

A true hero

Before you read the story guess whether these sentences are true or false:

1. The man in the picture is a clown.
2. He is not a real person, he is just a character from a book.
3. The man in the picture is not the man this story is about.
4. The title of the story is "A true hero", so it must be about a man saving people's lives.
5. The man in the picture is not alive any more, because he committed a suicide.

The dictionary defines a hero as any man celebrated for his courage, or any man **admired** for his character, ideals, or accomplishments. But a hero is much more than just those things. A hero must have a heart, he must be able to **stand up for** something he believes in, he must be **caring** and brave.



This is a story of a true hero – Hunter Patch Adams.

Hunter 'Patch' Adams was born into a **strict** military-like family. His father **ran** the household like a military institute and they were constantly moving and because of this, he learnt to accept differences in people and to quickly make friends.

Although he was never close to his father, he was very close to his mother. She instilled in him a sense of humor and made him want to learn. As Hunter started school, he became known as the class clown. He goofed off all the time because he got so bored with learning things that were too easy and simplistic for him. Eventually, he became interested in the diverse world of science and math. He won many small **science fairs** and **entered**, and won, the All-Europe science fair. Soon after winning one of his last science fairs, he went to spend a week with his father, who had been constantly drunk or too busy for him and his brother before. During this time, his father told him of the wars he had fought in and of his best friend who had died while saving his life, subjects which he never even talked about before. He and his father became very close during this week. A few days after, his father died suddenly of a heart attack.

Soon after, Adams and his family moved to Northern Virginia to live with his uncle and aunt for a few months before moving to West Virginia a little later. Adams became very close to his uncle and his uncle became a second father to him. He went to school and because he was in a racist town, he stood out as a person who loved everyone no matter what their skin color. He started to date his first girlfriend, Donna.

She broke up with him in his freshman year in college, and then, right around the same time, his uncle committed suicide. He dropped out of college and became **dreadfully** depressed. He was convinced he was still in love with Donna, and he wanted her back. He became obsessed with suicide. He would go and sit on the edge of a cliff almost every day, and he would write to or about her. He was convinced that he would jump as soon as he finished, but luckily he was too **wordy**.

He went to his mother right after a terrible visit with Donna, and he told her that he had been trying to commit suicide and that he needed to be checked into a mental hospital. While in the hospital, Adams made many different friends. The patients in the hospital changed him, especially one of them. He, who was suffering from loneliness, made Adams realize that he was loved and he was not lonely; he had friends. It is said that this patient was the one who gave him the nickname **Patch**, because his friendship had patched up the loneliness in the patient's life. It is in the mental hospital that he realized his passion - **healing** people with laughter.

It was there that he realized that many of the patients around him **suffered from** extreme loneliness. They didn't have people in their lives who loved them as did he. He made friends with the patients, and he soon discovered that the key to human happiness is having loving and caring for people in your life.

Patch is a doctor and a clown. His professors did not like his behavior and depicted it as "**excessive** happiness" and he was almost **expelled** from the university although was the top of his class. "If you want to be a clown, join a circus", one of them said.

Patch's theory on healing is **definitely** different. He believes that laughter is the best cure. He loves to go from hospital to hospital making people laugh and teaching regular doctors how to be funny for their patients. He "thinks every doctor should be a heart specialist -- a **merry** heart, that is."

Patch could be **considered** the most useful clown of the century. He uses his **clown-like attitude** for good. He has helped people feel and/or get better, he has stopped fights in the streets by just walking around acting and looking like a clown, and he has made an **unforgettable impression** on many. He is so **compassionate** and has never once had to give one of his patients a **tranquilizer** or psychiatric medication. **Silliness** is one of his virtues and he thinks that every doctor should possess it.

Hunter "Patch" Adams has been a physician for nearly 30 years, but he has been a clown for almost 40. He lives to make people laugh and feel good. He says that he is looking for a world where love will no longer be **extraordinary**, and he thinks that the **role** of a clown and a physician are the same: "to **elevate** the possible and to **relieve** suffering." Patch has been to many different countries with his clowns, **trying to work his charms** on the many different patients and **underprivileged** people of all shapes and sizes. He says that living in clown clothes is his **gift** to a world that he thinks is depressed, lonely, and **lacking** compassion.

Vocabulary: Fill in the blanks with one of the words from the text



1. For the patient showing extreme pain, a _____ may help.
2. Have you _____ the possibility of living in a different country?
3. Drugs helped to _____ the pain.
4. I am _____ sorry for any damage I may have caused.
5. It took three months for my arm to _____ properly.
6. He is wearing his best suit because he wants to leave a good _____ on Mary's parents.
7. Two girls were _____ from school for taking drugs.
8. We'll have to _____ up the hole in the roof.
9. At least he died suddenly and didn't _____.
10. This opportunity was a _____ from God.
11. A person who feels sympathy for people who are suffering is _____.
12. Parents play an important _____ in their child's learning.
13. The trip had been an _____ experience for both of them.
14. Don's wife left him because of his _____ gambling.

Answer the questions:

1. Why did Patch try to commit suicide?
2. Why was he almost expelled from the university?
3. Which part of the text shows us that Patch has always been a good student?
4. What are the amazing things that Patch can do by simply fooling around?
5. When did he realize that he wanted to be a doctor?
6. Do you believe that Patch is right to think that all doctors should be heart specialists? What does he really think when he says that?
7. A dictionary defines a hero as someone who has the courage. Does Patch have the courage?
8. What kind of clothes do you think he wears and why?

If only & I wish

1. I wish I _____ (think) about that earlier.
2. If only I _____ (have) 1 million. I wouldn't have to work at all.
3. If only I _____ (not forget) to call mum for her birthday.
4. I wish I _____ (be) younger.
5. I wish I _____ (never meet) him in my life.
6. This is horrible. I wish I _____ (not come) to watch this film.
7. It's so boring. I wish I _____ (be) somewhere else.