

LUCK by MARK TWAIN

Summary:

Once the narrator was at a dinner (banquet) in London given in honour of famous English military man namely Lieutenant General **Lord Arthur Scoresby**. The narrator had heard his name thousands of times when his name luckily became famous from a **Crimean battlefield**.

A clergyman was sitting next to the narrator. The clergyman was a teacher in the **military school** at **Woolwich**. He secretly said that Scoresby was an **absolute fool** and **woodenheaded**. This statement was great surprise for the narrator. But he knew that the clergyman was a man of honesty and sincerity. Besides, his judgment of men was good. Now the narrator realized that the world was mistaken about Scoresby.

Before forty years, the clergyman met Scoresby who was a student in the military school at Woolwich. In the preliminary exam, the rest of the class answered all the questions brilliantly, while Scoresby didn't know anything. Though he was good, sweet, lovable and innocent, his answers show his stupidity and ignorance. The priest (the clergyman) knew that he would certainly fail when he came to be examined again.

The priest decided to train him for the examination. He found that the boy knew about Julius Caesar, which would be asked in exam. And luckily on the examination day, he answered the questions on Julius Caesar while the others failed. It was all because of the cramming and practice provided by the clergyman. The priest also prepared him for the exam on mathematics which was a tough subject for Scoresby. But the clergyman drilled him and crammed him just on questions which were most likely to be asked. And at the examination, he got the first prize.

However, the clergyman felt guilty and miserable. His mind tortured him day and night. This was because he thought that he was putting a biggest fool in the way of glittering promotions and great responsibilities in a military set up.

The Crimean war had just broken out. Soon the news came that the young man was promoted to the rank of a **captain**. This news shocked the clergyman because soldiers usually promoted to such a high rank only after growing old and having large experience. It was also not

proper to put such a great responsibility on such foolish person. The clergyman could not bear the idea to make him a captain. So, he bought a **cornetcy** in his regiment to protect his country.

Scoresby went on committing blunder after blunder. Nobody knew his secret of how stupid he was. Everybody misunderstood him and considered him as **military genius**. But with each blunder, he promoted to higher rank.

The battle grew hotter and the English and their allies were on backfoot. Their regiment occupied an important position. A blunder now would mean total destruction. At this crucial moment, he just mistook his left hand for his right hand. An order had come for him to move the regiment to the right. Scoresby ordered it to move to the neighbouring hill to the left instead of right. But when they reached over the hill, they found an entire and unsuspected **Russian army**. The Russians were so shocked so they ran away over the hill and down into the fields in confusion. The British army ran after them and the Russian army was defeated.

It was a splendid victory for the allies. **Marshal Conrobert**, the commander, looked on with surprise, admiration and delight. He immediately called Scoresby, put his arms around him, hugged him and awarded him with medals on the field. Scoresby became famous all over the world as a marvelous **military genius**.

He was good and sweet and lovable but the stupidest man in the world. Nobody knew this secret except narrator and the clergyman. Every one of them was a record of some stupidity or other. So the best thing in this entire world that can happen to man is to be born lucky.

Q. Comment on the significance of the title of the story.

Introduction:

"Luck" is a short story written by Mark Twain in 1886 and published in Harper's Magazine in 1891. The story is all about luck. The story shows that Lord Arthur Scoresby is a product of luck. The title of this story also focuses on its theme. Lord Arthur Scoresby is lucky throughout his entire life in his education as well as military career.

The Significance of the Title 'Luck':

Once the narrator was at a dinner (banquet) in London given in honour of famous English military man namely Lieutenant General **Lord Arthur Scoresby**. He luckily became famous from a **Crimean battlefield**. The clergyman was a teacher in the **military school** at **Woolwich**. He secretly said that Scoresby was an **absolute fool**.

Before forty years, the clergyman met Scoresby who was a student in the military school at Woolwich. In the preliminary exam, the rest of the class answered all the questions brilliantly, while Scoresby didn't know anything.

The priest decided to train him for the examination. He found that the boy knew about Julius Caesar, which would be asked in exam. And luckily on the examination day, he answered the questions on Julius Caesar while the others failed.

Then, the priest also prepared him for the exam on **mathematics** which was a tough subject for Scoresby. But the clergyman drilled him and crammed him on questions which were most likely to be asked. And, he got the first prize in exam.

The Crimean war had just broken out. Soon the news came that Scoresby was promoted to the rank of a **captain**. This news shocked the clergyman because soldiers usually promoted to such a high rank only after growing old and having large experience.

The battle grew hotter and the English and their allies were on backfoot. Their regiment occupied an important position. A blunder now would mean total destruction. At this crucial moment, he just mistook his left hand for his right hand. An order had come for him to move the regiment to the right. Scoresby ordered it to move to the neighbouring hill to the left instead of

right. But when they reached over the hill, they found an entire and unsuspected **Russian army**. The Russians were so shocked so they ran away over the hill and down into the fields in confusion. The British army ran after them and the Russian army was defeated.

It was a splendid victory for the allies. **Marshal Conrobert**, the commander, called Scoresby and awarded him with medals. Scoresby became famous all over the world as a marvelous **military genius**.

Conclusion:

In this way, the story 'Luck' indicates that the best thing in this entire world that can happen to man is to be born lucky. Scoresby was lucky by birth whether it is educational or military sphere. Thus, the title of the story justify it.