Windows of the Mind  Frank Brennan

Summary

A Fine Wine

Daniel Appleby, expert supermarket wine-taster, visits Monsieur Colbert, a Bordeaux family vineyard proprietor. Appleby, impressed with the quality of Colbert's wine, offers him a derisory deal involving the supermarket taking control of production. Colbert, desperate for money, reluctantly agrees. On the way home, Appleby is involved in an accident; a blow to the head robs him of his sense of smell, restricting his sense of taste to the basic flavours of salt, sweet and bitter. He dare not admit his handicap to his boss, Justin, and arranges to postpone a televised wine tasting so Colbert himself can attend. Appleby admits his disability to Colbert and enlists his help. Colbert is to taste his wine first, then Appleby will taste and pronounce on the wine at a signal from Colbert. At the tasting, Appleby lavishly praises the wine. The wine is offered to the guests who spit it out in disgust – it is red wine vinegar! Colbert has taken revenge by exposing Appleby and ruining his reputation.

A Nose for a Story

Journalist Desiree Malpen, investigating deceased Indian writer Nyree Singh, is taken to the Singh house, where she is disgusted by the stench of sewage. She observes someone living there; this is Nyree's elder brother Gopal, in mourning for his brilliant sister, once the toast of Indian society. Desiree, intent on finding gossip about Nyree, talks to Raj Patel, director of the film of Nyree's final novel, and learns that Gopal Singh safeguards Nyree's diary, which is full of scandalous secrets. Meanwhile, respectable Professor Whitelaw, commissioned to write about Nyree's novels, has overheard the conversation. The next day, both Malpen and Whitelaw arrive at the Singh house. Gopal shows the journalist and professor a locked box containing Nyree's secrets, which he throws into the cesspit. Whoever retrieves the box will have the key. The next day Whitelaw admits to Gopal that he couldn't do it, but a triumphant, malodorous Malpen arrives with the box. She unlocks it only to discover sports results – the only secrets which Nyree kept from her brother! Malpen is the victim of an elaborate ruse concocted by Gopal Singh and Patel to prove whether a writer's intentions are honourable.

Arlo's War

War veteran Arlo Penton works for Teckno-Toys, designing electronic toys. He owes his job to fellow veteran Bernie Dimaggio, now Vice President. Arlo, mentally scarred by the noise of gunfire, cannot bear noise. He admires his pet snake Susie, as snakes live in a world of total silence. Since his wife's death, Arlo has not taken his medication regularly. President Eva De Cruz plans to sell Arlo's workplace, The Havens, an island of peace and quiet. Arlo, now becoming increasingly disturbed by noise, resigns and plans to silence the world around him by using radio-operated toy aircraft to carry explosives to sources of noise. A radio station mast is his first target. More explosions occur; Dimaggio suspects Arlo may be behind the bombing campaign. On a visit to Dimaggio the Sheriff sees a toy aircraft cruising by the office window, then an explosion. This time there are casualties. Police surround Arlo's house and shoot down the aircraft he is seen launching. In the explosion, Susie escapes and sinks her fangs into Arlo whose world becomes forever silent.

Open Doors

Radio journalist Kathy Page, blinded at birth, always discovers the truth. Listeners love the way in which she exposes corrupt politicians. Now fifty, she doesn't expect to gain her sight. She has turned down offers to work on TV, preferring the medium of radio. In an interview with eye surgeon Dr Percival, she is assured that he could restore her sight. She feels he is genuine and agrees to treatment. The operation is a success and Kathy acclimatises to a world of colour. She is particularly struck by the power of facial expressions. She accepts an offer to present a TV chat show, but there is a problem. She is so disarmed by the sight of the human face that she cannot judge people; viewers feel she is letting her guests off lightly. She takes a year out of broadcasting to complete her autobiography, then returns to front a radio show. This time she is
a success. Her incisive powers of perception have returned as she tears dishonest politicians apart. Now she interviews wearing a blindfold.

**A Gentle Touch**

Lecturer Jamie Russell has begun a new life in Singapore. Anxious to stop smoking, he receives acupuncture. Mr Lo, the practitioner, explains how the needles help direct the body’s life force or chi. The treatment is a success and Jamie enjoys improved health and energy. Curious to learn more, Jamie requests acupuncture lessons, but Mr Lo is shocked when Jamie wants to use it to raise his intelligence and refuses to teach him. The ambitious Jamie teaches himself acupressure and notices how effortless his work becomes, but he places huge demands on his students. Jamie begins outdoor Tai Chi exercises. One day a lorry overturns, trapping the driver. His tutor, Master Tong, lifts the vehicle clear of the driver. Jamie is fascinated. Master Tong explains that there are two sides to the chi – the strong and the gentle – but a balance must be kept. Jamie uses acupressure obsessively to develop the power of his chi, forgetting that wisdom must accompany power. One night, Jamie gets involved in a street brawl. Such is his strength that he puts four men in hospital before being overpowered. He is visited in hospital by Master Tong, who explains that he has much to learn about how to balance his chi.

### Before reading

2. *A Fine Wine* – taste
   *A Nose for a Story* – smell
   *Arlo’s War* – sound
   *Open Doors* – sight
   *A Gentle Touch* – touch
Check your reading

A Fine Wine
1. a Happimart customers
   b Monsieur Colbert
   c Daniel Appleby
   d Happimart supermarkets and Monsieur Colbert
   e Monsieur Colbert
2. 1 c, 2 d, 3 e, 4 a, 5 b
3. 1 c, 2 f, 3 a, 4 e, 5 b, 6 d

A Nose for a Story
1. 1 b, 2 e, 3 f, 4 c, 5 d, 6 a
2. a DM, b DM, c DM, d BOTH e CW
3. b, c, g

Arlo’s War
1. a Susie, Arlo’s pet snake
   b Arlo
   c Arlo’s wife, Maria
   d Bernie Dimaggio and Diego De Cruz
   e Eva De Cruz
2. b, g, e, f, a, d, c
3. soft, shaking, annoying, silent (42); noisy, loud, terrible (43); upsetting (45); painful, awful (49); quiet (50); normal (51); angry, shaking (59)

Open Doors
1. 1 c, 2 f, 3 a, 4 b, 5 d, 6 e
2. Blind radio journalist Kathy Page always discovered the truth if she thought a guest was lying. She turned down an offer to present a TV chat show because she preferred radio. Then she interviewed a scientist/doctor who said he could give Kathy her sight. The operation was a success. At first she could only see light and dark, then colours and shapes. She was surprised at how the human face affected her feelings. Then, she presented a TV show, but it wasn’t a success. She had lost her power of judgement. After writing her autobiography, she returned to radio, but interviewed with a black scarf over her eyes. Blind again, she could trust her judgement.

A Gentle Touch
1. 1 c, 2 a, 3 b
2. e, f, a, c, b, d
3. 1 b, 2 d, 3 a, 4 c