

ENGLISH LITERATURE

(Class-VII)



Publication Division
D.A.V. College Managing Committee
Chitragupta Road, New Delhi-110055

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1

Monkey Trouble

by Ruskin Bond

Pre-reading Task

1. Whenever we think of an animal or a bird, a particular quality comes to our mind. Pick up appropriate qualities from the box given and write them opposite the names of the animals/birds.

dove : _____
 dog : _____
 fox : _____
 parrot : _____
 monkey : _____



talkative cunning mischievous gentle faithful

2. Why do you think street entertainers prefer monkeys to other household pets like cats and dogs? Discuss with your friends.

Read the following story and enjoy the mischiefs of a troublesome monkey.

Grandfather bought Tutu from a street entertainer for the sum of ten rupees. The man had three monkeys. Tutu was the smallest but the most mischievous. She was tied up most of the time. The little monkey looked so miserable with a collar and chain that Grandfather decided it would be much happier in our home. Grandfather had a weakness for keeping unusual pets. It was the habit that I, at the age of eight or nine, used to encourage.



Grandmother at first objected to having a monkey in the house. 'You have enough pets as it is,' she said referring to Grandfather's goat, several white mice, and a small tortoise.

'But I don't have any,' I said. 'You're wicked enough for two monkeys. One boy in the house is all I can take.'

'Ah, but Tutu isn't a boy,' said Grandfather triumphantly. 'This is a little girl monkey!'

Grandmother gave in. She had always wanted a little girl in the house. She believed girls were less troublesome than boys. Tutu was to prove her wrong.

She was a pretty little monkey.

Her bright eyes sparkled with mischief beneath deep-set eyebrows. And her teeth, which were pearly white, were often revealed in a grin that frightened the wits out of Aunt Ruby whose nerves had already suffered from the presence of Grandfather's pet python in the house at Lucknow. But this was Dehra, my grandparents' house, and aunts and uncles had to put up with our pets.

One day Aunt Ruby took us all by surprise. She announced that she had become engaged. We had always thought that Aunt Ruby would never marry—she had often said herself—but it appeared that the right man had now come along in the person of Rocky Fernandes, a school teacher from Goa.



Rocky was a tall, firm-jawed, good-natured man, who visited the house quite often and brought me chocolates and cashewnuts, of which, he seemed to have an unlimited supply. He also taught me several marching songs. Naturally I approved of Rocky. Aunt Ruby won my admiration for having made such a wise choice.

One day I overheard them talking of going to the *bazaar* to buy an engagement ring. I decided I would go along too. But as Aunt Ruby had made it clear that she did



not want me around, I decided that I had better follow at a **discreet** distance. Tutu, becoming aware that a mission of some importance was underway, decided to follow me. But as I had not invited her along, she too decided to keep out of sight.

Once in the crowded *bazaar*, I was able to get quite close to Aunt Ruby and Rocky without being spotted. I waited until they had settled down in a large jewellery shop before **sauntering** past and spotting them as though by accident. Aunt Ruby wasn't too pleased at seeing me, but Rocky waved and called out. 'Come and join us! Help your aunt choose a beautiful ring!'

The whole thing seemed to be a waste of good money, but I did not say so—Aunt Ruby was giving me one of her most unloving looks.



While the jeweller and Aunt Ruby were sifting through the diamond rings, Tutu had slipped into the shop without being noticed by anyone but me. A little **squeal** of delight was the first sign she gave of her presence. Everyone looked up to see her trying on a pretty necklace.

'And what are those stones?' I asked.

'They look like pearls,' said Rocky.

'They are pearls,' said the shopkeeper, making a grab for them.

'It's that dreadful monkey!' cried Aunt Ruby. 'I knew the boy would bring her here!'

The necklace was already **adorning** Tutu's neck. I thought she looked rather nice in them, but she gave us no time to admire the effect. Springing out of our reach Tutu dodged around Rocky, slipped between my legs, and made for the crowded road. I ran after her, shouting to her to stop, but she wasn't listening.

discreet: that does not attract attention
sauntering: walking in a slow and relaxed manner

squeal: long, loud, high cry
adorn: to decorate

The jeweller, with a cry of **anguish**, **plunged** into the canal. So did Rocky. So did I. So did several other people, both adults and children. It was to be a treasure hunt!

Some twenty minutes later, Rocky shouted, 'I've found it!' Covered in mud, water-lilies, ferns and tadpoles, we emerged from the canal, and Rocky presented the necklace to the relieved shopkeeper. Finally the ring was bought, the engagement was announced and a date was set for the wedding.



A few days before the wedding I found Tutu in the kitchen helping Grandmother prepare the wedding cake. Tutu often helped with the cooking, and, when Grandmother wasn't looking, added herbs, spices, and other interesting items to the pots.

I'm not sure exactly what went into that wedding cake when Grandmother wasn't looking—but I did spot Tutu **stirring** in some red chilli sauce, bitter gourd seeds, and a generous helping of egg-shells!

It's true that some of the guests were not seen for several days after the wedding but no one said anything against the cake. Most people thought it had an interesting flavour.

anguish: suffering caused by pain or worry
plunged: fell suddenly forward or downward
stirring: mixing and moving

I Understanding the Story

A. Some statements based on the story are given below. Tick (T) for true statements and (F) for false statements. Rewrite the false statements after making corrections.

1. The street entertainer who sold Tutu had three other monkeys.



2. Rocky often gave chocolates and walnuts to the narrator.



3. Rocky took Aunt Ruby to a jeweller's shop for buying an engagement ring.



4. Tutu followed the narrator to the jeweller's shop without being noticed.



5. Tutu put some herbs and spices in the wedding cake.



B. Answer the following questions in not more than 30 words each.

1. How was Grandmother convinced to keep Tutu as a pet?
2. Why did the narrator follow Aunt Ruby and Rocky secretly to the jeweller's shop? What reason did Tutu have for following them?
3. Why did the people in the *bazaar* chase Tutu?
4. What did Tutu do with the necklace? How was it restored to the shopkeeper?
5. Why do you think some guests were not seen for several days after the marriage?

- C. The sentences below give an account of the menace that Tutu created in the bazaar, but the sentences are jumbled. Rearrange them by writing appropriate serial number in the box provided against each sentence. The opening sentence is given.**

Tutu followed Aunt Ruby and Rocky secretly to the jeweller's shop.

- (a) Rocky, the jeweller and several people in the market followed her.
- (b) Tutu leapt on the back of a scooterist.
- (c) She slipped into the shop without being noticed.
- (d) Tutu rushed out into the market.
- (e) Tutu took the road leading to the narrator's house.
- (f) She then landed on a donkey which panicked and rushed down the road.
- (g) She threw the necklace into a canal.
- (h) Aunt Ruby and the jeweller saw her and tried to grab the necklace.
- (i) Rocky dived into the canal, traced the necklace and returned it to the shopkeeper.
- (j) She took a pearl necklace and put it round her neck.



II HOTS

Some animals have a sharp mind. They amaze us by their actions. Do you think they are able to think in the right direction? Why/Why not?

III Life Skills

Do you like Tutu? If given a chance, would you like to keep her as a pet?

IV Values

The narrator decided to secretly follow Aunt Ruby and her fiancé Rocky to the market. Is he justified in doing that?

V Writing Skills

Tutu took a pearl necklace from a jeweller's shop and created a huge mess in the market before finally throwing it into a canal. The jeweller felt quite tense about the whole episode. Write the jeweller's diary entry describing how he felt at Tutu's mischief.

About the Author

Ruskin Bond was born in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, in 1934. He was brought up at different places that included Jamnagar, Dehradun and Shimla. He wrote his first novel *Room on the Roof* when he was just 17 years old for which he received the **John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial** prize in 1957.



Ruskin Bond has now been writing for more than six decades. His collections of short stories—*The Night Train at Deoli*, *Time Stops at Shamli* and *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* are worth reading. Replete with unassuming humour and quiet wisdom, his stories manifest a deep love for nature and people.

2

Birdie, will you pet?

by W. Allingham

Pre-reading Task

1. If asked to choose between money and freedom, what would you choose and why?
2. Can you think of a few things that come with freedom and cannot be bought with money? Discuss with your partner and prepare a list.

Now read the poem given below where a child is tempting a bird to be her pet.

CHILD : 'Birdie, Birdie, will you pet?
Summer-time is far away yet,
You'll have silken quilts and a velvet bed,
And a pillow of satin for your head!'

BIRD : 'I'd rather sleep in the ivy wall;
No rain comes through, tho' I hear it fall.
The sun peeps gay at dawn of day,
And I sing, and wing away, away!'



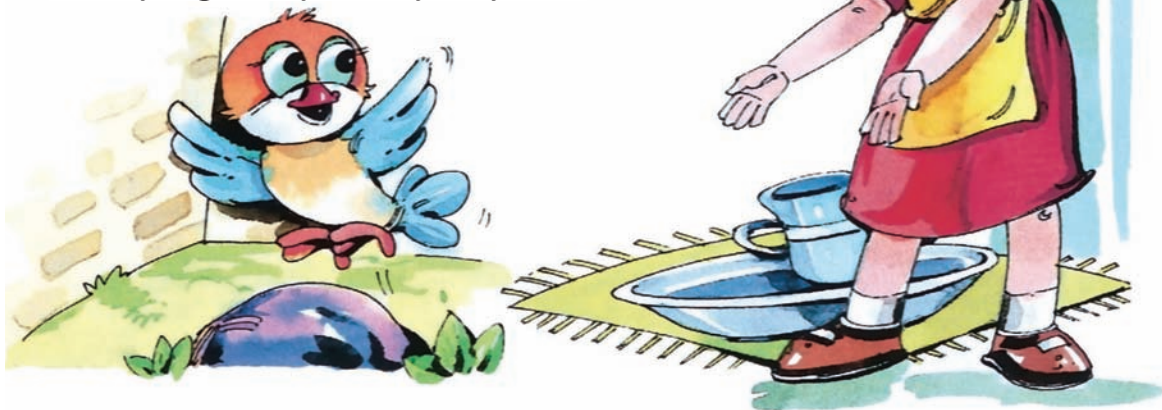
CHILD : 'O Birdie, Birdie, will you pet?
Diamond-stones and **amber** and jet
We'll string on a necklace fair and fine,
To please this pretty bird of mine!

BIRD : 'O thanks for diamonds, and thanks for jet,
But here is something **daintier** yet—
A feather necklace round and round,
That I wouldn't sell for a thousand pound!



CHILD : 'O Birdie, Birdie, won't you pet?
We'll buy you a dish of **silver fret**,
A golden cup and an ivory seat,
And carpets soft beneath your feet!

BIRD : 'Can running water be drunk from gold?
Can a silver dish the forest hold?
A rocking twig is the finest chair,
And the softest paths lie through the air—
Good-bye, good-bye to my lady fair!



amber: a brown substance for making jewellery
daintier: sweeter
silver fret: decorated with silver thread

I

Understanding the Poem

- A. In the poem, the child offers various comforts to the bird in exchange for its freedom, but the bird declines them. Complete the chart given below by filling in the offers made by the child and the bird's preference over them.

The child offers		The bird prefers
(a) Silken quilts (b) _____ (c) _____	→	_____ _____ _____
↓		↓
A necklace made of _____ _____ made _____	→	_____ _____ _____
↓		↓
(a) _____ (b) a golden cup (c) _____ (d) _____	→	_____ _____ _____ _____

- B. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- (a) I'd rather sleep in the ivy wall;
 No rain comes through, tho' I hear it fall.
 The sun peeps gay at dawn of day,
 And I sing, and wing away, away!
- (i) Who is 'I' in the above lines?
- (ii) Ivy is a plant. What does the bird want to convey by describing it as a wall?
- (iii) What does the speaker prefer ivy wall to?



(b) A feather necklace round and round,
That I wouldn't sell for a thousand pound!

- (i) What is the necklace offered by the child made of?
- (ii) What is the necklace that the bird has made of?
- (iii) Which necklace does the bird prefer? Why?



C. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

D. Pick out at least three examples of alliteration from the poem.

- (a) _____ Stanza 2
- (b) _____ Stanza 2
- (c) _____ Stanza 3

II HOTS

Why does the bird refuse to accept the various comforts offered by the child? Discuss.

III Life Skills

Is freedom just the right to live as we wish?

IV Values

Why does the child call the bird 'birdie'? Why does the child use the word 'birdie' twice?

The child in the poem realises that the bird cannot be lured. She has her own priorities in life. Freedom is equally important to her. The child decides to share the conversation between her and the bird with her friend through a letter. Write the letter in not more than 120 words.

About the Author

William Allingham was born on 19 March 1824 in the little port of Ballyshannon, County Donegal, Ireland. He produced excellent lyrical and descriptive poetry, and the best of his pieces are thoroughly national in spirit. He published *Poems* in 1850, followed by *Day and Night Songs*, a volume containing many charming lyrics, in 1855. His verse is clear, fresh, and graceful.

Other works are *Fifty Modern Poems* (1865), *Songs, Poems, and Ballads* (1877), *Evil May Day* (1883), *Blackberries* (1884) and his most famous work, *The Faeries*.



3

A Hero

by R. K. Narayan

Pre-reading Task

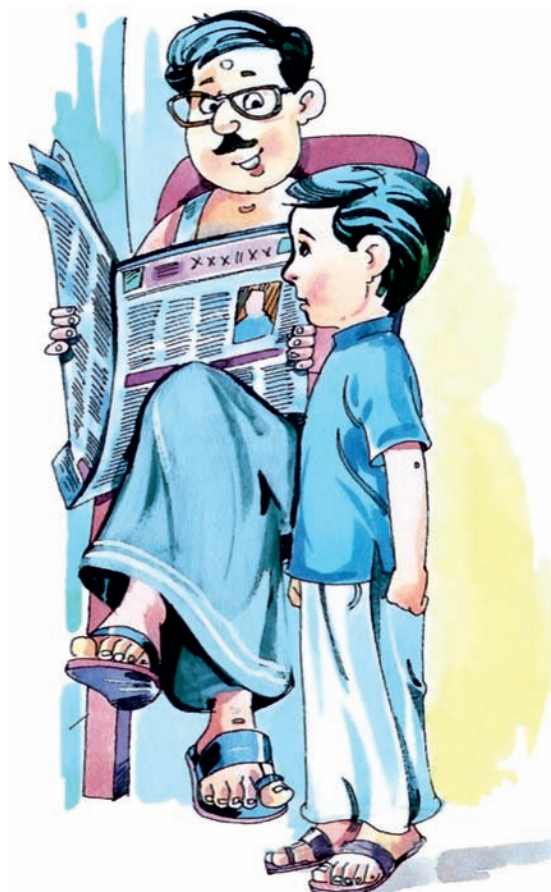
1. Work in groups of four or five and list the qualities that make a person a hero.
2. 'Courage is an attitude. It is there in the mind.' Do you agree? Discuss with reasons.

Now read the story about a small boy Swami and find out how he becomes a hero suddenly.

For Swami events took an unexpected turn. Father looked over the newspaper he was reading under the hall lamp and said, 'Swami, listen to this news: an act of bravery of a village lad who, while returning home by the jungle path, came face to face with a tiger..... .' The paragraph described the fight the boy had with the tiger and his flight up a tree, where he stayed for half a day till some people came that way and killed the tiger.

After reading it through, Father looked at Swami fixedly and asked, 'What do you say to that?' Swami said, 'I think he must have been a very strong and grown-up person, not at all a boy. How could a boy fight a tiger?'

'You think you are wiser than the newspaper?' Father **sneered**. 'A man may have the strength of an elephant and yet be a coward whereas another may have the strength of a straw, but if he has courage, he can do anything. Courage is everything, strength and age are not important.'



sneered: spoke in a scornful manner

Swami disputed the theory. 'How can it be, Father? Suppose I have all the courage, what can I do if a tiger should attack me?'

'Leave alone strength, can you prove you have courage? Let me see if you can sleep alone tonight in my office room.'

A frightful **proposition**, Swami thought. He had always slept beside his granny in the passage, and any change in this arrangement kept him trembling and awake all night. He hoped at first that his father was only joking. He mumbled weakly, 'Yes,' and tried to change the subject; he said very loudly and with a great deal of **enthusiasm**, 'We are going to admit even elders in our cricket club hereafter. We are buying brand new bats and balls. Our captain has asked me to tell you ...'

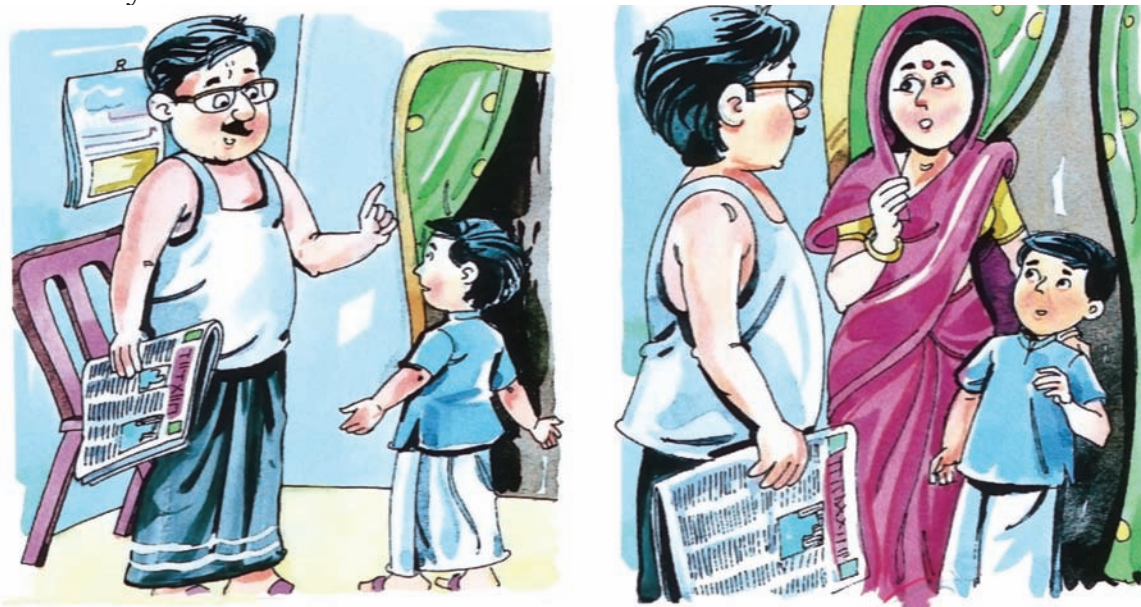
'We'll see about it later,' Father cut in. 'You must sleep alone hereafter.' Swami realised that the matter had gone beyond his control: from a challenge it had become a plain command; he knew his father's **tenacity** at such moments.

'From the first of next month I'll sleep alone, Father.'

'No, you must do it now. It is disgraceful sleeping beside granny or mother like a baby. You are in the second form and I don't at all like the way you are being brought up,' he said, and looked at his wife, who was rocking the cradle. 'Why do you look at me while you say it?' she asked. 'I hardly know anything about the boy.'

'No, no, I don't mean you,' Father said.

'If you mean that your mother is spoiling him, tell her so; and don't look at me,' she said, and turned away.



proposition: proposal

enthusiasm: great zeal

tenacity: firmness

Swami's father sat gloomily gazing at the newspaper on his lap. Swami rose silently and tiptoed away to his bed in the passage. Granny was sitting up in her bed, and remarked, 'Boy, are you already feeling sleepy? Don't you want a story?' Swami made wild **gesticulations** to silence Granny, but that good lady saw nothing. So Swami threw himself on his bed and pulled the blanket over his face.

Granny said, 'Don't cover your face. Are you really very sleepy?' Swami leant over and whispered, 'Please, please, shut up, Granny. Don't talk to me, and don't let anyone call me even if the house is on fire. If I don't sleep at once I shall perhaps die.' He turned over, curled, and snored under the blanket till he found his blanket pulled away.



Presently Father came and stood over him. 'Swami, get up,' he said. He looked like an **apparition** in the semi-darkness of the passage, which was lit by a cone of light from the hall. Swami stirred and groaned as if in sleep. Father said, 'Get up, Swami,' Granny pleaded, 'Why do you disturb him?'

'Get up, Swami,' he said for the third time, and Swami got up. Father rolled up his bed, took it under his arm, and said, 'Come with me.' Swami looked at his granny, hesitated for a moment, and followed his father into the office room. On the way he threw a look of appeal at his mother and she said, 'Why do you take him to the office room? He can sleep in the hall, I think.'

gesticulations: gestures

apparition: ghost

‘I don’t think so,’ Father said, and Swami **slunk** behind him with bowed head.

‘Let me sleep in the hall, Father,’ Swami pleaded. ‘Your office room is very dusty and there may be scorpions behind your law books.’

‘There are no scorpions, little fellow. Sleep on the bench if you like.’

‘Can I have a lamp burning in the room?’

‘No. You must learn not to be afraid of darkness. It is only a question of habit. You must cultivate good habits.’

‘Will you at least leave the door open?’

‘All right. But promise you will not roll up your bed and go to Granny’s side at night. If you do it, mind you, I will make you the laughing-stock of your school.’

Swami felt cut off from humanity. He was pained and angry. He didn’t like the strain of cruelty he saw in his father’s nature. He hated the newspaper for printing the tiger’s story. He wished that the tiger hadn’t spared the boy, who didn’t appear to be a boy after all, but a monster...

As the night advanced and the silence in the house deepened, his heart beat faster. He remembered all the stories of devils and ghosts he had heard in his life. How often had his chum Mani seen the devil in the banyan tree at his street-end. And what about poor Munisami’s father, who spat out blood because the devil near the river’s edge slapped his cheek when he was returning home late one night. And so on and on his thoughts continued. He was faint with fear. A ray of light from the street lamp strayed in and cast shadows on the wall. Through the stillness all kinds of noises reached his ears—the ticking of the clock, rustle of trees, snoring sounds, and some **vague** night insects’ humming. He covered himself so completely that he could hardly breathe. Every moment he expected the devils to come up to carry him away; there was the instance of his old friend in the fourth class who suddenly disappeared and was said to have been carried off by a ghost to Siam or Nepal...

Swami hurriedly got up and spread his bed under the bench and **crouched** there. It seemed to be a much safer place, more compact and reassuring. He



slunk: walked stealthily

vague: uncertain

crouch: to stoop

shut his eyes tight and encased himself in his blanket once again and unknown to himself fell asleep, and in sleep was racked with **nightmares**. A tiger was chasing him. His feet stuck to the ground. He desperately tried to escape but his feet would not move; the tiger was at his back, and he could hear its claws scratch the ground... scratch, scratch, and then a light thud... Swami tried to open his eyes, but his eyelids would not open and the nightmare continued. It threatened to continue for ever. Swami groaned in despair.

With a desperate effort he opened his eyes. He put his hand out to feel his granny's presence at his side, as was his habit, but he only touched the wooden leg of the bench. And his lonely state came back to him. He sweated with fright. And now what was this **rustling**?

He moved to the edge of the bench and stared into the darkness. Something was moving down. He lay gazing at it in horror. His end had come. He realised that the devil would presently pull him out and tear him, and so why should he wait? As it came nearer he crawled out from under the bench, hugged it with all his might, and used his teeth on it like a **mortal** weapon ...

'Aiyo! Something has bitten me,' went forth an agonised, thundering cry, followed by a heavy tumbling and falling amidst furniture. In a moment Father, cook and a servant came in, carrying light.

And all three of them fell on the burglar who lay amidst the furniture with a bleeding ankle ...

Congratulations were showered on Swami next day. His classmates looked at him with respect, and his teacher patted his back. The Headmaster said that he was a true scout. Swami had bitten into the flesh of one of the most notorious house-breakers of the district and the police were grateful to him for it.

The inspector said, 'Why don't you join the police when you are grown up?'



nightmares: frightening dreams

rustling: low noise

mortal: deadly

Swami said for the sake of politeness, 'Certainly, yes,' though he had quite made up his mind to be an engine driver, a railway guard or a bus conductor later in life.

When he returned home from the club that night, Father asked, 'Where is the boy?'

'He is asleep.'

'Already!'

'He didn't have a wink of sleep the whole of last night,' said his mother.

'Where is he sleeping?'

'In his usual place,' Mother said casually. 'He went to bed at seven-thirty.' 'Sleeping beside his granny again!' Father said. 'No wonder he wanted to sleep before I could return home—clever boy!'

Mother lost her temper. 'You let him sleep where he likes. You needn't risk his life again.... .' Father mumbled as he went in to change: 'All right, **mollycoddle** and spoil him as much as you like. Only don't blame me afterwards... .'

Swami, following the whole conversation from under the blanket, felt tremendously relieved to hear that his father was giving him up.



mollycoddle: to protect from unpleasant experiences

I Understanding the Story

A. Each statement given below contains one wrong word/phrase, which makes the complete statement false. Underline the wrong words/phrases and replace them with the correct ones to make the statements true. One has been done for you.

1. Swami's father read the report of a lad's bravery in a newspaper weekly magazine.
2. The boy was rescued by some people who captured the tiger. _____
3. Swami seemed convinced of the boy's bravery. _____
4. Swami had always slept beside his mother. _____
5. Swami proposed to sleep alone beginning with the same night. _____
6. Swami studied in fourth grade. _____
7. Swami had to sleep alone in the hall. _____

B. Answer the following questions briefly in about 30 words.

1. How did Swami react to the news of the village lad's bravery? How was his reaction different from his father's reaction?
2. What was the challenge given to Swami by his father? How did he receive it?
3. Describe Swami's feelings in the office room at night.
4. How did Swami catch the burglar?

C. Of the following words, which would you choose to describe Swami and why?

1. meek
2. clever
3. cowardly
4. courageous
5. boastful
6. strong



- D. Various incidents in the story evoke contradictory reactions from Swami and his father. Complete the table given below highlighting the difference of opinion between the two.**

Father thought	Swami thought
(a) The village boy who had fought a tiger was very courageous.	
(b)	Courage alone cannot do anything, strength is also important.
(c) Sleeping alone would make Swami courageous and independent.	

II HOTS

Courage is everything, strength and age are not important. Do you agree? Why/Why not?

III Life Skills

- Would you call Swami 'a hero'? Why/Why not?
- Should children be allowed to face nasty situations in life or should they be mollycoddled?

IV Values

It is said that Swami did not like the strain of cruelty in his father's nature. Is Swami's father really cruel?

After the Headmaster narrates to the class how Swami caught the burglar, one of Swami's friends writes a report on the incident to be published in the *Malgudi Times*. Write the report in about 100 words.

About the Author

R. K. Narayan is one of the most famous and widely read Indian novelists. He was born on 10 October 1906 in Madras (now Chennai). He began his writing career with *Swami and Friends* in 1935. Most of his work is set in the fictional town of Malgudi, which captures everything Indian while having a unique identity of its own. He told stories of ordinary people trying to live their simple lives in a changing world. His style is marked by simplicity, elegance and subtle humour.

Among the best-received of Narayan's 34 novels are *The English Teacher* (1945), *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* (1961), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967), and *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983). Narayan also wrote a number of short stories; collections include *Lawley Road* (1956), *A Horse and Two Goats and Other Stories* (1970), *Under the Banyan Tree and Other Stories* (1985) and *The Grandmother's Tale* (1993).

R. K. Narayan passed away in 2001.

