

- 1 Several women had come to visit the pastor's wife and sat politely in the house sipping tea and waiting for the children to appear. Suddenly, a tall, thin girl of ten or eleven burst into the room, wildly flinging herself about in a series of cartwheels, completely shocking the proper visitors with her odd activities.
- 2 The girl was Dorothy Thompson, and for Dorothy such unusual manners were quite usual, and they helped in a career as a reporter that shocked and delighted millions of people.
- 3 As a girl Dorothy was robust and energetic, and she managed to lead her brother, as well as herself, into all kinds of scrapes and mishaps. In the barn—for she lived in a rural community—there was a tightrope on which she would walk, balancing herself with a long pole. One day she got the idea of parachuting out the barn window and she did, clutching an open umbrella and landing with a thud that broke her collarbone.
- 4 When Dorothy was seven her mother died, and it wasn't long before Dorothy made her first big news "scoop." (Scoop means getting the news first.) She declared that the church organist wanted to marry her father, the Methodist pastor. The marriage took place and Dorothy began four years of misery and rebellion. She and her stepmother got along so badly that, at fourteen, Dorothy was sent to Chicago to live with an aunt.
- 5 She went to school in Chicago but her heart wasn't really in it. Her scholastic record was undistinguished, but she went on to Syracuse University and did well enough there to graduate with very high grades.
- 6 While at Syracuse Dorothy became extremely interested in politics, an interest that grew so intense that she talked politics all the time. No matter what people might be discussing, Dorothy would find a way to talk about tax laws, trade acts, or elections.
- 7 Later Dorothy's interest expanded to include international politics, and she tried to get a job overseas as a

# The Human Tornado

by Jane Muir



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reporter. But without experience and with the added drawback of being a woman, she found the doors to journalism—a primarily masculine field—closed to her. She was not easily dismayed, however, and if no one would give her a job as a reporter, she decided to make one for herself.

8 With an inexhaustible self-confidence and only \$150 in her pocket, an amount she hoped to increase by writing articles, she sailed for England in 1920. Through a combination of remarkable luck and a reporter's intuition for news, she managed to be on the spot when major stories broke. Wherever she went news happened with such regularity that it became a joke among her fellow reporters to ask, when Dorothy had arrived in town at noon, what had happened at one o'clock.

9 Eventually she landed a permanent position with the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* as their correspondent in Vienna, Austria, where she did very well. She was always ready to plunge into the worst discomfort or danger to get a story. At the opera in Vienna one night she heard that a revolution had broken out in Poland. Without bothering to go home she dashed to the railway station in her evening dress and satin slippers and boarded the next train to Poland. Near the Polish city of Warsaw she and other reporters changed to cars that they borrowed or rented from residents fleeing the city.

10 Dorothy got into one of the first cars and raced to the scene of the fighting. Later the other reporters passed the car. It was lying in a ditch riddled with bullet holes. They did not bother to stop, since no one could have survived the wreck. They reached Warsaw and were just about to wire news of Dorothy Thompson's death when she walked in completely unharmed. Along the way she had changed cars because the driver of the first car had refused to enter the city.

11 Such narrow escapes as this gave her an immense prestige in newspaper circles. She was a woman who could go after the news and get it, quite often when no one else could. A fellow reporter called her a human tornado.

12 During her four years in Vienna Dorothy established a glowing reputation for her brilliant scoops, and it was only natural that she should be offered a better job. The *New York Evening Post* hired her as chief of its European Service with headquarters in Berlin. It was there that she met the American novelist Sinclair Lewis. Within a week he asked her to marry him but she said no. Then one evening at a dinner given for him and to which she had been invited, Lewis again proposed, but

publicly this time. When called on to make a speech, he stood, turned to Dorothy and said: "Will you marry me?" Then he sat down because that was his entire speech.

13 He trailed her all over Europe, proposing daily. Finally in May, 1928, she and Lewis were married in London. Two years later they had a son.

14 Dorothy gave up her job in Europe and the couple returned to the United States, settling down on a farm in Vermont known as Twin Farms—because it was really two farms in one—which gave Dorothy Thompson and Sinclair Lewis the privacy they each needed to write. Dorothy worked on short stories and articles while her husband continued writing the novels that in 1932 won him the Nobel Prize for literature.

15 In 1931 Dorothy returned to Europe to hold an interview with Adolph Hitler, the man who would become the leader of Germany. Despite Dorothy's knowledge of Germany and German life, her judgment about Hitler was one of the worst errors she ever made, and she spent years making up for it. She said that Hitler would never amount to a thing!

16 By 1936 Dorothy had already won a place for herself as a distinguished foreign correspondent, but she wanted to become an even greater star in journalism. So, she accepted an assignment from the *New York Herald Tribune* to write three columns a week interpreting political events. Her column was called "On the Road" and was an immediate hit. It was printed in nearly two hundred newspapers and had between seven and eight million readers.

17 She was almost a fanatic when it came to politics, or "it," as Sinclair Lewis called the subject. He hated to be around when "it" was being discussed, for politics bored him, but unfortunately it was practically the only thing Dorothy talked about. During one political conversation he tried to change the subject by humbly reminding the group, "You know, I wrote a novel once."

18 Dorothy had no patience with people who disagreed with her. What she considered a silly or ignorant viewpoint infuriated her and she dismissed her opponents with a loud "Bah" or "Rubbish."

19 Despite her occasional bad manners, Dorothy Thompson was, for a time, the most influential woman writer in the English-speaking world. Her opinions were respected by millions of people. Her articles were clear and to the point. They are collected at Syracuse University and are models for any reporter or writer.

## How Well Did You Read?

Write *T* if the statement is true according to the story.  
Write *F* if the statement is false.

- 1 Dorothy was timid and quiet as a child.
- 2 Dorothy left home because she couldn't get along with her stepmother.
- 3 It was at Syracuse University that Dorothy became interested in politics.
- 4 Being a woman was a handicap to becoming a journalist in those days, because journalism was mostly a man's field.
- 5 When no one would hire Dorothy as a journalist, she went after the news on her own.
- 6 Dorothy entered journalism without much confidence that she would succeed.
- 7 Dorothy seemed to have a gift for being "on the spot" when news was made.
- 8 When Dorothy met Sinclair Lewis, she fell in love at once.
- 9 When Dorothy met Adolph Hitler she foresaw that he would be a danger to peace and freedom.

Write the letter of the best answer for the question.

- 10 The author called the story "The Human Tornado." How was Dorothy Thompson like a tornado?
- a She had tremendous energy and drive.
  - b When she blew into town, sensible people fled.
  - c She had a reputation for writing "windy" stories.

## 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 strong and healthy (3)
- 2 fighting against authority; revolt (4)
- 3 discouraged (7)
- 4 instinct or "sixth sense"; inborn ability to understand (8)
- 5 status or high standing based on achievements (11)
- 6 person employed by a newspaper to send news from distant places (16)
- 7 person who is enthusiastic beyond reason (17)
- 8 examples to imitate or learn from (19)

- B A word may have more than one meaning.

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, b, or c. Write a, b, or c.

- 9 **burst** (1)
- a came suddenly
  - b exploded
  - c gave expression to emotion

- 10 **grades** (5)
- a the slopes of a road
  - b numbers or letters that show how well one has done in school
  - c stages in a process

## Word Study

### C **Whoever said that** is mistaken.

The words in **heavy type** are a noun clause. The entire clause works as a noun and is the subject of the sentence. A noun clause can also be the direct object in a sentence. Here is an example:

I bought **what I needed**.

One test for a noun clause is to see if you can substitute *somebody* or *something* for the clause and still have a sensible-sounding sentence. (*Somebody* is mistaken. I bought *something*.) Noun clauses often begin with *how*, *what*, *whatever*, *when*, *where*, *which*, *who*, *whose*, or *whoever*. Read the sentences below. If the words in **heavy type** are a noun clause, write Yes. If they are not, write No.

- 11 **Where have all the children** gone?
- 12 Agnes couldn't decide **which dress she wanted**.
- 13 Forget **whose team won**; be happy for both.
- 14 Each child knew **when it was time to go home**.
- 15 **How will the moon be** colonized?
- 16 I remember **what a happy day it was**.
- 17 Be sure to thank **whoever answers the door**.
- 18 **Whatever you do**, don't be late!

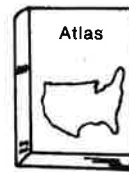
### D That is the house **where I grew up**.

The words in **heavy type** make up an adjective clause. An adjective clause does what an adjective does: it modifies a noun or pronoun. The clause above modifies the noun *house*. Adjective clauses often begin with *that*, *which*, *where*, *who*, *whom*, or *whose*. Each sentence below contains an adjective clause. Write the first word and the last word of the adjective clause.

- 19 There once was a man whom a princess loved.
- 20 The people who live here are planning to move.
- 21 A judge whose words were wise settled the dispute.
- 22 The equator, which is an imaginary line dividing the globe, crosses South America.
- 23 It is hard to imagine a time that has been without problems.

- 24 The apple that Don ate was not as tasty as yours.
- 25 The person who found the silver mine never drew a map of it.
- 26 There once was a place where you could get whatever you needed.

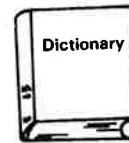
E There are many kinds of reference books. Each one is used for looking up some special kind of information. An *atlas* contains maps and facts about many countries. A *dictionary* gives the meanings of words and tells you how to spell and pronounce them. A *book of quotations* contains statements that various people have spoken or written. A *telephone directory* lists the names, addresses, and phone numbers of many people and businesses. The drawings show these four books. Each one has been given a letter. Decide which book would be most helpful in answering the questions below. Write A, B, C, or D for each question.



A



B



C



D

- 27 How far is Melbourne from Sidney?
- 28 Is there a pet shop in your town?
- 29 Who said, "A little thin, flowery border round, neat, not gaudy"?
- 30 How do you pronounce *etymology*?
- 31 Is *disobedient* spelled correctly here?
- 32 Did Andrew Jackson say, "Our Federal Union: it must be preserved"?
- 33 Are the Alps in Switzerland?