

Reading for NINE with 3, 4, 7, 8, 12

EIGHT [*hard, to THREE*]. What does that have to do with a man's life? [*then, to NINE*]. Why might the old man have lied? You have a right to be heard.

NINE [*after a moment's hesitation*]. It's just that I looked at him for a very long time. The seam of his jacket was split under his arm. Did you notice that? He was a very old man with a torn jacket, and he carried two canes. [*Gets up, moves R and leans against wall*]. I think I know him better than anyone here. This is a quiet, frightened, insignificant person who has been nothing all his life - who has never had recognition - his name in the newspapers. Nobody knows him, nobody quotes him, nobody seeks his advice after seventy-five years. This is a very sad thing. A person like this needs to be recognized - to be questioned, and listened to, and quoted just once. This is very important...

TWELVE. And you're trying to tell us he lied about a thing like this just so he could be important?

NINE. No, he wouldn't really lie. But perhaps make himself believe that he heard those words and recognized the boy's face.

THREE. Well - [*Loud and brassy*] - that's the most fantastic story I've ever heard. How can you make up a thing like that?

NINE. [*doggedly*]. I'm not making it up.

THREE. You must be making it up. People don't lie about things like that.

NINE. He made himself believe he told the truth.

THREE. What do you know about it?

NINE [*low but firm*]. I speak from experience.

SEVEN. What!

NINE. I am the same man / woman.

FOUR. I think we all understand now. Thank you. [*NINE moves slowly back to table and sits.*]

THREE [*as NINE sits*]. If you want to admit you're a liar, it's all right by me.