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A Daring Bet

In 1872, Mr. Phileas Fogg lived in a fashionable part of London. People there knew almost nothing about him.

Was Phileas Fogg rich? Certainly, he was rich. And he was often generous. But how had he made his money? No one would think of asking him such a question.

He spoke very little. This made him seem even more mysterious. His daily habits could easily be observed. But everything he did was precisely what he had always done.

Had he traveled? Most likely he had. No one seemed to know the world better.

He seemed to have neither wife nor children. He lived alone—a single servant was all he needed. But Phileas Fogg was not an easy master. On the first of October, he fired his servant, James

Forster. Forster had brought him shaving water that was 84 degrees instead of 86!

On October 2, Mr. Fogg waited for his new servant to arrive. He watched his clock. It showed the hours, the minutes, the seconds, the days, the months, and the years.

Then Fogg heard someone knocking. When he answered the door, a young man of about 30 stepped forward and bowed.

“You are a Frenchman, I believe,” said Phileas Fogg, “and your name is John?”

“*Jean*, if you please, monsieur,” the man said. “*Jean Passepartout*. You probably know that *passepartout* means ‘go everywhere’ in French. I have this name because I have gone from one business to another. I’ve been a singer and a circus-rider. I’ve been a professor of gymnastics and a fireman. But I left France to become a valet in England. I heard that you are the most exact and regular gentleman in the country. I have come to you with the hope of living a quiet life. I now wish to forget the name *Passepartout*.”

“*Passepartout* suits me,” Mr. Fogg said. “I have heard many good things about you. It is now exactly twenty-nine minutes past eleven A.M. Today is Wednesday, October second, and you

are now in my service.”

With that, Phileas Fogg put on his hat and went out the door. He said not a word. Passepartout was alone in the house.

During his brief talk with Mr. Fogg, Passepartout had studied him carefully. Mr. Fogg seemed to be about 40 years old. He was a tall, well-built man. His features were fine and handsome. His hair and whiskers were light. His eyes were calm and clear.

Fogg never made a move that was not necessary. He never took an extra step. Wherever he went, he went by the shortest route. He avoided most people’s company, knowing they would slow him down.

Passepartout had searched in vain for a master after his own heart. He was an honest man, with a pleasant face. He had a good, round head. It was the kind of head one likes to see on the shoulders of a friend. His body was compact, solid, and muscular.

Now Passepartout explored Mr. Fogg’s house from top to bottom. It was warm and quiet and very clean—like a snail’s shell.

Above the clock, Passepartout found a list of his duties. Tea and toast were to be served at

23 minutes past eight. Shaving water was to be brought at 37 minutes past nine. The duties went on and on until midnight, when Mr. Fogg went to bed.

Mr. Fogg's clothes were many, and in the best taste. Each pair of pants, each coat and vest had a number. The numbers showed the time of year they were to be worn. The same system was used for his shoes.

Passepartout rubbed his hands. A wide smile spread across his face.

This is exactly what I wanted! he said to himself. *We shall get along very well, Mr. Fogg and I! What a regular gentleman he must be—a real machine!*

After leaving the house, Phileas Fogg walked to the Reform Club. He took his place at his usual table and ate his breakfast. At 13 minutes to one, he read a newspaper. At a quarter to four he read another paper until dinner time. After dinner, five other members of the Reform Club arrived. They usually played a game of whist with Mr. Fogg.

Flanagan was a brewer. Stuart was an engineer. Sullivan and Fallentin were bankers. And Ralph was a director of the Bank of England.

“Well,” said Flanagan to the other men, “what