

Reading B

The Muddle Head

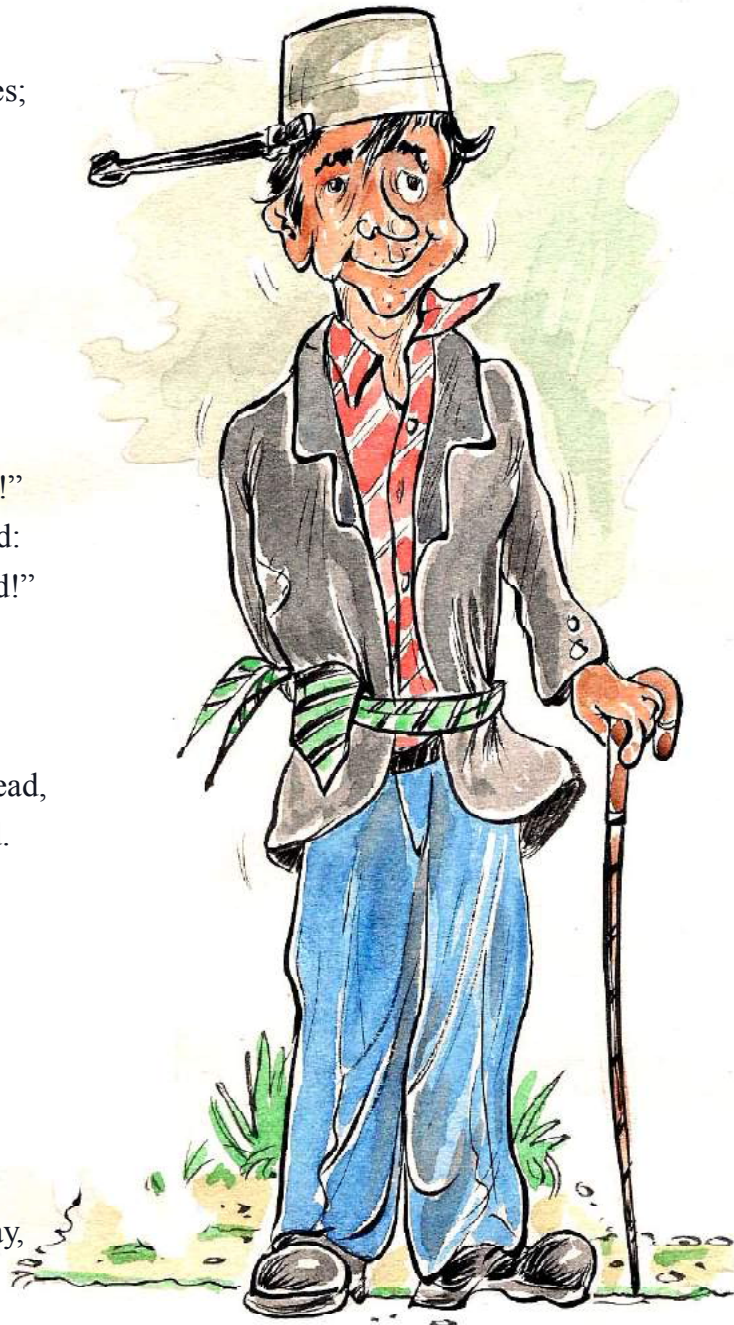
I knew a man from Petushkee
As muddleheaded as could be.

He always got mixed up with clothes;
He wore his mittens on his toes,
Forgot his collar in his haste,
And tied his tie around his waist.
What a muddle head was he,
That man who lived in Petushkee!

They told him as he went about:
“You’ve got your coat on inside out!”
And when they saw his hat, they said:
“You’ve put a saucepan on your head!”
What a muddle head was he,
That man who lived in Petushkee!

At lunch he scratched a piece of bread,
And spread some butter on his head.
He put his walking stick to bed,
And he stood in the rack instead.
What a muddle head was he,
That man who lived in Petushkee!

He walked upto a tram one day
And climbed in very sprightly;
Conductor thought that he would pay,
Instead he said politely:
“Parding your beggon,
Kister Monductor,



I'm off for a week's vacation;
 I stop you to beg your cramway tar
 As soon as we reach the station."
 Conductor got a fright
 And didn't sleep that nite.
 What a muddle head was he,
 That man who lived in Petushkee!

He rushed into the first café:
 "A railway ticket please, One way."
 And at the ticket office said:
 "A slice of tea and a cup of bread."
 What a muddle head was he,
 That man who lived in Petushkee!

He passed the man collecting the fares,
 And entered a carriage awaiting repairs,
 That stood on a siding, all by itself.
 Half of his luggage, he put on a shelf,
 The rest on the floor, his coat on his lap
 And settled himself for a bit of a nap.
 All at once he raised his head,
 "I must have been asleep"- he said.
 "Hey, what stop is this?" he cried
 "Petushkee," a voice replied.

Once again he closed his eyes
 And dreamt he was in Paradise.
 When he woke, he looked about,
 Raised the window and leaned out.
 "I've seen this place before, I believe,
 Is it Kharkov or is it Kiev?
 Tell me where I am," he cried.
 "In Petushkee," a voice replied.

And so again he settled down
 And dreamt the world was upside down
 When he woke, he looked about,
 Raised the window and looked out.
 "I seem to know this station too,
 Is it Nalchik or Baku?
 Tell me what its called," he cried.
 "Petushkee" a voice replied.
 Up he jumped: "It's a crime!
 I've been riding all this time,
 And here I am where I began!
 That's no way to treat a man!"
 What a muddle head was he,
 That man who lived in Petushkee!

Ogden Nash

Notes : The muddle head mixes up words and mispronounces them. The expressions he uses are explained below.

<i>Parding your beggon</i>	-	<i>begging your pardon</i>
<i>Kister Monductor</i>	-	<i>Mister Conductor</i>
<i>Stop you to beg</i>	-	<i>beg you to stop</i>
<i>Cramway tar</i>	-	<i>tramway car</i>

About the author

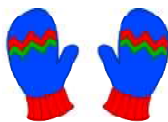


Frederic Ogden Nash (1902-1971) was an American poet well known for his humorous poetry. Nash wrote over 500 pieces of comic verse. The best of his work was published in 14 volumes between 1931 and 1972.

Meanings in context

muddle : confused

mittens : a type of glove



saucepan : a deep cooking vessel with a handle



sprightly : lively, energetic

cramway tar (tramway car) : rail vehicle which runs on tracks along public streets



Parding your beggon (Begging Your Pardon) : excuse me (polite language, used when addressing a stranger)

I stop you to beg (I beg you to stop) : I request politely to stop

Comprehension

Answer the following questions.

1. Describe briefly the dream the muddle head had when he slept in the train.
2. Did the muddle head lie down to sleep? Quote the line from the poem in support of your answer.
3. Who is 'I' in different stanzas of the poem?
4. Point out why the following lines in the poem sound funny.
"A railway ticket please, One way."
"A slice of tea and a cup of bread."
5. List the things that make the poem look funny to you.