

GEMS OF FICTION

**CLASS IX
BOOK- II**



**BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
RAJASTHAN, AJMER**

TEXTBOOK DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

GEMS OF FICTION

Class- IX

BOOK-II

Convener & Chief Editor - Dr. S. K. Agrawal
Professor & Head, Department of English
Maharaja Ganga Singh University, Bikaner

- Editors -**
1. Dr. Seema Sharma
Assistant Professor, Department of English
Maharaja Ganga Singh University, Bikaner
 2. Kalu Ram Prajapati
Principal, G.H.S. School, Jajiwali Bhatiya, Jodhpur
 3. Sanwarlal Kumawat
Senior Teacher,
Government Hr. Sec. School, Ummedpura (Sahada), Bhilwara

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The editors and the Board of Secondary education, Rajasthan, Ajmer express their thankfulness and indebtedness to the authors whose invaluable creations have been included in this book.

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Editors

SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Book – GEMS OF FICTION

CLASS IX

Convener - Dr. S.K. Agrawal
Professor & head, Department of English
Maharaja Ganga Singh University
Bikaner

- Editors -**
- 1. Dr. Sohrab Sharma, Lecturer**
Government College, Kota
 - 2. Jai Prakash Raghav, Principal**
Government Adersh Senior Secondary School,
Kalwara (Sanganer), Jaipur
 - 3. Devilal Patidar, Lecturer**
Government Mahipal Senior Secondary School,
Sagwara, Dungarpur
 - 4. Kewa Ram, Lecturer**
Government Adersh Senior Secondary School,
Bagoba (Bhinmal), Jalore

PREFACE

Gems of Fiction has been created as a textbook for the Paper Compulsory English of Class IX with a view to fostering in the students the shared human values. Good pieces of writing are the best means of transmitting values. Values are as old as issues and hence, as old as man. Instilling these values has wider relevance at a time when our society finds itself at the crossroads.

Language learning can be a pleasurable experience if the learners feel involved with the text, and the text motivates the learners. The short stories included in the text relate to the learner's context and thus ensures his/her involvement. The stories invite the young readers to read them and then to explore their meaning.

Reading also allows us to explore our strengths and discover our potential. When we read, we do not read only for the meaning, we read for pleasure too. The *Gems of Fiction* meant for extensive reading, should be approached in the same way, as one goes to see a movie with a sense of joy and pleasure, and while returning home analyses and appreciates the value/s, he/she imbibed. Since the aim of the book is to promote values through pleasurable reading, comprehension questions related to jargon have been avoided.

We hope the young readers will enjoy reading the stories and be motivated enough to be the ambassadors of the morals enshrined there in.

Suggestions for the improvement in the textbook are welcome.

Editors

English Syllabus

Time : 3.15 Hours

Subject Code : 02

Marks : 100

Areas of Learning	Marks
Reading	10
Writing	20
Grammar	30
Text book : Insight	25
Supp. Book : Gems of Fiction	15

(1) Reading

10 Marks

One unseen passage for comprehension of about 250 words

(Besides comprehension questions, grammatical items should also be tested)

10

(2) Writing

20 Marks

(i) Letter writing

Informal - personal, such as to family and friends.

Formal - letters to the editor/the principal of school.

Email - to the principal of the school or to the

editor of a newspaper or a magazine.

07

(ii) Short paragraph - speech or debate type, based on outline

one out of two (Limit : 60 to 80 words)

07

(iii) Short writing task in the form of dialogue or story

on the basis of some hints (Limit : 50 to 70 words)

06

(3) Grammar

30 Marks

(i) Tenses (present, past and future)

04

(ii) Modals (can, could, may, might, should, must, etc.)

04

(iii) Subject Verb agreement

04

(iv)	Narration	04
(v)	Antonyms/Synonyms	04
(vi)	Parts of speech	08
(vii)	One word substitution	02
(4)	Insight	25 Marks
	◆ Prose	17 Marks
(i)	One passage from the text book for comprehension (limit 200 words) (Besides comprehension questions, grammatical items should also be tested)	10
(ii)	Three short answer type questions (out of five, to be answered in 30 words each)	03
(iii)	One long answer type question (out of two, to be answered in 60 words each)	04
	◆ Poetry	08 Marks
(i)	One out of two reference to the context from the prescribed poems	04
(ii)	Two out of three short answer type questions on interpretation of themes and ideas of the prescribed poems.	04
(5)	Supplementary Reader -Gems of Fiction	15 Marks
(i)	One out of two long answer type questions based on characters, plot or situation in the lessons.	04
(ii)	Two out of four short answer type questions.	06
(iii)	Road Safety Education	05

Prescribed Books :

1. **Insight** – Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan, Ajmer
2. **Gems of Fiction** – Board of Secondary Education, Rajasthan, Ajmer



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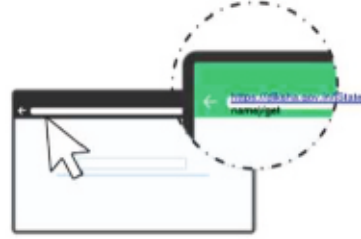


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2 ब्राउजर पर diksha.gov.in/rj/get टाइप करें।



3 सर्च बार में 6 अंकों का DIAL कोड टाइप करें।



4 सभी उपलब्ध पाठ्य सामग्री की सूची देखिए और किसी भी नए पाठ्य सामग्री को क्लिक करें और देखें।

राज्य के अधिकारियों और शिक्षकों के संवर्ग ने तकनीकी नवाचार को एक वास्तविकता बनाने के लिए बहुत प्रयास किए हैं। कुछ मूल्यवान योगदानकर्ताओं के नाम इस QR कोड के साथ प्रदान किए गए हैं। योगदानकर्ताओं की सूची देखने हेतु उपयुक्त निर्देशों का प्रयोग करते हुए इस QR कोड स्कैन करें।



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THREE QUESTIONS



It once occurred to a certain king, that if he always knew the right time to begin everything; if he knew who were the right people to listen to and whom to avoid; and, above all, if he always knew what was the most important thing to do, he would never fail in anything he might undertake.

And this thought having occurred to him, he had it proclaimed throughout his kingdom that he would give a great reward to anyone who would teach him what was the right time for every action, who were the most necessary people and how he might know what was the most important thing to do.

Learned men came to the King, but they all answered his questions differently.

In reply to the first question, some said that to know the right time for every action one must draw up in advance, a table of days, months, and years, and must live strictly according to it. Only thus, said they, could everything be done at its proper time. Others declared that it was impossible to decide beforehand the right time for every action; but that, not letting oneself be absorbed in idle pastimes, one should always attend to all that was going on and then do what was most needful. Others, again, said that however attentive the King might be to what was going on, it was impossible for one man to decide correctly the right time for every action, but that he should have a Council of wise men who would help him to fix the proper time for everything.

But then again others said there were some things which could not wait to be laid before a Council, but about which one had at once to decide whether to undertake them or not. But in order to decide that, one must know beforehand what was going to happen. It is only magicians who know that; and, therefore, in order to know the right time for every action, one must consult magicians.

Equally various were the answers to the second question. Some said, the people the King most needed were his councillors; others, the priests; others, the doctors; while some said the warriors were the most necessary.

To the third question, as to what was the most important occupation: some replied that the most important thing in the world was science. Others said, it was skill in warfare; and others, again, that it was religious worshipping.

All the answers being different, the King agreed with none of them, and gave the reward to none. But still wishing to find the right answers to his questions, he decided to consult a hermit widely renowned for his wisdom.

The hermit lived in a wood which he never quitted, and he received none but common folk. So the King put on simple clothes, and before reaching the hermit's cell dismounted from his horse, and, leaving his bodyguard behind, went on alone.

When the King approached, the hermit was digging the ground in front of his hut. Seeing the King, he greeted him and went on digging. The hermit was frail and weak, and each time he stuck his spade into the ground and turned a little earth, he breathed heavily.

The King went up to him and said: I have come to you, wise hermit, to ask you to answer three questions: How can I learn to do the right thing at the right time? Who are the people most needed, and to whom should I, therefore, pay more attention than to the rest? And, what affairs are the most important, and need my first attention?'

The hermit listened to the King, but answered nothing. He just spat on his hand and recommenced digging.

'You are tired,' said the King, 'let me take the spade and work awhile for you.'

'Thanks!' said the hermit, and, giving the spade to the King, he sat down on the ground.

When he had dug two beds, the King stopped and repeated his questions. The hermit again gave no answer, but rose, stretched out his hand for the spade, and said:

'Now rest awhile—and let me work a bit?'

But the King did not give him the spade, and continued to dig. One hour passed, and another. The sun began to sink behind the trees, and the King at last stuck the spade into the ground, and said:

'I came to you, wise man, for an answer to my questions. If you can give me none, tell me so and I will return home.'

'Here comes someone running?' said the hermit, 'let us see who it is?'

The King turned round, and saw a bearded man come running out of the wood. The man held his hands pressed against his stomach, and blood was flowing from under them. When he reached the King, he fell fainting on the ground moaning feebly. The King and the hermit unfastened the man's clothing. There was a large wound in his stomach. The King washed it as best he could, and bandaged it with his handkerchief and with a towel the hermit had. But the blood would not stop flowing, and the King again and again removed the bandage soaked with warm blood, and washed and rebandaged the wound. When at last the blood ceased flowing, the man revived and asked for something to drink. The King brought fresh water and gave it to him. Meanwhile the Sun had set, and it had become cool. So the King, with the hermit's help, carried the wounded man into the hut and laid him on the bed. Lying on the bed the man closed his eyes and was quiet;

but the King was so tired with his walk and with the work he had done, that he crouched down on the threshold, and also fell asleep—so soundly that he slept all through the short summer night. When he awoke in the morning, it was long before he could remember where he was or who was the strange bearded man lying on the bed and gazing intently at him with shining eyes.

‘Forgive me!’ said the bearded man in a weak voice, when he saw that the King was awake and was looking at him.

‘I do not know you, and have nothing to forgive you for?’ said the King.

‘You do not know me, but I know you, I am that enemy of yours who swore to revenge myself on you, because you executed my brother and seized his property. I knew you had gone alone to see the hermit, and I resolved to kill you on your way back. But the day passed and you did not return. So I came out of my ambush to find you, and I came upon your bodyguard and they recognized me and wounded me. I escaped from them, but should have bled to death, had you not dressed my wounds. I wished to kill you, and you have saved my life. Now, if I live, and if you wish it, I will serve you as your most faithful slave and will bid my sons do the same. Forgive me!’

The King was very glad to have made peace with his enemy so easily, and to have gained him for a friend, and he not only forgave him, but said he would send his servants and his own physician to attend to him, and promised to restore his property.

Having taken leave of the wounded man, the King went out into the porch and looked around for the hermit. Before going away he wished once more to beg an answer to the questions he had put. The hermit was outside, on his knees, sowing seeds in the beds that had been dug the day before.

The King approached him, and said;

‘For the last time, I pray you to answer my questions, wise man.’

‘You have already been answered!’ said the hermit still crouching on his thin legs, and looking up at the King, who stood before him.

‘How answered? What do you mean?’ asked the King.

‘Do you not see?’ replied the hermit, ‘If you had not pitied my weakness yesterday and had not dug these beds for me, but had gone your way, that man would have attacked you and you would have repented for not having stayed with me. So the most important time was when you were digging the beds; and I was the most important man; and to do me good was your most important business. Afterwards, when that man ran to us, the most important time was when you were attending to him, for if you had not bound up his wounds he would have died without having made peace with you. So he was the most important man, and what you did for him was your most important business. Remember then: there is only one time that is important—Now! It is the most important time because it is the only time when we have any power. The most necessary man is he with whom you are, for no man knows whether he would ever have dealings with anyone else,

and the most important affair is, to do him good, because for that purpose alone was man sent into this life!’

- Leo Tolstoy

About the Story

Written in 1903, ‘Three Questions’ is one of the stories Tolstoy contributed in aid of the Jews left destitute after the massacres and outrages in Krishiny and elsewhere in Russia.

Through a crisp narrative, the story reveals the importance of the present in life. It is ‘now’ that matters in our dealings, for the past is irretrievably gone and the future is still hidden. The most important time is the present; the most important person is the one we are dealing with at that moment; and the most important thing is to do good to our fellow beings.

This moral is conveyed through the story of a king who wants a kind of formula for success in life; the most appropriate time to do a thing, the right person to deal with and the most important action. Various answers come his way but he is not satisfied. He goes to a hermit as a seeker to learn the answers. The hermit does not say anything directly, but elaborates on the incidents of the day to provide convincing answers to the questions.

The story is written by Leo Tolstoy, a famous Russian novelist and short story writer. His philosophy of trust and non-violence influenced Mahatma Gandhi.

Glossary

Council: a formally constituted advisory body

hermit: a person living alone as a religious disciple

ambush: (here) to wait in a concealed position with the intention of launching a surprise attack

porch: a covered shelter projecting in front of the entrance of a house

beds: an area of ground where flowers and plants are grown

occurred: came to mind

undertake: to take in hand to do

proclaimed: announced officially

warrior: a soldier

quit: leave

moaning: murmuring due to pain, mournful sound

feebly: weakly

resolved: determined

COMPREHENSION

(A) Tick the correct alternative:

1. The story ‘Three Questions’ reveals the importance of the -

- (a) future in life (b) past in life (c) present in life (d) anytime in life
- The hermit lived in a _____ which he never quitted.
(a) Wood (b) Temple (c) Palace (d) Farm House
 - When the King approached, the hermit-
(a) was digging the ground (b) praying to God
(c) was delivering sermons to his followers (d) was sitting idle
 - Present is the only time when we have-
(a) no power (b) any power (c) some power (d) none

(B) Answer the following questions in 10-15 words each:

- What are the three questions of the king?
- What does he do to get an appropriate answer?
- Is the king satisfied with the answers of the various learned men? If not, why?
- Where does the king go to seek answers to his questions and why?
- Describe the manner in which the king approaches the hermit.
- Did the hermit pay immediate attention to the king's questions? If not, how did he behave?

(C) Answer the following questions in 20-30 words each:

- List in brief the various answers given by the learned men to the king's three questions.
- Describe how the king takes care of the wounded man.
- Describe how the king and his enemy passed that particular day. What happened at the end of the day?
- How did the hermit answer the king's questions through the incidents of the previous day?
- Write a brief note on the moral of the story.

(D) Answer the following questions in 60-80 words each:

- Draw a character sketch of the hermit.
- Why is the "Present" the most important time in life? Elaborate.

(E) Say whether the following statements are True or False. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False in the bracket:

- The king goes to a hermit to seek answers to his questions. []
- The king put on simple clothes because the hermit received none but common folk. []
- At the end of the story the King gets a kind of formula for success in life. []
- The hermit answers the King's questions by elaborating on the incidents of the day. []
- Leo Tolstoy was a Russian novelist and short story writer. []

THE EYES ARE NOT HERE



I had the compartment to myself up to Rohana, and then a girl got in. The couple who saw her off were probably her parents; they seemed very anxious about her comfort, and the woman gave the girl detailed instructions as to where to keep her things, when not to lean out of the windows, and how to avoid speaking to strangers. They said their good-byes; the train pulled out of the station.

As I was totally blind at the time, my eyes sensitive only to light and darkness, I was unable to tell what the girl looked like; but I knew she wore slippers from the way they slapped against her heels.

It would take me some time to discover something about her looks, and perhaps I never would. But I liked the sound of her voice, and even the sound of her slippers.

‘Are you going all the way to Dehra?’ I asked.

I must have been sitting in a dark corner, because my voice startled her. She gave a little exclamation and said, ‘I didn’t know anyone else was here.’

Well, it often happens that people with good eyesight fail to see what is right in front of them. They have too much to take in, I suppose. Whereas people who cannot see (or see very little) have to take in only the essentials, whatever registers most tellingly on their remaining senses.

‘I didn’t see you either,’ I said. ‘But I heard you come in.’

I wondered if I would be able to prevent her from discovering that I was blind, I thought. Provided I keep to my seat, it shouldn’t be too difficult.

The girl said, ‘I’m getting down at Saharanpur. My aunt is meeting me there.’

‘Then I had better not be too familiar,’ I said. ‘Aunts are usually formidable creatures.’

‘Where are you going?’ she asked.

‘To Dehra, and then to Mussoorie.’

‘Oh, how lucky you are, I wish I were going to Mussoorie. I love the hills. Especially in October.’

‘Yes, this is the best time,’ I said, calling on my memories. ‘The hills are covered with wild dahlias, the sun is delicious, and at night you can sit in front of a log-fire and enjoy yourself. Most of the tourists have gone, and the roads are quiet and almost deserted. Yes, October is the best time.’

She was silent, and I wondered if my words had touched her, or whether she thought me a romantic fool. Then I made a mistake.

‘What is it like?’ I asked.

She seemed to find nothing strange in the question. Had she noticed already that I could not see? But her next question removed my doubts.

‘Why don’t you look out of the window?’ she asked.

I moved easily along the berth and felt for the window-ledge. The window was open, and I faced it, making a pretence, of studying the landscape. I heard the panting of the engine, the rumble of the wheels, and in my mind’s eye, I could see the telegraph-posts flashing by.

‘Have you noticed,’ I ventured, ‘that trees seem to be moving while we seem to be standing still?’

‘That always happens,’ she said. ‘Do you see any animals? Hardly any animals left in the forests near Dehra.’

I turned from the window and faced the girl, and for a while we sat in silence.

‘You have an interesting face,’ I remarked. I was becoming quite daring, but it was a safe remark. Few girls can resist flattery.

She laughed pleasantly, a clear, ringing laugh.

‘It’s nice to be told I have an interesting face. I’m tired of people telling me I have a pretty face.’

Oh, so you do have a pretty face, thought I, and aloud said: ‘Well, an interesting face can also be pretty.’

‘You are a very gallant young man,’ she said. ‘But why are you so serious?’

I thought then, that I would try to laugh for her; but the thought of laughter only made me feel troubled and lonely.

‘We’ll soon be at your station,’ I said.

‘Thank goodness it’s a short journey. I can’t bear to sit in a train for more than two or three hours.’

Yet I was prepared to sit there for almost any length of time, just to listen to her talking. Her voice had the sparkle of a mountain stream. As soon as she left the train, she would forget our brief encounter; but it would stay with me for the rest of the journey, and for some time after.

The engine’s whistle shrieked, the carriage wheels changed their sound and rhythm.

The girl got up and began to collect her things. I wondered if she wore her hair in a bun, or if it was plaited, or if it hung loose over her shoulders, or if it was cut very short.

The train drew slowly into the station. Outside, there was the shouting of porters and vendors and a high-pitched female voice near the carriage door which must have belonged to the girl's aunt.

'Good-bye,' said the girl.

She was standing very close to me, so close that the perfume from her hair was tantalising. I wanted to raise my hand and touch her hair; but she moved away, and only the perfume still lingered where she had stood.

You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will, but the scent of the roses will linger there still...

There was some confusion in the doorway. A man, getting into the compartment, stammered an apology. Then the door banged shut, and the world was shut out again. I returned to my berth. The guard blew his whistle and we moved off. Once again, I had a game to play and a new fellow-traveller.

The train gathered speed, the wheels took up their song, the carriage groaned and shook. I found the window and sat in front of it, staring into the daylight that was darkness for me.

So many things were happening outside the window. It could be a fascinating game, guessing what went on out there.

The man, who had entered the compartment, broke into my reverie.

'You must be disappointed,' he said, 'I'm sorry I'm not as attractive a travelling companion as the one who just left'

'She was an interesting girl,' I said. 'Can you tell me—did she keep her hair long or short?'

'I don't remember,' he said, sounding puzzled. 'It was her eyes I noticed, not her hair. She had beautiful eyes—but they were of no use to her, she was completely blind. Didn't you notice?'

- Ruskin Bond

About the Story

'The Eyes are Not Here' (also known as 'The Girl on the Train' and 'The Eyes Have It') is a deeply touching story about two co-passengers in a train who are both blind and do not realise that the other is also blind. The irony lies the fact that the narrator of the story learns that his co-passenger was blind only after she had got off the train. There is pathos and irony in the situation and Bond offers us the irony in the ending, adding to the effect of the whole story on the reader. It was only after she left and another passenger came into the compartment that the narrator realises that the girl was blind.

The author Ruskin born in Kasauli (Himachal Pradesh) and grew up in Jamnagar (Gujarat), Dehradun and Shimla, is a short story writer and novelist, and has also written more than thirty books for children.

Glossary

anxious: worried, concerned

instructions: directions, information on what to do, advice
 strangers: unknown or unfamiliar persons
 sensitive: responsive
 exclamation: utterance in amazement
 tellingly: Powerfully, forcefully, effectively, significantly.
 to see off : to go to an airport, station, etc, with someone who is beginning a journey and to bid goodbye
 startle : to cause someone to be suddenly surprised, sometimes making them jump
 register on: to have an effect (on a person), to be noticed or remembered
 formidable: causing anxiety/fearful respect
 dahlia: a garden flower with a lot of brightly coloured petals
 a romantic fool: highly imaginative person
 pretence: an action or way of behaving that is intended to make people believe something that is not true
 panting: a condition of being out of breath, though here, the sound made by the train's engine is compared to the sound made by a person if he/she were out of breath
 venture: to venture a question or statement is to say it in an uncertain or hesitant manner .
 gallant: a man politely attentive to women
 a brief: a short unexpected meeting
 tantalising: causing temptation or to appear promising
 linger: to remain, stay on
 stammer: to speak with difficulty, hesitating and repeating words or sounds
 reverie: a state of imagining or thinking about pleasant things, as in a dream
 apology: a word or statement saying sorry for something that has been done wrong

COMPREHENSION

(A) Tick the correct alternative:

- Where was the narrator going to?
 (a) Saharanpur (b) Delhi (c) Dehra (d) Rohana
- Who came to see the girl off at the station of Rohana?
 (a) Aunt (b) Uncle (c) Parents (d) Father
- “She had beautiful eyes – but they were no use to her.” Who spoke these words:
 (a) narrator (b) aunt (c) a man (d) uncle

(B) Answer the following questions in 10-15 words each:

- Why were the girl's parents very much anxious about her comfort?
- What was the narrator's very first clue about his fellow traveller in the train?

3. Why was the narrator unable to tell anything about the look of the girl?
4. What was the girl tired of?
5. "Oh, now lucky you are." Who said this and about whom?

(C) Answer the following questions in 20-30 words each:

1. What did the girl say about Mussoorie?
2. How did the narrator compare the girl's voice?
3. What did the narrator want to play once again?
4. What did the new passenger say about the girl?

(D) Answer the following questions in 60-80 words each:

1. How did the narrator try to impress the girl?
2. Comment on the appropriateness of the title.

(E) Say whether the following statements are True or False. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False in the bracket:

1. According to the narrator of the story October is the right time to visit Mussoorie. []
2. The narrator in the story was aware that the girl whom he was talking to was blind. []
3. The narrator was ready to play the game with his next fellow traveller. []
4. Ruskin Bond is primarily an Essayist. []

THE KING AND THE DRUM



Once upon a time there lived a king in central India. He was handsome but very vain. He looked at himself constantly, in mirrors, in pools of water, even in other people's eyes when they spoke to him. "I am the handsomest King on Earth." he said to his courtiers.

He paid less attention to ruling his kingdom than he did to having his hair styled and his body massaged. As a result, his people grew poorer and unhappier. But the king did not care. "Why!" he boasted one day in court, "I am probably more handsome than all the gods."

Unfortunately for the king, a particularly bad-tempered god happened to be flying by and was incensed at what he heard.

"Something will have to be done about this king."

He searched in his mind for an appropriate punishment. Then his eyes fell upon a bull. "Horns!" The god clapped his hand with malicious glee. "I'll see how his handsomeness likes himself with horns."

When the king awoke the next morning, he followed his normal routine. First, he drew his mirror out from under his pillow and gazed into it.

Suddenly the guards outside the king's chamber heard a loud shriek. They came rushing in to find the king sitting upright in bed with a large pillow on his head.

"Out... out..." he waved a trembling finger at them. As they backed away, he shouted after them, "Send for the royal barber immediately."

The royal barber was cheeky talkative little man. He came in briskly.

"You're up early today, Your Majesty, but why the pi..."

The king broke in, "Stop your patter and come close to my body."

As the surprised barber drew close, the king said in his most commanding voice, "Barber, I'm about to show you something. But if you talk about it to a single living soul, I will have you flogged and hanged." The king slowly removed the pillow from his head.

"Oh!" The barber clapped his hands to his mouth in horror.

"Well, don't just stand there", said the king impatiently. "Do something to cover them up."

The barber tugged the king's hair this way and that and managed to cover the horns partially. The king put his nightcap on to hide the rest. "Now go and tell the court I am unwell. I will not see anyone."

He sat up and glared at the barber, "And remember my warning."

The barber fled. As soon as the door of the bedchamber closed behind him, he started laughing. The people of the palace stopped and asked him the reason for his mirth. But the barber just shook his head helplessly and ran laughing through the halls.

"I will die if I don't tell someone," he groaned. "My stomach is swelling with the secret."

He saw a tamarind tree standing in the middle of the royal courtyard. He went up to it and whispered the secret to its trunk.

That night there was a fierce storm and the Tamarind tree was blown down. The king was informed through the door, for he would not see anyone, and he commanded the tree to be given to the royal musician. "Let him make a drum from the trunk of the tamarind and play it outside my door."

Soon the drum made of tamarind wood was ready. The courtiers assembled outside the king's door and the musician began to play. But instead of the thum-thum-thum that everyone expected, the Tamarind drum intoned, "The Raja has horns on his head. The Raja has horns on his head."

The court burst out laughing and the king cried with rage. "I won't stay in the palace a moment longer", he shouted, "I'll go to the forest and live by myself."

He tore the nightcap off his head and ran out of the palace, seizing the Tamarind drum on his way out. The king lived for several years in the forest. He learnt to care for creatures smaller than himself. He grew strong and wise and selfless. His only companion was the Tamarind drum and the drum, when he beat it, gave him all the advice and experience of the old tree. The king learnt to play the drum so beautifully that even the spirits of the trees were charmed and they went to meet the god who had given him the horns.

"Forgive him", they pleaded. "He has changed. Remove his horns and give him back his kingdom."

The god waved his hand and the horns disappeared.

During the day, the king went down to forest pool to drink water. While cupping his hands he saw his reflection, and his lean, sun-tanned face looked back at him, without any horns! And, as he sat up in surprise, several horse-riders burst into the clearing and he saw his courtiers. They knelt before him. "Your Majesty, forgive us and come back. The kingdom needs you."

The king went back to his kingdom. He kept his Tamarind drum beside him always and he ruled wisely. And, yes, the barber kept his head, but lost his job!

- **Maneka Gandhi**

About the Story

The story describes how a Tamarind tree helps a proud king overcome his vanity and become a wise ruler. The underlying message of the story is that some miracle happens on the earth in some or the other form to control the vanity or pride of a person when the people on the earth find themselves helpless in controlling the same.

Mrs. Maneka Gandhi is a political activist and social worker. She is also engaged in organising several activities for environmental awareness.

Glossary

- vain: conceited, having too high an opinion of one's looks, abilities, etc.
- clapped: here it means 'brought the hands together'
- malicious: feeling/showing malice or ill will
- glee: feeling of joy caused by success or triumph
- shriek: scream shrilly
- cheeky: saucy, impudent
- briskly: quickly
- patter: a kind of talk used by a particular class of people
- tugged: pulled hard
- glared: stared angrily or fiercely
- intoned: spoke with a particular tone
- rage: anger, violence
- cupping: putting into the shape of a cup
- sun-tanned: make or become brown with sunburn.

COMPREHENSION

A. Tick the correct alternative:

1. The king becomes -
 - a) more vain at the end of the story.
 - b) more wise at the end of the story.
 - c) more aggressive at the end of the story.
 - d) more commanding at the end of the story. []
2. The king was proud of his.....
 - a) wealth b) beautiful appearance
 - c) ruling etiquette d) subjects []
3. Who taught a lesson to the king?
 - a) a bad tempered god b) the people of the kingdom
 - c) the barber d) the invaders []
4. There is an implied message in the story
 - a) that miracle happens on the earth in some form or the other when there is nobody to control the vanity or pride of a person.

- b) that kings are always cruel and are punished by gods.
- c) that kings always pay attention to their subjects.
- d) there is no message in the story.

[]

B. Answer the following questions in 10-15 words each:

1. What did the king say to his courtiers?
2. How did the king learn a lesson?
3. 'Suddenly the guards outside the king's chamber heard a loud shriek" who gave this loud shriek and why?
4. Who called the barber and why?
5. What was the warning given by the king to the barber?
6. Why did the barber tell the story to a Tamarind tree?
7. Who was given the Tamarind tree after it had blown out? How did he utilise the trunk of the Tamarind tree?
8. Why did the barber lose his job?
9. Who decided to punish the king? and why?

C. Answer the following questions in 20-30 words each:

1. What miracle did the malicious god perform?
2. What did the king do to remove the horns from his head?
3. What did the Tamarind drum say? How did the courtiers react to the saying of the Tamarind drum?
4. How was the king freed from the curse?
5. How was the Tamarind drum used by the king?

D. Answer the following questions in about 60-80 words each:

1. What happened to the king and how did he become a wise king?
2. Summarise the main idea of the story. Also state the underlying message of the story.

E. Say whether the following sentences are True or False:

1. The barber whispered the secret to the trunk of a Tamarind tree. []
2. The Tamarind drum intoned thum-thum-thum []
3. The people went to the God and prayed to forgive the king. []
4. The barber lost his job. []
5. The king also learnt to care for creatures smaller than himself. []

THE LAST LEAF



In a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called 'places'.

These 'places' make strange angles and curves. One street crosses itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth-century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Sixth Avenue, and became a colony.

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio. 'Johnsy' was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine, the other from California. They had met at the table d'hote of an Eighth Street 'Delmonico's', and found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom, the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy finger. Over on the East Side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and moss-grown 'places'.

Mr Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric old gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by Californian zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short-breathed old duffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay, scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house.

One morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, grey eyebrow.

'She has one chance in—let us say, ten,' he said, as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. 'And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of lining-up on the side of the undertaker makes the entire

pharmacopoeia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she's not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?'

'She—she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples some day,' said Sue.

'Paint?—bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking about twice—a man, for instance?'

A man?' said Sue, with a jews'-harp twang in her voice. 'Is a man worth—but, no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind.'

'Well, it is the weakness, then,' said the doctor. 'I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract 50 per cent from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about: the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in five chance for her, instead of one in ten.'

After the doctor had gone, Sue went into the workroom and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into Johnsy's room with her drawing-board, whistling ragtime.

Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to 'illustrate' a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horseshow riding trousers and a monocle on the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside.

Johnsy's eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting—counting backward.

'Twelve,' she said, and a little later, 'eleven'; and then 'ten, and 'nine'; and then eight' and 'seven', almost together.

Sue looked solicitously out the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away. An old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half-way up the brick wall. The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

'What is it, dear?' asked Sue.

'Six,' said Johnsy, in almost a whisper. 'They're falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my head ache to count them. But now it's easy. There goes another one. There are only five left now.'

'Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie.'

'Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the last one falls I must go too. I've known that for three days. Didn't the doctor tell you?'

'Oh, I never heard of such nonsense,' complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. 'What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that

vine so, you naughty girl. Don't be a goosey. Why, the doctor told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were—let's see exactly what he said—he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that's almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street-cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork chops for her greedy self.'

'You needn't get any more wine,' said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window.

'There goes another. No, I don't want any broth. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I'll go too.'

'Johnsy, dear,' said Sue, bending over her, 'will you promise me to keep your eyes closed, and not look out of the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by tomorrow. I need the light or I would draw the shade down.'

'Couldn't you draw in the other room?' asked Johnsy coldly. 'I'd rather be here by you,' said Sue. 'Besides, I don't want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves.'

'Tell me as soon as you have finished,' said Johnsy, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as a fallen statue, 'because I want to see the last one fall. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of thinking. I want to turn loose my hold on everything, and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves.'

'Try to sleep,' said Sue. 'I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I'll not be gone a minute. Don't try to move till I come back.'

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was past sixty and had a Michael Angelos Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along the body of an imp. Behrman was a failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress's robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artists in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in anyone, and who regarded himself as especial mastiff- in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly-lighted den below. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy's fancy, and how she feared she would; indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

‘Vass! he cried. ‘Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I haf not heard of such a thing. No, I vill not bese as a model for your fool hermit-dunderhead. Why do you allow dot silly business to come in der prain of her? Ach, dot poor little Miss Yohnsy.’

‘She is very ill and weak,’ said Sue’, ‘and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fancies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn’t. But I think you are a horrid old—old flibberti-gibbet.’

‘You are just like a woman!’ yelled Behrman. ‘Who said I vill not bese? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I have peen trying to say dot I am ready to bese. Gott! dis is not any blace in which one so goot as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Some day I vill baint a masterpiece, and ve shall all go away. Gott! yes.’

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the window-sill and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit-miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour’s sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade.

Pull it up! I want to see,’ she ordered, in a whisper. Wearily Sue obeyed.

But, lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, but with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from a branch some twenty feet above the ground.

‘It is the last one,’ said Johnsy. ‘I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind. It will fall today, and I shall die at the same time.’

‘Dear, dear!’ said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow; ‘think of me, if you won’t think of yourself. What would I do?’

But Johnsy did not answer. The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves.

When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the shade be raised.

The ivy leaf was still there.

Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.

‘I’ve been a bad girl, Sudie,’ said Johnsy. ‘Something has made that last leaf stay there to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and—no; bring me a hand-mirror first; and then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook.’

An hour later she said—

‘Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Naples.’

The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go into the hallway as he left.

‘Even chances,’ said the doctor, taking Sue’s thin, shaking hand in his. ‘With good nursing you’ll win. And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Behrman, his name is—some kind of an artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is an old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital today to be made more comfortable.’

The next day the doctor said to Sue; ‘She’s out of danger. You’ve won. Nutrition and care now—that’s’ all’

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woollen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all

‘I have something to tell you, white mouse,’ she said ‘Mr Behrman died of pneumonia today in hospital. He was ill only two days. The janitor found him on the morning of the first day; in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn’t imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colours mixed on it, and—look out the window, dear, at the last ivy leaf on the wall. Didn’t you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it’s Behrman’s masterpiece—he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell’

- O. Henry

About the Story

The story ‘The Last Leaf’ is set in Greenwich Village in New York where artists live and is about two young girls, one of whom is suffering from pneumonia and feels she will die when the last leaf falls from the vine outside her window. She is saved by an old artist who sacrifices his life and in doing so creates his masterpiece.

Written by William Sydney Porter, better known as O. Henry, a central figure in American literature, the story is characteristic of the author’s literary style.

Glossary

- chicory : small pale green leaves that are bitter in taste and are eaten raw or cooked as a vegetable
- squatty: a building in which people are living without permission
- quaint : attractive because unusual or old-fashioned
- gable : three-cornered part of an outside wall between sloping roofs
- pewter : grey alloy of lead and tin
- chafing dish : a vessel with an outer pan of hot water for keeping warm, things placed on it
- table d'hote : a restaurant meal offered at a fixed price
- smiting : striking with a firm blow
- chivalric : courteous behaviour, especially that of a man towards women
- zephyrs : soft, gentle breeze; the west wind
- pharmacopoeia : a book containing a list of medicinal drugs with their effects and directions for use
- jew's harp: a small musical instrument held between the teeth and struck with a finger
- monocle: a single eye glass worn in the olden days and kept in position by the muscles around the eye
- solicitously: anxiously, with concern
- flibberti-gibbet: a frivolous person

COMPREHENSION

(A) Tick the correct alternative:

1. Sue and Johnsy were
(a) singers (b) dancers
(c) artists (d) painters
2. Johnsy has made up her mind that
(a) she is going to die soon (b) she is going to get well
(c) she is going to make a good painting (d) medicines only can cure her
3. The leaves were falling faster. As the last leaf fell, Johnsy would.....
(a) become more serious (b) recover
(c) be confident to get better (d) be no more

(B) Answer the following questions in about 10-15 words each:

1. Who are the two friends mentioned in the story? Where did they live?
2. Why did Sue call a doctor?
3. What did Sue see out of the window?
4. Who was Behrman?
5. What was Behrman suffering from?
6. What did Sue and Johnsy find lying near Behrman's bed?

(C) Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words each:

1. What did the doctor tell Sue about Johnsy's sickness?
2. Why had Johnsy been looking at the creeper for last three days?
3. Why could Sue not draw the curtain?
4. What was Behrman longing for? Did it come true?

(D) Answer the following in about 60-80 words each:

1. What is the significance of the title 'The Last Leaf'? What does the last leaf symbolise?
2. Draw character sketches of (60 words each):
(i) Johnsy (ii) Old Behrman

(E) Say whether the following statements are True or False. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False in the bracket:

1. William Sydney Porter, the author of the story 'The Last Leaf' is better known as O. Henry. []
2. The character Old Behrman in the story 'The Last Leaf' was a painter. []
3. Johnsy thinks that with the fall of the last leaf she will also die. []
4. Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia in hospital []
5. Behrman's masterpiece that he had painted before he died was the last leaf. []

THE LOST CHILD



It was the festival of Spring. From the wintry shades of narrow lanes and alleys emerged a gaily clad humanity, thick as a crowd of bright-coloured rabbits issuing from a warren, and entering the flooded sea of sparkling silver sunshine outside the city gates, sped towards the fair. Some walked, some rode on horses, others sat, being carried in bamboo and bullock-carts. One little boy ran between his parent's legs, brimming over with life and laughter, as the joyous, smiling morning, with its open greetings and unashamed invitations to come away into the fields, full of flowers and songs.

'Come, child, come,' called his parents, as he lagged behind, arrested by the toys in the shops that lined the way.

He hurried towards his parents, his feet obedient to their call, his eyes still lingering on the receding toys. As he came to where they had stopped to wait for him, he could not suppress the desire of his heart, even though he well knew the old, cold stare of refusal in their eyes.

'I want that toy,' he pleaded.

His father looked at him red-eyed in his familiar tyrant's way. His mother, melted by the free spirit of the day, was tender, and giving him her finger to catch, said:

'Look, child, what is before you.'

The faint disgust of the child's unfulfilled desire had hardly been quelled in the heavy, pouting sob of a breath, 'M—o—th—e—r', when the pleasure of what was before him filled his eager eyes. They had left the dusty road on which they had walked so far to wend its weary way circuitously to the north, and had entered a footpath in a field.

It was a flowering mustard-field, pale, like melting gold, as it swept across miles and miles of even land, a river of yellow light, ebbing and falling with each fresh eddy of wild wind, and straying at places into broad, rich tributary streams, yet running in a constant sunny sweep towards the distant mirage of an ocean of silver light. Where it ended, on a side stood a dense group of low, mud-walled

houses put into relief both by the lower forms of a denser crowd of yellow-robed men and women and by high-pitched sequence of whistling, creaking, squeaking, roaring, humming noises that rose from it, across the groves, to the blue-throated sky like the weird, strange sound of Siva's mad laughter.

The child looked up to his father and mother, saturated with the shrill joy and wonder of this vast glory, and feeling that they, too, wore the evidence of this pure delight in their faces, left the footpath and plunged headlong into the field, prancing like a young colt, his small feet chiming with the fitful gusts of wind that came winnowing from the fragrance of more distant fields.

A group of dragon-flies were bustling about on their gauzy, purple wings, intercepting the flight of a lone black bee or butterfly in search of sweet perfume from the hearts of flowers. The child followed them in the air, with his gaze, till one of them would fold its wings and sit down, and he would try to catch it. But it would go, fluttering, flapping, hovering in the air, when he had almost caught it in his hands. One bold black bee, having evaded capture, sought to tempt him by whining round his ear, and nearly settled on his lips, when his mother made a cautionary call:

'Come, child, come; come on the footpath.'

He went towards his parents gaily, and walked abreast of them for a while, being, however, soon left behind, attracted by the little insects and worms along the footpath that were coming out teeming from their hiding-places to enjoy the sunshine.

'Come, child, come,' his parents called from the shade of a grove where they had seated themselves on the edge of a well. He ran towards them.

An old banyan here outstretched its powerful arms over the blossoming jack and jaman and neem and champa and serisha, and cast its shadows across beds of golden cassis and crimson gulmohur, as an old grand-mother spreads her skirts over her young ones. The blushing blossoms freely offered their adoration to the sun, however, in spite of their protecting chaperon, by half uncovering themselves; and the sweet perfume of their pollen mingled with the soft, cool breeze that came and went in little puffs, only to be wafted aloft by a stronger gush.

A shower of young flowers fell upon the child as he entered the grove, and, forgetting his parents, he began to gather the raining petals in his hands, but lo! he heard the cooing of the doves and ran towards his parents, shouting: 'The dove! The dove!' The raining petals dropped from his forgotten hand. A curious look was in his parents' faces, till a koel struck out a note of love and released their pent-up souls.

'Come, child, come,' they called to the child, who had now gone running in a wild caper round the banyan tree and, gathering him, they took the narrow, winding footpath which led to the fair from the mustard-fields.

As they neared the village, the child could see many other footpaths full of throngs, converging to the whirl-pool of the fair, and felt at once repelled and fascinated by the confusion of the world he was entering.

A sweetmeat-seller hawked, 'Gulab-jaman, rusgula, burfi, jalebi,' at the corner of the entrance, and a crowd pressed round his counter at the foot of an architecture of many-coloured sweets, decorated with leaves of silver and gold. The child stared open-eyed, and his mouth watered for the burfi that was his favourite sweet. 'I want that burfi,' he slowly mur-mured. But he half knew as he made the request that it would not be heeded, because his parents would say he was greedy. So, without waiting for an answer, he moved on.

A flower-seller hawked, 'A garland of gulmohur, a garland of gulmohur. The child seemed irresistibly drawn by the implacable sweetness of the scents that came floating on the wings of the languid air. He went towards the basket where the flowers lay heaped and half murmured, I want that garland,' but he well knew his parents would refuse to buy him these flowers be-cause they would say they were cheap. So, without waiting for an answer, he moved on.

A man stood holding a pole with yellow, red, green and purple balloons flying from it. The child was simply carried away by the rainbow glory of their silken colours, and he was possessed by an overwhelming desire to possess them all. But he well knew his parents would never buy him the balloons, because they would say he was too old to play with such toys. So he walked on farther.

A juggler stood playing a flute to a snake which coiled itself in a basket, its head raised in a graceful bend like the neck of a swan, while the music stole into its invisible ears like the gentle rippling of a miniature water-fall. The child went towards the juggler. But knowing his parents had forbidden him to hear such coarse music as the jugglers play, he proceeded farther.

There was a roundabout in full swing. Men, women and children, carried in a whirling motion, shrieked and cried with dizzy laughter. The child watched them intently going round and round, a pink blush of a smile on his face, his eyes rippling with the same movement, his lips half parted in amaze, till he felt he himself was being carried round. The ring seemed to go fiercely at first, then gradually it began to move less fast. Presently, the child, rapt, his finger in his mouth, beheld it stop. This time, before his over-powering love of his anticipated sensation of movement had been chilled by the fact of his parents' eternal denial, he made a bold request: 'I want to go on the roundabout, please, father, mother.'

There was no reply. He turned to look at his parents. They were not there, ahead of him. He turned to look on the side. They were not there. He looked behind. There was no sign of them.

A full, deep cry arose within his dry throat, and with a sudden jerk of his body he ran from where he stood, crying in red fear, 'Mother, father.' Tears rained down from his eyes, heavy and fierce, his flushed face was convulsed with fear. Panic-stricken, he ran to one side first then to the other, before and aft in all

directions, knowing not where to go. 'Mother, father,' he wailed, with a moist, shrill breath now, his throat being wet with the swallowing of his spittle. His yellow turban came untied, and his clothes, wet with perspiration, became muddy where the dust had mixed with the sweat of his body. His light frame seemed heavy as a mass of lead.

Having run to and fro in a sheer rage of running for a while, he stood defeated, his cries suppressed into sobs. At little distance on the green grass he could see, through his filmy eyes, men and women talking. He tried to look intensively among the patches of bright yellow clothes, but there was no sign of his father and mother among these people, who seemed to laugh and talk just for the sake of laughing and talking. He ran hotly again, this time to a shrine to which people seemed to be crowding. Every little inch of space here was congested with men, but he ran through people's legs, his little sob lingering, 'Mother, father.' Near the entrance of the temple, however, the crowd became very thick: men jostled each other—heavy men, with flashing, murderous eyes and hefty shoulders. The poor child struggled to carve a way between their feet, but, knocked to and fro by their brutal paws, he might have been trampled underfoot, had he not shrieked at the highest pitch of his voice, 'F—ather, mother.' A man in the surging crowd heard his groan, and, stooping with very great difficulty, lifted him up in his arms.

'How did you get here, child ? Whose baby are you ?' the man asked as he steered clear of the mass.

The child wept more bitterly than ever now and only cried, I want my mother, I want my father.'

The man tried to soothe him by taking him up to the roundabout. 'Will you have a lift on the horses?' he gently asked as he approached the ring.

The child's throat tore into a thousand shrill sobs and he only shouted, 'I want my mother, I want my father.'

The man headed towards the place where the juggler still played on the flute to the dancing cobra.

'Listen to that nice music, child,' he pleaded.

But the child shut his ears with his fingers and shouted his double-pitched strain, I want my mother, I want my father.'

The man took him near the balloons, thinking the bright colours of the balls would distract the child's attention and quieten him. 'Would you like a rainbow-coloured balloon ?' he persuasively asked.

But the child turned his eyes from the flying balloons and just sobbed, 'I want my mother, I want my father.'

The man, still importunate in his kindly desire to make the child happy, bore him to the gate where the flower-seller stood. 'Look! Can you smell these nice flowers, child ? Would you like a garland to put round your neck?'

The child turned his nose away from the basket and reiterated his sob, 'I want my mother, I want my father.'

Thinking to humour his disconsolate find by a gift of sweets, the man took him to the counter of the sweet-shop. 'What sweets would you like, child?' he asked.

The child turned his face from the sweet-shop and only sobbed, 'I want my mother, I want my father.'

- Mulk Raj Anand

About the Story

'The Lost Child' deals with the experience of a child who goes to a fair with his parents and wants many things. Then the child gets lost, and refuses to accept any of the things it had earlier wanted so much. Now the child only insists, 'I want my mother, I want my father.' Perhaps, the child is a symbol of human being lost in this world. As Guru Nanak says, 'We are all children lost in the world fair.'

The story is written by Mulk Raj Anand, a famous Indian English novelist. He was given the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1972.

Glossary

gaily clad humanity: colourfully dressed people going to the fair.

warren: piece of land where rabbits breed or abound.

brimming over with life and laughter: overflowing with joy and laughter.

arrested by the toys: The child stopped, attracted by toys.

red-eyed in his familiar tyrant's way: As usual, his father looked stern and harsh with red, angry eyes.

melted by the free spirit of the day: softened by the gay and happy atmosphere.

quelled: crushed.

mirage: illusion produced by atmospheric conditions.

weird: supernatural.

prancing like a young colt: springing like a young horse.

teeming: abundant.

offered their adoration to the sun: worshipped and paid their homage to the sun.

chaperon:(here) the protective covering of the banyan tree.

running in wild caper: running, leaping and jumping in a playful and carefree manner.

architecture of many-coloured sweets: piles of sweets of many colours arranged on top of each other.

double-pitched strain: high-pitched and shrill cry of the child repeatedly asking for his parents.

disconsolate find: the weeping and sad child whom it was difficult to console.

aft: near or towards the back

shrieked: cried with pain

trampled: crushed

spittle : Saliva, liquid that forms in the mouth

importunate: asking for things many times

hefty : big and heavy

tyrant : dictator

reiterate : repeat, say again

COMPREHENSION

(A) Tick the correct alternative:

1. The father looked at the child red-eyed in his familiar tyrant's way because-
 - a. the child wanted everything at the fair.
 - b. the child was lost.
 - c. his wife asked him to buy sweets for the child.
 - d. it was raining.
2. The child was panic-stricken because-
 - a. he had lost his father and mother.
 - b. he had been scolded by his father.
 - c. a kind-hearted person had given everything he desired.
 - d. his parents had deserted him
3. The lost child in the story 'The Lost child' is a symbol of-
 - a. a human being lost in this World.
 - b. the unfulfilled desires of a human being.
 - c. a human being who is never satisfied.
 - d. a human being who is spiritual in his approach.

(B) Answer the following questions in about 10-15 words each:

1. What the story 'The Lost Child' is about?
2. What does the lost child represent?
3. Who is the disconsolate find in the story 'The Lost Child'?
4. What does the phrase "guilty clad humanity" mean?
5. What was the attitude of the father towards the demands of the child?

(C) Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words each:

1. What made the father angry with his child?
2. What did the child want after he had lost his father and mother?
3. What happened as the child entered the grove?
4. What did the child do to find his parents?

(D) Answer the following questions in about 60-80 words each:

1. Enumerate the things that the child wants. Do the parents fulfil his desire?
2. Bring out the symbolic significance of the title of the story 'The Lost Child'.

(E) Say whether the following statements are True or False. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False in the bracket:

1. All the desires of the child are fulfilled towards the end of the story in 'The Lost Child'. []
2. The parents in 'The Lost Child' are generous and fulfil all his demands. []
3. The story 'The Lost Child' is written by Mulk Raj Anand. []
4. The lost child gets pleased because people fulfil his demands by offering him several things. []

THE POSTMASTER



The postmaster took up his duties first in the village of Ulapur. Though the village was small, there was an indigo factory near it, and the proprietor, an Englishman, had managed to get a post office established.

Our postmaster belonged to Calcutta. He felt like a fish out of water in this remote village. His office and living-room were in a dark thatched shed, not far from a green, slimy pond, surrounded on all sides by a dense growth.

The men employed in the indigo factory had no leisure; moreover, they were hardly desirable companions for decent folk. Nor is a Calcutta boy an adept in the art of associating with others. Among strangers he appears either proud or ill at ease. At any rate, the postmaster had but little company; nor had he much work to do.

At times he tried his hand at writing verse. That the movement of the leaves and the clouds of the sky were enough to fill life with joy—such were the sentiments to which he sought to give expression. But God knows that the poor fellow would have felt it as the gift of a new life, if some genie of the Arabian Nights had in one night swept away the trees, leaves and all, and substituted for them a macadamised road, and had hidden the clouds from view with rows of tall houses.

The postmaster's salary was small. He had to cook his own meals, which he used to share with Ratan, an orphan girl of the village, who did odd jobs for him.

When in the evening, the smoke began to curl upwards from the village cowsheds, and the cicadas chirped in every bush; when the mendicants of the Haul sect sang their shrill songs in their daily meeting place; when any poet, who had attempted to watch the movement of the leaves in the dense bamboo thickets, would have felt a ghostly shiver run down his back, the postmaster would light his little lamp, and call out 'Ratan.'

Ratan would sit outside waiting for his call, and instead of coming in at once, would reply, 'Did you call me, Sir?'

'What are you doing?' the postmaster would ask.

‘I must go and light the kitchen fire,’ she would reply.

And the postmaster would say: ‘Oh let the kitchen fire wait for a while; light me my pipe first.’

At last Ratan would enter, with puffed-out cheeks, vigorously blowing into a flame a live coal to light the tobacco. This would give the postmaster an opportunity of chatting with her. ‘Well, Ratan,’ perhaps he would begin, ‘do you remember anything of your mother?’ That was a fertile subject. Ratan partly remembered, and partly forgot. Her father had been fonder of her than her mother: him she recollected more vividly. He used to come home in the evening after his works, and one or two evenings stood out more clearly than others, like pictures in her memory- Ratan would sit on the floor near the postmaster’s feet as memories crowded in upon her. She called to mind a little brother that she had—and how on some bygone cloudy day she had played at fishing with him on the edge of the pond, with a twig for a fishing-rod. Such little incidents would drive out greater events from her mind. Thus, as they talked, it would often get very late, and the postmaster would feel too lazy to do any cooking at all. Ratan would then hastily light the fire, and toast some unleavened bread, which with the cold remnants of the morning meal, was enough for their supper.

On some evenings, seated at his desk in the corner of the big empty shed, the postmaster too would call up memories of his own home, of his mother and his sister, of those for whom in his exile his heart was sad,—memories which were always haunting him, but which he could not reveal to the men of the factory, though he found himself naturally recalling them aloud in the presence of the simple little girl. And so it came about that the girl would allude to his people as mother, brother, and sister, as if she had known them all her life. Indeed, she had a complete picture of each one of them painted in her heart.

One day, at noon, during a break in the rains, there was a cool soft breeze blowing; the smell of the damp grass and leaves in the hot sun felt like the warm breathing on one’s body of the tired earth. A persistent bird repeated all the afternoon the burden of its one complaint in Nature’s audience chamber.

The postmaster had nothing to do. The shimmer of freshly washed leaves, and the banked-up remnants of the retreating rain-clouds were sights to see; and the postmaster was watching them and thinking to himself: ‘Oh, if only some kindred soul were near—just one loving human being whom I could hold near my heart!’ This was exactly, he went on to think, what that bird was trying to say, and it was the same feeling which the murmuring leaves were striving to express. But no one knows, or would believe, that such an idea might also take possession of an ill-paid village postmaster in the deep, silent midday interval in his work,

The postmaster sighed, and called out ‘Ratan.’ Ratan was then stretched at full length beneath the guava-tree, busily engaged in eating unripe guavas. At the voice of her master, she ran up breathlessly, saying: ‘Did you call me, Dada?’ ‘I

was thinking of teaching you to read,' said the postmaster. And then for the rest of the afternoon he taught her the alphabet.

Thus, in a very short time, Ratan had got as far as the double consonants.

It seemed as though the rains would never end. Canals, ditches, and hollows were all flooded with water. Day and night the patter of rain was heard, and the croaking of frogs. The village roads became impassable, and marketing had to be done in punts.

One heavily clouded morning, the postmaster's little pupil had been waiting long outside the door to be called, but as the usual summons did not come, she took up her dog-eared book, and slowly entered the room. She found her master lying on his bed, and thinking he was resting, she was about to retire on tiptoe, when she suddenly heard her name—'Ratan!' She turned at once and asked: 'Were you asleep, Dada?' The postmaster in a weak voice replied: 'I am not well. Feel my head; is it very hot?'

In the loneliness of his exile, and in the gloom of the rains, he needed a little tender nursing. He longed to call to mind the touch on his forehead of soft hands with tinkling bracelets, to imagine the presence of loving woman-hood, the nearness of mother and sister. And the exile was not disappointed. Ratan ceased to be a little girl. She at once stepped into the post of mother, called in the village doctor, gave the patient his pills at the proper intervals, sat up all night by his pillow, cooked his gruel for him, and every now and then asked: 'Are you feeling a little better Dada?'

It was some time before the postmaster, though still weak, was able to leave his sickbed. 'No more of this,' said he with decision, 'I must apply for a transfer from this place.' He wrote off at once to Calcutta an application for a transfer, on the ground of the unhealthiness of the spot.

Relieved from her duties as nurse, Ratan again took up her former place outside the door. But she no longer heard the same old call. She would sometimes furtively peep inside to find the postmaster sitting on his chair, or stretched on his bed, and gazing absently into the air. While Ratan was awaiting her call, the postmaster was awaiting a reply to his application. The girl read her old lessons over and over again—her great fear was lost, when the call came, she might be found wanting in the double consonants. After a week's waiting, one evening her summons came. With an overflowing heart Ratan rushed into the room and cried, as she used to cry: 'Did you call me, Dada?' The postmaster said: 'I am going away tomorrow, Ratan.'

'Where are you going, Dada?'

'I am going home.'

'When will you come back?'

'I am not coming back.'

Ratan asked no more. The postmaster, of his own accord, went on to tell her that his application for a transfer had been rejected, so he had resigned his post and was going home.

For a long time neither of them spoke. The lamp burned dimly, and from a leak in one corner of the thatch water dripped steadily into an earthen vessel on the floor beneath.

After a while Ratan rose, and went off to the kitchen to prepare the meal; but she was not so quick about it as before. Many new things to think of had entered her little brain. When the postmaster had finished his supper, the girl suddenly asked him 'Dada, will you take me home with you?'

The postmaster laughed. 'What an idea!' said he. But he did not think it necessary to explain to the girl wherein lay the absurdity of such a course.

That whole night, awake and asleep, the postmaster's laughing reply haunted her—'What an idea!'

When he woke up in the morning, the postmaster found his bath ready. He had continued his Calcutta habit of bathing in water drawn and kept in pictures, instead of taking a plunge in the river as was the custom of the village.

For some reason or other, the girl could not ask him the time of his departure, she had therefore fetched the water from the river long before sunrise, so that it should be ready as soon as he might want it. After the bath came a call for Ratan. She entered without a sound, and looked silently into her master's face for orders. The master said: 'You need not be anxious about my going away, Ratan: I shall tell my successor to look after you.' These words were kindly meant, no doubt: But inscrutable are the ways of a woman's heart!

Ratan had borne many a scolding from her master without complaint, but these kind words she could not bear. She burst out weeping, and said: 'No, no, you need not tell anybody anything at all about me; I don't want to stay here any longer.'

The postmaster was dumbfounded. He had never seen Ratan like this before.

The new man duly arrived, and the postmaster gave over charge, and prepared to depart. Just before starting he called Ratan and said: 'Here is something for you: I hope it will keep you for some little time.' He brought out from his pocket the whole of his month's salary, retaining only a trifle for the journey. Then Ratan fell at his feet and cried: 'O, Dada pray don't give me anything, don't in any way trouble about me,' and then she ran away out of sight.

The postmaster heaved a sigh, took up his bag, put his umbrella over his shoulder, and accompanied by a man carrying his many-coloured tin trunk, slowly made for the boat.

When he got in and the boat was under way, and the rain-swollen river, like a stream of tears welling up from the earth, swirled and sobbed at her bows, then he felt grieved at heart; the sorrow-stricken face of a village girl seemed to represent for him the great unspoken pervading grief of Mother Earth herself. At one moment he felt an impulse to go back and bring away with him that lonely waif,

forsaken of the world. But the wind had just filled the sails, the boat had got well into the middle of the turbulent current, and already the village was left behind, and its outlying burning-ground had come into sight.

So the traveller, borne on the breast of the swift-flowing river, consoled himself with philosophical reflections on the world, and on death, the great parting, from which there is no return.

But Ratan had no philosophy. She was wandering about the post office with the tears streaming from her eyes. It may be that she had still a hope lurking in some corner of her heart that her Dada would return, and perhaps that is why she could not tear herself away. Alas, for our foolish human nature! Its fond mistakes are persistent. The dictates of reason take a long time to assert their sway.

The surest proofs meanwhile are disbelieved. One clings desperately to some vain hope, till a day comes when it has sucked the heart dry and then it breaks through its bonds and departs. After that comes the misery of awakening, and then once again the longing to get back into the maze of the same mistakes.

- Rabindranath Tagore

About the Story

‘The Postmaster’ is a simple but moving story of a girl’s emotional attachment to the postmaster who is posted to the remote village of Ulapur. Ratan, an adolescent village girl, works for him and calls him Dada, elder brother. The postmaster belongs to Calcutta (now Kolkata) and feels lonely in the village. Besides, he has nothing in common with the indigo factory workers with whom he cannot exchange his thoughts and feelings. In order to pass his evenings he engages Ratan in conversation, asks her about her family, tells her about his mother and sister, and also starts teaching her. Ratan nurses him when he falls sick and it is during this period that the woman in her feels attached to her benefactor. He, however, does not understand the girl’s sentiments for him. The postmaster leaves his job when his transfer application does not get through. His departure leaves the girl broken and desolate. The postmaster has his philosophy to comfort her but Ratan has only an aching heart.

The story was written by Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel Laureate when Tagore was at Shahjadpur, a small village where the arrival of the new postmaster (mentioned in the story) became news.

Glossary

indigo : a violet-blue dye obtained from the leaves of the indigo plant. It is called ‘neel’ in Hindi

fish out of water: hence restless and uncomfortable

remote: distant (here it has a sense of being lonely; also away from town)

slimy: muddy

adept: skilled

ill at ease: uncomfortable

genie: 'jinnee' or a supernatural being; plural Jinn (from the Arabic)
 Arabian Nights: These are a thousand and one stories; popular among them ...are Aladin's Lamp, Alibaba and Forty Thieves, Sindbad's adventures.
 macadamized: covered with small broken stones so as to form a smooth hard surface.
 Cicadas: an insect known for its loud chirping sound
 vigorously: with force
 fertile: inventive, yielding rich results (here it means a subject on which much could be said)
 squat: to sit on heels
 make-believe: imaginary
 remnants: left-over
 unleavened: made without yeast therefore flat (chapattis or roti in Hindi)
 allude to: refer to
 persistent : insistent
 kindred soul : near and dear one
 sprawling: lying down carelessly
 Dada: elder brother in Bengali and many other Indian languages
 double consonants: In Devnagri and other Indian scripts, combined letters like ksh
 impassable: difficult to walk on or cross
 punt: a long shallow boat
 pallet: flat wooden bed
 inscrutable: difficult to understand
 swirled: moved quickly in a circular motion, churned
 waif: a homeless wanderer
 trifle: small and not important
 sobbed: cried noisily
 forsaken: left
 turbulent: confused; difficult to control
 impulse: a sudden strong wish
 assert: say, speak
 sway: move slowly from side to side
 clings: sticks
 vain: useless
 desperately: disappointedly
 tinkling: a light high ringing sound
 gruel: simple dish containing boiled oats
 exile: the state of being sent to live in another country
 gloom : darkness
 furtively: stealthy, secretly
 vessel: a large ship or boat
 mendicants: living by asking people for money and foods, beggars

COMPREHENSION

(A) Tick the correct alternative:

1. The story 'The Postmaster' shows the author's deep understanding of-
(a) human psyche (b) economy (c) a social system (d) climatic changes
2. The village of Ulapur in Tagore's 'The Postmaster' is the place-
(a) where the Post Office was established (b) where the tribals lived
(c) where no one lived (d) where no one dared to go
3. Ratan in Tagore's 'The Postmaster' is a/an -
(a) boy (b) orphan village girl (c) gentleman (d) vagabond

(B) Answer the following questions in about 10-15 words each:

1. Why and with whose efforts was the post office established in Ulapur?
2. Who did odd jobs for the postmaster and what was the nature of her work?
3. Describe Ratan's role as a nurse during the postmaster's illness.
4. What were the postmaster's thoughts when he started his journey homeward?
5. Why did Ratan reject the postmaster's offer of money as well as his offer to get her employed with the new postmaster?

(C) Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words each:

1. Describe the typical evening scene in the village with reference to the postmaster's feelings.
2. Give a brief account of the rainy season in the village and the various sights and sounds of nature that moved the postmaster.
3. "Ratan ceased to be a little girl." Explain this line with reference to Ratan's role as a nurse.
4. What was Ratan's reaction to the postmaster's decision to leave the village? What was her state of mind later?
5. Who do you think is the real sufferer in the story and why?

(D) Answer the following questions in about 60-80 words each:

1. Draw a pen picture of Ratan and 'The Postmaster'.
2. "The entire focus of the story 'The Postmaster' is on the Postmaster but in reality it is the story of Ratan's growing up." Do you agree with this statement? Discuss with reference to the events of the story.

(E) Say whether the following statements are True or False. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False in the bracket:

1. 'The Postmaster' is a simple but moving story of a girl's emotional attachment. []

2. Ratan fell at the Postmaster's feet and requested him to give her the whole of his month's salary. []
3. The Postmaster told Ratan that her application for transfer had been rejected, so he had resigned his post and was going home. []
4. The Postmaster used to get handsome salary. []
5. Ratan could not bear the Postmaster's kind words and burst out. []

UNDER THE BANYAN TREE



The village Somal, nestling away in the forest tracts of Mempri, had a population of less than three hundred. It was in every way a village to make the heart of a rural reformer sink. Its tank, a small expanse of water, right in the middle of the village, served for drinking, bathing, and washing the cattle, and it bred malaria, typhoid, and heaven knew what else. The cottages sprawled anyhow and the lanes twisted and wriggled up and down and strangled each other. The population used the highway as the refuse ground and in the backyard of every house drain water stagnated in green puddles.

Such was the village. It is likely that the people of the village were insensitive, but it is more than likely that they never noticed their surroundings because they lived in a kind of perpetual enchantment. The enchanter was Nambi the storyteller. He was a man of about sixty or seventy. Or was he eighty or one hundred and eighty? Who could say? In a place so much cut off as Somal (the nearest bus-stop was ten miles away), reckoning could hardly be in the familiar measures of time. If anyone asked Nambi what his age was, he referred to an ancient famine or an invasion or the building of a bridge and indicated how high he had stood from the ground at the time.

He was illiterate, in the sense that the written word was a mystery to him; but he could make up a story, in his head, at the rate of one a month; each story took nearly ten days to narrate.

His home was the little temple which was at the very end of the village. No one could say how he had come to regard himself as the owner of the temple. The temple was a very small structure with red-striped walls, with a stone image of the Goddess Shakti in the sanctum. The front portion of the temple was Nambi's home. For aught it mattered any place might be his home; for he was without possessions. All that he possessed was a broom with which he swept the temple; and he had also a couple of dhoties and upper cloth. He spent most of the day in the shade of the banyan which spread out its branches in front of the temple. When he felt hungry he walked into any house that caught his fancy and joined

the family at dinner. When he needed new clothes they were brought to him by the villagers. He hardly ever had to go out in search of company; for the banyan shade served as a clubhouse for the village folk. All through the day people came seeking Nambi's company and squatted under the tree. If he was in a mood for it he listened to their talk and entertained them with his own observations and anecdotes. When he was in no mood he looked at the visitors sourly and asked, 'What do you think I am? Don't blame me if you get no story at the next moon. Unless I meditate how can the Goddess give me a stray? Do you think stories float in the air?' And he moved out to the edge of the forest and squatted there, contemplating the trees.

On Friday evenings the village turned up at the temple for worship, when Nambi lit a score of mud lamps and arranged them around the threshold of the sanctuary. He decorated the image with flowers, which grew wildly in the backyard of the temple. He acted as the priest and offered to the Goddess fruits and flowers brought in by the villagers.

On the nights he had a story to tell, he lit a small lamp and placed it in a niche in the trunk of the banyan tree. Villagers as they returned home in the evening saw this, went home, and said to their wives, 'Now, now, hurry up with the dinner, the storyteller is calling us? As the moon crept up behind the hillock, men, women, and children gathered under the banyan tree. The storyteller would not appear yet. He would be sitting in the sanctum, before the Goddess, with his eyes shut, in deep meditation. He sat thus as long as he liked and when he came out, with his forehead ablaze with ash and vermilion, he took his seat on a stone platform in front of the temple. He opened the story with a question. Jerking his finger towards a vague, faraway destination, he asked, 'A thousand years ago, a stone's throw in that direction, what do you think there was? It was not the weed-covered waste it is now, for donkeys to roll in. It was not the ash-pit it is now. It was the capital of the king...' The king would be Dasaratha, Vikramaditya, Asoka, or anyone that came into the old man's head; the capital was called Kapila, Kridapura, or anything. Opening thus, the old man went on without a pause for three hours. By then brick by brick the palace of the king was raised. The old man described the dazzling durbar hall where sat a hundred vassal kings, ministers, and subjects; in another part of the palace all the musicians in the world assembled and sang; and most of the songs were sung over again by Nambi to his audience; and he described in detail the pictures and trophies that hung on the walls of the palace .. ,

It was story-building on an epic scale. The first day barely conveyed the setting of the tale, and Nambi's audience as yet had no idea who were coming into the story. As the moon slipped behind the trees of Mempi Forest, Nambi said, 'Now friends, Mother says this will do for the day? He abruptly rose, went in, lay down, and fell asleep long before the babble of the crowd ceased.

The light in the niche would again be seen two or three days later, and again and again throughout the bright half of the month. Kings and heroes, villains and fairy-like women, gods in human form, saints and assassins, jostled each other in that world which was created under the banyan tree. Nambi's voice rose and fell in an exquisite rhythm, and the moonlight and the hour completed the magic. The villagers laughed with Nambi, they wept with him, they adored the heroes, cursed the villains, groaned when the conspirator had his initial success, and they sent up to the gods a heartfelt prayer for a happy ending . . .

On the day when the story ended, the whole gathering went into the sanctum and prostrated before the Goddess . . .

By the time the next moon peeped over the hillock, Nambi was ready with another story. He never repeated the same kind of story or brought in the same set of persons, and the village folk considered Nambi a sort of miracle, quoted his words of wisdom, and lived on the whole in an exalted plane of their own, though their life in all other respects was hard and drab.

And yet it had gone on for years and years. One noon he lit the lamp in the tree. The audience came. The old man took his seat and began the story. '. . . When King Vikramaditya lived, his minister was . . .' He paused. He could not get beyond it. He made a fresh beginning. There was the king . . .' he said, repeated it, and then his words trailed off into a vague mumbling. 'What has come over me?' he asked pathetically. 'Oh, Mother, great Mother, why do I stumble and falter? I know the story. I had the whole of it a moment ago. What was it about? I can't understand what has happened? He faltered and looked so miserable that his audience said, 'Take your own time. You are perhaps tired?'

'Shut up!' he cried. 'Am I tired? Wait a moment; I will tell you the story presently.' Following this there was utter silence. Eager faces looked up at him. 'Don't look at me!' he flared up. Somebody gave him a tumbler of milk. The audience waited patiently. This was a new experience. Some persons expressed their sympathy aloud. Some persons began to talk among themselves. Those who sat in the outer edge of the crowd silently slipped away. Gradually, as it neared midnight, others followed this example. Nambi sat staring at the ground, his head bowed in thought. For the first time he realized that he was old. He felt he would never more be able to control his thoughts or express them cogently. He looked up. Everyone had gone except his friend Mari, the blacksmith. 'Mari, why aren't you also gone?'

Mari apologized for the rest: 'They didn't want to tire you; so they have gone away?'

Nambi got up. 'You are right. Tomorrow I will make it up. Age, age. What is my age? It has come on suddenly? He pointed at his head and said, 'This says, "Old fool, don't think I shall be your servant anymore. You will be my servant hereafter?'" It is disobedient and treacherous.

He lit the lamp in the niche next day. The crowd assembled under the banyan faithfully. Nambi had spent the whole day in meditation. He had been fervently praying to the Goddess not to desert him. He began the story. He went on for an hour without a stop. He felt greatly relieved, so much so that he interrupted his narration to remark, 'Oh, friends. The Mother is always kind. I was seized with a foolish fear . . . ? and continued the story. In a few minutes he felt dried up. He struggled hard: 'And then ... and then ... what happened?' He stammered. There followed a pause lasting an hour. The audience rose without a word and went home. The old man sat on the stone brooding till the cock crew. I can't blame them for it? He muttered to himself. 'Can they sit down here and mope all night?' Two days later he gave another instalment of the story, and that, too, lasted only a few minutes. The gathering dwindled. Fewer persons began to take notice of the lamp in the niche. Even these came only out of a sense of duty. Nambi realized that there was no use in prolonging the struggle. He brought the story to a speedy and premature end.

He knew what was happening. He was harrowed by the thoughts of his failure. I should have been happier if I had dropped dead years ago, he said to himself. Mother, why have you struck me dumb . . . ? He shut himself up in the sanctum, hardly ate any food, and spent the greater part of the day sitting motionless in meditation.

The next moon peeped over the hillock, Nambi lit the lamp in the niche. The villagers as they returned home saw the lamp, but only a handful turned up at night. 'Where are the others?' the old man asked. 'Let us wait? He waited. The moon came up. His handful of audience waited patiently. And then the old man said, 'I won't tell the story today, nor tomorrow unless the whole village comes here. I insist upon it. It is a mighty story. Everyone must hear it.' Next day he went up and down the village street shouting. 'I have a most wonderful tale to tell tonight. Come one and all; don't miss it ...' This personal appeal had a great effect. At night a large crowd gathered under the banyan. They were happy that the storyteller had regained his powers. Nambi came out of the temple when everyone had settled and said: It is the Mother who gives the gifts; and it is she who takes away the gifts. Nambi is a dotard. He speaks when the Mother has anything to say. He is struck dumb when she has nothing to say. But what is the use of the jasmine when it has lost its scent? What is the lamp for when all the oil is gone? Goddess be thanked ... These are my last words on this earth; and this is my greatest story.' He rose and went into the sanctum. His audience hardly understood what he meant. They sat there till they became weary. And then some of them got up and stepped into the sanctum. There the storyteller sat with eyes shut. 'Aren't you going to tell us a story?' they asked. He opened his eyes, looked at them, and shook his head. He indicated by gesture that he had spoken his last words.

When he felt hungry, he walked into any cottage and silently sat down for food, and walked away the moment he had eaten. Beyond this he had hardly anything to demand of his fellow beings. The rest of his life (he lived for a few more years) was one great consummate silence.

- R.K. Narayan

About the Story

‘Under the Banyan Tree’ is an interesting story about a storyteller, Nambi, who enraptures his village audience with gripping tales. The author gives a graphic picture of the village, Somal Nambi’s daily routine, and his story-telling sessions. As if by some mutual, unannounced agreement, the villagers take upon themselves to cater to Nambi’s needs for food and clothes in return for the entertaining tales. Nambi is old and eccentric but alert. The turning point in Nambi’s life comes when he fails to concoct a story and falls silent. Narayan has painted Nambi and his storytelling sessions with an undercurrent of humour. One feels desolate, however, along with the villagers, to see Nambi fall silent, losing his art of storytelling forever.

R. K. Narayan, the author of the story, is a famous Indian English novelist who became a household name after the telecast of *Malgudi Days*.

Glossary

nestling: situated in a position that is sheltered

tracts: region

sprawled: spread ungracefully

twisted : took a curved course

wiggled: twisted and turned

perpetual: everlasting, uninterrupted

enchantment: charm, delight

enchanter: a person who charms or bewitches, especially a magician

reckoning: estimation

sanctum: (here) the inner room of the temple where the idol is kept

aught: anything

sourly: unpleasantly

anecdote: story or short account of an entertaining incident

epic scale: grand scale

babble: chatter

jostle: to push roughly against others in a crowd

prostrated: lay flat on the ground, especially in submission

cogently: clearly and forcefully

mope: to sit around listlessly, with no particular purpose; sulk

dwindle: to decline, to become less

harrowed: distressed, upset

dotard: a person who is feeble-minded from old age
consummate: complete
puddles: small amount of water that has collected in one place
fathered: became less effective
flared up: grew angry
tumbler: a glass for drinking out
cogently: strongly; clearly
fervently: showing strong feelings
desert: leave
expanse: wide and open area
strangled: not clear
stagnated: stopped developing

COMPREHENSION

(A) Tick the correct alternative:

1. The village Somal had a population of—
(a) less than three hundred (b) less than three thousand
(c) less than two hundred (d) less than five hundred
2. Nambi lived in a—
(a) palace (b) little temple
(c) beautiful house (d) hut
3. Mari, mentioned in the story ‘Under the Banyan Tree’ is a —
(a) Blacksmith (b) merchant
(c) bureaucrat (d) teacher

(B) Answer the following questions in about 10-15 words each:

1. Why does R. K. Narayan call Nambi an ‘enchanter’?
2. Why does Nambi stop telling stories at the end?
3. How has Narayan portrayed village life?
4. How old is Nambi?
5. What is the frequency with which Nambi can create a story and how long does his narration last?
6. Where does Nambi live?
7. Why does Nambi say, ‘. . . Age, age. What is my age? It has come on suddenly’?

(C) Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words each:

1. How do the villagers look upon Nambi? What is their opinion of the man?
2. Describe Nambi’s daily routine and the ritual performed on Friday evenings.
3. Describe the second day of Nambi’s failure to tell the story.
4. Describe Nambi’s life after he stops telling stories. Do the villagers reject him?

(D) Answer the following questions in about 60-80 words each:

1. How does Nambi announce that he has a tale ready? Describe the congregation of villagers and the style of Nambi's narration.
2. Draw a character sketch of Nambi.

(E) Say whether the following statements are True or False. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False in the bracket:

1. The story 'Under the Banyan Tree' gives a graphic description of the village Somal. []
2. Nambi is a storyteller. []
3. "What is the lamp for when all the oil is gone" is a statement spoken to the villagers by Nambi. []
4. After Nambi stops telling stories, he takes to begging. []
5. After Nambi stops telling stories, his life becomes restless. []

THE JUDGEMENT- SEAT OF VIKRAMADITYA



UNIT-A

Deep in the hearts of the Indian people, one name is held ever dear—the name of Vikramaditya, who became King of Malwa, it is said, in the year 57 before Christ.

He was so strong and true and gentle that the men of his own day almost worshipped him, and those of all after times were obliged to give him the first place, though they had never looked in his face, nor appealed to his great and tender heart—simply because they could see that there had never been a king loved like this king. But one thing we do know about Vikramaditya. It is told of him that he was the greatest judge in history.

Never was he deceived. Never did he punish the wrong man. The guilty trembled when they came before him, for they knew that his eyes would look straight into their guilt. And those who had difficult questions to ask, and wanted to know the truth, were thankful to be allowed to come, for they knew that their King would never rest till he understood the matter, and that then he could give an answer that would convince all.

And so, in after time in India, when any judge pronounced sentence with great skill, it would be said of him, ‘Ah, he must have sat in the judgement-seat of Vikramaditya!’ And this was the habit of speech in the whole country. Yet in Ujjain itself, the poor people forgot that the heaped-up ruins a few miles away had been his palace, and only the rich and learned, and the wise men who lived in kings’ courts remembered.

The story I am about to tell you happened long, long ago; yet there had been time for the old palace and fortress of Ujjain to fall into ruins, and for the sand to be heaped up over them, covering the blocks of stone, and bits of old wall, often with grass and dust, and even trees. There had been time, too, for the people to forget.

In those days, the people of the villages, as they do still, used to send their cows out to the wild land to graze.

Early in the morning they would go, in the care of the shepherds, and not return till evening, close on dusk. How I wish I could show you that coming and going of the Indian cows!

Such gentle little creatures they are, with such large wise eyes, and a great hump between their shoulders! And they are not timid or wild, like our cattle. For in India, amongst the Hindus, everyone loves them. They are very useful and precious in that hot, dry country, and no one is allowed to tease or frighten them. Instead of that, the little girls come at daybreak and pet them, giving them food and hanging necklaces of flowers about their necks, saying poetry to them and even strewing flowers before their feet! And the cows, for their part, seem to feel as if they belonged to the family, just as our cats and dogs do.

If they live in the country, they delight in being taken out to feed on the grass in the daytime; but of course someone must go with them, to frighten off wild beasts, and to see that they do not stray too far. They wear little tinkling bells, that ring as they move their heads, saying, 'Here! here!' And when it is time to go home to the village for the night, what a pretty sight they make!

One cowherd stands and calls at the edge of the pasture and another goes around behind the cattle, to drive them towards him, and so they come quietly forward from here and there, sometimes breaking down the brushwood in their path. And when the herdsmen are sure that all are safe, they turn homewards—one leading in front, one bringing up the rear, and the cows making a long procession between them. As they go they kick up the dust along the sun-baked path, till at last they seem to be moving through a cloud, with the last rays of the sunset touching it. And so the Indian people call twilight, cowdust, 'the hour of cowdust'. It is a very peaceful, a very lovely moment. All about the village can be heard the sound of the children playing. The men are seated, talking, round the foot of some old tree, and the women are gossiping or praying in their houses.

Tomorrow, before dawn, all will be up and hard at work again, but this is the time of rest and joy.

UNIT-B

Such was the life of the shepherd boys in the villages about Ujjain. There were many of them, and in the long days on the pastures they had plenty of time for fun. One day they found a playground. Oh, how delightful it was! The ground under the trees was rough and uneven. Here and there the end of a great stone peeped out, and many of these stones were beautifully carved. In the middle was a green mound, looking just like a judge's seat.

One of the boys thought so at least, and he ran forward with a whoop and seated himself on it. I say, boys,' he cried, 'I'll be judge and you can all bring cases before me, and we'll have trials!' Then he straightened his face, and became very grave, to act the part of judge.

The others saw the fun at once, and, whispering amongst themselves, quickly made up some quarrel, and appeared before him, saying very humbly, ‘May your worship be pleased to settle between my neighbour and me which is in the right?’ Then they stated the case, one saying that a certain field was his, another that it was not, and so on.

But now a strange thing made itself felt. When the judge had sat down on the mound, he was just a common boy. But when he had heard the question, even to the eyes of the frolicsome lads, he seemed quite different. He was now full of gravity, and, instead of answering in fun, he took the case seriously, and gave an answer which in that particular case was perhaps the wisest that man had ever heard.

The boys were a little frightened. For though they could not appreciate the judgement, yet his tone and manner were strange and impressive. Still they thought it was fun and went away again, and, with a good deal more whispering, concocted another case. Once more they put it to their judge, and once more he gave a reply, as if it were out of the depth of a long experience, with incontrovertible wisdom. And this went on for hours and hours, he sitting on the judge’s seat, listening to the questions propounded by the others, and always pronouncing sentences with the same wonderful gravity and power. Till at last it was time to take the cows home, and so then he jumped down from his place, and was just like any other cowherd.

The boys could never forget that day, and whenever they heard of any perplexing dispute they would set this boy on the mound, and put it to him. And always the same thing happened. The spirit of knowledge and justice would come to him, and he would show them the truth. But when he came down from his seat, he would be no different from other boys.

Gradually the news of this spread through the countryside, and grown-up men and women from all the villages about that part would bring their lawsuits to be decided in the court of the herd-boys on the grass under the green trees. And always they received a judgement that both sides understood, and went away satisfied. So all the disputes in that neighbourhood were settled.

UNIT-C

Now Ujjain had long ceased to be a capital, and the King now lived very far away, hence it was some time before he heard the story. At last, however, it came to his ears. ‘Why,’ he said, ‘that boy must have sat on the Judgement-Seat of Vikramaditya! He spoke without thinking, but all around him were learned men, who knew the chronicles. They looked at one another. The King speaks the truth, they said; the ruins in yonder meadows were once Vikramaditya’s palace!’

Now this sovereign had long desired to be possessed with the spirit of law and justice. Everyday brought its problems and difficulties to him and he often felt

weak and ignorant in deciding matters that needed wisdom and strength. If sitting on the mound brings it to the shepherd boy,' he thought, 'let us dig deep and find the Judgement-Seat. I shall put it in the chief place in my hall of justice, and on it I shall sit to hear all cases. Then the spirit of Vikramaditya will descend on me also and I shall always be a just judge!'

So men with spades and tools came to disturb the ancient peace of the pastures, and the grassy knoll where the boys had played was overturned. All about the spot were now heaps of earth and broken wood and upturned sod. And the cows had to be driven further afield. But the heart of the boy who had been judge was sorrowful, as if the very home of his soul were being taken away from him.

At last the labourers came on something. They uncovered it—a slab of black marble, supported on the hands and outspread wings of twenty-five stone angels, with their faces turned outwards as if for flight—surely the Judgement-Seat of Vikramaditya.

With great rejoicing it was brought to the city, and the King himself stood by while it was put in the chief place in the hall of justice. Then the nation was ordered to observe three days of prayer and fasting, for on the fourth day the King would ascend the new throne publicly, and judge justly amongst the people.

At last the great morning arrived, and crowds assembled to see the Taking of the Seat. Pacing through the long hall came the judges and priests of the kingdom, followed by the sovereign. Then, as they reached the Throne of Judgement, they parted into two lines, and he walked up the middle, prostrated himself before it, and went close up to the marble slab.

When he had done this, and was just about to sit down one of the twenty-five stone angels began to speak. 'Stop! it said, 'Thinkest thou that thou art worthy to sit on the Judgement-Seat of Vikramaditya? Has thou never desired to rule over kingdoms that were not thine own?' And the countenance of the stone angel was full of sorrow.

At these words the King felt as if a light had blazed up within him, and shown him a long array of tyrannical wishes. He knew that his own life was unjust. After a long pause he spoke. 'No,' he said, 'I am not worthy.'

'Fast and pray yet another three days,' said the angel, 'that thou might purify thy will, and make good thy right to seat thyself thereon. And with these words it spread its wings and flew away. And when the King lifted up his face, the place of the speaker was empty, and only twenty-four figures supported the marble slab.

And so there was another three days of royal retreat, and he prepared himself with prayer and with fasting to come again and essay to sit on the Judgement-Seat of Vikramaditya.

But this time it was again as before. Another stone angel addressed him, and asked him a question which was still more searching. 'Hast thou never,' it said, 'coveted the riches of another?'

And when at last he spoke and said, 'Yea, I have done this thing; I am not worthy to sit on the Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya!' The angel commanded him to fast and pray yet another three days, and spread its wings and flew away into the blue.

At last four times twenty-four days had gone, and still three more days of fasting, and it was now the hundredth day. Only one angel was left supporting the marble slab, and the King drew near with great confidence, for today he felt sure of being allowed to take his place.

But as he drew near and prostrated himself the last angel spoke. 'Art thou, then, perfectly pure in heart, O King?' it said. 'Is thy will like unto that of a little child? If so, thou art indeed worthy to sit on this seat!'

'No,' said the King, speaking very slowly, and once more searching his own conscience, as the judge examines the prisoner at the bar, but with great sadness; 'no, I am not worthy.'

And at these words the angel flew up into the air, bearing the slab upon his head, so that never since that day has it been seen upon the earth.

But when the King came to himself and was alone, pondering over the matter, he saw that the last angel had explained the mystery. Only he who was pure in heart, like a little child, could be perfectly just. That was why the shepherd boy in the forest could sit where no king in the world might come, on the Judgement-Seat of Vikramaditya.

- Sister Nivedita

About The Story

This story retells a famous Indian legend that highlights the importance of purity. The story starts with the chance discovery by some shepherds of a mound underneath which the mythical judgement seat of Vikramaditya is discovered. An innocent shepherd boy needed only to sit on the mound for the spirit of knowledge and justice to flood him, not so the king. The story tells us why.

Sister Nivedita was Irish and her original name was Margaret Elizabeth Nobel. She was attracted to Indian spiritualism after attending lectures delivered by Swami Vivekananda in England. She left her home to live and work in India and was re-christened Prabhavati Nivedita by Swami Vivekananda. She became a disciple of Swamiji and served India all her life. She deeply loved India and her people.

GLOSSARY

look straight into : see that they were guilty

dusk : the time just before it gets quite dark

hump : round lump on the back

precious : of great value

pet : fondle, treat with affection

brushwood : rough low-growing bushes

peeped out : stood out
mound : small hillock
whoop : a shout of joy
grave : serious
your worship : title of respect used for a magistrate
frolicsome : playful and merry
gravity : seriousness
concocted : made up
incontrovertible : too clear to be questioned
propounded : brought to be answered, proposed
pronouncing : declaring, announcing
perplexing dispute : quarrel difficult to settle
set : (here) seat
cease : stop, come to an end
chronicles : history
yonder : over there
sovereign : king
knoll : small hill, mound
sods : lumps of earth and grass
prostrated himself : lay flat on the ground with his forehead touching the ground
worthy : fit, deserving
countenance : face, including its appearance and expression
blaze : shine brightly
array : line, (here) list
tyrannical wishes : wishes for more power
retreat : religious meditation; a period of seclusion or solitude
essay : try
coveted : wanted keenly to have
conscience : consciousness with oneself of right and wrong
prisoner at the bar : prisoner brought to the court for trial
bearing : carrying
pondering : thinking

COMPREHENSION

(A) Tick the correct alternative:

1. King Vikramaditya was known—
(a) For politics (b) For administration (c) For justice (d) None
2. The story 'The Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya' highlights the importance of—
(a) Purity (b) Straightforwardness (c) Impurity (d) Dedication
3. The judgement seat of Vikramaditya was discovered by—
(a) Shepherds (b) Tribals (c) Brahmins (d) Kshatriyas

(B) Answer the following questions in about 10-15 words each:

1. What qualities of head and heart made Vikramaditya a well-loved king?
2. How long ago, roughly, did Vikramaditya rule over Malwa? Does the present story belong to his time?
3. Who do you think the writer is talking to: Indians or people from other countries?
4. Why is the cow a special animal for many Indians?
5. Mark the rhythm of the language and note how the writer has been successful in creating an evocative picture of an evening in rural India.

(C) Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words each:

1. Why did the boys feel 'a little frightened' even though they were just playing at court scenes?
2. How was the boy's conduct when he was on the seat different from his normal behaviour?
3. How did the king react when he heard of the court of the herd-boys?
4. Why did the king want to have the judgement-seat of Vikramaditya? Were his intentions good or bad?
5. How was the king prevented again and again from taking Vikramaditya's seat?
6. What was the last angel's question? What is the significance of this question?

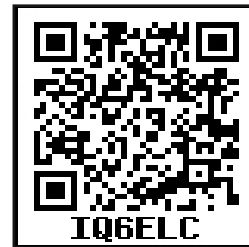
(D) Answer the following questions in about 60-80 words each:

1. Why is Vikramaditya known as the greatest judge in India?
2. Why could the shepherd boy sit on the judgement seat and not the king?

(E) Say whether the following are True or False. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False in the bracket:

1. Vikramaditya became the King of Malwa in the year 57 year before Christ. []
2. Vikramaditya was the greatest judge in history. []
3. Vikramaditya, though the greatest King in history, was deceived several times. []
4. Sister Nivedita, the author of 'The Judgement Seat of Vikramaditya' was an Indian. []
5. The Shephard boy could sit on the judgement seat of Vikramaditya because only a child could be perfectly just pure in heart. []

THE DEATH OF A HERO



‘Sit down,’ the principal said. But Mr Tagde continued to stand, gaining courage from his own straight-backed stance, because he was beginning to feel a little afraid now.

The principal looked unhappy. He disliked being forced to perform this sort of an unpleasant task.

‘I wish you would consider withdrawing this report,’ he said.

‘I am sorry sir, I cannot do that,’ Mr. Tagde said. He was pleased with his unwavering voice and uncompromising words.

‘It will be a very damaging report if put on record.’

‘It is a factual report on very damaging conduct.’

‘You are asking for the boy’s expulsion from school. Don’t you think the punishment is too harsh for a few boyish pranks?’

‘He has spoiled benches in my class room by scoring them with a razor blade. He has made the blackboard useless by scratching on it with a piece of tin. He has broken several window panes by throwing stones at them. Yesterday he broke another one and the flying pieces of glass hurt a pupil badly. That is not all. Many girl students have complained of having their books, notebooks and pens stolen, and I could get evidence that the More boy is behind it. Also there have been complaints from girls that he stops them on the street and shouts obscenities at them and threatens to beat them up. The report contains all this and more. I cannot agree with you that the behaviour can be called merely boyish pranks.’

The principal spread his hands in a helpless gesture. He looked at Mr Tagde, a small thin man in his slightly yellowed dhoti and his coat of a nondescript colour and his black cap. Outwardly he looked the same as he had for the last fifteen years that the principal had known him. A solid teacher, a mature and rational man, suitably diplomatic in his dealings with those in authority, a good man to work with.

The principal, heartened by his scrutiny of his colleague, continued more hopefully.

‘But the boy has already been punished for this misconduct,’ he said. ‘Why take it all up again?’

‘When More hurt that boy yesterday—the glass cut his cheek, and small piece of it had to be removed from the wound at the government dispensary—I decided that he had to be stopped before he did any further damage. The boy who was hurt comes from a poor family. His parents are not in a position to do anything about More.’

‘I am sure Veerendra did not mean this particular boy any harm.’

‘Most certainly he did not. He merely wanted to break a windowpane and disrupt my class. If in the process someone got hurt that was an added bonus.’

Mr Tagde surprised himself at the sudden intensity of his anger. The kind of anger he had felt when he saw the irregular star of the broken window and the blood running down the boy’s cheek, and anger which sends the blood rushing to one’s eyes and momentarily blurs one’s vision and one’s fear.

‘There is no call to be sarcastic, Mr Tagde,’ the principal said sharply. ‘I am not condoning the boy’s behaviour. I am merely suggesting that you are putting too serious a construction on it.’

Mr Tagde neither moved nor spoke.

‘I could refuse to put the matter on the agenda for the school committee meeting, you know?’

‘In that case I shall be forced to send a copy of the report to each committee member and one to Vartavihar. I am sure the editor would find it interesting enough to publish in the next edition.’

This was an extempore thought, and his elation at having stumbled on it gave Mr Tagde more confidence.

The principal made a feeble attempt at laughing. ‘Come now, you don’t mean that,’ he said.

‘I am afraid I mean every word I said.’

‘You are aware,’ the principal said, carefully enunciating each word as though to make sure Mr Tagde heard it, that the chairman of the school committee is Veerendra’s uncle?’

‘I am.’

‘You still want this report to go up to the committee?’

‘All right, I shall forward it as your personal recommendation, for consideration at the meeting to be held on Friday evening.’

That’s right, save your own skin, don’t endorse it, Mr Tagde thought, looking with distaste at the principal’s bland face. Then he thought, I have no right to be bitter. I spent my life doing just what he is doing, saving my own skin.

While he was walking home, the enormity of what he had done began to dawn on him. He had always had access to all the facts, of course. He had simply failed to combine them and realize their implications. Without the principal’s endorsement, his report would cause serious repercussions. It might very well

mean the loss of his job. There were rules for the protection of employees of long-standing. But mofussil private schools had a way of getting around such rules.

He decided he would simply have to face the consequences. The loss of his job would not be such a great tragedy. He was only three years away from retirement anyway. His children were on their own, a daughter married and two sons in good jobs. For once in his life he was in a position to do something he felt was right, without fear of consequences. He was sick of doing the bidding of the petty politicians and manoeuvrers who ran the school, and of always being afraid of losing his job if he punished or failed their delinquent children. There had to come a time in every man's life when he had to square all these things with his conscience.

When he reached home he called out as usual, 'I am home.' While he removed his coat and had a wash, his wife would have a cup of tea ready for him. He debated telling her about what had happened, but discarded the idea. He had always been thankful for her unquestioning acceptance of his decisions, though her acceptance had meant only that she was not sufficiently interested. Since this decision might affect her, it might interest her. But for the time being he was content to leave it.

The reactions came sooner than he expected. Mr Thakar, the lawyer, brought up the subject during their before-dinner walk.

'Principal Deshpande asked me to have a talk with you,' he said.

Mr Tagde said, 'I have made my decision and nothing you say is going to change it.'

Mr Thakar looked at his friend in surprise.

'Wait till I have had my say,' he said, holding up his hand. 'I hold no brief for Veerendra More. He is despicable and deserves to be kicked out of school. The point is this. You know and I know that your report is not going to serve that purpose, because of circumstances you know very well. Then why commit suicide needlessly?'

'I know you have only my interests at heart, and I am thankful for it. But it's no use your trying to talk me out of this. I have made up my mind.'

'But why?'

'I think this whole system is rotten, by which politicians control educational institutions. Somebody has to strike out against it.'

'Why you?'

'Why not me?' Because I am just a poor insignificant teacher?'

Mr Thakar sighed.

'Think of the consequences. First, you may lose your job.'

'I wouldn't mind. I can continue to make a living by giving tuitions. That was what I had planned to do after my retirement anyway.'

'Do you think it would be easy for you to get tuitions if you declare yourself openly an enemy of the Mores?'

Mr Tagde was silent a long time. This was a logical possibility, but it had not occurred to him.

‘Everybody in this town is not afraid of them,’ he said finally. ‘And if they are, there are always other places to go to.’

‘Oh, you mean you are prepared to disarrange your whole life over this worthless boy?’

‘Yes.’

‘We’, I admire you, Tagde, but I still think you are making a foolish mistake.’

Vishnupant Joshi came to see him the next morning, large, aggressively hearty man, a brahmin bagaitdar, careful of his skin but foxy enough to gain a foothold in Maratha politics, and therefore the ideal pacifier and go-between.

Over tea Mr Tagde said, ‘Why should a father’s money and political, power protect his child from punishment which he richly deserves?’

Every time he argued his case, he seemed to receive an inner reinforcement from his own words.

‘I agree with you, it shouldn’t. But the fact is that it does. It does all the time, all over the world. We have to live with it. That’s life. You have to keep your balance. Why jeopardise your position for a fine-sounding sentiment?’

‘We are looking at the questions from two opposing points of view, Mr Joshi, and I cannot hope to make you see mine.’

‘Don’t be in a hurry to take a stand. Think about it for a while. There is still time to withdraw your report?’

‘You can take it as final that I will not withdraw it. If necessary, I am prepared to hand in my resignation.’

‘You are aware that the school committee has powers to stop your pension?’

‘I was not aware of it until you mentioned it.’ Mr Tagde said in cold anger. ‘If you came here to ensure my compliance through threats, you are wasting your time.’

On Wednesday night when Mr Tagde was returning home from a visit to the public lavatory which he used, he was attacked by a group of boys. They beat him with sticks and stones and fists. He thought he recognised Veerendra More among them, thought he heard his voice urging the others to ‘teach the bastard a lesson.’

The next morning, covered with turmeric paste and bandages, unable to get up, Mr Tagde lay in bed groaning with pain.

The night before when he walked in after the beating, his wife had been horrified and angry.

‘Why won’t you take back your silly report? Is it worth being beaten, losing your job? Oh yes, I know what’s going on, even if you won’t tell me anything.’

‘I think it’s worth it,’ he said calmly.

‘They will kill you.’

‘Let them. I am an old man, I am not afraid of dying.’

‘You think only of yourself. What about me? What will happen to me if you die? I shall be a helpless widow for nothing.’

Mr Tagde felt like laughing.

He said gently, ‘Not for nothing, my dear, for a principle.’

‘What good will a principle be to me when I am a widow?’

Then he did laugh, and she withdrew into sullenness which she did not abandon with the dawning of the next day. Watching her going about her work silently, he thought, I cannot be bothered with inessentials, now. I have jumped into this, and I will not back out. God will look after me, and look after her if something does happen to me.

Their neighbours had seen him coming home with a bloody face, so the news must be all over town, but nobody came to see him. This is what I shall have to get used to, he thought with a strange kind of exaltation. I shall have to stand alone. He thanked God for giving him this opportunity to become free of fear at last, to grow into a tall, proud man.

In the evening Mr Thakar came.

‘Glad to see you.’ Mr Tagde said. ‘I thought you had also abandoned me, like the others.’

‘Ha-ha, you do get funny ideas.’

Mr Tagde frowned at the lawyer’s levity in the face of the seriousness of the situation.

‘I bring you news,’ Mr Thakar said.

‘Good or bad?’ Mr Tagde asked cautiously.

‘That depends on you.’

‘If you are going to ask me to back out, you can save your breath.’

‘At least let me tell you everything before you jump to conclusions. When I heard about the beating, I said to myself, this has gone too far. Something must be done about it. So I went to see Ramrao More, Veerendra’s uncle. I put it to him that you were not going to withdraw your report no matter what, and many of the townspeople respected you for it; that the beating you had received was disgraceful and sufficient evidence, if any was needed, that your report is accurate; that the beating, if no action was taken about it, would create a lot of resentment in the town. Finally I said that if he looked at the thing rationally—I emphasised the point that I felt he was the only member of their family who was fully capable of thinking rationally—being kicked out of school might be the best thing that could happen to Veerendra. He agreed.’

‘What!’ Mr Tagde shot up in bed.

‘Calm yourself. Of course he did not agree that Veerendra should be kicked out of school. He agreed that it would do Veerendra good to be taken out of school and put in a boarding school such as the Solapur Boys’ School which is run specially for problem boys. Naturally the family has not been happy about Veerendra’s exploits, but they haven’t known how to control him. I also brought it

to Ramrao's attention that, in view of the forthcoming elections in which Veerendra's father is a candidate, any adverse publicity—such as you, I said, were capable of giving this matter—would be undesirable at this time. So he consulted with Veerendra's father and they have agreed to take the boy out of school immediately, and in June, only three months from now, send him away. This is of course on condition that you withdraw your report about the boy immediately. You will have to agree that it is fair compromise, because it gives you what you want.'

Mr Tagde, white and trembling, sank back on his pillow.

'What is the matter? Mr Thakar asked in alarm. 'Are you feeling ill?'

'No, no, I am all right. This is such a surprise.'

'I understand. After the tension of the last few days it must be a sudden relief. You do agree, don't you? I have to get in touch with Mr More and let him know tonight.'

Mr Tagde nodded mechanically and then closed his eyes; a tired old teacher looking ahead to three more years of teaching and then retirement and a pension, however measly.

- Jai Nimbkar

About the Story

The story begins with the familiar conflict between integrity and justice on the one hand and expediency and corruption on the other. Somewhere in the middle of the story we find that how struggle changed the timid ordinary school teacher into something of a hero who can fight recklessly for a cause sacrificing his career and security. The compromise at the end deflates him by taking away the need for this heroic sacrifice and settling him once more in the groove which he had temporarily transcended.

Glossary

More: pronounced Mo-ray, a common Maratha family name.

bagaitdar: A rich farmer who has irrigated land.

Maratha politics: Marathas are a non-Brahmin caste in Maharashtra who wield a great deal of political power in the state.

stance: position

unwavering: not changing; becoming weaker

expulsion: forcing someone to leave the place

prank: trick played as a joke

gesture: movement with hands or head or face

non-descript: having no interesting features

disrupt: make it difficult to continue in the same way

bonus: advantage

blurs: less clear

sarcastic: expressing of ridicule that wounds
condoning: accept as immoral act
extempore: spoken or done without any previous preparation
elation: happiness;joy
stumbled: hit,walked
feeble: weak
enunciating: saying; pronouncing
endorse: support
bland: with little excitement
saving my own skin: safeguarding one's own interest
enormity: of a great size or effect
access: approach
manoeuvrers: movement performed with skill and care
delinquent: a young person showing tendency to commit crimes
discarded: rejected
brief: (here)instruction
despicable: unpleasant,evil
deserves: to be worthy of something
worthless: useless
foxy: like a fox in appearance
jeopardize: take risk
sentiment: feeling
compliance: practice of obeying rules
silly: foolish, stupid
sullenness: darkness or unhappiness
inessential: not necessary
exaltation: joy,happiness
frowned: got angry
disgrace: insulting
rationally: reasonably
exploits: (here) unwanted daring acts
adverse: negative and unpleasant
merely: not enough,very small in size

COMPREHENSION

(A) Tick the correct alternative:

- (1) The Story 'Death of a Hero' is about the conflict between-
(a)integrity and justice (b)honesty and dishonesty
(c) sincerity and insincerity (d) truth and absolute lie
- (2) Mr.Tedge is a _____

(a) doctor (b) teacher (c) lawyer (d)nurse

- (3) “I have to get in touch with Mr.More and let him know tonight...” Who speaks these words and to whom?
(a) Mr.Thakar to Mr. Tadge (b) Mr.Tedge to Mr.Thakar
(c) Mrs.Tedge to Mr.Thakar (e) Mrs.Thakar to Mr.Tedge

(B) Answer the following questions in about 10-15 words each:

1. Who is the hero in ‘The Death of the Hero?’
2. Name the boy whose expulsion from School Mr.Tadge asks for?
3. What is ‘Vartavihar’?
4. Who is the Principal of the School?
5. Who is Vishnupant Joshi?

(C) Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words each:

1. Why does Mr.Tedge insist that Veerendra More be expelled from the School?
2. What according to Mr.Thakar,may happen to Mr.Tadge if he insists on the expulsion of the boy from the School?
3. On what condition does Mr.Tadge agree to withdraw his report about the boy?
4. Who, according to the author, control the educational institutions?

(D) Answer the following questions in about 60-80 words each:

1. The story ‘The Death of a Hero’ is a satire on our educational institutions.Discuss.
2. How is a timid school teacher changed into a hero?

(E) Say whether the following are true or false. Write ‘F’ for False and ‘T’ for true

1. The Chairman of the School committee, where Mr.Tedge works isVeerendra More’s Uncle. []
2. Mr.Tedge agrees to withdraw the report only if Veerendra More’s expulsion is ensured. []
3. The story is a satire on the functioning of the present day education. []
4. Mr. Tadge protests because he has personal enmity with Veerendra More. []
5. Veerendra More represents the students whose aim is to spoil the system. []

KARMA



Sir Mohan Lal looked at himself in the mirror of a first-class waiting room at the railway station. The mirror was obviously made in India. The red oxide at its back had come off at several places and long lines of translucent glass cut across its surface. Sir Mohan smiled at the mirror with an air of pity and patronage.

The mirror smiled back at Sir Mohan.

“You are a bit of all right, old chap,” it said. ‘Distinguished, efficient—even handsome. That neatly trimmed moustache—the suit from Saville Row with the carnation in the button-hole—the aroma of eau de cologne, talcum powder, and scented soap all about you! Yes, old fellow, you are a bit of all right.’

Sir Mohan threw out his chest, smoothed his Balliol tie for the umpteenth time and waved a goodbye to the mirror.

Outside the waiting room Sir Mohan Lal’s luggage lay piled along the wall. On a small grey steel trunk Lachmi, Lady Mohan Lal, sat chewing a betel leaf and fanning herself with a newspaper. She was short and fat and in her middle forties. She wore a white sari with a red border. On one side of her nose glistened a diamond nose-ring and she had several gold bangles on her arms. She had been talking to the bearer until Sir Mohan had summoned him inside. As soon as he had gone, she hailed a passing railway coolie.

‘Where does the zenana stop?’

‘Right at the end of the platform.’

The coolie flattened his turban to make a cushion, hoisted the steel trunk on his head, and moved down the platform. Lady Lal picked up her brass tiffin-carrier and ambled along behind him. On the way she stopped by a hawker’s stall to replenish her silver betel-leaf case, and then joined the coolie. She sat down on her steel trunk (which the coolie had put down) and started talking to him.

‘Are the trains very crowded on these lines?’

‘These days all trains are crowded, but you’ll find room in the zenana.’

‘Then I might as well get over the bother of eating.’

Lady Lal opened the brass carrier and took out a bundle of cramped chapatties and some mango pickle. While she ate, the coolie sat opposite her, drawing lines in the gravel with his finger.

‘Are you travelling alone, sister?’

‘No, I am with my master, brother. He is in the waiting room. He travels first class. He is a vizier and barrister, and meets many officers and Englishmen in the trains—and I am only a native woman. I can’t understand English and don’t know their ways, so I keep to my zenana inter-class.’

Lachmi chatted away merrily. She was fond of a little gossip and had no one to talk to at home. Her husband never had any time to spare for her. She lived in the upper storey of the house and he on the ground floor. He did not like her poor illiterate relatives hanging about his bungalow, so they never came.

The signal came down and the clanging of the bell announced the approaching train. Lady Lal hurriedly finished off her meal. She got up, still licking the stone of the pickled mango. She emitted a long, loud belch as she went to the public tap to rinse her mouth and hands. After washing she dried her mouth and hands with the loose end of her sari and walked back to her steel trunk, belching and thanking the gods for the favour of a filling meal.

The train steamed in. Lachmi found herself facing an almost empty inter-class zenana compartment next to the guard’s van, at the tail end of the train. The rest of the train was packed. She heaved her squat, bulky frame through the door and found a seat by the window. She produced a two-anna bit from a knot in her sari and dismissed the coolie. She then opened her betel case and made herself two betel leaves charged with a red and white paste, minced betelnuts and cardamoms. These she thrust into her mouth till her cheeks bulged on both sides. Then she rested her chin on her hands and sat gazing idly at the jostling crowd on the platform.

The arrival of the train did not disturb Sir Mohan Lal’s sang-froid. He continued to sip his Scotch and ordered the bearer to tell him when he had moved the luggage to a first-class compartment. Excitement, bustle, and hurry were exhibitions of bad breeding, and Sir Mohan was eminently well bred. In his five years abroad, Sir Mohan had acquired the manners and attitudes of the upper classes. He rarely spoke Hindustani. When he did, it was like an Englishman’s—only the very necessary words and properly anglicized. But he fancied his English, finished and refined at no less a place than the University of Oxford. He was fond of conversation, and like a cultured Englishman he could talk on almost any subject—books, politics, people. How frequently had he heard English people say that he spoke like an Englishman!

Sir Mohan wondered if he would be travelling alone. It was a Cantonment and some English officers might be on the train. His heart warmed at the prospect of an impressive conversation. He never showed any sign of eagerness to talk to the English as most Indians did. Nor was he loud, aggressive, and opinionated like

them. He went about his business with an expressionless matter-of-factness. He would retire to his corner by the window and get out a copy of *The Times*. He would fold it in a way in which the name of the paper was visible to others while he did the crossword puzzle. *The Times* always attracted attention. Someone would like to borrow it when he put it aside with a gesture signifying, 'I've finished with it.' Perhaps someone would recognize his Bailiol tie which he always wore while travelling. That would open a vista leading to a fairyland of Oxford colleges, masters, dons, tutors, boat races, and rugger matches. If both *The Times* and the tie failed, Sir Mohan would 'Koi Hai' his bearer to get the Scotch out. Whisky never failed with Englishmen. Then followed Sir Mohan's handsome gold cigarette case filled with English cigarettes. English cigarettes in India? How on earth did he get them? Sure, he didn't mind? And Sir Mohan's understanding smile—of course he didn't. But could he use the Englishman as a medium to commune with his dear old England? Those five years of grey bags and gowns, of sports blazers and mixed doubles, of dinners at the Inns of Court. Five years of a crowded glorious life.

Sir Mohan's thoughts were disturbed by the bearer announcing the installation of the Sahib's luggage in a first-class coupe next to the engine. Sir Mohan walked to his coupe with a studied gait. He was dismayed. The compartment was empty. With a sigh he sat down in a corner and opened the copy of *The Times* he had read several times before.

Sir Mohan looked out of the window down the crowded platform. His face lit up as he saw two English soldiers trudging along, looking in all the compartments for room. They had their haversacks slung behind their backs and walked unsteadily. Sir Mohan decided to welcome them, even though they were entitled to travel only second class. He would speak to the guard.

One of the soldiers came up to the last compartment and stuck his face through the window. He surveyed the compartment and noticed the unoccupied berth.

"Ere, Bill," he shouted, "one'ere."

His companion came up, also looked in, and looked at Sir Mohan.

'Get the nigger out,' he muttered to his companion.

They opened the door, and turned to the half-smiling, half- protesting Sir Mohan.

'Reserved!' yelled Bill.

'Janata-Reserved. Army-Fauj,' exclaimed Jim; pointing to his khaki shirt.

'Ek dum jao—get out!'

'I say, I say, surely,' protested Sir Mohan in his Oxford accent.

The soldiers paused. It almost sounded like English, but they knew better than to trust their inebriated ears. The engine whistled and the guard waved his green flag.

They picked up Sir Mohan's suitcase and flung it into the platform. Then followed his thermos-flask, suitcase, bedding, and *The Times*. Sir Mohan was livid with rage.

'Preposterous, preposterous,' he shouted hoarse with anger. 'I'll have you arrested—guard, guard!'

Bill and Jim paused again. It did sound like English, but it was too much of the King's for them.

'Keep yer ruddy mouth shut!' And Jim struck Sir Mohan flat on the face.

The engine gave another short whistle and the train began to move. The soldiers caught Sir Mohan by the arms and flung him out of the train. He reeled backwards, tripped on his bedding, and landed on the suitcase.

'Toodle-oo!'

Sir Mohan's feet were glued to the earth and he lost his speech. He stared at the lighted windows of the train going past him in quickening tempo. The tail end of the train appeared with a red light and the guard standing in the open doorway with the flags in his hands.

In the inter-class zenana compartment was Lachmi, fair and fat, on whose nose the diamond nose-ring glistened against the station lights. Her mouth was bloated with betel saliva which she had been storing up to spit as soon as the train had cleared the station. As the train sped past the lighted part of the platform, Lady Lal spat and sent a jet of red dribble flying across like a dart.

- Khushwant Singh

About the story -

The story 'Karma' takes the reader back to the colonial pre-Independence India, when many western-educated Indians prided themselves on their superior Western culture and demeanour. In this story Sir Mohan Lal, an anglophile, puts on airs about his Oxford background and perfect English accent, only to be humiliated by a pair of ill-educated, drunken and boorish English soldiers' who not only dislodge him from his reserved berth but first strike him on the face, and then fling him out of the train. This traumatic experience shocks him into realizing his true identity.

Written by Khushwant Singh, a well-known novelist, short story writer and journalist, the story is dramatic, vigorous and witty. The style is lucid and forthright.

Glossary

translucent: allowing light to pass through

carnation: a flower of bright, rosy, pink colour

Saville Row: a fashionable shopping centre in London

aroma: sweet smell, fragrance

eau de cologne: a perfumed toilet water

Balliol: An Oxford college founded in 1263 by John de Baliol (d. 1269)
umpteens: many
glistened: shined
ruminate: meditate
zenana: ladies' compartment
hoisted: raised
ambled along: moved along at an easy pace
hawker: a person who sells things by going from place to place
gravel: small stones
vizier: an important official in past
replenish: fill up again
anglicized: made something English in character
squat: short and thick
sangfroid: undisturbed poise and calmness in difficult circumstances
The Times: leading British newspaper published in London
vista: prospect, possibility
dons: lecturers
boat races: annual boat races between Oxford and Cambridge universities
rugger: rugby football
blazer: loose-fitting jacket, sometimes in the colours of a team, club, school or college
clanging: making a bond ringing sound
emitted: sent out
belch: to let air come up noisily from stomach and out through mouth
Piccadilly: A street in central London, extending from Hyde Park eastwards to Piccadilly Circus, noted for its fashionable shops, hotels, and restaurants
Cardamom: dried seeds used in cooking as a spice (Ilaaychi)
bulged: stuck out
commune: to share feelings without speaking
gait: a way of walking
slung: threw in a careless way
mattered: spoke something in a quiet voice that was difficult to hear
unoccupied: (here) empty
yelled: shouted loudly
reeled: moved because you were hit
protested: opposition
preposterous: unreasonably annoying and shocking
glued: joined two things together
stared: looked at for a long time
tempo: speed or rhythm
saliva: liquid that is produced in mouth that helps to swallow food
tripped: fell down

Inns of Court: law societies in London having the sole right of admitting persons to the bar
coupe: a railway compartment for two passengers
trudging along: walking wearily
haversack: a canvas bag carried on the back or over the shoulder
'Ere: here
yer: your
nigger: here, a coloured man (or a negro)
Ek dumjao: get out at once (Hindi)
inebriated: drunken
livid: of the colour of lead, blue-grey (here, it means furiously, angry)
the King's: the King's English, standard English
chap: informal and old fashioned man
bother: trouble
ruddy: here it means 'bloody' (slang)
bloated: swollen, stuffed, full
dribble: a drop or a small trickling stream
dart: quick, sudden, forward movement

COMPREHENSION

(A) Tick the correct alternative:

1. Khushwant Singh was not a
(a) journalist (b) novelist
(c) short-story writer (d) politician
2. Balliol is a/an
(a) Oxford college (b) Christ college
(c) Rodgee's college (d) a famous university in London
3. He is a vizier ... Who is a vizier?
(a) Sir Mohan Lal (b) Bill (c) Jim (d) Lachmi

(B) Answer the following questions in about 10-15 words each:

1. Where was Sir Mohan Lal's luggage lay piled up?
2. 'Are you travelling alone, sister?' Who speaks these words and to whom?
3. 'She was fond of a little gossip and had no one to talk to at home.' To whom does these lines refer to?
4. Who flings Mohan Lal out of the train?

(C) Answer the following questions in about 20-30 words each:

1. Comment on Sir Mohan Lal's manner of speech.
2. What is Mohan Lal's attitude towards Indian culture?
3. Write a note on Sir Mohan Lal's dress.

4. What was Lachmi's attitude towards the coolie?
5. Why did Lachmi travel in the Zenana and not with her husband in the first class?

(D) Answer the following questions in about 60-80 words each:

1. Bring out the significance of the title 'Karma'.
2. Who is an anglophile in the story? Describe the characteristics that make him an anglophile.

(E) Say whether the following statements are true or false. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False:

1. Sir Mohan Lal in Khushwant Singh's story 'Karma' is an anglophile. []
2. Sir Mohan Lal and his wife Lachmi (in Khushwant Singh's Karma) lived in the upper storey of the house. []
3. The story 'Karma' is about post-independence India. []
4. Sir Mohan had decided to welcome Jim and Bill. []

A large red dashed border with rounded corners frames the central text.

Road Safety Education

Comprehension Passage



Read the following poem and answer the questions that follow :

Death of An Innocent

I went to a party, mom, I remember what you said,
you told me not to drink, mom, so I drank soda instead,
I didn't touch a drink, mom, though everyone said I should,
I really felt proud inside, mom, just the way you said I would.

I know I did the right thing, mom,
I know you're always right,
Now the party is finally ending, mom,
and everyone's driving out of sight.
As I got into my car, mom,
I knew I'd get home in one piece,
Because of the way you raised me, mom,
so responsible and sweet.



I started drive away, mom,
but as I pulled out onto the road,
The other car didn't see me,
mom and hit me like a load.
As I lie here on the pavement, mom,
I hear the policeman say,
The other guy is drunk, mom, and now I'm the one who'll pay.



I'm lying here dying. mom, I wish you'd get here soon.
How could this happen to me, mom? My life burst like a balloon.
There's blood all around me, mom, and most of it is mine,
I hear the medico say, mom, I'll die in a short time.

I just wanted to tell you, mom, I swear I didn't drink,
It was the others, mom. The others didn't think.
He was probably at the same party as I,
The only difference is, he drank and I will die.

Why do people drink, mom? It can ruin your whole life,
 I'm feeling sharp pains now, mom, pains just like a knife.
 The guy that hit me is walking, mom. I don't think it is fair,
 I'm lying here dying, mom, all he can do is stare.



Tell my brother not to cry, mom,
 Tell daddy to be brave.
 And when I go to heaven, mom,
 Put "daddy's girl" on my grave.
 Someone should have told him, mom, not to drink and drive.
 If only they had told him, mom, I would still be alive.



My breath is getting short, mom, I'm becoming very scared.
 Please don't cry for me, mom.
 When I needed you, you were always there.
 I have one last question, mom, before I say goodbye.
 I didn't drink and drive, mom, so why am I the one to die ?

- Q1 Who is the speaker of the above lines ?
- Q2 Who is he/she speaking to ?
- Q3 What do we know about the speaker and his/her character ?
- Q4 How old is the speaker of the above lines?
- Q5 Which scene has been described in the poem ?
- Q6 What do we know about the other driver ?
- Q7 What social problem does the speaker's plight bring to our mind ?
- Q8 What do you know about teenage driving?
- Q9 Why are so many teenagers involved in car accidents?
- Q10 The last two verses of the poem bring about a sense of
 and and make us feel very about

- Q11 Suggest another appropriate title for the poem.

Follow Up Activity :

The name of the drunk driver of the above poem was Mark Jones. Work in groups and have a mock trial in class: The State against Mark Jones. You need a prosecutor, lawyers, witnesses and a judge, of course.



Letter Writing



News

Driving behaviour is an extension of public behaviour.. Social scientists say that “ we are unable to ever ‘give way’, lest this be seen as a weakness”. Seldom is the right of way given to an ambulance, while it is considered smart to jump queues at toll gates or violate a red-light traffic signal. Following the rules. it seems, is left to the meek. [The Economics Times]



You have just read the above article in the Economic Times. Write a letter to the editor expressing your concern over the ever increasing number of accidents on our roads today. Site inexperience, risk taking, lack of hazard perception, non existent road culture and apathy towards rules and regulations as major causes that lead to accidents. (150-200 wards)



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Article Writing



ROAD OFFENCES

S.No.	OFFENCES	MAXIMUM PENALTY	SECTION
2.1.1	Driving by Minor.	Rs. 500/-	4r/w 181 MVA
2.1.2	Allowing Unauthorized person to drive	Rs. 1000/-	5r/w180MVA
2.1.3	Driving without Helmet	Rs. 100/-	129r/w177 MVA
2.1.4	Seat Belts not fastened.	Rs. 100/-	138(3)CMVR 177 MVA
2.1.5	Roug/Rash/Negligent Driving	Rs. 1000/-	184 MVA
2.1.6	Dangerous or hasty Driving	Rs. 1000/- and/or imprisonment (6 months)	112-183MVA
2.1.7	Not Driving in Proper Lane.	Court Challan	66r/w192MVA
2.1.8	Driving in the Center and not to left side	Rs. 100/-	2 RRRr/w177 MVA
2.1.9	Driving against One Way.	Rs. 100/-	17(i)RRR177MVA



S.No.	OFFENCES	MAXIMUM PENALTY	SECTION
2.1.10	Driving Under influence of Alcohol/	Rs. 2000/- and/or imprisonment (6 months)	185 MVA
2.1.11	Taking “U” turn during outlawed hours	Rs. 100/-	12 RRR 177 MVA
2.1.12	Using Mobile Phone while Driving	Up to 1000/-	184 MVA
2.1.13	In case of a minor Accident	Rs. 1000/-	184MVA
2.1.14	Failing to Carry on left of traffic island	Rs. 100/-	2 RRR 177 MVA
2.1.15	Playing music while Driving	Rs. 100/-	102/177MVA
4.7	Using horn in Silence Zone	Rs. 100/-	21(ii) RRR 177 MVA
5.1	Using Vehicle in Unsafe Conditions	Court Challan	192 MVA
5.2.	When motor Vehicle is out of state for more than 12 months	Rs. 100/-	47-177MVA
5.3	Particulars to be printed on transport vehicles	Rs. 100/-	84(G)-177 MVA
5.4	Without Wiper	Rs. 100/-	CMVR 101 5,12/177 MVA
5.4	Without Side Mirror	Rs. 100/-	5,7/177MVA
5.5	Defective tyres	Rs. 100/-	CMVR 94
5.6	No indication board on left hand drive vehicle	Rs. 100/-	120,177 MVA
5.7	Sale of motor vehicle/ alteration of motor vehicle in contravention of Act.	Rs. 300/-	52/191 MVA 31/192.66/192 MV Act
5.8	Vehicles fitted with dark glasses/ Sun films	Rs. 100/-	100 CMVR 177 MVA

S.No.	OFFENCES	MAXIMUM PENALTY	SECTION
5.9	Driving without proper number plate/ illuminating rear number plate	Rs.100/-	236 MMVR 177 MVA
5.10	Failing to display public carrier board	Rs.100/-	116 MMVR 177 MVA
5.11	Using Private vehicle for commercial Purposes	Rs.5000/- (not less than Rs. 2000/-)	
5.12	Any sort of misconduct with passengers, not wearing uniform/ not displaying badge	Rs.100/-	MMVR 21 (18)177 MVA
5.13	Overloading a goods vehicle	Rs.2000/- plus Rs. 1000/- for every additional ton.	MMVR 93(u)(i) 177MVA
5.14	Carrying goods in a dangerous or hazardous manner	Imprisonment and/ or fine of Rs.3000/-	29 RRR 177 MVA
5.15	Infringement of permit conditions	Imprisonment and/or fine of Rs.5000/- (not less than Rs.2000/-)	
5.16	Use of Colored light on Vehicle	Rs. 100/-	97(2) 177 DMVR
6.1	Plying in No ENTRY Time	Upto 2000/-	115/194 MVA
6	Violation of Time Table	Court Challan	11/177,2/177 66/192 MVA
6.2	High and long/Load in Vehicles	Rs. 100/-	29 RRR/ 177MVA
6.3	Carrying animals in goods vehicles in Contravention of rules	Rs. 100/-	MMVR 83 177 MVA
6.4	Carrying persons dangerously or carrying persons in goods vehicles	Rs. 100/-	MMVR 108 177 MVA
6.6	Dangerous projection of goods	Rs. 100/-	229 MMVR 29 RRR 177 MVA

S.No.	OFFENCES	MAXIMUM PENALTY	SECTION
6.7	Carrying goods unsecured	Rs. 100/-	MMVR 202 177 MVA
6.8	Carrying goods more than 11 feet high	Rs 100/-	MMVR 93 (u)(i) 177 MVA
6.9	Load on Tail Board	Rs. 100/-	MMVR 202 177 MVA
6.10	Misbehavior by Taxi/TSR Driver	Rs. 100/-	11(3)/177DMVR
6.11	Over Charging by Taxi/TSR Driver	Rs. 100/-	11(8)/177DMVR
6.12	Charging without Meter	Rs. 100/-	11(3)/177DMVR
6.13	Refusal by Taxi/TSR Driver	Rs. 100/-	11(9)/177DMVR
6.14	Driver without Uniform	Rs. 100/-	7/177DMVR
6.14	Driver without Badge	Rs. 100/-	22(1)/177DMVR
6.15	Conductor without Uniform	Rs. 100/-	23(1)/177DMVR
6.16	Conductor without Badge	Rs. 100/-	23(1)/177DMVR
6.17	Stopping without Bus stop	Court Challan	66/192 MVA
6.18	Power to detain Vehicle used in contravention of section 3.4,39 or 66(1) MV Act.	Court Challan	207(1) MVA
7.1	Paking in the direction of flow of traffic	Rs. 100/-	22(a) RRR 177 MVA
7.2	Parking away from footpath towards road.	Rs. 100/-	15(2) RRR 177 MVA
7.3	Parking against flow of traffic	Rs. 100/-	15(2) RRR 177 MVA

S.No.	OFFENCES	MAXIMUM PENALTY	SECTION
7.4	Parking causing Obstruction	Rs. 100/-	15(2) RRR 177 MVA
7.5	Parking on a Taxi Stand	Rs. 100/-	15(2) RRR 177 MVA
7.6	Parking in not any prescribed manner	Rs. 100/-	15(1) RRR 177 MVA
7.7	Parking at any Corner	Rs. 100/-	15(1) RRR 177 MVA
7.8	Parking within 15 meters on either side of Bus Stop	Rs. 100/-	15(2) RRR 177 MVA
7.9	Parking on Bridge	Rs. 100/-	15(2)(i) RRR 177 MVA
7.10	Parking at Traffic Island	Rs. 100/-	15(1) RRR 177 MVA
7.11	Parking “No Parking” Area	Rs. 100/-	15(2) RRR 177 MVA
7.12	Parked on Pedestrian Crossing	Rs. 100/-	15(2)(iii) RRR 177 MVA
7.13	Parking on Footpath	Rs. 100/-	15(2)(ii) RRR 177 MVA
7.14	Parking in front of a gate	Rs. 100/-	15(2)(viii) RRR 177 MVA
7.15	Parking causing obstruction	Rs. 100/-	15(1) RRR 177 MVA

RRR: Rules of Road Regulations 1989

MVA : Motor Vehicle Act 1988

MMVR: Maharashtra Motor Vehicles Rules 1989

CMVA: Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989



Parking on footpath or in front of a gate can cause obstruction

Grammar Exercise



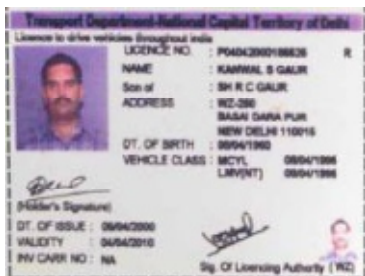
Complete the following passage by filling in appropriate words:

CHANDIGARH: When singers were reluctant to pen verses on the “dry subject” of traffic rules road safety, 41 year. old head constable Desh Raj of the Traffic Police decided to put his passion poetry and singing to good use.



Writing poems on road safety, need..... helmets for women, the hazards of drunk driving and the like, Desh Raj’s first poem was over speeding. He even staged a play on Duryodhan chasing Draupadi on the roads, breaking rules, Road Safety Week celebrations.

The head constable holds court the Children’s Traffic Park in Sector 23. He enjoys sessions on road safety school children, peppers them with couplets, incorporates movies on serious issue, gathers informative reading material and gives practical demonstrations training.



“For classes V to X traffic sessions deal..... minor security issues. Class X onwards, teenagers are taught the importance of driving with license and the responsibility every driver must have. We ask studentsshare their experience at th Traffic Park with friends and others to spread traffic awareness, “said Raj.

Many organisations and Army units invite for interactive sessions. Swelling with pride, Desh Raj tells, “ Intelligent people will always appreciate public safety .” His colleagues call him department hero.



Note :-

This passage salutes an individual’s efforts to sensitize us to a burning social issue and reiterates the fact that an individual CAN make a difference. Let’s work towards safe and accident free roads. We owe it to ourselves.

Follow Up Activity :

Use the internet to read up articles about children who have organized campaigns on road safety in their neighborhoods. Bring two of your favourite articles to school and share them with your friends.

