

To Be Somebody

by Margaret Chase Smith and H. Paul Jeffers

The sun beating down on Wimbledon stadium in England on July 6, 1957, was unusually hot. On the grass court of the most famous tennis stadium in the world the tem-

perature was almost 38°C (100°F). Up in the stands it was a little cooler for the spectators, who could sip cold drinks and stir up a slight breeze with their fans. One of them was the

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Queen of England herself, in a summer dress and sunglasses. Round her the guards and soldiers in heavy red uniforms found it impossible to be comfortable. But down on the grass two women from the United States managed to look cool in their white tennis dresses.

2 The women were about to play the final match in the Wimbledon tournament. One of them, Darlene Hard, an excellent player, wiped the sweat from her forehead. She hoped she could keep a good grip on her tennis racket with her moist hand.

3 Across the net was her opponent, Althea Gibson. Althea had learned to play tennis in hotter weather than this. But there had been no cool grass under her feet on the hot, sticky streets of New York City, where she had grown up. There had been no fancy rackets and tennis balls, either—just wooden paddles and a rubber ball.

4 As a child Althea had loved street games. Luckily for her, the city had blocked off her street so that she and her friends could pass the hot summer days playing there without worrying about traffic.

5 The game Althea liked best was paddle tennis. Light-footed and with a powerful swing, she was the best player on her street. She was so good that she caught the attention of a man named Buddy Walker.

6 "I wonder what you'd do with a regular tennis racket," he said to her.

7 Althea shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know. I never had one. And I never will because I don't have the money."

8 Almost without money himself, Buddy Walker had scraped together enough cash to buy Althea an old tennis racket that had been restrung. And he had encouraged her to begin a career in tennis.

9 As Althea waited now in the hot sun, she thought about how far she had come from the streets of New York to the finals at Wimbledon. As she prepared herself for the first serve of the game, she was aware that this was one of the most important moments of her life. In the past, friends had been a big help to her.

Now she was on her own. Well, I always wanted to be somebody, she thought. Now's my chance. And it's up to me.

10 Althea Gibson paused on the green court. Then she heard the swish of Darlene Hard's racket and the popping sound as it hit the ball. The game was on. Swish! Pop! Swish! Pop! Thousands of heads in the stands turned from left to right, right to left, left to right, as the audience watched the two women play. A good serve or an excellent return brought occasional bursts of polite clapping from the quiet crowd. Finally, after forty-nine minutes of hard play, the score was 6-3, 6-2. Althea Gibson had won! The crowd applauded, and the players shook hands over the net. Then the Queen of England, looking stately and cool, presented the Wimbledon trophy to Althea. Althea curtsied and smiled as she received the prize from the Queen. "It must have been very hot on the court," the Queen said.

11 Althea grinned. "Yes," she replied.

12 It was a hot day, too, five days later when the city of New York welcomed Althea Gibson home with a special parade. At a ceremony on the steps of the City Hall, Althea looked down on the thousands of people gathered in the square. She felt deeply moved. She said to the crowd, "Despite all the other acclaim I have had, none was a greater honor than this I am receiving here today."

13 Later, she went by car to her old home for another parade. The street was closed again. This time it was not for children to play in, but for the parade. As the car moved slowly down the street she remembered Buddy Walker and all the other people who had helped and encouraged her. She thought, When you have a friend, you have a gold mine.

14 But Althea Gibson's friends were the first to point out that it had taken more than friends to help her win this victory. It had taken courage and determination. Those were qualities that no one else could give her. "To be somebody," she had to find them in herself. And she did.

How Well Did You Read?

Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

- 1 Why did the author write paragraph 1?
 - a To describe the setting of the story's main action
 - b To show how difficult the match would be for the two players
 - c Both a and b
- 2 Why did the author write paragraph 3?
 - a To show that Althea came from a poor background
 - b To show that Althea was a champion
 - c To describe American tennis
- 3 Why did the author write paragraph 8?
 - a To show that everyone was poor
 - b To show how Althea got her first tennis racket and early encouragement
 - c To show that Althea couldn't win
- 4 Why did the author write paragraph 13?
 - a To show that the people who had helped Althea were very important to her
 - b To show that Althea was very important to the people of New York
 - c To show that Althea always looked to the past, never to the future
- 5 Why did the author write the story?
 - a To show how tennis became popular
 - b To show how a poor girl became famous with the help of friends and by her own efforts
 - c Both a and b
- 6 If someone had asked Althea about Buddy Walker, what might have been her reply?
 - a "I don't remember him."
 - b "He did a lot for me."
 - c "I think he moved away."
- 7 The match between Gibson and Hard was played under a difficult condition. What was the condition?
 - a It was very hot at Wimbledon.
 - b Rain had made the court slippery.
 - c The crowd was extremely noisy.

8 After Althea's victory at Wimbledon, who presented the trophy to her?

- a Buddy Walker
- b Darlene Hard
- c The Queen of England

Learn about Words

Vocabulary

A You can often tell the meaning of a word by reading the words around it.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. Then find the word that fits the given meaning. Write the word.

- 1 well-known (1)
- 2 damp (2)
- 3 rival; competitor (3)
- 4 nimble; quick (5)
- 5 life's work (8)
- 6 not very frequent; now and then (10)
- 7 bowed; made a respectful gesture (10)

B A word may have more than one meaning. Its meaning depends on the way it is used. The word *string* is an example.

We tied the box with *string*.

Our team had a *string* of victories.

Look at each number in parentheses. Find the paragraph in the story with the same number. See how the word in **heavy type** below is used in the paragraph. Decide whether it has meaning a or b. Write a or b.

- 8 **match** (2)
 - a duplicate
 - b contest
- 9 **blocked** (4)
 - a closed off
 - b shaped with a mold
- 10 **court** (10)
 - a place of law
 - b place where games are played

Word Study

- C Betty **does read** fast.
 Joe **has gone** away.
 Maisie **won't be coming** today.

The words in **heavy type** are verb phrases (verbs of more than one word). Each verb phrase is made up of one or more *helping verbs* and a *main verb*. The helping verbs come first. The main verb is the last word in the verb phrase. Thus the main verbs above are *read*, *gone*, and *coming*. The verb phrases in the sentences below are in **heavy type**. If the underlined words are helping verbs, write *HV*. If they are main verbs, write *MV*.

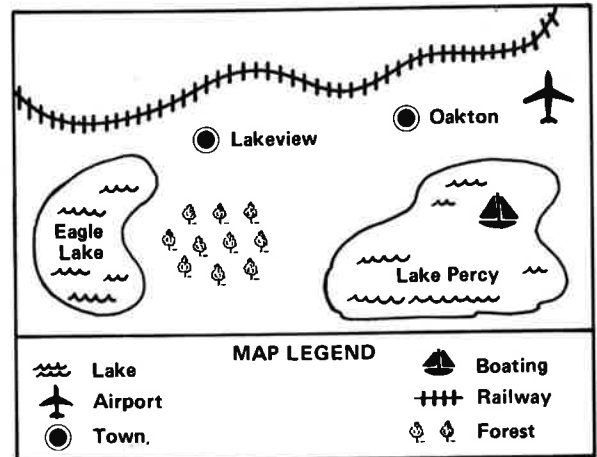
- 11 The chair **was covered** with cloth.
- 12 Barbara **is playing** outside.
- 13 Her blue dress **was torn**.
- 14 The bees **are buzzing** around the hive.
- 15 I **won't be leaving** early today.
- 16 They **were wondering** what to do with the lost dog.
- 17 My sister **is visiting** her friend.
- 18 Julie **has fed** the cat.

- D strength + **en** = strengthen (cause to have strength)
 just + **ify** = justify (cause to be just)

Many verbs end in *en* and *ify*. Often *en* means "cause to have" or "make," and *ify* means "cause to be." Read each word in **heavy type** and the incomplete definition of it. Write the word that completes the definition.

- 19 **frighten**: cause to have ___
- 20 **beautify**: cause to be a ___
- 21 **soften**: to make ___
- 22 **simplify**: cause to be ___
- 23 **solidify**: cause to be ___
- 24 **hasten**: to make ___
- 25 **purify**: cause to be ___
- 26 **lengthen**: cause to have greater ___

- E There are several symbols on this map. Notice the airplane shape in one corner. The map *legend* (below the map) tells you that that symbol shows where an airport is located. Use the legend to find out what the other symbols mean. Then decide whether the statements below are true or false. Write *T* for true or *F* for false.



- 27 The town of Lakeview is close to the railway.
- 28 You can go boating on Eagle Lake.
- 29 The forest is near the airport.
- 30 Oakton is closer to the airport than Lakeview is.
- 31 Lake Percy is smaller than Eagle Lake.
- 32 The railway runs near Eagle Lake.
- 33 There are three towns near the airport.