



INDIAN SCHOOL NIZWA - WORKSHEET

ENGLISH READING PASSAGE

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: XII/XI Sec: ____

Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions that follow:

THE ACCIDENTAL NOVELIST

I was 53 when my first book, 'The Naked face' was published in 1970. People frequently remarked, "Isn't it wonderful you've finally achieved your life-long ambition". In truth, writing a book hadn't occurred to me before I sat down and did it. 'The Naked face' was an accident.

But I found the prospect of writing a novel intimidating. I assumed I didn't have whatever extra dash of magic goes into composing a book.

Then, I hatched a plot about a psychoanalyst whom someone tries to murder. He has no enemies and no clue who wanted him dead. Using his skills as an analyst, he sets out to solve the mystery.

This story might just as well have been a film, or T.V movie except for one challenge: It demanded the audience get inside the protagonist's head and hear his thoughts. I couldn't figure out how to do that in a script. So I tried to let go of the notion, but it wouldn't let go of me.

Then I started dictating my attempt at a novel. I've always dictated everything, including screen plays, because my mind works faster than my hands. I rewrote the book about six times.

Once I finished the book, I had no idea of the next step. I was familiar with all the Hollywood agents, but not the literary agents. I called my friend the writer Irwin Wallace. He kindly sent my manuscript to his agent, who took over.

I was less optimistic because I didn't view myself as a real author. Three months and seven rejections went by, and when my agent called with good news, I didn't believe it.

Reviews of the book were published in all leading newspapers and they were mostly negative. But the New York Times came out with a wonderful review, describing my novel as 'the best first mystery novel of the year'. A literary luncheon followed, where eminent novelists were promoting their novels. I was among five others. While people queued up in front of the others to get their copies signed, there was not a soul in front of me.

A couple of months later, my book sold 17000 copies but I made no money because what I got covered up the cost of the book tour. But something fantastic happened during the experience, mortifying moments and all. I discovered a sense of freedom I had never known.

When you write a movie or a play, yours is but one voice in a cacophony of opinions. You deal with a producer who decrees a scene too expensive, a director who changes your female lead into a man, an actor who insists, 'My character would never say that'. But when you write a book, you alone are the producer, director and cast. You decide your story's setting, whether to make your characters healthy or ill, rich or poor, heroic or evil. You're totally responsible for your novel. It's all you. I loved that. Sidney Sheldon



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A. Answer the following questions briefly and in your own words as far as possible:

- i. The author felt less confident of being a successful writer because
- ii. What is 'notion' that the author had in his mind?
- iii. How long did the author take to realize 'his goal'?
- iv. How does this novel prove to be a 'no-profit' exercise?
- v. What is 'the sense of freedom' that the author experienced?

B. Find words in the passage which mean the same as the ones given below:

- i. challenging
- ii. main character
- iii. talking in different voice