

Task I

The excerpt is taken from the novel "Beauty" by Raphael Selbourne, which was published in 2009. It is about the young English ex-prisoner Mark who teaches the 19-year-old, illiterate Bangladeshi Beauty in reading and writing.

Mark starts easily and slowly by letting Beauty say the alphabet. Afterwards, he wants her to write it down. He is very patient with Beauty and does not require too much of her. He asks her to repeat the exercises over and over again and does not give the illiterate a more difficult exercise until she is able to solve the easier one.

When Beauty knows how to read three-letter words, he asks her to write them down and when she is able to do so, he goes on with more difficult words.

Task II

In the excerpt from the novel "Beauty" by Raphael Selbourne, the 19-year-old Bangladeshi of the same name is introduced to the reader.

Beauty is characterized as a person who is not very self-confident. Entering the room, she asks anxiously: "Promise you aynt gonna laugh?" (Text, l.9). This character trait is also emphasized when the author cites Beauty's thoughts: "Beauty knew she would sound thick at first" (l.14). The illiterate Bangladeshi is afraid of making mistakes. But since Mark is very patient and does not ask too much of her, she becomes a little more self-confident: she "read the words to him, surprised and delighted each time the snaking letters revealed their meaning" (ll.36-37).

As a result of Mark's patience and the self-confidence he gives her, she is eager to learn. This is revealed by the author's comment in lines 37 up to 38: "The tiredness from her sleepless night vanished. She felt awake, the room seemed brighter, everything was clearer, not just the words on a piece of paper."



Task III

3.1

The experience described in the quote influences Beauty's reaction to Mark's teaching. She is thankful for Mark's help and surprised at the fact that someone is patient with her and encourages her ("No one had been patient with her or encouraged her like Mark did", l. 57). But when she notices that a stranger does more for her than her own family (they had always persuaded her of being stupid and crazy) she begins to wonder why he behaves that way. She realizes that Mark is probably in love with her since he is not able to look directly into her eyes.

But Beauty does not care why Mark helps her learning to write and to read – when he rescued her from an assault by Asian youths and gave her shelter in his own home, he did so because he wanted to help a poor, homeless girl.

Emotional support is important for personal development – in this case, it does not matter *why* Mark gives support. Beauty has always been told that she is stupid and thus, she is not self-confident and does not trust her skills. But since Mark does not ask too much of her and is very patient, she begins to recognize that she is not stupid. She is a good example of the importance of emotional support for personal development.

3.2

The novel "Beauty" by Raphael Selbourne is about the 19-year-old, illiterate Bangladeshi of the same name who escapes from her family. She takes refuge with Mark who rescues her from an assault by Asian youths.

The ex-prisoner and skinhead takes care of the young Bangladeshi woman and teaches her how to read and to write. Beauty is not very self-confident since her parents used to tell her that she was stupid. But Mark is very patient and does not ask too much of her and thus, she learns very quickly and becomes a little more self-confident. Thanks to the ex-prisoner, who is trying hard to lead a good life, Beauty learns reading, writing and being more self-confident.

He rescued her from an assault by Asian youths and gave her shelter in his home although he had never seen her before. He did so in order to help a poor, homeless girl which was a quite selfless act. Getting to know Beauty, however, he feels attached to her and therefore he does not teach her without being selfless. He helps her because that way he has the possibility to sit near her and to be with her.

The film "The Blind Side" also deals with a person who helps someone apparently selfless. Driving home from a thanksgiving party, the mother of two children, Leigh Anne Tuohy, spots Michael, one of her son's friends, who is walking along a dark road and is terribly freezing. She decides to put him up for a night. The next morning, Michael is trying to escape when Leigh Anne catches him. She asks him whether he wants to spend Thanksgiving with her family and slowly, he becomes a part of the family. Leigh Anne takes care of him, prepares a room for him and gets him a driver's license.

Learning about Michael's protective instinct, Leigh Anne helps Michael to join the football team at his school. Since he is very talented, many coaches from all over the USA take notice of him. Thanks to Anne, who organizes private lessons for him, his grades improve and he applies for a scholarship for football.

Choosing college, he is influenced by his private teacher, Miss Sue, who tells Michael (who hates horror films) that the FBI buries body parts of deaths who are not identified under the playing field of the University of Tennessee. Thus, Michael decides to study at the University of Mississippi. Leigh Anne is very happy about his decision since both her husband and she are alumni. Later, Michael finds out that Mr. and Mrs. Tuohy and Miss Sue are boosters of Mississippi University. Having confronted Leigh Anne with the reproach, Mike runs away. Anne looks for him and finally he calls her and they meet. Leigh Anne assures him that she will support him and that for her it is not important which university he attends.

Both, Mark and Leigh Anne, do not act completely selfless. Mark teaches Beauty how to read and to write because that way he has the possibility to spend time with her and Leigh Anne supports Michael in order to be hailed as a hero. Furthermore, she avails herself of Michael's talent.

Nevertheless, Mark and Leigh Anne helped two persons who really needed help – thus, their reasons can be neglected.



3.3

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Subject: Raphael Selbourne's *Beauty* – perfectly suitable for demonstrating how people from different backgrounds can come together

Dear Sir or Madam,

I'm writing to give a comment on the novel "Beauty" by Raphael Selbourne.

In my opinion, it is a suitable example of demonstrating how people from different backgrounds can come together – especially one particular excerpt from the novel.

Although I assume that you know the novel, I will summarize the particular extract for you.

The 19-year-old Bangladeshi Beauty, who is an illiterate and has escaped from her family, is helped by an ex-prisoner, Mark, who rescues her from an assault by Asian youths and gives her shelter in his own home.

He teaches her in writing and reading. The young Bangladeshi is not very self-confident since her parents always demoralised her by telling her that she was stupid. But Mark is a very patient teacher and thanks to him, Beauty recognizes that she is not stupid but able to learn reading and writing.

The excerpt shows very well that people's backgrounds do not matter. Although Mark and Beauty could not be more different (a skinhead and ex-prisoner and a young Bangladeshi woman who has just escaped from her family) they become friends. The fact that Mark is an ex-prisoner does not matter to Beauty. Mark is the first person who strengthens her self-confidence and does not tell her that she is stupid or crazy. But Mark also benefits from their friendship. Trying hard not to commit crimes again, educating Beauty helps him a lot. He has got a task – something that is worth making an effort.

The novel illustrates very well that people from different backgrounds can come together in various ways – and their backgrounds do not matter in that case.

Sincerely yours,

Felicitas Müller, Karlsruhe