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Father Lets in the Telephone

When the telephone was invented and was ready to use, hardly anybody cared to install one. People admitted that telephones were ingenious contraptions but nobody thought of getting one.

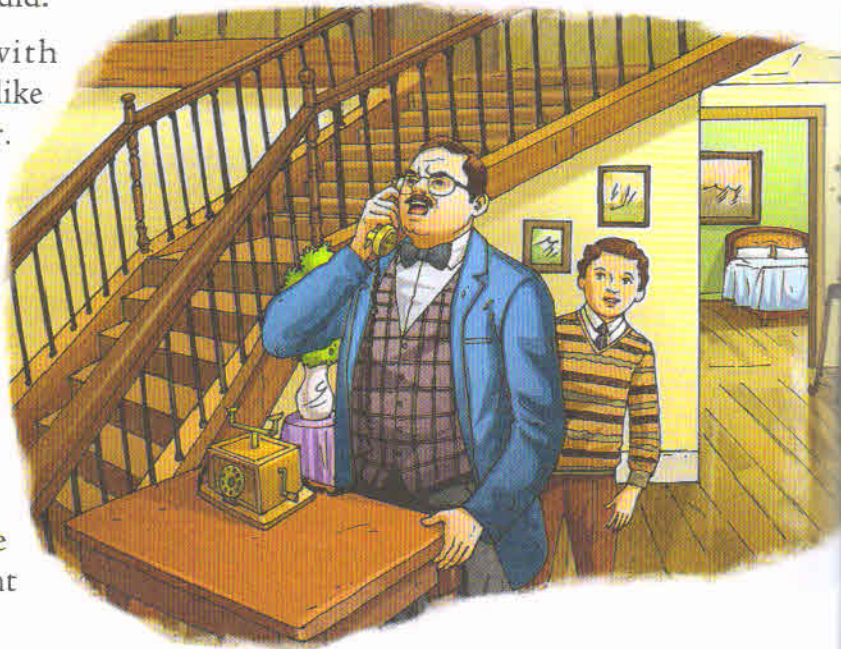
As a matter of fact, for a long time they were of little use in a home. Since almost nobody had them, there was no one to talk to. The telephone company sent us circulars in which they made large claims: they said that an important department store now had a telephone and three banks had ordered one each and some enterprising doctors were getting them. But though people saw vaguely that a telephone might be a convenience if every household installed one, they decided to wait until everyone did.

Mother agreed with Father—she didn't like telephones either. She distrusted machines of all kinds. She never knew what they might do to her. The telephone seemed to her, and many other people, especially dangerous. They were afraid the electric wiring might

give them a shock. Mother wouldn't even touch the queer toy. Besides, she said, she had to see the face of any person she talked to. She didn't want to be answered by a voice coming out of a box on the wall.

Little by little, however, telephones came into use. After ten or fifteen years, Father got one.

We didn't give it much of a welcome. It seemed to us rude and from the first it was a trouble. It rang seldom but it always came at a bad moment, when there was nobody on that floor to answer. Mother would get up her skirts and run upstairs, calling loudly "I'm coming! I'm coming!" but a fretful thing kept right on ringing.



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The outer world now began intruding upon us at will. This was hard to get used to. Father met these invasions with ferocious resentment. When somebody telephoned him and he couldn't make out at once who it was, "Speak up, speak up!" he would shout at the telephone, getting red in the face. "What is it, who are you? I can't hear a word you are saying. I can't hear a word, I tell you."

Father always assumed when the bell rang that it was a message for him. If he let anyone but himself answer, he would keep calling out and asking who it was and what it was all about, while we tried, in the midst of his shouts, to hear some of the message. When we said it was something that didn't concern him, he was incredulous.

One day a new friend of mine, a girl, telephoned to invite me to lunch. Father answered the telephone. "Yes. This is Mr Day. Speak up! Don't mumble at me. Who are you? ...What? Come to lunch? I've had lunch ... Next Friday? ... No. Where? In Rivington Street? Lunch with you in Rivington Street? Good God! I never heard of such a thing in my life! Goodbye, Madam!"

"I think that was a friend of mine, Father," I said.

"A friend of yours!" he exclaimed. "Why, it sounded to me like some impudent pedlar's wife, arguing with me about lunching with her somewhere down in the slums. I can't stand it, that's all I have to say; I'll have the confounded thing taken out."

CLARENCE DAY

A. Comprehension

1. Initially when the telephone was invented and ready to use people did not care to install it.

a. True

b. False

Give reason for your choice.

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2. How did the telephone company try to lure people to install it in their homes?

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3. Give three reasons why the narrator's mother did not like the telephone?

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4. How did the narrator's father react after the telephone was installed in the house?

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5. What made the narrator's father finally say, "I will have the confounded thing taken out"?

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6. Fill in the banks with these words from the passage in order to bring out their meaning appropriately.

contraptions assumed ingenious enterprising

Many farmers have flourished with their methods of farming. In arid regions of the world, drone like are used to transport fertilizers and water to the fields to increase yield and save water. It is that in agriculture drone technology is going to see a high demand in the near future.

B. Composition

1. In the story Mr Day received a call which was for his son, but he presumed it was for himself. Write a dialogue that might have taken place between Mr Day and his friend. Use the inputs from the passage. Use the blanks provided to make notes.

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2. How do you feel the invention of the telephone has benefitted us? Do you think excessive use of the phone can be harmful too? Write a paragraph on this subject within 200 words. Use the blanks provided to make notes.

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