

Sand Art, On Deadline

Talent Is a Gift-Not to Be Squandered¹

Anonymous

The young man arrived on the Massachusetts beach early carrying a portable radio, a shovel, and an odd assortment of tools. There were a bricklayer's trowel, a palette knife, spatulas, spoons, and a spray bottle.

He walked down near the water-the tide was out-put down the radio and tuned it to soft rock. Then he shoveled wet sand into a pile nearly four feet high and as many feet across. He took up the trowel and used it to slice large hunks off the pile, creating a rectangular shape.



After that, he set to work with palette knife, spatulas, and spoons. He shaped a graceful tower, topped walls with crenelated battlements, fashioned elegant bay windows, and carved out a massive front gate.

The man knew his sand. With skillful strokes, he smoothly finished some surfaces, embroidered elaborate designs on others. As delicate shapes began to dry, he gently moistened them with water from the spray bottle, lest they crumble in the breeze.

All this took hours. People gathered, commenting to each other and asking questions of the sculptor. Lost in concentration, he gave only mechanical replies. At last he stood back, apparently satisfied with a castle worthy of the Austrian countryside or Disneyland.

Then he gathered his tools and radio and moved them up to drier sand. He had known for a while what many in the rapt crowd still overlooked; the tide was coming in. Not only had he practiced his craft with confidence and style, he had done so against a powerful, absolute deadline.

As the spectators looked on, water began to lap at the base of the castle. In minutes it was surrounded, a miniature Mont-Saint-Michel. Then the rising flood began to erode the base, chunks of wall fell, the tower tumbled, finally the gate's arch collapsed. More minutes passed, and small waves erased bay windows and battlements-soon no more than a modest lump was left.



Many in the crowd looked distraught; some voiced dismay. But the sculptor remained serene. He had, after all, had a wonderful day, making beauty out of nothing, and watching it return to nothing as time and tide moved on.

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Sand Art, On Deadline, Inference Questions

Author's Words (AW)		Prior Knowledge (PK)		Inference
There were a bricklayer's trowel, a palette knife, spatulas, spoons, and a spray bottle.	PLUS		EQUALS	
The man knew his sand.				
Lost in concentration, he gave only mechanical replies				
Many in the crowd looked distraught; some voiced dismay.				

1. Based on the information in the story, what inference can you make about the young man? Include information from the story to support your inference.
2. Based on the information in the story, predict what will most likely happen if the young man visits another beach. Provide information from the story to support your prediction.
3. What is the most likely reason that young man built the castle? Provide **two** details from the story in your answer.