. Do what I say an don't come back or disturb anything after you bring the young ratts like I said. Just females.

Goodby.

**“Barney” Questions**

**Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper in FULL SENTENCES.**

1. Define the following words in context of the story:
	1. MONASTIC
	2. COPING
	3. FACILITATE
2. Summarize the story in 2-3 sentences.
3. What is the conflict of the story? Explain your reasoning.
4. On what grounds is Tayloe fired? How does the protagonist rationalize Tayloe’s dismissal?
5. What is the real cause for the dismissal of Tayloe? What other foreshadowing is there of the surprise ending?
6. Referring to the Sept. 11th entry, explain what has happened since the previous entry?

**Questions Pre-reading:**

1. Who or what do you think of when you hear the name “Barney”?

2. Look at the picture at the beginning of the story. What might the story be about?

3. Read the context statement above the picture. What do you think the story is about now?

4. This is a science fiction story. Now that you are familiar with the ingredients of science fiction, predict what the theme will likely be.

5. Predict what might happen in the story “Barney”

**During Reading:**

1. Read to the end of the second paragraph. Who is the speaker? Who is Tayloe? Who is Barney?

a. Speaker

b. Tayloe

c. Barney

2. What reason does the speaker give for why Tayloe was fired?

3. Read to the end of September 8. Summarize what has happened so far.

**After reading:**

1. Referring to the Sept. 11th entry, explain what has happened since the previous entry?

2. On what grounds is Tayloe fired? How does the protagonist rationalize Tayloe’s dismissal?

3. What is the real cause for the dismissal of Tayloe? What other foreshadowing is there of the surprise ending?

4. Find and explain three examples of irony in the last two paragraphs of the story.

5. Why is the story written in journal form? Would the story have worked any other way? Discuss.

6. Define the following words in context of the story:

COPING

FACILITATE

GLUTAMIC ACID

7. Imagine that you are a detective and you have just arrived on the island. Write a short police report outlining what you find. Include details on evidence, motive, and possible suspects.

JOURNAL: choose one topic or the other Although the scientists in the story “Barney” were well educated, they were still tricked and manipulated by a rodent. Was it their naive attitude towards the possibility of an animal being as smart or smarter then they, which allowed Barney to take over the island? Many people inadvertently cause their own down fall by being over confidant, or assuming they are always right. Write about a time when you, or someone you know, were over confident in a situation only to have it backfire. Or Scientific research is taking us in different and new directions everyday. Should there be limitations placed on researchers and scientists? Should people be allowed to carry out research in private? Why or Why not? Where should the line be drawn on projects such as genetic mutation, gene research, animal testing, human testing, and other controversial research? Defend your position.

**Barney**

**Statement (Agree/Disagree)**

Animal experiments are important to further human progress.

Counterpoint