**A Day´s Wait by Ernest Hemingway**

**Summary**In the story "A Day´s Wait," a nine-year-old boy (Schatz) living in America falls ill with influenza (the flu) and has to stay in bed. The father calls for the doctor who takes the boy´s  
temperature, which turns out to be one hundred and two degrees. He is given medicine and is told that there is nothing to worry about unless the fever goes over one hundred and four degrees. The boy stays in bed, but does not pay any attention to his surroundings; he does not listen to the story his father reads to him. He only stares at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely.   
His father goes out to hunt for a while and tells the boy to sleep, but when he returns from hunting he is informed that the boy would not let anyone enter the room because he is afraid that they will get what he himself got. The father goes to his son and finds him in the same position as he left him. Again, he takes his temperature, and it is still one hundred and two, nothing to worry about. So he tells his son to take it easy. The son agrees but suddenly asks the question how long it will take until he will die. The father is shocked and explains to the son that people never die from a fever of one hundred and two. After a while the son tells the father that he heard from a boy in France that people will die when they get a fever over 44 and he himself has one hundred and two. The father explains to him that there is a difference between the thermometers in America and Europe, which is the same with kilometers and miles. The boy relaxes and the next day he begins to complain about little things that are of no importance.

**Vocabulary:**

1. influenza – caused by a virus, commonly known as the flu
2. epidemic – affecting many persons at the same time.
3. evidently – clearly
4. covey – a small group of game birds (such as the quail in the story)
5. purgative – a drug that causes a bowel movement
6. pneumonia – inflammation of the lungs; the flu
7. detached – separate, not attached to something
8. varnished – a coat that give a smooth surface and attractive finish
9. slithered – slide or gliding movement
10. flushed – red in the face
11. commenced – to begin something
12. to ache- to hurt
13. one hundred and two degrees Fahrenheit- (freezing-point at 32° and boiling-point at 212°)
14. Howard Pyle- American author.
15. Sleet- falling snow mixed with rain
16. to **varnish** to put a hard transparent coating (thin covering) on the surface of.
17. **setter** long haired dog –
18. **to flush** to (cause to) rise suddenly and fly away (of birds) –
19. **covey**  small flock of birds –
20. **to be poised** [poizd] to be balanced –
21. **to flush** to become red.
22. **to hold tight on to** to keep strong feelings under control, to be very tense –
23. **forty-four degrees** the boy is talking of Centigrade while the doctor was talking of Fahrenheit
24. **slack** inactive, lax
25. **mound** small hill; the cut brush had been piled up and was covered with ice forming a kind of hill –

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WARzVshoAFY>

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He came into the room to shut the windows while we were still in bed, and I saw he looked ill. He was shivering, his face was white, and he walked slowly as though it ached to move.

"What's the matter, Schatz?"

"I've got a headache."

"You better go back to bed."

"No. I'm alright."

"You go to bed. I'll see you when I'm dressed."

But when I came downstairs he was dressed, sitting by the fire, looking a very sick and miserable boy of nine years. When I put my hand on his forehead I knew he had a fever.

"You go up to bed," I said. "You're sick."

"I'm all right," he said.

When the doctor came, he took the boy's temperature.

"What is it?" I asked him.

"One hundred and two."

Downstairs, the doctor left three different medicines in different colored capsules with instructions for giving them. One was to bring down the fever, another a purgative, the third to overcome an acid condition. The germs of influenza can only exist in an acid condition, he explained. He seemed to know all about influenza and said there was nothing to worry about if the fever did not go above one hundred and four degrees. This was a light epidemic of flu and there was no danger if you avoided pneumonia.

Back in the room, I wrote the boy's temperature down and made a note of the time to give the various capsules.

"Do you want me to read to you?"

"Alright. If you want to," said the boy. His face was very white and there were dark areas under his eyes. He lay still in the bed and seemed very detached from what was going on.

I read aloud from Howard Pyle's *Book of Pirates*, but I could see he was not following what I was reading.

"How do you feel, Schatz?" I asked him.

"Just the same, so far," he said.

I sat at the foot of the bed and read to myself while I waited for it to be time to give another capsule. It would have been natural for him to go to sleep, but when I looked up, he was looking at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely.

"Why don't you try to go to sleep? I'll wake you up for the medicine."

"I'd rather stay awake."

After a while he said to me, "You don't have to stay in here with me, Papa, if it bothers you."

"It doesn't bother me."

"No, I mean you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you."

I thought perhaps he was a little lightheaded, and after giving him the prescribed capsules at eleven o'clock, I went out for a while.

It was a bright, cold day, the ground covered with a sleet that had frozen so that it seemed as if all the bare trees, the bushes, the cut brush and all the grass and the bare ground had been varnished with ice. I took the young Irish setter for a little walk up the road and along a frozen creek, but it was difficult to stand or walk on the glassy surface, and the red dog slipped and slithered, and I fell twice, hard, once dropping my gun and having it slide away over the ice.

We flushed a covey of quail under a high clay bank with overhanging brush, and I killed two as they went out of sight over the top of the bank. Some of the covey lit in trees, but most of them scattered into brush piles, and it was necessary to jump on the ice-coated mounds of brush several times before they would flush. Coming out while you were poised unsteadily on the icy, springy brush, they made difficult shooting, and I killed two, missed five, and started back pleased to have found a covey close to the house and happy there were so many left to find on another day.

At the house they said the boy had refused to let anyone come into the room.

"You can't come in," he said. "You mustn't get what I have."

I went up to him and found him in exactly the position I had left him, white-faced, but with the tops of his cheeks flushed by the fever, staring still, as he had stared, at the foot of the bed.

I took his temperature.

"What is it?"

"Something like a hundred," I said. It was one hundred and two and four tenths.

"It was a hundred and two," he said.

"Who said so?"

"The doctor."

"Your temperature is all right," I said. "It's nothing to worry about."

"I don't worry," he said, "but I can't keep from thinking."

"Don't think," I said. "Just take it easy."

"I'm taking it easy," he said and looked straight ahead. He was evidently holding tight onto himself about something.

"Take this with water."

"Do you think it will do any good?"

"Of course it will."

I sat down and opened the Pirate book and commenced to read, but I could see he was not following, so I stopped.

"About what time do you think I'm going to die?" he asked.

"What?"

"About how long will it be before I die?"

"You aren't going to die. What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, yes, I am. I heard him say a hundred and two."

"People don't die with a fever of one hundred and two. That's a silly way to talk."

"I know they do. At school in France, the boys told me you can't live with forty-four degrees. I've got a hundred and two."

He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o'clock in the morning.

"You poor Schatz," I said. "Poor old Schatz. It's like miles and kilometers. You aren't going to die. That's a different thermometer. On that thermometer thirty-seven is normal. On this kind it's ninety-eight."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely," I said. "It's like miles and kilometers. You know, like how many kilometers we make when we do seventy miles in the car?"

"Oh," he said.

But his gaze at the foot of the bed relaxed slowly. The hold over himself relaxed too, finally, and the next day it was very slack, and he cried very easily at little things that were of no importance.