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1 Three Questions

by Leo Tolstoy

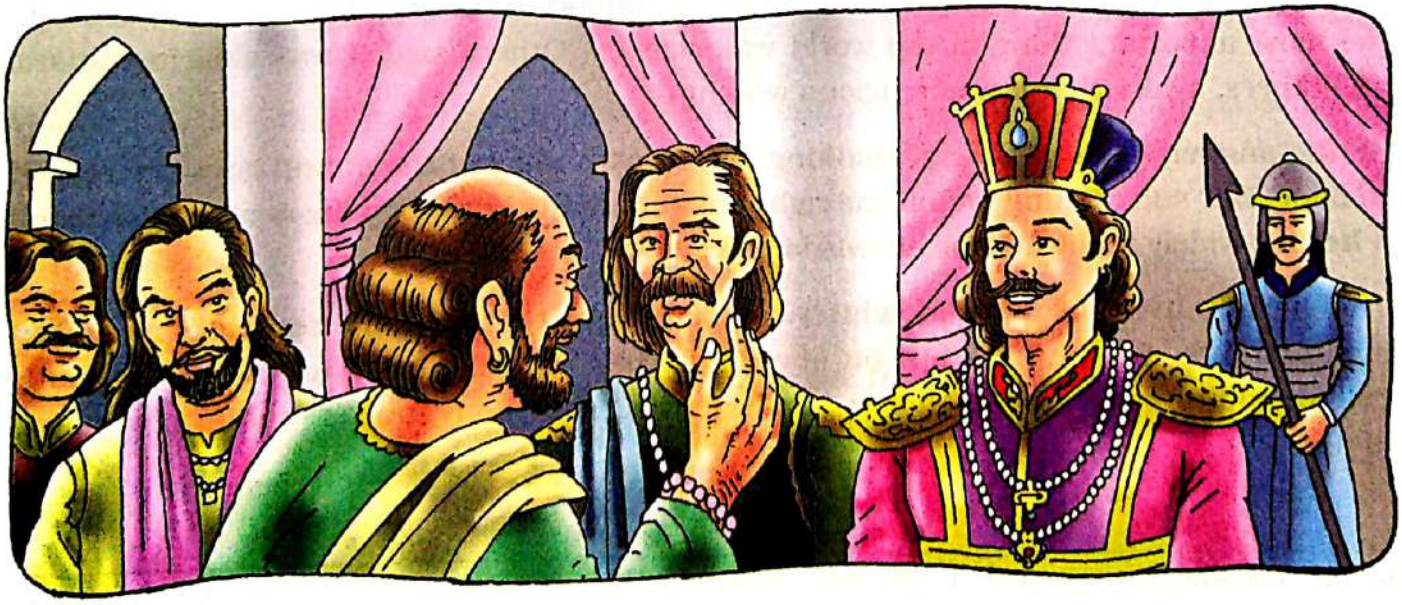
Pre-reading Task

1. Suppose you want to start a new task. Will you wait for an auspicious time or will you start working immediately? Discuss with your partner, giving reasons.
2. Work individually and answer the following.
   (a) What do you think is the most important occupation?
   (b) Who do you think are the most important people (soldiers, leaders, doctors, priests, etc.)?

   Compare your answers with the responses given by other students in your group. Are your choices different from those of your friends? Discuss the reason for your choices.

Now read this beautiful story by Leo Tolstoy.

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.



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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 tell him what was the right time for every action, and who were the most necessary people, and how he might know what was the most important thing to do.

And 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 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 worship.

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 bodyguards behind, went on alone.

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hermit: one who has renounced the world for religion

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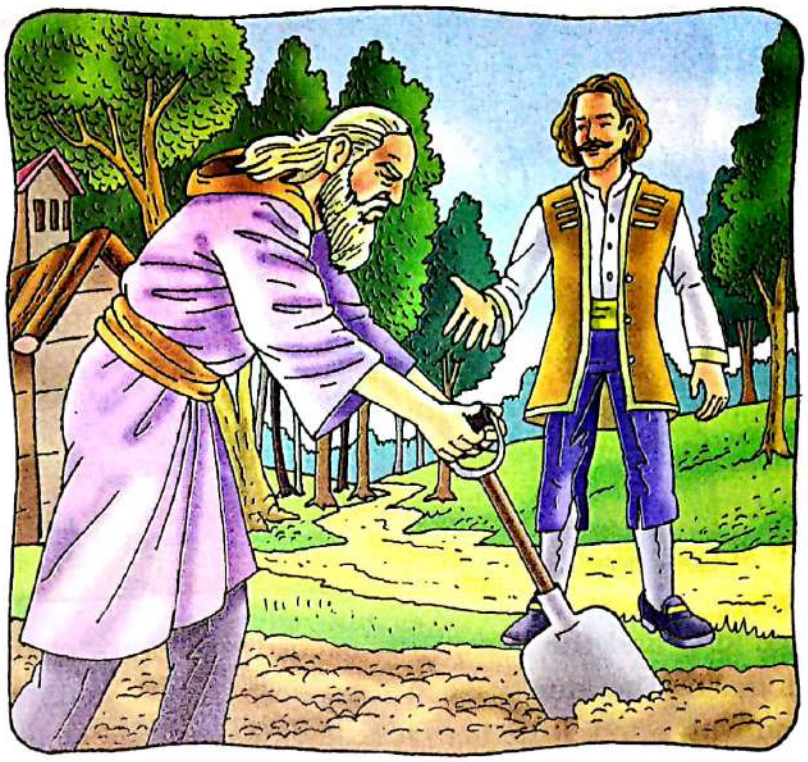
When the king approached, the hermit was digging earth in front of his hut. Seeing the king, he greeted him and went on digging. The hermit was frail and weak, and each time he stuck his spade into the ground and turned a little earth, he breathed heavily.



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 I most need, and whom should I, therefore, pay more attention to 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.

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recommenced: started again

moaning: groaning

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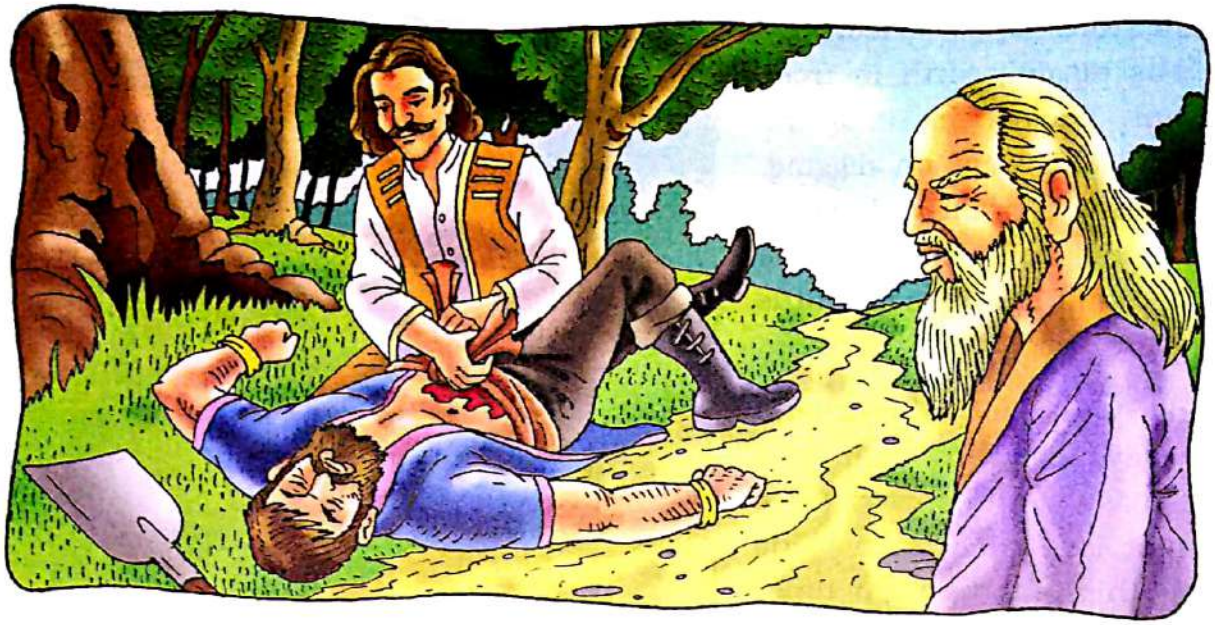
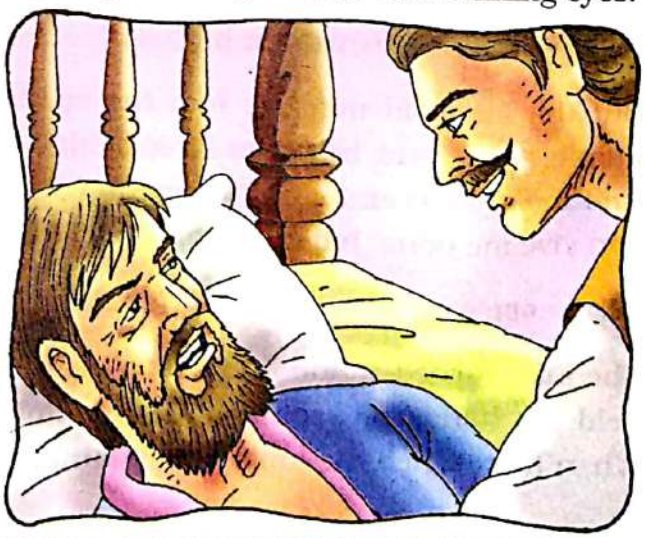


The king and the hermit unfastened the man's clothing. There was a large wound in his stomach. The king washed it as best as he could, and bandaged it with his handkerchief and with a towel the hermit had. But the blood would not stop flowing, and the king again and again removed the bandage soaked with 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 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 himself on you, because you executed his brother and seized his property. I knew you had gone alone to see the hermit, and



threshold: entrance

intently: paying full attention

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I resolved to kill you on your way back. But the day passed and you did not return. So I came out from my **ambush** to find you, and I came upon your bodyguards and they recognised 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 upon him, and promised to restore his property.

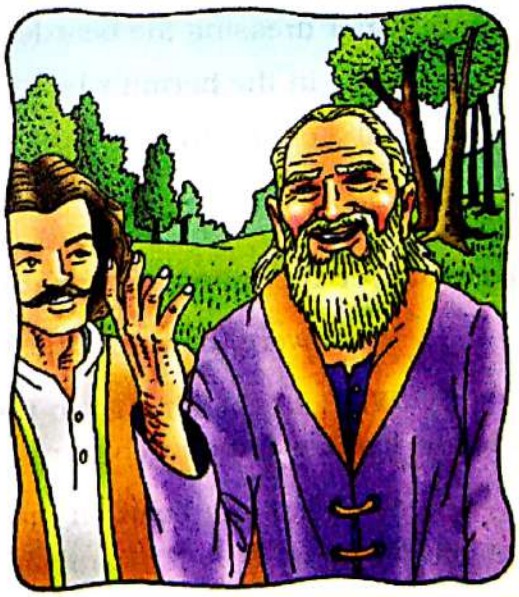
Having taken leave of the wounded man, the king went out into the porch and looked around for the hermit. Before going away he wished once more to beg an answer to the question he had put. The hermit was outside, on his knees, sowing seeds in the beds that had been dug the day before.

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 upon him, for if you had not dressed his wounds, he would have died without having made peace with you. So he was the most important business. Remember then: there is only one time that is important—the only time when we have any power. The most necessary man is he with whom you are, for no man knows whether he will ever have dealing with anyone else; and the most important affair is, to do him good, because for that purpose alone was man sent into this life!'



ambush: hiding place

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I Understanding the Story

A. Tick (✓) the correct answers from the options given below.

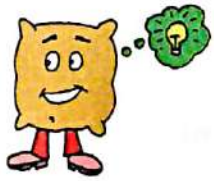
1. The king reached the hermit's cell—
   - (i) on foot, ☐
   - (ii) on horseback, ☐
   - (iii) in a chariot. ☐

2. When the king approached the hermit, the latter was—
   - (i) planting trees, ☐
   - (ii) sowing seeds, ☐
   - (iii) digging earth. ☐

3. The man who came running from the woods had a wound in—
   - (i) his hands, ☐
   - (ii) his stomach, ☐
   - (iii) his head. ☐

4. The king dressed the bearded man's wounds with—
   - (i) the hermit's handkerchief, ☐
   - (ii) his towel, ☐
   - (iii) his handkerchief and the hermit's towel. ☐

5. After dressing the bearded man's wounds, the king slept—
   - (i) in the hermit's bed, ☐
   - (ii) on the threshold of the hermit's cell, ☐
   - (iii) in the woods outside the hermit's cell. ☐



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

1. What were the three questions that occurred to the king?
2. Why did the king go to the wise hermit? Why did he go there alone and dressed like a commoner?
3. Who was the bearded man who came running from the woods? How had he got wounded?
4. How did digging of beds for the hermit save the king's life?

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C. Write the given adjectives against the characters (the king, the hermit, the bearded man) they belong to. Also, find extracts from the story to justify your choice.

inquisitive, wise, considerate, practical, impulsive, grateful

Characters	Adjectives	Extracts from the story
king	(i) (ii)	(i) (ii)
hermit	(i) (ii)	(i) (ii)
bearded man	(i) (ii)	(i) (ii)

II HOTS

Briefly explain the answer the king got to his three questions. Making these answers your base, comment on the importance of the present moment in our life. (About 80-100 words)

III Life Skills

'Knowledge gained through experience is far superior to and many times more useful than theoretical knowledge.'

Discuss the above statement in the light of the fact that the hermit did not answer the king's questions as soon as they were put to him.

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IV Values

'For that purpose alone was man sent into this life.' What is this purpose? Discuss some means of fulfilling this purpose.

V Writing Skills

On behalf of the king, write a notice inviting people to respond to his three questions. Mention the questions also.

About the Author

Leo Nikoleievich Tolstoy was born in Russia in 1828. He served in the Russian army from 1851 to 1856. He was a noble man who owned a great deal of land but felt it was his duty to give it away and lead a simple life. He came to be a firm believer in non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi was greatly influenced by his writings. His tales give a true picture of the life of the Russian peasants. He does not tell a story merely to amuse us, he is teaching us a lesson.

War and Peace and *Anna Karenina* are two immortal classics written by Leo Tolstoy.

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2 Granny's Tree Climbing

by Ruskin Bond

Pre-reading Task

1. Which of the following tasks do you associate with your grandmother:
   (a) cooking,
   (b) knitting,
   (c) sewing,
   (d) preparing pickles,
   (e) climbing trees?

2. Have you ever climbed a tree? Did you find the task easy and enjoyable or difficult? Discuss with your friends some risks involved in climbing trees.
3. Do you know what a tree-top house is? Discuss with your friends how different living in a tree-top house would be from living in an ordinary house.

Now read Ruskin Bond's poem 'Granny's Tree Climbing'.

My grandmother was a genius. You'd like to know why?
Because she could climb trees. Spreading or high,
She'd be up their branches **in a trice**. And mind you,
When last she climbed a tree, she was sixty-two.
Ever since childhood, she'd had this gift
For being happier in a tree than in a lift;
And though, as years went by, she would be told

in a trice: very quickly

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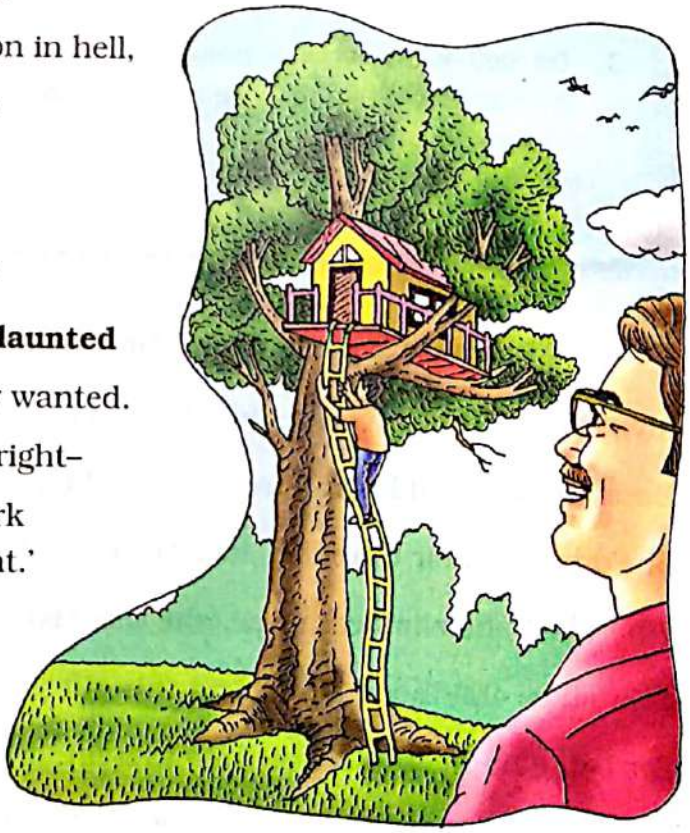
That climbing trees should stop when one grew old
And that growing old should be gone about gracefully.
She'd laugh and say, 'Well, I'll grow old disgracefully.
I can do it better.' And we had to agree;
For in all the garden there wasn't a tree
She hadn't been up, at one time or another
(Having learned to climb from a loving brother
When she was six) but it was feared by all
That one day she'd have a terrible fall.
The outcome was different while we were in town
She climbed a tree and couldn't come down!
We went to the rescue, and then the doctor took
Granny's temperature and said,
'I strongly recommend a quiet week in bed.'
We sighed with relief and tucked her up well.
Poor Granny! For her, it was like a brief season in hell,
Confined to her bedroom, while every breeze
Whispered of summer and dancing leaves.
But she held her peace till she felt stronger,
Then sat up and said, 'I'll lie here no longer!'
And she called for my father and told him **undaunted**
That a house in a tree-top was what she now wanted.
My Dad knew his duties. He said, 'That's all right–
You'll have what you want, dear. I'll start work
tonight.'
With my expert assistance, he soon finished
the **chore:**
Made her a tree-house with windows and a door.



undaunted: firmly and earthusiastically

chore: job

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So Granny moved up, and now every day

I climb to her room with glasses and a tray.

She sits there **in state** and drinks **sherry** with me,

Upholding her right to reside in a tree.

I Understanding the Poem

A. On the basis of your understanding of the poem, answer the following questions in one word/phrase.

1. At what age did Granny learn climbing trees?
2. Who taught her the art of climbing trees?
3. How old was she when she last climbed a tree?
4. In which season did she get trapped in a tree?
5. For how long was she advised to take rest after being rescued?
6. Who made a tree-top house for her?
7. What things does the narrator carry to his granny's tree-top house daily?

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

1. We sighed with relief and tucked her up well.

   Poor Granny! For her, it was like a brief season in hell,

   Confined to her bedroom, while every breeze

   Whispered of summer and dancing leaves.

   (a) Why did the narrator and his family 'sigh in relief'?

   (b) Why was Granny confined to bed? Why did she find it 'a brief season in hell'?

   (c) How did she finally get rid of this 'season in hell'?

---

in state: in grand style

sherry: a kind of wine

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2. ... but it was feared by all

That one day she'd have a terrible fall.

The outcome was different ...

(a) What did everyone fear?

(b) 'The outcome was different'. What was this outcome? How was it different from what everyone had expected?

(c) What did this outcome lead to?

C. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

_____

_____

II HOTS

The poet says:

'... every breeze

Whispered of summer and dancing leaves.'

Discuss with your partner how breeze can 'whisper' and leaves 'dance'. Which figure of speech has been used here?

III Life Skills

Granny liked living in a tree-top house more than living in an ordinary house. If you get a chance to live in a tree-top house, what problems would you face while living there and what things would you enjoy?

IV Values

Grandparents are always very dear to grandchildren. What all do you do to spend quality time with your grandparents?

V Writing Skills

Imagine yourself to be Granny. Write a diary entry expressing your ardent wish to climb trees and your family's disapproval of it.

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About the Author

Ruskin Bond (b. 1934) has written many books for children, some dealing with his own childhood, others dealing with the lives of contemporary Indian children.

Bond spent his childhood at his grandparents' house in Dehradun, where he grew up in the company of a number of pets. He developed a deep love for nature, which is evident in most of his works.

The poem 'Granny's Tree Climbing' has been taken from *An Island of Trees*, which is a collection of short stories and poems dealing exclusively with Bond's love for nature.

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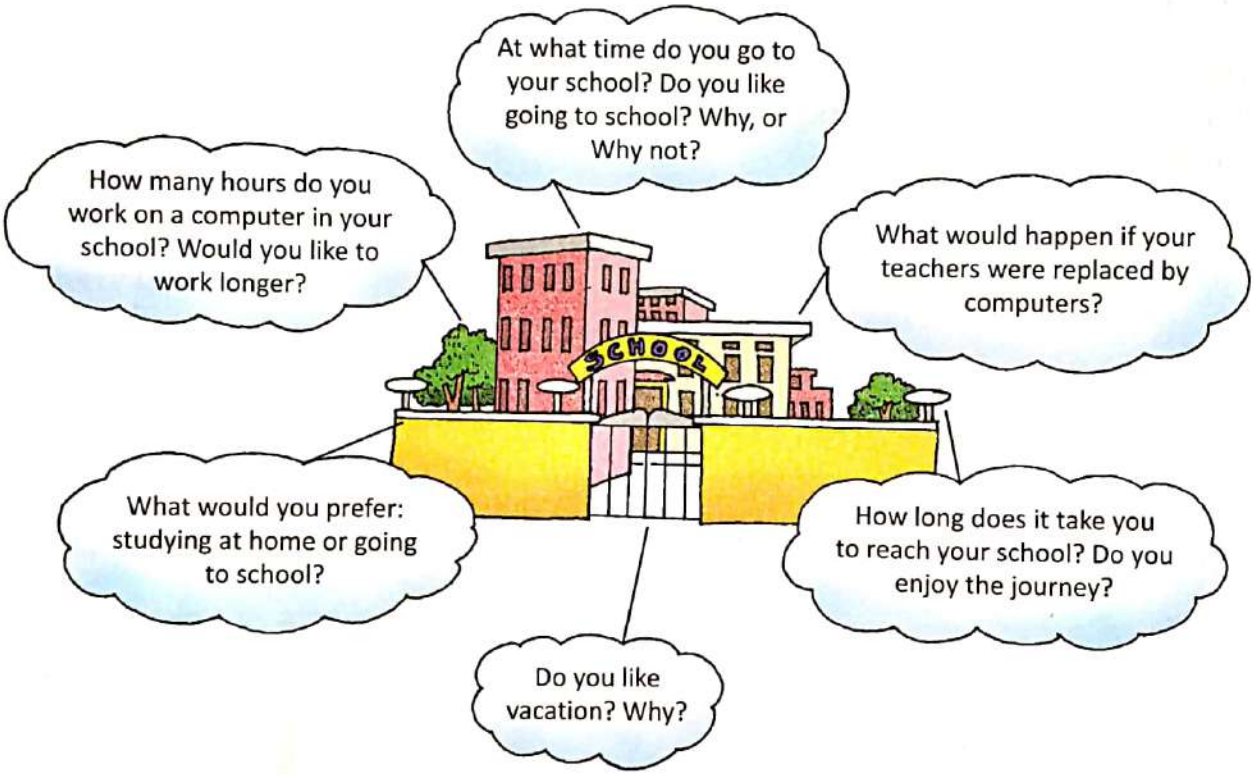
3 The Fun They Had

by Isaac Asimov

Pre-reading Task

1. Read these questions and share your responses with your partner.



Now read this story by Isaac Asimov about the school experience of two children living in 2155.

Margie even wrote about it that night in her diary. On the page headed 17 May, 2155, she wrote, 'Today Tommy found a real book!'

It was a very old book. Margie's grandfather once said that when he was a little boy *his* grandfather told him that there was a time when all stories were printed on paper.

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They turned the pages, which were yellow and **crinkly**, and it was awfully funny to read words that stood still instead of moving the way they were supposed to—on a screen, you know. And then, when they turned back to the page before, it had the same words on it that it had when they read it the first time.

'Gee,' said Tommy, 'what a waste! When you're through with the book, you just throw it away, I guess. Our television screen must have had a million books on it and it's good for plenty more. I wouldn't throw *it* away.'

'Same with mine,' said Margie. She was eleven and hadn't seen as many telebooks as Tommy had. He was thirteen.

She said, 'Where did you find it?'

'In my house.' He pointed without looking, because he was busy reading. 'In the **attic**.'

'What's it about?'

'School.'

Margie was scornful. 'School? What's there to write about school? I hate school.' The mechanical teacher had been giving her test after test in geography and she had been doing worse and worse until her mother had shaken her head sorrowfully and sent for the County Inspector.

He was a round little man with a red face and a whole box of tools with dials and wires. He smiled at her and gave her an apple, then took the teacher apart. Margie had hoped he wouldn't know how to put it together again,

crinkly: wrinkled

attic: a room at the top of a building

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but he knew how to set it all right and after an hour or so, there it was again, large and black and ugly with a big screen on which all the lessons were shown and the questions were asked. That wasn't so bad. The part she hated most was the slot where she had to put homework and test papers. She always had to write them out in a punch code they made her learn when she was six years old, and the mechanical teacher calculated the marks in no time.

The Inspector had smiled after he was finished and patted her head. He said to her mother, 'It's not the little girl's fault, Mrs Jones. I think the geography sector was geared a little too quick. Those things happen sometimes. I've slowed it up to an average ten-year level. Actually, the overall pattern of her progress is quite satisfactory.' And he patted Margie's head again.

Margie was disappointed. She had been hoping they would take the teacher away altogether. They had once taken Tommy's teacher away for nearly a month because his history sector had blanked out completely.

So she said to Tommy, 'Why would anyone write about school?'

Tommy looked at her with very superior eyes. 'Because it's not our kind of school, stupid. This is the old kind of school that they had hundreds and hundreds of years ago.' He added loftily, pronouncing the words carefully, '*Centuries ago.*'

Margie was hurt. 'Well, I don't know what kind of school they had all that time ago.' She read the book over his shoulder for a while, then said, 'Anyway, they had a teacher.'

'Sure they had a teacher, but it wasn't a *regular* teacher. It was a man.'

'A man? How could a man be a teacher?'

'Well, he just told the boys and girls things and gave them homework and asked them questions.'

'A man isn't smart enough.'

'Sure he is. My father knows as much as my teacher.'

'He can't. A man can't know as much as a teacher.'

'He knows almost as much, I bet.'

Margie wasn't prepared to dispute that. She said, 'I wouldn't want a strange man in my house to teach me.'

Tommy screamed with laughter, 'You don't know much, Margie. The teachers didn't live in the house. They had a special building and all the kids went there.'

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'And all the kids learned the same thing?'

'Sure, if they were the same age.'

'But my mother says a teacher had to be adjusted to fit the mind of each boy and girl it teaches and that each kid has to be taught differently.'

'Just the same, they didn't do it that way then. If you don't like it, you don't have to read the book.'

'I didn't say I didn't like it,' Margie said quickly. She wanted to read about those funny schools.

They weren't even half finished when Margie's mother called, 'Margie! School!'

Margie looked up. 'Not yet, mamma.'

'Now,' said Mrs Jones. 'And it's probably time for Tommy, too.'

Margie said to Tommy, 'Can I read the book some more with you after school?'

'Maybe,' he said, **nonchalantly**. He walked away whistling, the dusty old book tucked beneath his arm.

Margie went into the schoolroom. It was right next to her bedroom, and the mechanical teacher was on and waiting for her. It was always on at the same time every day except Saturday and Sunday, because her mother said little girls learned better if they learned at regular hours.

The screen was lit up, and it said, 'Today's arithmetic lesson is on the addition of proper fractions. Please insert yesterday's homework in the proper slot.'

nonchalantly: calmly

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Margie did so with a sigh. She was thinking about the old schools they had when her grandfather's grandfather was a little boy. All the kids from the whole neighbourhood came laughing and shouting in the schoolyard, sitting together in the schoolroom, going home together at the end of the day. They learned the same things so they could help one another in the homework and talk about it.

And the teachers were people....

The mechanical teacher was flashing on the screen: 'When we add the fractions ½ and ¼—'

Margie was thinking about how the kids must have loved it in the old days. She was thinking about the fun they had.

I Understanding the Story

A. Complete the following statements.

1. Tommy found a real book about _____

   _____

2. The part of her mechanical teacher that Margie hated the most was _____

   _____

3. Once the inspector had taken away Tommy's teacher because _____

   _____.

4. Margie wrote her homework in _____, which she had been taught when she was six years old.
5. Margie's school was located _____.
6. Margie's school was off on _____ and _____.

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

1. What was awfully funny about the words written in the book found by Tommy?
2. Why had Margie started hating her school more than ever?
3. What was the complication in the geography sector of Margie's teacher?
4. 'Margie thought he would not know how to put it together again.'

   Whom do 'he' and 'it' refer to? Why did Margie not want 'it' to be put together again?

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II HOTS

A. 'What a waste!' What is Tommy referring to as a waste? Is it really a waste? Discuss.

B. 'How could a man be a teacher?' says Margie. But we do have human teachers. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of having a computer as a teacher as compared to a human teacher.

III Life Skills

Respond to the points given in the first column and complete the table. You may discuss them with your partner.

Points	The school in which you study	The school in which Margie studied
Distance to be travelled to reach the school		
Interaction with the peer group		
Percentage of time devoted to academic development in school		
Availability of sports and fitness-related exercises		
Availability of co-curricular activities		
The use of technology in the teaching-learning process		
Cultivation of human values during the prayer time or story-telling sessions		
Competence and knowledge levels of the teachers		

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IV Values

'Margie was thinking about the fun, they, who went to a school to study along with their friends, had.' Why did Margie think going to school could be fun? Do you and your friends also think so? Discuss.

V Writing Skills

After discussing the pros and cons of the two types of schools, can we try to create a situation wherein the best aspects of both the schools are included? Write an article for your school magazine expressing your opinion about the perfect school you dream of.

About the Author

Isaac Asimov (1920–92) was a prolific Russian-born American writer well-known for his science fiction. He had the canny knack of transporting young reader's imagination to the future world dominated by computers and robots. It is a world of fun and fantasy, but the frightening spectacle of totally mechanical existence leads to meaningful introspection too. Asimov's popular works include *Nightfall, Foundation, Second Foundation, The Caves of Steel* and *The End of Eternity*.

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4 Father's Help

by R. K. Narayan

Pre-reading Task

1. Have you ever experienced Monday morning blues while going to school after an enjoyable weekend? Share some such experiences with your friends.
2. Suppose you do not wish to go to school some day. Do you—
   - pretend to have a headache,
   - tell your parents that you do not have any important class,
   - tell your parents the truth,
   - make some other excuse?

   Share your response with your friends.

Now read the following story about Swaminathan, whose excuse for not going to school lands him into trouble.

Lying in bed, Swami realised with a shudder that it was Monday morning. It looked as though only a moment ago it had been the last period on Friday; already Monday was here. He hoped that an earthquake would reduce the school building to dust, but that good building—Albert Mission School—had withstood similar prayers for over a hundred years now. At nine o'clock Swaminathan **wailed**, 'I have a headache.' His mother said, 'Why don't you go to school in a ***jutka***?'

'So that I may be completely dead at the other end? Have you any idea what it means to be jolted in a *jutka*?'

'Have you many important lessons today?'

'Important! Bah! That geography teacher has been teaching the same lesson for over a year now. And we have arithmetic, which means for a whole period we are going to be beaten by the teacher. ....Important lessons!'

wailed: cried with pain

jutka: rickshaw

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And mother generously suggested that Swami might stay at home.

At 9:30, when he ought to have been shouting in the school prayer hall, Swami was lying on the bench in mother's room. Father asked him, 'Have you no school today?'

'Headache,' Swami replied.

'Nonsense! Dress up and go.'

'Headache.'

'Loaf about less on Sundays and you will be without a headache on Monday.'

Swami knew how **stubborn** his father could be and changed his tactics. 'I can't go so late to the class.'

'I agree, but you'll have to; it is your own fault. You should have asked me before deciding to stay away.'

'What will the teacher think if I go so late?'

'Tell him you had a headache and so are late.'

'He will beat me if I say so.'

'Will he? Let us see. What is his name?'

'Samuel.'

'Does he beat the boys?'

'He is very violent, especially with boys who come late. Some days ago a boy was made to stay on his knees for a whole period in a corner of the class because he came late, and that too after getting six cuts from the cane and having his ears twisted. I wouldn't like to go late to Samuel's class.'

'If he is so violent, why not tell your headmaster about it?'

'They say that even the headmaster is afraid of him. He is such a violent man.'

And then Swami gave a **lurid** account of Samuel's violence; how when he started caning he would not stop till he saw blood on the boy's hand, which he made the boy press to his forehead like a vermilion marking. Swami hoped that with this his father would be made to see that he couldn't go to his class late. But Father's behaviour took an unexpected turn. He became excited. 'What do these swine mean by beating our children? They must be driven out of service. I will see...'

---

stubborn: obstinate **lurid:** shocking

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The result was he proposed to send Swami late to his class as a kind of challenge. He was also going to send a letter with Swami to the headmaster. No amount of protest from Swami was of any avail; Swami had to go to school.

By the time he was ready, Father had composed a long letter to the headmaster, put it in an envelope and sealed it.

'What have you written, Father?' Swaminathan asked **apprehensively**.

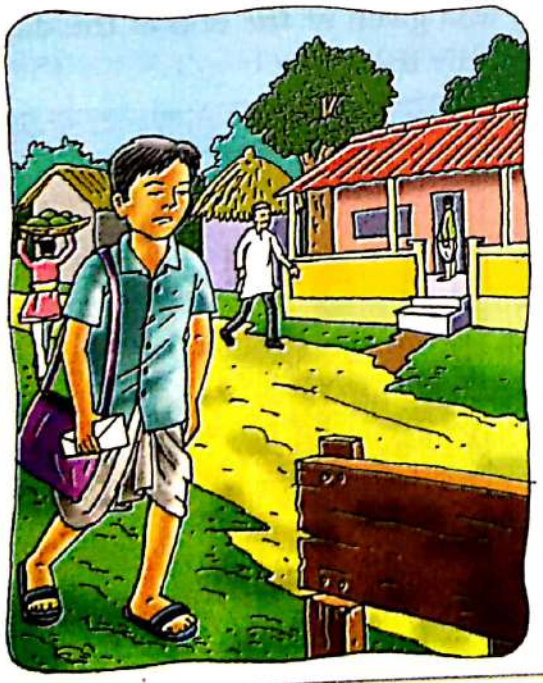
'Nothing for you. Give it to your headmaster and go to your class.'

'Have you written anything about our teacher Samuel?'

'Plenty of things about him. When your headmaster reads it, he will probably dismiss Samuel from the school and hand him over to the police.'

'What has he done, Father?'

'Well, there is a full account of everything he has done in the letter. Give it to your headmaster and go to your class. You must bring an acknowledgement from him in the evening.'



Swami went to school feeling that he was the worst **perjurer** on earth. His conscience bothered him: he wasn't at all sure if he had been accurate in his description of Samuel. He could not decide how much of what he had said was imagined and how much of it was real. He stopped for a moment on the roadside to make up his mind about Samuel: he was not such a bad man after all. Personally he was much more **genial** than the rest; often he cracked a joke or two centring around Swami's inactions, and Swami took it as a mark of Samuel's personal regard for him. But there was no doubt that he treated people badly... His cane skinned people's hands. Swami cast his mind about for an instance of this. There was none within his knowledge. Years and years ago he was reputed to

apprehensively: anxiously **perjurer:** false witness **genial:** friendly and pleasant

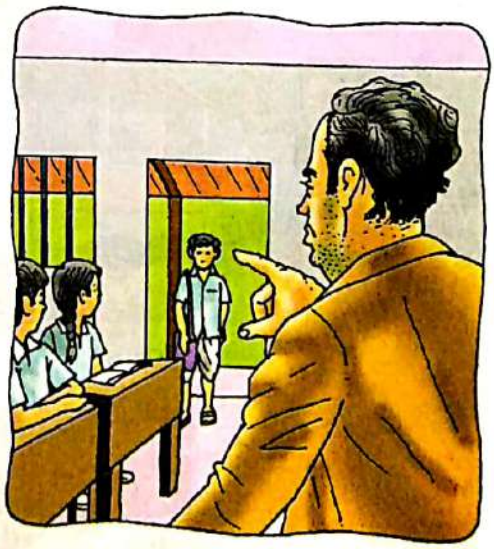
Scanned by CamScanner

have skinned the knuckles of a boy in First Standard and made him smear the blood on his face. No one had actually seen it. But year after year the story persisted among the boys... Swami's head was dizzy with confusion in regard to Samuel's character—whether he was good or bad, whether he deserved the **allegations** in the letter or not... Swami felt an **impulse** to run home and beg his father to take back the letter. But Father was an obstinate man.

As he approached the yellow building he realised that he was perjuring himself and was ruining his teacher. Probably the headmaster would dismiss Samuel and then the police would chain him and put him in jail. For all this disgrace, humiliation and suffering who would be responsible? Swami shuddered. The more he thought of Samuel, the more he grieved for him—the dark face, his small red-streaked eyes, his thin line of moustache, his unshaven cheek and chin, his yellow coat; everything filled Swami with sorrow. As he felt the **bulge** of the letter in his pocket, he felt like an **executioner**. For a moment he was angry with his father and wondered why he should not fling into the gutter the letter of a man so unreasonable and stubborn.

As he entered the school gate an idea occurred to him, a sort of solution. He wouldn't deliver the letter to the headmaster immediately, but at the end of the day—to that extent he would disobey his father and exercise his independence. There was nothing wrong in it, and Father would not know it anyway. If the letter was given at the end of the day there was a chance that Samuel might do something to justify the letter.

Swami stood at the entrance to his class. Samuel was teaching arithmetic. He looked at Swami for a moment. Swami stood hoping that Samuel would fall on him and tear his skin off. But Samuel merely asked, 'Are you just coming to the class?'



'Yes, sir.'

'You are half an hour late.'

'I know it.' Swami hoped that he would be attacked now. He almost prayed: 'God of Thirupathi, please make Samuel beat me.'

allegations: charges
executioner: hangman
impulse: urge
bulge: big size

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'Why are you late?'

Swami wanted to reply, 'Just to see what you can do.' But he merely said, 'I have a headache, sir.'

'Then why did you come to the school at all?'

A most unexpected question from Samuel. 'My father said that I shouldn't miss the class, sir,' said Swami.

This seemed to impress Samuel. 'Your father is quite right; a very sensible man. We want more parents like him.'

'Oh, dear!' Swami thought. 'You don't know what my father has done to you.' He was more puzzled than ever about Samuel's character.

'All right, go to your seat. Have you still a headache?'

'Slightly, sir.'

Swami went to his seat with a bleeding heart. He had never met a man so good as Samuel. The teacher was inspecting the home lessons, which usually produced (at least, according to Swami's impression) scenes of great violence. Notebooks would be flung at faces, boys would be abused, caned and made to stand up on benches. But today Samuel appeared to have developed more tolerance and gentleness. He pushed away the bad books, just touched people with the cane, never made anyone stand up for more than a few minutes. Swami's turn came. He almost thanked God for the chance.

'Swaminathan, where is your homework?'

'I have not done any homework, sir,' he said **blandly**. There was a pause.

'Why—headache?' asked Samuel.

'Yes, sir.'

'All right, sit down.' Swami sat down, wondering what had come over Samuel. The period came to an end, and Swami felt **desolate**. The last period for the day was again taken by Samuel. He came this time to teach them Indian history. The period began at 3:45 and ended at 4:30. Swaminathan had sat through the previous periods thinking acutely. He could not devise any means of provoking Samuel. When the clock struck four, Swami felt desperate. Half an hour more. Samuel was reading the red text, the portion describing Vasco da Gama's arrival in India. The boys listened **in half-languor**. Swami suddenly asked at the top of his voice, 'Why did not Columbus come to India, sir?'

blandly: gently **desolate:** miserable **in half-langour:** with a dull mind

Scanned by CamScanner

'He lost his way.'

'I can't believe it; it is unbelievable, sir.'

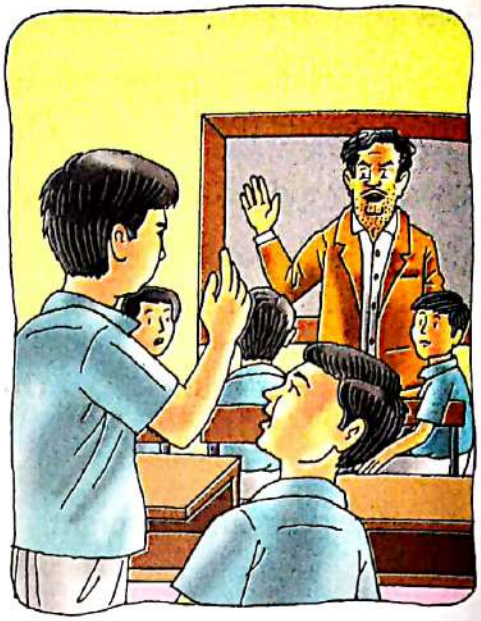
'Why?'

'Such a great man. Would he have not known the way?'

'Don't shout. I can hear you quite well.'

'I am not shouting, sir; this is my ordinary voice, which God has given me. How can I help it?'

'Shut up and sit down.'



Swaminathan sat down, feeling slightly happy at his success. The teacher threw a puzzled, suspicious glance at him and resumed his lessons.

His next chance occurred when Sankar of the first bench got up and asked, 'Sir, was Vasco da Gama the very first person to come to India?'

Before the teacher could answer, Swami shouted from the back bench, 'That's what they say.'

The teacher and all the boys looked at Swami. The teacher was puzzled by Swami's **obtrusive** behaviour today. 'Swaminathan, you are shouting again.'

'I am not shouting, sir. How can I help my voice, given by God?' The school clock struck a quarter-hour. A quarter more. Swami felt he must do something drastic in fifteen minutes. Samuel had no doubt **scowled** at him and snubbed him, but it was hardly adequate. Swami felt that with a little more effort Samuel could be made to deserve dismissal and imprisonment.

The teacher came to the end of a section in the textbook and stopped. He proposed to spend the remaining few minutes putting questions to the boys. He ordered the whole class to put away their books, and asked someone in the second row, 'What is the date of Vasco da Gama's arrival in India?'

Swaminathan shot up and screeched, '1648, December 20.'

'You needn't shout,' said the teacher. He asked. 'Has your headache made you mad?'

'I have no headache now, sir,' replied the thunderer brightly.

'Sit down, you idiot.' Swami was thrilled at being called an idiot. 'If you get up again, I will cane you,' said the teacher. Swami sat down, feeling happy at the promise. The

obtrusive: difficult to understand **scowled:** looked angrily

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teacher then asked, 'I am going to put a few questions on the Mughal period. Among the Mughal emperors, whom would you call the greatest, whom the strongest and whom the most religious emperor?'

Swami got up. As soon as he was seen, the teacher said emphatically, 'Sit down.'

'I want to answer, sir.'

'Sit down.'

'No, sir; I want to answer.'

'What did I say I'd do if you got up again?'

'You said you would cane me and peel the skin off my knuckles and make me press it on my forehead.'

'All right; come here.'

Swaminathan left his seat joyfully and hopped on the platform. The teacher took out his cane from the drawer and shouted angrily, 'Open your hand, you little devil.' He whacked three wholesome cuts on each palm. Swami received them without **blenching**. After half a dozen the teacher asked, 'Will these do, or do you want some more?'

Swami merely held out his hand again, and received two more; and the bell rang. Swami jumped down from the platform with a light heart, though his hands were smarting. He picked up his books, took out the letter lying in his pocket and ran to the headmaster's room. He found the door locked.

He asked the peon, 'Where is the headmaster?'

'Why do you want him?'

'My father has sent a letter for him.'

'He has taken the afternoon off and won't come back for a week. You can give the letter to the assistant headmaster. He will be here now.'

'Who is he?'

'Your teacher, Samuel. He will be here in a second.'

blenching: showing signs of fear

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Swaminathan fled from the place. As soon as Swami went home with the letter, Father remarked, 'I knew you wouldn't deliver it, you coward.'

'I swear our headmaster is on leave,' Swaminathan began.

Father replied, 'Don't lie in addition to being a coward...'

Swami held up the envelope and said, 'I will give this to the headmaster as soon as he is back...' Father snatched it from his hand, tore it up and thrust it into the wastepaper basket under his table. He muttered, 'Don't come to me for help even if Samuel **throttles** you. You deserve your Samuel.'

I Understanding the Story

A. Tick 'T' for true statements and 'F' for false ones.

1. Swami did not want to go to school because he had a headache. T F
2. Swami's school began at 9:00 a.m. T F
3. Samuel taught arithmetic and history to Swami and his class-fellows. T F
4. Swami decided to fling the complaint letter written by his father into a gutter. T F
5. Swami was overjoyed at getting the complaint letter against Samuel. T F
6. Swami reached the school an hour late. T F
7. Samuel had two arithmetic periods with Swami's class on Monday. T F
8. Samuel gave Swami eight cuts of cane. T F
9. Swami delivered the complaint letter to the headmaster after the last bell rang. T F

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

1. How did Swami's father react when Swami told him that he was not going to school? How different was his reaction from that of Swami's mother?
2. 'Father's behaviour took an unexpected turn.'. What was unexpected about Swami's father's behaviour?

throttles: strangles

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3. Why didn't Swami hand over the complaint letter to the headmaster in the morning?
4. Could Swami deliver the complaint letter to the headmaster after the school? Why/Why not?

II HOTS

'Swami went to school feeling that he was the worst perjurer on earth.' Describe Swami's feelings at this point. Why did he feel like 'the worst perjurer'? (About 60-80 words)

III Life Skills

What impression have you formed of Swami's relation with his father? How should children and their parents behave with each other?

IV Values

Swami gives a very unfair description of Samuel to his father. How would you have behaved, had you been in Swami's place?

V Writing Skills

A. Imagine that you are Swami. Write a diary entry relating your experience with Samuel in the school.

B. Imagine that you are Samuel. Write a diary entry expressing your surprise at Swami's strange behaviour in the class and your feelings at caning him.

About the Author

R. K. Narayan (1906-2001) was born in Madras (now Chennai) and was educated at Maharaja's College in Mysore. His first novel *Swami and Friends* became immensely popular amongst children. His novel *The Guide* won him the National Prize of the Indian Literary Academy. Most of Narayan's stories are set in a fictitious village in South India—Malgudi. Many of his stories have been adapted for screening on television. 'Swami' and 'The Talkative Man' remain two of his most famous characters.

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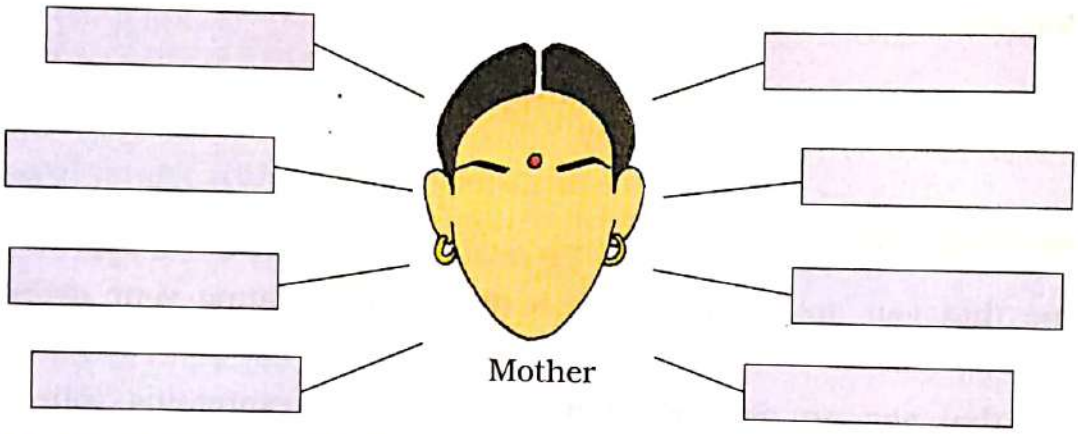
5 My Mother

by A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

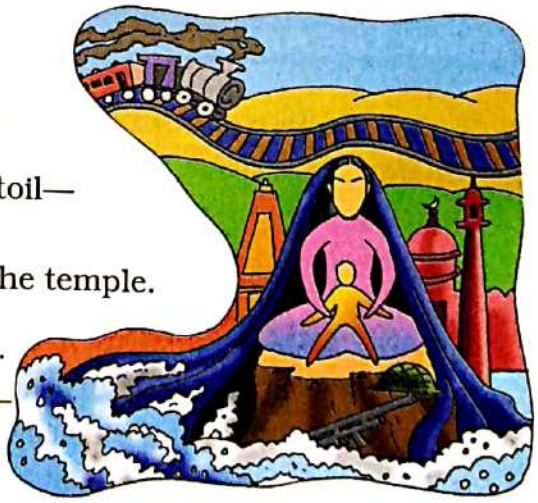
Pre-reading Task

1. 'God could not be everywhere, so he made mother.' What does this statement mean? Is the comparison between God and mother justified? Share your views with the class.
2. The word 'mother' brings up certain emotions in everyone. Think of some words that you would like to associate with this most wonderful creation of God and write them in the web chart below.



Now read the poem 'My Mother' by A. P. J. Abdul Kalam.

Sea waves, golden sand, pilgrims' faith,
Rameswaram Mosque Street, all merge into one,
My Mother!
You come to me like heaven's caring arms.
I remember the **war days** when life was challenge and toil—
Miles to walk, hours before sunrise,
Walking to take lessons from the saintly teacher near the temple.
Again miles to the Arab teaching school,



Rameswaram Mosque Street: The poet lived in a house on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram.
war days: A. P. J. Abdul Kalam was born on October 15, 1931. So the reference is to World War II, that broke out in 1939.

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Climb sandy hills to Railway Station Road,
Collect, **distribute newspapers** to temple city citizens,
Few hours after sunrise, going to school.
Evening, business times before study at night.
All this pain of a young boy,
My Mother you transformed into pious strength
With kneeling and bowing five times
For the Grace of the Almighty only, My Mother.
Your strong piety is your children's strength,
You always shared your best with whoever needed the most,
You always gave, and gave with faith in Him.
I still remember the day when I was ten.
Sleeping on your lap to the envy of my elder brothers and sisters
It was full moon night, my world only you knew
Mother! My Mother!
When at midnight I woke with tears falling on my knee
You knew the pain of your child, My Mother,
Your caring hands, tenderly removing the pain
Your love, your care, your faith gave me strength
To face the world without fear and with His strength.
We will meet again on the great Judgement Day, My Mother!

distribute newspapers: The poet helped his cousin to distribute newspapers and earned his first wages.

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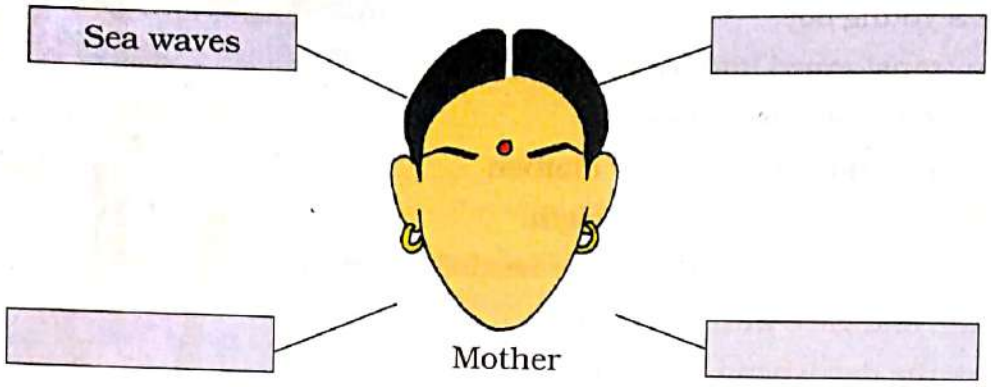
I Understanding the Poem

A. As the poet thinks of his mother, several images flash across his mind. Write those images in the web chart below.



B. The poet has beautifully described some personal qualities of his mother. In the table given below, Column A has a list of qualities and Column B has extracts from the poem that suggest those qualities. Match the columns. Some words are given in italics to help you.

Column A	Column B
1. helpful	you always gave and gave with *faith in Him.*
2. understanding	your caring hand *tenderly* removing the pain.
3. religious	you *knew* the pain of your child.
4. tender	*shared* your best with whoever needed the most.

C. The poet's childhood days were full of struggle. Find out a few things that the poet had to do in his childhood to help the family.

_____

_____

_____

_____

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D. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

1. You come to me like heaven's caring arms.

   I remember the war days when life was challenge and toil—

   Miles to walk, hours before sunrise,

   (a) Who are 'you' and 'me' in the above lines?

   (b) Identify the figure of speech used in the first line and explain it.

   (c) Mention two things that made the poet's life difficult.

   (d) Why did the poet have to walk so much early in the morning?

2. All this pain of a young boy,

   My Mother you transformed into pious strength

   With kneeling and bowing five times

   (a) Who is the young boy?

   (b) What pain is he talking about?

   (c) What was this pain transformed into? How did this transformation take place?

   (d) What do you understand by 'kneeling and bowing five times'?

II HOTS

How did the poet's mother act as a source of inspiration to the poet?

III Life Skills

'There are many ups and downs in man's life but one should not lose hope.'

Discuss this statement with reference to Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who became the President of India.

IV Values

'Sleeping on your lap to the envy of elder brothers and sisters...'

Why were the elder brothers and sisters envious of the poet? Is envy good? Discuss.

Scanned by CamScanner

V Writing Skills

The word 'mother' evokes powerful emotions in everyone. Think about your mother and write a short poem about her, thanking her for everything she does for you.

About the Author

Late Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam (1931–2015) was the President of India from 2002 to 2007. Popularly known as the 'Missile Man of India', he was known for his dedication to science and commitment to professional excellence. Dr. Kalam had a multi-faceted personality. Besides being a scientist and humanist, he was also an excellent writer. *Wings of Fire* and *Ignited Minds* are two of his very popular books. The poem 'My Mother' has been taken from *Wings of Fire*.

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6 The Luncheon

by Somerset Maugham

Pre-reading Task

1. Prepare an ideal diet chart for a teenager. Does it match with the actual diet you are taking?
2. What could be the possible consequences of not taking a balanced diet? Discuss with your partner.
3. Work with your partner and prepare a list of the etiquettes and table manners one must observe during a formal lunch in the family.

Now read this interesting story by Somerset Maugham.

I caught sight of her at the play and in answer to her **beckoning**, I went over during the interval and sat down beside her. It was long since I had last seen her and if someone had not mentioned her name, I hardly think I would have recognised her. She addressed me brightly.

'Well, it's many years since we first met. How time does fly! We're none of us getting any younger. Do you remember the first time I saw you? You asked me to luncheon.'

Did I remember?

It was twenty years ago and I was living in Paris. I had a tiny apartment in the Latin Quarter overlooking a cemetery and I was earning barely enough money to keep body and soul together. She had read a book of mine and had written to me about it. I answered, thanking her, and presently I received from her another letter saying that she was passing through Paris and would like to have a chat with me; but her time was limited and the only free moment she had was on the following Thursday; she was spending the morning at the Luxembourg and would I give her a little luncheon at Foyot's afterwards? Foyot's is a restaurant at which the French **senators** eat and it was so far beyond my means that I had never even thought of going there. But I was flattered and I was too young to have learned to say no to a woman. I had eighty francs to last me the rest of the month and a modest luncheon should not cost more than fifteen. If I cut out coffee for the next two weeks, I could manage well enough.

beckoning: signalling by a movement of the head or hand

senators: members of the Senate

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I answered that I would meet my friend—by correspondence—at Foyot's on Thursday at half past twelve. She was not so young as I expected and in appearance **imposing** rather than attractive. She was in fact a woman of forty. She was talkative, but since she seemed inclined to talk about me I was prepared to be an attentive listener.

I was **startled** when the bill of fare was brought, for the prices were a great deal higher than I had anticipated. But she reassured me.

'I never eat anything for luncheon,' she said.

'Oh, don't say that!' I answered generously.

'I never eat more than one thing. I think people eat far too much nowadays. A little fish, perhaps. I wonder if they have any **salmon**.'

Well, it was early in the year for salmon and it was not on the bill of fare, but I asked the waiter if there was any. Yes, a beautiful salmon had just come in, it was the first they had had. I ordered it for my guest. The waiter asked her if she would have something while it was being cooked.

'No,' she answered, 'I never eat more than one thing. Unless you had a little **caviare**. I never mind caviare.'

My heart sank a little. I knew I could not afford caviare, but I could not very well tell her that. I told the waiter by all means to bring caviare. For myself I chose the cheapest dish on the menu and that was a mutton chop.

'I think you're unwise to eat meat,' she said. 'I don't know how you can expect to work after eating heavy things like chops. I don't believe in overloading my stomach.'

Then came the question of drink.

'I never drink anything for luncheon,' she said.

'Neither do I,' I answered promptly.

Note: Salmon, caviare and asparagus are very expensive food items that a person of average means cannot even dream of ordering at a costly hotel like the Foyot's.

imposing: impressive **startled:** surprised **salmon:** large fish with pinkish flesh
caviare: a salty relish made from the eggs of sturgeon or certain other large fish, eaten as an appetiser

Scanned by CamScanner

'Except white wine,' she proceeded as though I had not spoken. 'These French white wines are so light. They're wonderful for the digestion.'

'What would you like?' I asked, hospitable still, but not exactly **effusive**.

She gave me a bright and amicable flash of her white teeth.

'My doctor won't let me drink anything but **champagne**.'

I fancy I turned a trifle pale. I ordered half a bottle. I mentioned casually that my doctor had absolutely forbidden me to drink champagne.

'What are you going to drink, then?'

'Water.'

She ate the caviare and she ate the salmon. She talked gaily of art and literature and music. But I wondered what the bill would come to. When my mutton chop arrived she took me quite seriously to task.

'I see that you're in the habit of eating a heavy luncheon. I'm sure it's a mistake. Why don't you follow my example and just eat one thing? I'm sure you'd feel ever so much better for it.'

'I am only going to eat one thing,' I said, as the waiter came again with the bill of fare.

She waved him aside with an airy gesture.

'No, no, I never eat anything for luncheon. Just a bite, I never want more than that, and I eat that more as an excuse for conversation than anything else. I couldn't possibly eat anything more—unless they had some of those giant **asparagus**. I should be sorry to leave Paris without having some of them.'

My heart sank. I had seen them in the shops and I knew that they were horribly expensive. My mouth had often watered at the sight of them.

'Madame wants to know if you have any of those giant asparagus,' I asked the waiter.

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effusive: unrestrained, enthusiastic
champagne: an expensive white or pink wine made in the Champagne area of France
asparagus: a plant whose shoots are used as a vegetable

Scanned by CamScanner

I tried with all my might to will him to say no. A happy smile spread over his broad, priest-like face, and he assured me that they had some so large, so splendid, so tender, that it was a marvel.

'I'm not in the least hungry,' my guest sighed, 'but if you insist I don't mind having some asparagus.'

I ordered them.

'Aren't you going to have any?'

'No, I never eat asparagus.'

'I know there are people who don't like them. The fact is, you ruin your palate by all the meat you eat.'

We waited for the asparagus to be cooked. Panic seized me. It was not a question now how much money I should have left over for the rest of the month, but whether I had enough to pay the bill. It would be **mortifying** to find myself ten francs short and be obliged to borrow from my guest. I could not bring myself to do that. I knew exactly how much I had and if the bill came to more, I made up my mind that I would put my hand in my pocket and with a dramatic cry start up and say it had been picked. Of course it would be awkward if she had not money enough either to pay the bill. Then the only thing would be to leave my watch and say I would come back and pay later.

The asparagus appeared. They were enormous, **succulent** and appetising. The smell of the melted butter tickled my nostrils. But all I could do was to watch my guest thrust them down in large mouthfuls. At last she finished.

'Coffee?' I said.

'Yes, just an ice-cream and coffee,' she answered.

I was past caring now, so I ordered coffee for myself and an ice-cream and coffee for her.

'You know, there's one thing I thoroughly believe in,' she said, as she ate ice-cream. 'One should always get up from a meal feeling one could eat a little more.'

'Are you still hungry?' I asked faintly.

'Oh, no, I'm not hungry; you see, I don't eat luncheon. I have a cup of coffee in the morning and then dinner, but I never eat more than one thing for luncheon. I was speaking for you.'

'Oh, I see!'

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mortifying: humiliating **succulent:** juicy

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Then a terrible thing happened. While we were waiting for the coffee, the head waiter came up to us bearing a large basket full of huge peaches. They had the blush of an innocent girl; they had the rich tone of an Italian landscape. But surely peaches were not in season then? Lord knew what they cost. I knew too—a little later, for my guest, going on with her conversation, absentmindedly took one.

'You see, you've filled your stomach with a lot of meat'—my one miserable little chop—'and you can't eat any more. But I've just had a snack and I shall enjoy a peach.'

The bill came and when I paid it, I found that I had only enough for a quite inadequate tip. Her eyes rested for an instant on the three francs I left for the waiter and I knew that she thought me mean. But when I walked out of the restaurant, I had the whole month before me and not a penny in my pocket.

'Follow my example,' she said as we shook hands, 'and never eat more than one thing for luncheon.'

'I'll do better than that,' I retorted. 'I'll eat nothing for dinner tonight.'

'Humorist!' she cried gaily, jumping into a cab. 'You're quite a humorist!'

But I have had my revenge at last. Today, she weighs twenty-one **stone**.

stone: a unit of weight (1 stone = app. 6.35 kg)

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I Understanding the Story

A. Tick (✓) the correct answers from the options given below.

1. 'Did I remember?' The narrator means that—
   - (i) he did not remember. ☐
   - (ii) he could not forget. ☐
   - (iii) he was not sure. ☐

2. The narrator is by profession—
   - (i) a writer. ☐
   - (ii) a musician. ☐
   - (iii) an artist. ☐

3. He had never been to Foyot's before because—
   - (i) it was meant only for the French senators. ☐
   - (ii) it was very expensive. ☐
   - (iii) he had not heard of it. ☐

4. He did not order champagne for himself because—
   - (i) he did not like it. ☐
   - (ii) his doctor had forbidden him to drink it. ☐
   - (iii) he could not afford it. ☐

5. He did not give an adequate tip to the waiter because—
   - (i) he did not believe in giving tips. ☐
   - (ii) he was miserly. ☐
   - (iii) he had no more money. ☐

B. Give two pieces of evidence from the story to justify each of the following statements.

1. The narrator was still a struggling writer.
2. He promptly said 'yes' to the woman's proposal for lunch at the Foyot's.
3. The woman did not approve of the narrator's choice of eating meat.

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4. The narrator planned ways to face a bill beyond his means.
5. The asparagus were tempting and difficult to resist.
6. The narrator was shocked to see the head waiter carry a basket full of peaches.

C. Answer the following questions in about 30 words each.

1. How did the woman know the narrator? Why did she want to meet him?
2. What impression did the narrator gather of the woman when he met her?
3. Why was the narrator panic-stricken while they were waiting for the asparagus to be cooked?
4. Why did the narrator order coffee for himself also?
5. What is the waiter's contribution in allowing the woman to have a gorgeous meal?

II HOTS

A. The narrator's meeting with the woman begins with his being flattered and hospitable and ends with being mortified and disgusted. Discuss his different states of mind.

B. The woman calls the narrator 'a humorist'. Who do you think actually contributes to the humour in the story? How?

III Life Skills

If you come across such a guest at home, how will you behave?

IV Values

A. Observe the following remarks made by the woman during the luncheon.

'I never eat anything for luncheon.'

'I never drink anything for luncheon.'

'I never eat more than one thing for luncheon.'

Discuss these statements in the light of her behaviour during the luncheon.

B. Was the woman considerate or self-centred?

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V Writing Skills

Imagine that you are the narrator.

(a) Write a diary entry expressing your plans on how you hope to manage the budget of the entire month.

(b) Write a diary entry expressing your satisfaction on observing the woman put on a lot of weight in the second meeting.

About the Author

W. Somerset Maugham (1874–1965) was an eminent novelist, playwright, short-story writer, travel writer, autobiographer and essayist. He was one of the most popular writers in English in the twentieth century and is noted for his clarity of style and skill in story-telling. His popular short stories include 'The Verger', 'The Ant and the Grasshopper', 'Mr. Know-All' and 'The Traitor'.

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7 The Children's Song

by Joseph Rudyard Kipling

Pre-reading Task

1. Prepare a list of the qualities/virtues that you think an individual must possess. Grade these qualities in terms of importance.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   Now compare your list with your partner's. Have you missed out on some important quality?

2. Discuss with your friends and make a list of the duties and responsibilities that you have towards your motherland.

   _____

   _____

   _____

Now read the poem 'The Children's Song' by J. R. Kipling.

Land of our Birth, we pledge to thee
Our love and toil in the years to be;
When we are grown and take our place
As men and women with our race.

Father in Heaven who lovest all,
Oh, help Thy children when they call;
That they may build from age to age
An **undefiled** heritage.

undefiled: unpolluted, pure

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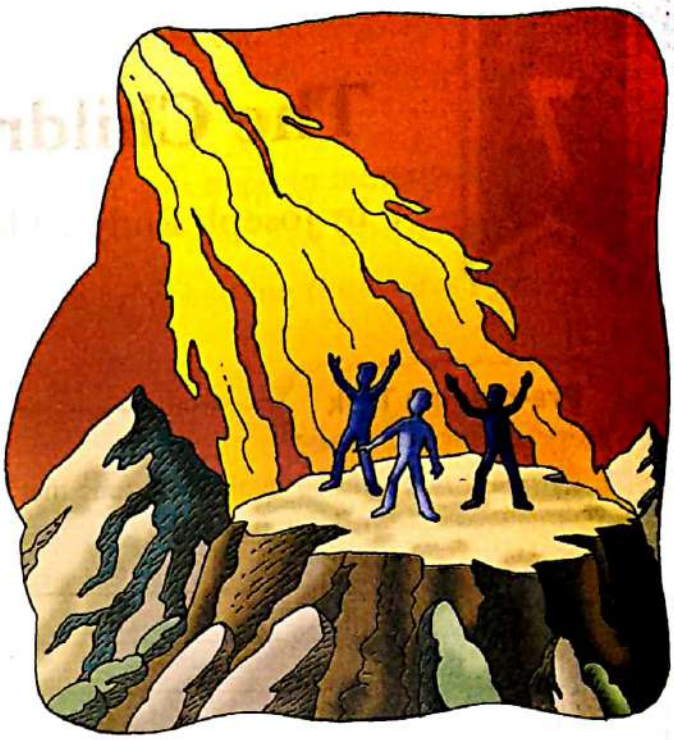
Teach us to bear the **yoke** in youth,
With **steadfastness** and careful truth;
That, in our time, Thy Grace may give
The Truth whereby the Nations live.

Teach us to rule ourselves alway,
Controlled and cleanly night and day;
That we may bring, if need arise,
No **maimed** or worthless sacrifice.

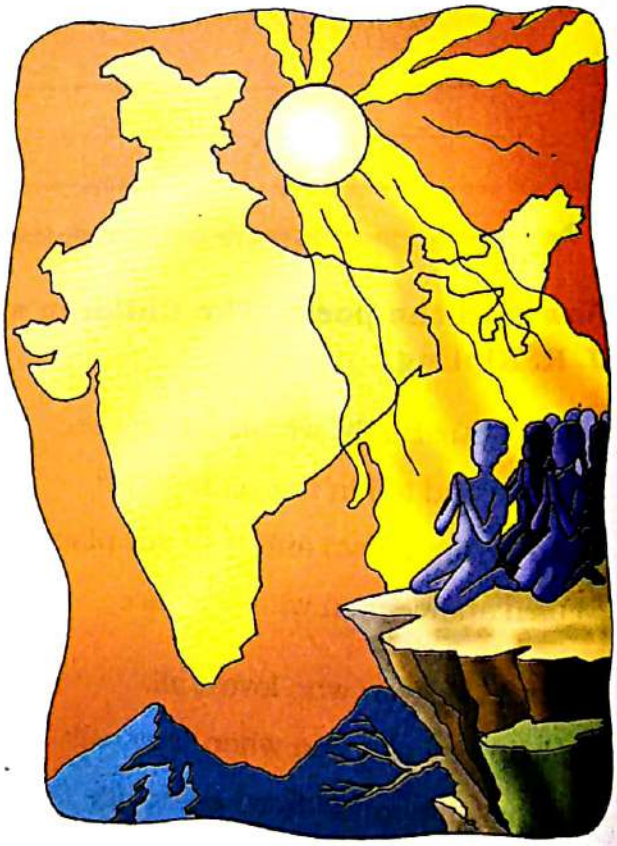
Teach us to look in all our ends
On Thee for judge, and not our friends;
That we, with Thee, may walk **uncowed**
By fear or favour of the crowd.



Teach us the Strength that cannot seek,
By deed or thought, to hurt the weak;
That, under Thee, we may possess
Man's strength to comfort man's distress.

Teach us Delight in simple things,
And Mirth that has no bitter springs;
Forgiveness free of evil done,
And Love to all men 'neath the Sun!

Land of our Birth, our faith, our pride,
For whose dear sake our fathers died;
Oh, Motherland, we pledge to thee
Head, heart and hand through the years to be!



yoke: responsibility **steadfastness:** firmness, resoluteness **maimed:** half-hearted, trivial
uncowed: unafraid

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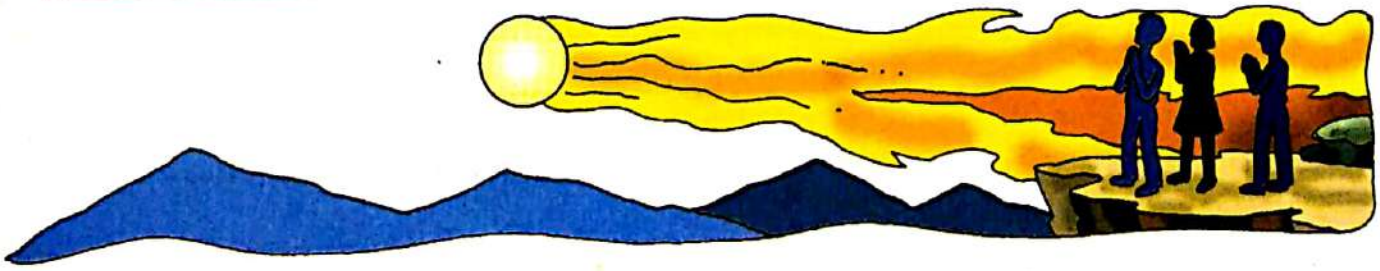
I Understanding the Poem

A. The poem is a children's prayer to God to enable them to serve their country. Complete the table given below by filling in Column A the virtues/qualities that the children pray to God to bless them with and in Column B how these virtues/qualities will help them.in serving their nation.

	Column A	Column B
stanza 2	Help us whenever we need Your help.	We may build a world free of all evils.
stanza 3	Teach us to be focussed, responsible and firm in youth.	
stanza 4		We may make a useful sacrifice to bring freedom and dignity to the individual.
stanza 5	Only You should be the judge of our actions.	
stanza 6		We may not harm the weak and may provide solace to those in misery.
stanza 7	Teach us to seek happiness in simplicity and nobility and to learn forgiveness.	



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

1. Teach us to bear the yoke in youth,
   With steadfastness and careful truth;
   That, in our time, Thy Grace may give
   The Truth whereby the Nations live.
   (a) What yoke is the speaker referring to in the first line?
   (b) What does the speaker mean by 'careful truth'?
   (c) What does the phrase 'in our time' in line 3 refer to?
   (d) Explain: 'The Truth whereby the Nations live.'
2. Land of our Birth, our faith, our pride,
   For whose dear sake our fathers died;
   Oh, Motherland, we pledge to thee
   Head, heart and hand through the years to be!
   (a) Why does the speaker call their motherland 'Land of..., ...faith, ...pride'?
   (b) How does the speaker wish to serve their motherland?
   (c) What do the words 'head', 'heart' and 'hand' in line 4 refer to?
   (d) What purpose is served by the repetition of the word 'our' in line 1?

C. Explain the following.

1. ...we pledge to thee
   Our love and toil in the years to be.
2. That we may bring, if need arise,
   No maimed or worthless sacrifice.
3. That we, with Thee, may walk uncowed
   By fear or favour of the crowd.
4. Mirth that has no bitter springs.

D. The repetition of a sound to create a musical effect in a poem is called 'alliteration'. Find at least four examples of alliteration in the poem.

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E. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?

II HOTS

Why is the poem titled 'The Children's Song'?

III Life Skills

A 'The Children's Song' has a definite message for the people of every country in every age. What is that message?

B. How can we comfort a man in distress?

C. Why should we have more trust in God than in our friends?

IV Values

Almost all values find expression in the poem 'The Children's Song'—love for the country, shouldering responsibilities, selflessness, compassion, forgiveness, etc. Throw light on the humanitarian aspect of the poem in the light of the above observation.

V Writing Skills

Taking hints from the poem, prepare a speech to be delivered in the morning assembly on the topic: 'The Role of the Youth in Our Nation's Development'.

About the Author

Joseph Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was born in India and educated in England, where he became one of the leading writers of his time. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907 and he has since charmed generations of children and adults with his enchanting stories and poems. Author of the unforgettable *The Jungle Book*, he also wrote about colonial India and nineteenth-century England and America.

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8 The Case of the Sharp-Eyed Jeweller

by Nicolas Bentley

Pre-reading Task

1. Observe the given picture carefully. Can you make some guesses about the man in the picture by observing him?

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss with your friends and list a few qualities that a good detective should possess.

_____

_____

3. Have you ever observed strangers while travelling in a train or at a bus stop? Narrate any such incident when you could make some guesses about a stranger by observing them.

Now read the story about a jeweller's assistant who foils an attempt to steal an expensive ring by virtue of his vigilance.

First, let me introduce myself. My name is William Morris. I am a very ordinary man except that I use my eyes and my common sense more than most people do. My hobby is perhaps a little out of the ordinary. It is the study of crime and criminals. For the past thirty years I have made a study of the crime stories of the greatest authors, from Edgar Allan Poe to Agatha Christie. And here, I must say that the stories I have most enjoyed are not those where the detective is an extraordinary person, extraordinarily favoured by fortune, but where he is just an ordinary man who uses his eyes and his common sense to the full.

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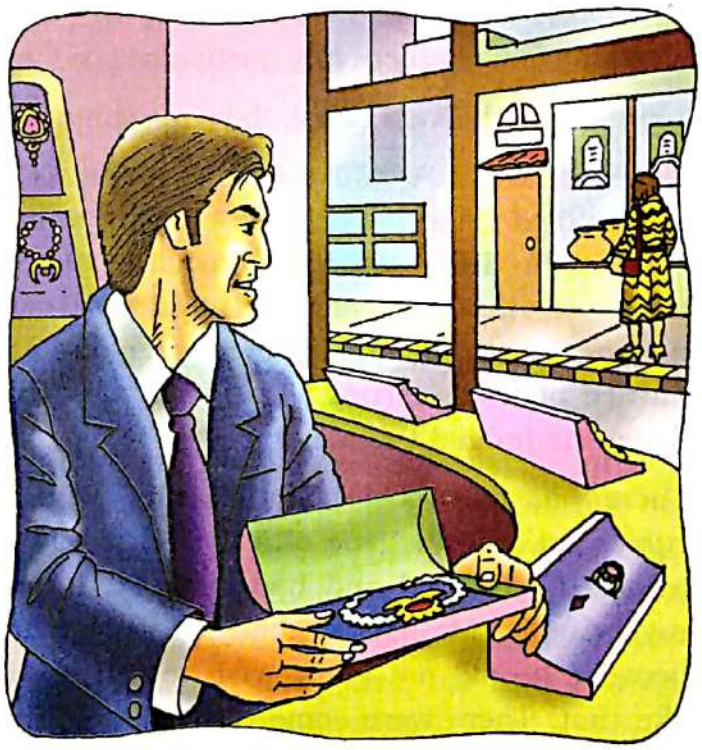
I love to watch people. Some men love to watch the behaviour of birds, others the behaviour of fish, but I love to watch how men and women behave. I have the habit of observing everything they do—the way they walk, speak and pray, what they eat, read, wear and wish for. Nothing ever escapes my sharp eye. Of course you cannot learn much from one fact, but, if you put two or more facts together, you can learn a great deal. I admit that I am only guessing at the truth and that my guesses may be wrong. All the same, it is an interesting pastime and I thoroughly enjoy it.

I have told you something about my hobbies and habits and now I shall speak of my work. I am a jeweller, or more accurately, a jeweller's assistant. This may not strike you as anything important or unusual, but when I tell you that I am working for Regnier's, I am sure that you will be impressed. Everyone knows Regnier's, which is famous for antique jewellery that it sells at prices that only the very rich can afford. Our principal customers are millionaires, oil-kings, film-stars, heroes of the football field, and people of that class. The jewels we sell are never less than three hundred years old. Some of them have a romantic history. Many had once been the gifts of a prince to some reigning beauty of his time.

The first thing I do when I get to work in the morning is to put in the window some pieces of jewellery which are always kept in the safe overnight. I was doing this on that eventful day when I noticed a young woman standing in front of a shop on the opposite side of the street. Her eyes were fixed on the display in the shop windows, and she stood there all the time it took me to arrange our display—quite fifteen or twenty minutes. And what do you think she was staring at? Well, the shop is an **undertaker's**, and in the window there was nothing but two urns for holding the ashes of the dead, and some photographs of grave-stones. Her interest in such things struck me as very strange. The thought crossed my mind that someone dear to her had died. Maybe. But she was not wearing black or any other sign of mourning. She was, in fact, wearing a bright yellow coat with a vivid zig-zag pattern running all over it, and yellow sandals.



undertaker: a person whose job is to prepare dead bodies for cremation

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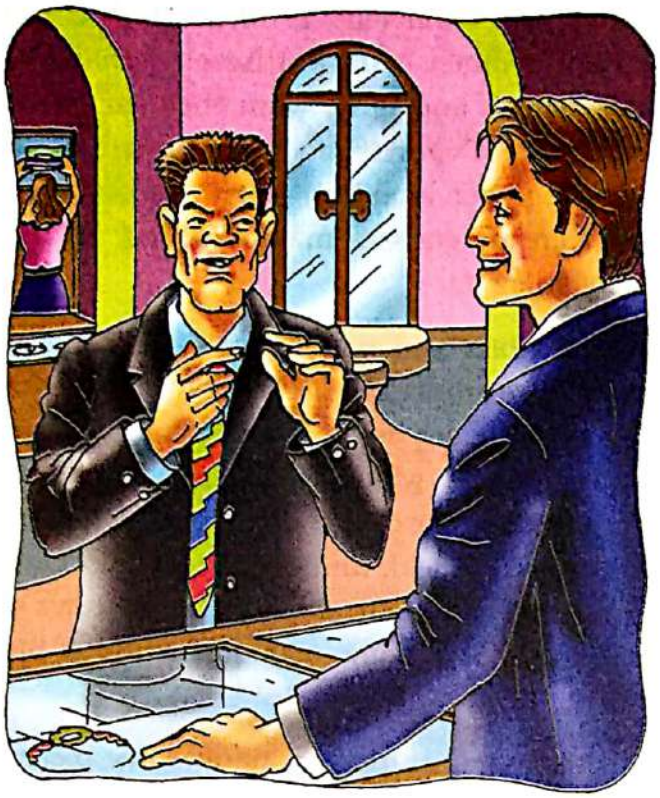


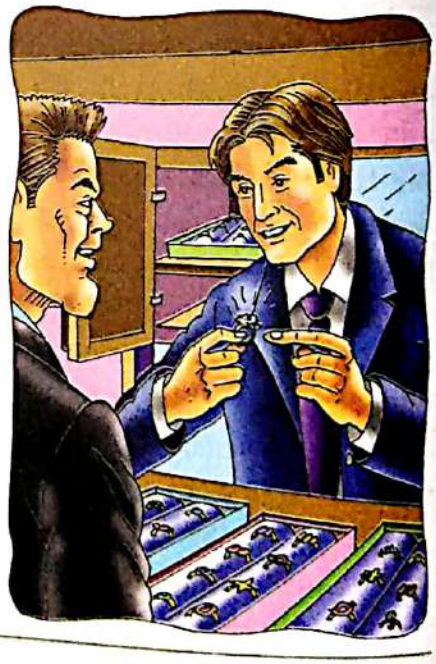
I had finished arranging the jewels in the window and was still keeping one eye on the young woman when a man came into our shop. It was immediately plain to me that he was an American—one of the gum-chewing Americans. An American is the easiest of all to pick out. There is his hair-cut, his tie in so many bright colours, and then so often you find him chewing—chewing that dreadful chewing gum. He was a big, strongly-built man, with a red face that showed he drank more than was good for him. His suit was a darkish grey but his tie was a mixture of exceedingly bright colours. I took him to be about thirty-five years old.

'Good morning, sir,' I said. 'May I help you?'

'Well,' he said, rolling the gum round his mouth, and speaking with a strong **yankee** accent, 'I'd like to look at some rings.'

'Certainly, sir. Is there any particular kind you have in mind?'

'I guess not,' he said. 'Just show me some.'



I opened the safe and took out a tray of rings to show him and to get some idea of what he wanted. He picked out two or three of them and asked the price of them. I noticed that he was left-handed. It was clear that he knew nothing at all about precious stones and the nature of their setting. The price was the measure by which he judged them.

There was one most beautiful ring, with diamonds and rubies set in the shape of a flower. It was well over three hundred years old and had been in the possession of a royal family. Mr Regnier had set a very high price on it because he did not really wish to sell it. Mr Regnier was like that. There were some of his jewels that he loved as

yankee: American

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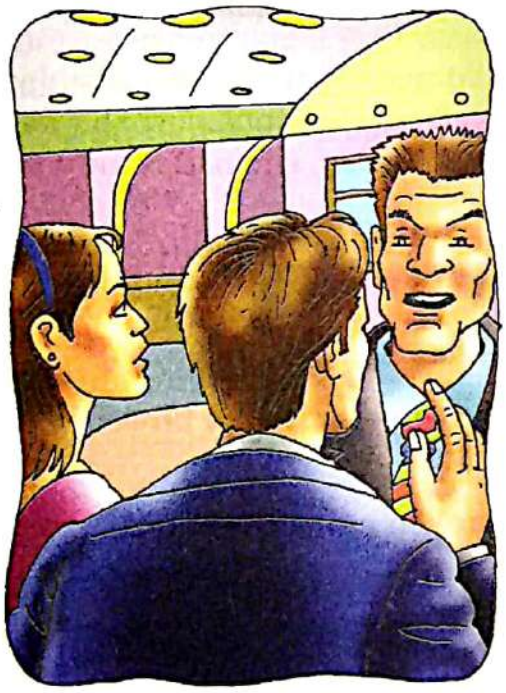
much as he loved his children. The American preferred this flower ring to all the others but he complained that the price was too high. He asked to see some other rings and I showed him three more trays but he was still unsatisfied. His eye then fell on a fourth tray which was still inside the safe—whose door I had left open.

'I guess I'd better take a look at those as well,' he said.

I turned to take the tray out of the safe and then turned quickly back again to put the tray on the counter. It was then that I saw that the diamond and ruby ring had disappeared.

I made a sign to Miss Susskind, another assistant and she came and stood beside me. Then I said to the American, 'I see that you have decided on the flower ring, sir. If you will kindly hand it to me, I will find a suitable box for it.'



I held out my hand for the ring.

'I haven't decided on anything yet,' the American said. 'I'm not the one who's going to decide. I'm just picking out two or three rings for my wife to choose from. She'll be coming in later this morning to make her choice.'

'But the flower ring! Where is it?' I asked in dismay. Then I turned to Miss Susskind. 'Will you please ask Mr Regnier to come here?' I said.

I came out from my side of the counter and began searching for the ring. The American joined in the search, and so did Mr Regnier and Miss Susskind. I could see that Mr Regnier was most upset but he was doing his best to keep calm.

Then Miss Susskind said, 'I think that you ought to look in the turn-ups of his trousers.'

The suggestion was a reasonable one. It is quite easy for something small to drop in the turn-up of a trouser leg. And Miss Susskind, who is a very kind person, meant him no harm, but he turned on her with a very ugly look. His face turned even redder than before, and I noticed that he had stopped chewing. His jaw moved as if he were a fierce dog ready to bite. It was a dangerous moment and I felt afraid, but Miss Susskind stood there perfectly calm. Then the American bent down and felt round his turn-ups and I helped him too, but there was nothing there.

The American laughed. 'I suppose you're thinking that I've stolen it,' he said.

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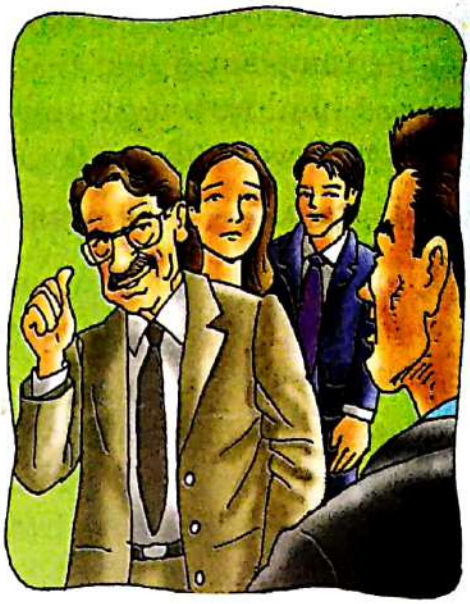
'Oh, no sir. Of course not,' Mr Regnier protested. 'Of course I do not suspect you. But when I report the matter to the Insurance Company, I shall have to inform them that I made a thorough search—even on you, sir, if you will excuse me.'



'O.K.,' said the American and went off quite cheerfully to Mr Regnier's office, where Mr Regnier searched through his clothes—without finding any trace of the ring.

While this was happening another customer came in. It was the young woman who had been looking at the funeral display in the undertaker's windows for such a long time. Her coming in at this moment struck me as rather strange.

I looked at her across the counter and noticed several things. Her handbag was of an expensive kind but it was old and worn and very shabby. The same was true of her clothes. Clearly, she had been well-off once, but now she was living in poverty. She had not come here to buy anything. More likely, she had come with something to sell.

She put her handbag down on the counter and, taking a little paper packet out of it, she put that down beside her bag. She used her left hand to do this but, strangely enough, she had not shown herself left-handed in anything that she had done before.

I opened the packet and found inside it a piece of cheap jewellery—a **filigree** brooch with an imitation **turquoise** stone, worth about thirty shillings.

'Could you mend this for me?' she asked, showing me the broken pin of the brooch.

'I am sorry, madam,' I said. 'Regnier's does not do repairs.'

'Thank you,' she said. Then, as if by accident, her arm somehow swept against the paper in which the brooch had been wrapped, and this fell to the floor on my side of the counter. I say 'as if by accident' because, in fact, it was no accident at all. It was a cunning trick.

I realised this as I bent down to pick up the paper. All the facts suddenly came together in my head, and I knew what had happened to the flower ring. All the things that I had noticed joined to form a single picture, and that picture showed me all that I wanted to know.

filigree: made from delicate twisted silver wire

turquoise: a bluish green stone

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I put the brooch back into its paper wrapping and handed it to her. She put it into her handbag, using her right hand to do this, and then turned to leave the shop.

'One moment, madam,' I said.

She heard me but she pretended that she hadn't. She walked on towards the door.

'Pardon me,' I said, 'but if you don't stop, I shall press the alarm and the door will be locked.'

She stopped but she did not look round.

Miss Susskind stood like a statue behind the other counter while I went up to the young woman. 'Madam,' I said, 'we do not wish for any unpleasantness. Kindly hand me the ring which you have in the left-hand pocket of your coat. If you will not, Miss Susskind will press the alarm.'

The young woman was looking deathly pale and very frightened. I felt sorry for her. Without saying a word, she felt in her pocket and gave me the ring. She ran out of the shop as if the place was on fire.

It was then that Mr Regnier came out of his office with the American, whose face was one big grin of satisfaction. Mr Regnier was not smiling. He was as white as a sheet. His voice was shaking as he said, 'I am so sorry, sir. I hope that you will understand and excuse me. I beg your pardon, indeed I do.'

It was then that I opened my hand and showed the ring. It is a pity that you were not there to see Mr Regnier's face. What a mixture of astonishment, joy and thankfulness!

As for that American, he was out of the shop that instant, like a shot from a gun.

'How .....how did you find it?' gasped Mr Regnier, falling into a chair.

'Well,' I began, 'from the first that fellow seemed a strange customer for us. That type of American does not come to us as a rule. They want something more modern and showy than what we sell. Besides, he didn't know a thing about jewellery and he didn't even know what he wanted. People who come to Regnier's know what they want and they generally know something about antique jewellery. And so, I said to myself, 'Why has he come to us?'

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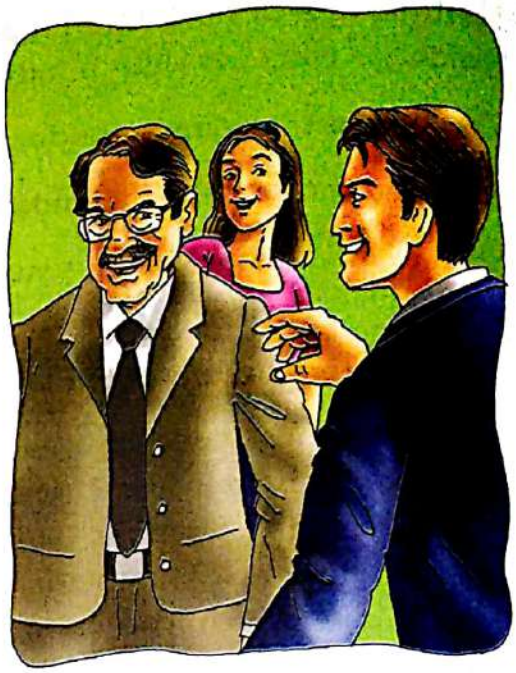
'Right, quite right,' said Mr Regnier. 'That was very clever of you, William.'



'Then,' I continued, 'there was the young woman. I saw her standing about for quite a while, looking at the display opposite.'

'The undertaker's?' said Mr Regnier. 'How very strange!'

'That is what I thought. And why was she waiting about all that time if she intended to come in? Why did she bring us a cheap brooch to repair? Everyone knows that Regnier's has nothing to do with cheap **trinkets** and never does cheap repairs.'

'Certainly not,' said Mr Regnier, deeply shocked at the thought. 'Go on.'

'Now, she isn't left-handed, but she took the packet out of her bag with her left hand. And she put her left hand just where the American, who was left-handed, had put his after I had taken that last tray of rings out of the safe, just before I noticed that the flower ring had disappeared.'

'And what had he done with it?' asked Mr Regnier.

'It was like this,' I explained. 'It all became clear to me when I was picking up that piece of paper. When the American looked so angrily at Miss Susskind, I noticed that he had stopped chewing his gum. Now, you can't swallow chewing-gum. You can't drop it on the floor, either. We haven't got a waste-paper basket here, and, in any case, he hadn't moved an inch from where he was standing. He must have put the gum somewhere well within his reach. Where? Where else could he have put it except under the edge of the counter? And then he pressed the ring

trinkets: small items of jewellery

Scanned by CamScanner

into the gum for the girl to take out when she came into the shop. And that is what she did. As the girl turned to go out, I found the gum just where I had expected it to be. Here it is! Look, you can see the mark that the ring made in it.'

How differently people react to the same happening! Mr Regnier was angry at the attempted theft and most grateful to me. But Miss Susskind, I noticed, only said, 'Tsk, tsk.' I notice that she often says 'Tsk, tsk' when anything upsets her.

I Understanding the Story

A. Each statement given below contains a word/phrase, which makes it false. Underline the wrong word/phrase and rewrite the correct statement in the space provided.

1. The narrator owns the Regnier's jewellery shop.

_____

2. The Regnier's sells high-priced modern jewellery.

_____

3. The young woman standing on the opposite side of the Regnier's was staring at the displayed jewellery.

_____

_____

4. The narrator showed the American five trays of rings in all.

_____

5. The young woman said she had come to the Regnier's to sell her filigree brooch.

_____

_____

6. The young woman hid the flower ring in the right pocket of her purse.

_____

_____

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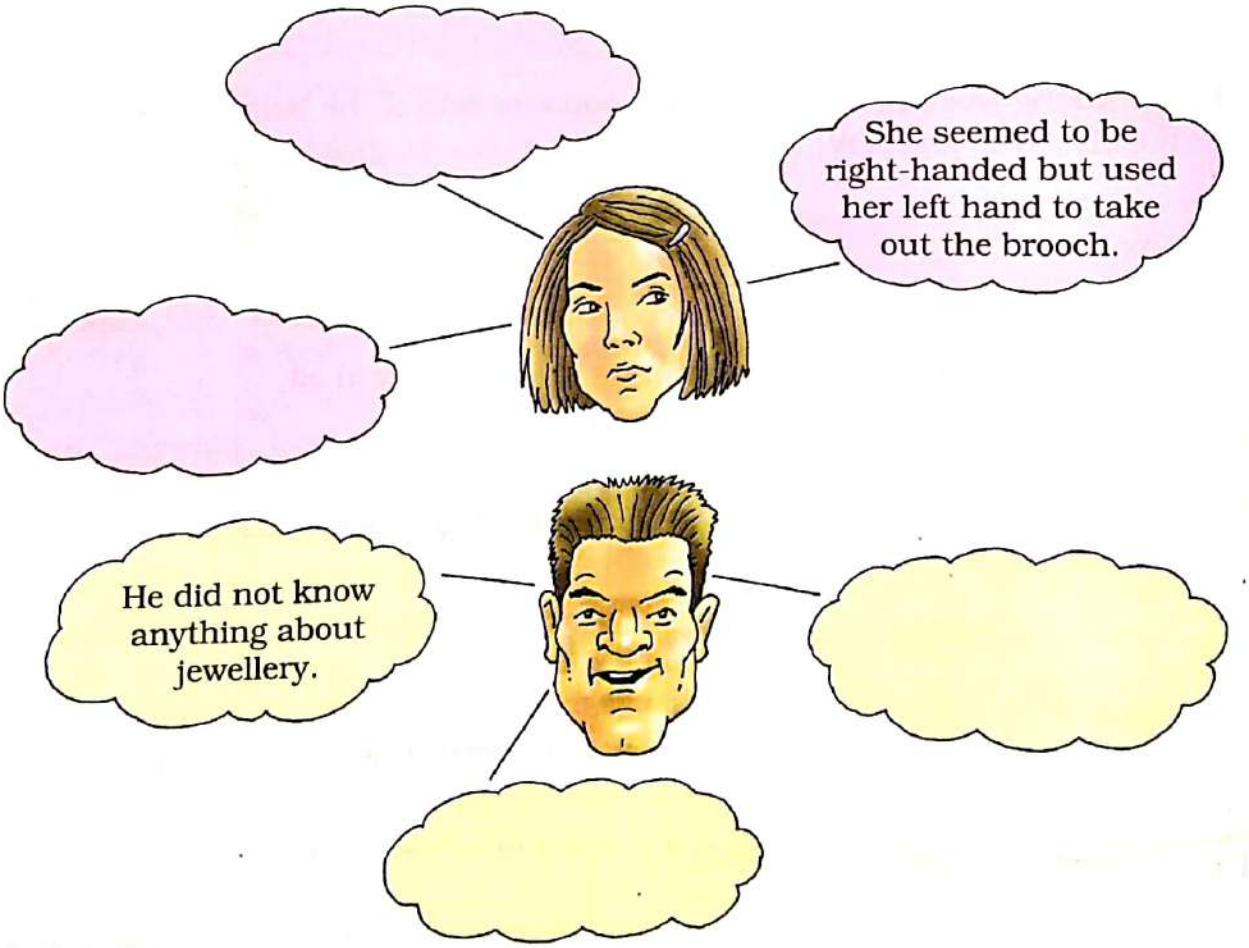
B. Answer the following questions in about 30 words each.

1. 'My hobby is perhaps a little out of the ordinary.' What is the narrator's hobby? Why does he consider it 'out of the ordinary'?
2. Why did the narrator find the behaviour of the woman standing outside the Regnier's strange?
3. 'Her arrival at this moment struck me as rather strange.' Why did the narrator find the young lady's arrival at that point of time strange?
4. Do you think the young lady had accidentally dropped the paper in which her brooch was wrapped? If not, why did she do so?
5. Where did the narrator find the ring from? How did he know it would be there?

C. William Morris noticed certain things about the American and the young lady that put them under suspicion and finally helped him in solving the mystery of the missing ring. Complete the web chart below by filling in the blurbs the observations that the narrator made about the two.



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D. On the basis of your reading of the story, complete the flow chart by filling in the correct sequence of events.

Morris observes a young woman standing in front of the undertaker's.

↓

[ ]

↓

An American customer asks for rings.

↓

[ ]

↓

Mr Regnier takes the American to his office.

↓

[ ]

↓

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The lady 'accidentally' drops the paper in which her brooch was wrapped.

↓

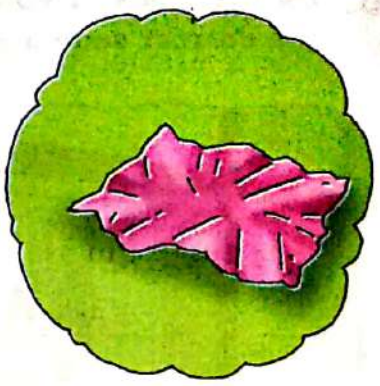
↓

↓

Mr Regnier and the American come out of the former's office.

↓

Morris gives the ring back to Mr Regnier.



E. What impression do you form of William Morris? (About 80 words)

II HOTS

A. 'Intelligence is using common sense to the full.' Discuss with reference to the story.

B. 'But she was not wearing black or any other sign of mourning.'

(a) Why is 'black' considered to be a sign of mourning?

(b) Why do you think some people wear 'white' also for the same reason?

(c) Should colour be given more importance or heartfelt feelings?

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III Life Skills

A. Why did William Morris make a sign to Miss Susskind before speaking to the American about the flower ring?

B. Why was it important to conduct a thorough search on the American before reporting the matter to the Insurance Company?

C. Why were the American and his accomplice not handed over to the police?

IV Values

Miss Susskind is mostly seen to be calm and composed throughout the story. She does not react impulsively. Do you think she is right in doing so? Why/Why not?

V Writing Skills

Imagine yourself to be the young lady. Write a diary entry relating how the jeweller's vigilant assistant foiled your well-made plan to steal the ring.

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9 Couplets

by Alexander Pope

Pre-reading Task

A **couplet** consists of two lines of verse of the same length with the last two words of each line rhyming with each other. Kabir and Rahim are Hindi poets famous for their couplets.

Recite a few couplets in Hindi (or in your mother tongue) and discuss their meanings with your partner. Try to find out how the poet succeeds in expressing a beautiful idea of universal importance only in two lines.

Now read these couplets by Alexander Pope.

1. 'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
   Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
2. He knows to live, who keeps the middle state
   And neither **leans** on this side nor on that.
3. For forms of government let fools **contest**;
   Whate'er is best administered is best.
4. For **modes of faith** let graceless **zealots** fight;
   His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.
5. In faith and hope the world will disagree,
   But all mankind's concern is charity.

leans: bends **contest:** to quarrel **modes of faith:** religions **zealots:** fanatic people

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I Understanding the Couplets

A. On the basis of your understanding of the couplets, complete the following statements by filling in the blanks.

1. Just as no two watches show the same time, the _____ of different people vary and each person believes in their own _____.
2. The best way to live is to tread the _____ path and avoid _____ on the extremes.
3. Only fools _____ over the forms of government. The most successful government is the one with the best _____.
4. Let fanatic people _____ for _____. One who follows the path of truth can never be _____ or aimless.
5. People might have different _____, religions, aims or ambitions, but _____ is the common concern of the whole _____.

B. Answer the following questions in about 30 words, elaborating the ideas given in the couplets.

1. What is the key to a successful life?
2. What are the various forms of government? (Mention two or three.) Which one is the best? Why?
3. What should be the chief concern of the whole mankind? What other concerns divert people's attention from this?

C. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

1. He knows to live, who keeps the middle state.
   (a) What do you understand by 'middle state'?
   (b) How can the 'middle state' be achieved?
   (c) Is this line relevant in a student's life? Give an example.
   (d) What other things are required to lead a virtuous life?

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2. For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight.

(a) Why do zealots fight?

(b) Why are zealots called 'graceless'?

(c) Whose life cannot be wrong? Why?

(d) How can we help the zealots attain peace?

II HOTS

'Half of the problems of the world will vanish if we realise that each person is right in their own perspective.' Discuss.

III Life Skills

List five qualities that a good government should have other than good administration.

IV Values

The joy of giving is always greater than the joy of receiving. Write a few ways in which you can help your fellow human beings who are less fortunate than you.

V Writing Skills

Taking ideas from the third couplet, write a letter to a friend telling the importance of leading a balanced life.

About the Author

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) was a famous English poet who began writing poetry at the age of twelve. Quite early in his poetic career, he acquired the art of writing couplets and used them to express very profound thoughts effectively in the fewest possible words. As a result, many of his lines have become proverbial. *An Essay on Man* contains his philosophic ideas on mankind.

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10 The Undeserved Reward

by Premchand

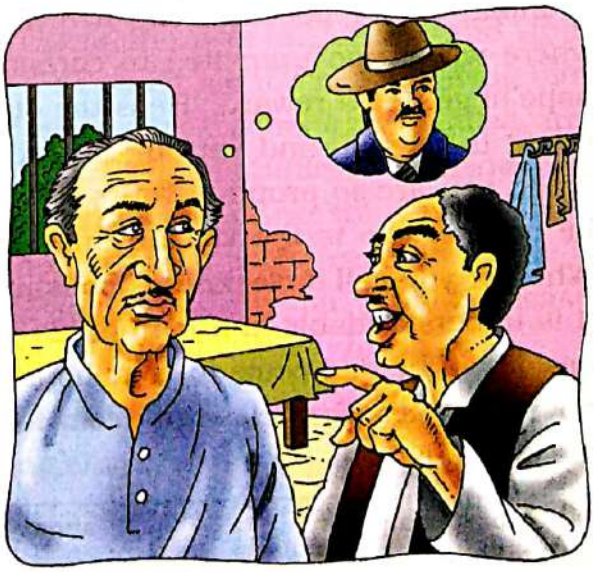
Pre-reading Task

1. If you are offered a reward for a task done by someone else, will you.....
   (a) accept the reward quietly,
   (b) refuse to accept the reward, saying that you don't deserve it,
   (c) accept the reward with the intention that you will pass it on to the one who really deserves it?

   Discuss your response with your partner.

Now read this story by Premchand.

Our district officer is a man of learning. He has done considerable research in history and in old coins. God alone knows how he finds time for it in the midst of his official duties. I have read his works and am a secret admirer of his. His being the district officer is, however, a barrier between us. I am certain that if I take the initiative in meeting him, it would, as usual, be **misconstrued**. And I am not prepared for this at any cost. I am one of those who are even against inviting government officials to preside over public functions. Whenever I hear that a school, a hospital or a widow's home has been named after a governor, I feel sorry at the mentality of my countrymen.



One day I was asked by the district officer to come and see him. I found myself in a **predicament**. The friends, whom I consulted, advised me not to go. Their argument was that if it had been in connection with some official matter, I would have had no choice. But in this

misconstrued: misunderstood

predicament: difficult and unpleasant situation

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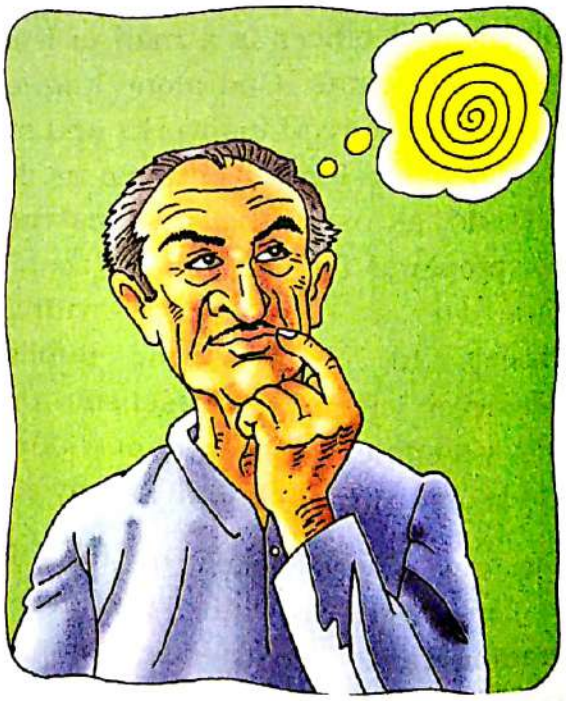
case I had been asked to come for a private interview and it was not **obligatory** for me to go. They even suggested that I had been insulted by being summoned like this. 'If he is so keen to meet you,' they said, 'why doesn't he come to see you? When will these Indian officers realise that outside the office they are as good or as bad as any other person. Probably they cannot forget that they are officers even when they are with their wives.' Another friend, who kept a treasure chest of jokes about government officers, related the story of an officer who went to his in-laws to fetch his wife. When the father-in-law insisted that the girl should be allowed to stay on with them for another month, the officer came back enraged and issued summons for the arrest of the father-in-law. The next day the old man came with the daughter and begged forgiveness. In his opinion these district officers were a **snooty** lot and he advised me to keep away from them. His opinion was that since I was not interested in being appointed a ***Naib-Tehsildar*** or a recommendation for my son, there was precious little that I could expect to gain from his acquaintance. If I wrote a story or an article which was considered **seditious**, I would anyhow be arrested and no mercy would be shown to me merely because I knew the district officer.

However, I did not follow the wise counsels of my friends. To turn down a request merely because it was from the district officer appeared to me against all **canons** of good manners. Undoubtedly, if he had come to see me, it would not have led to any loss of prestige for him. But, after all, a district officer is an important personage in this country and a writer is an ordinary individual. It is not like England or America where even a Prime Minister would consider it an honour to visit a writer. This is India, where poets throng to every rich man, where writers go uninvited to coronations in the hope of getting a reward. 'He is the district officer,' I said to myself, 'and you are an ordinary writer. When you are so proud of yourself, why shouldn't he be—he who is the virtual king of the district. Whether you call it weakness, foolishness or pride, it is understandable in a man of his position. And besides, if he had come to your house, wouldn't it have created a first class problem for you? There



obligatory: compulsory
snooty: a person who considers himself to be superior to others
naib-tehsildar: a naib-tehsildar was an assistant officer in a district
seditious: that would provoke people against the government (the story refers to the period when the British ruled India)
canons: principles

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is not even a decent chair in your house. You are used to twenty-four for three **pies** *bidis*. Where would you have got the expensive cigars for him? You do not even know their brand or where they can be purchased. Thank God he did not come to see you; otherwise, you would have had to spend at least four to five rupees and yet felt that you were not able to entertain him properly. And if through your bad luck his wife also came, would your wife be able to entertain her? One can live in one's own house in rags but can any self-respecting person bear the thought of making his poverty a topic of drawing-room conversation for others? You would not have been able to utter a word before his wife and would have prayed for the earth to open up and take you in.'

With all these considerations in mind, I decided to go and visit the district officer. I stayed with him for sometime and we talked about things in general. His behaviour did not give me any reason to complain. Although I did not attach any importance to this meeting, people soon came to know of it and in some circles, it came to be known that I was a great friend of the district officer. Some even said that he consulted me on all important matters. I could have easily taken advantage of the situation. A drowning man catches even at a straw. It would not have been difficult for me to convince people that through me they could get favours from the district officer. But I considered this as downright mean and dishonest. Many people came to me—some had grudges against the police, some had tales to tell about the high-handedness of the Income-Tax officials, others complained about discrimination in the district office, where underserving people were getting promotions. To all of them my answer was the same—that such matters had nothing to do with me.

One day I was sitting in my room when a childhood friend called. We had studied together. That was some forty-five years ago. I was then about eight or nine years old. He was about the same. I was thin, lean and intelligent. He was fat, strong and dull. Our teacher was completely fed up with him and had assigned me the task of giving him extra lessons. I considered this a great honour and where the teacher's cane failed, my sympathetic approach yielded results. Baldev was soon well up in studies. Unfortunately, because of the teacher's sudden death, the school closed down and we all parted. Since then I had met Baldev only once or twice casually and had never exchanged more than a mere hurried greeting with him. Shaking his hand, I said, 'How are you, Baldev? Please come in. I haven't seen you for ages.'

'I have wanted to see you too for a long time,' said Baldev, 'You are my teacher you know. But for you, I would still have been a good-for-nothing chap. Now I can at least look after my lands. I don't know why, but whatever the Maulvi Sahib taught me went completely over my head. For teaching an ass like me the credit goes entirely to you.'

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pies: pie was an old coin, approximately one-two hundredth part of a rupee

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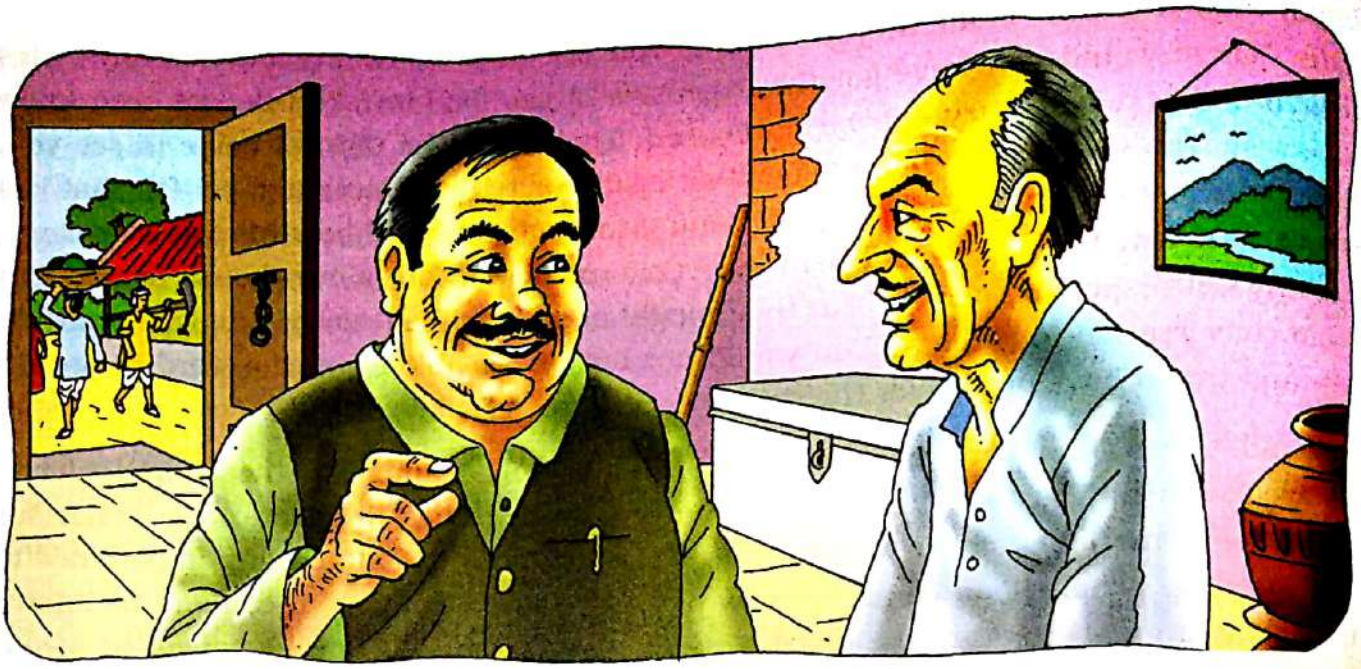

'Baldev,' I said, **overwhelmed**. 'Whenever I see you the childhood memories revive with all the freshness and this long spell of forty-five years vanishes in a minute.'

Baldev replied, 'I have always considered you an elder brother you know and tell everyone that I can depend on you whenever I am in trouble.... Why don't you eat properly? You are thin as ever. If you can't get good ghee, I can send you a couple of tins. Now you are getting old. Food is the only thing that will keep you going. Look at me. I can still drink a **seer** of milk and eat a quarter seer ghee besides some butter. I have to keep fit. Although the whole life has been spent in bringing up the children, do they care about me? If I were to fall ill, they would not even come to ask if I needed anything— Yes, I have come to you about my eldest son. You know he is also a hefty and well-built man like me and can never take anything lying down. On a number of occasions he quarrelled with the police and they have always been on the look-out for an opportunity to **implicate** him. Recently when a dacoity took place in the village, they got their chance and during the investigation roped him in. He is under arrest and has been in jail for the last one week. The case is filed in the court of the Deputy Collector, Mr Mohammad Khalil. The *Daroga Sahib* and he are great friends and I am sure that my son will be sentenced. No one but you can save him. If he is sentenced, the whole family will be ruined. I do not expect you to do anything out of the way. All you have to do is to go and tell the district officer that it is a completely false case and that he should investigate the matter personally. You are a childhood friend of mine and my Guru. Please do not refuse. I know that you do not like getting involved in such matters and it is right too. But in

overwhelmed: overpowered by a strong emotion
implicate: involve in a criminal case
seer: unit of weight slightly less than a kilogram

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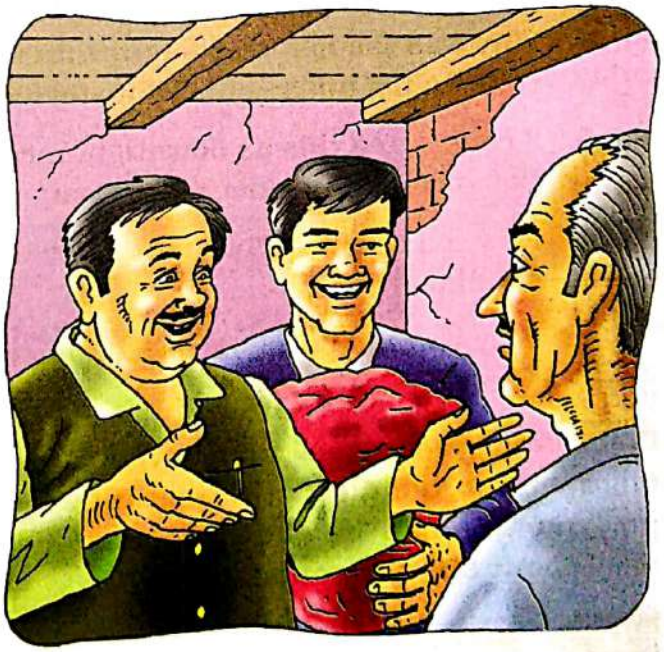
this case, you should think as if your own son were in trouble. If the case had not been absolutely false, I would not have troubled you. The boy's mother is crying her heart out. His wife has not eaten anything since his arrest. As a matter of fact, nothing has been cooked in the house since he was taken away. If he is sentenced, I am sure that both these women will die. I have consoled them by saying that as long as you are alive, no one can harm the boy.'

I was in a great fix. All the objections that I could have put forward had already been answered by Baldev Singh. I could not think of a valid excuse and said ultimately to get out of the predicament, 'All right, I shall mention it to the district officer, but it is doubtful that anything would come out of it. He does not interfere in the work of his subordinates.'

'You go and tell him about this case,' repeated Baldev Singh, 'that is all that I ask of you. The rest will all depend on fate. Will you go tomorrow?' Baldev Singh took leave of me. I completed the article I was writing and lay down to rest after finishing my meals. I had no intention whatsoever of keeping my promise to him. All I had to tell him when I met him next was that the district officer did not consider it proper to interfere in the case.

I had completely forgotten about the incident when, eight days later, Baldev Singh and his son came to see me. The son knelt and touched my feet. Baldev Singh said, 'This is the boy. He has been let off without a **blemish**. The district officer called the *Daroga Sahib* and **reprimanded** him severely, warning him that if in future he indulged in **maligning** innocent and respectable people, he would be dismissed. The *Daroga* could not even show his face to me after this. It is all due to you. But for you, we would have been undone. You have saved four lives. When I came to you I had my doubts whether you would help. People had told me that nobody had ever benefited through you. But I was certain that you would not let me down.' And saying this, he signalled to his son, who went out and brought a huge bundle of presents. In spite of my insistence, they refused to take it back. And I could not pick up the courage to tell them that I had done nothing to deserve this reward.



reprimanded: scolded

blemish: charge

maligning: bringing bad name to someone without any basis

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I Understanding the Story

A. Write T for true or F for false statements.

1. The narrator is a lawyer by profession. ☐
2. The district officer had a keen interest in history. ☐
3. The narrator and Baldev used to be classmates about ten years back. ☐
4. Baldev came to see the narrator because he was keen to revive an old friendship. ☐
5. The narrator requested the district officer to help his friend. ☐
6. Baldev was thankful to the narrator for saving his son. ☐

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

1. Why is the narrator a secret admirer of the district officer?
2. What did the Indian officer do when his father-in-law insisted on prolonging his daughter's stay at his house?
3. When the narrator was invited by the district officer to see him, his friends said that it was an insult to him. Why?
4. Why was the narrator happy that the district officer had not come to his house himself instead of calling him?
5. 'I considered this as downright mean and dishonest.' What did the narrator consider to be mean and dishonest?
6. How did the narrator and Baldev become friends in their childhood?
7. Why had the police involved Baldev's son in a false case of dacoity?

C. Baldev presented many arguments before the narrator to convince him to speak to the district officer. State a few arguments and identify the one which you think to be the most convincing, giving reasons to justify your choice. (About 80-100 words).

II HOTS

'I feel sorry at the mentality of my countrymen,' says the narrator. Why does the narrator feel sorry for it? Explain.

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III Life Skills

A. 'Every deserving action should be rewarded; likewise every reward should be well deserved.' Does this statement always hold true in real life? Substantiate your answer with examples.

B. 'One should listen to all but take one's own decision guided by both intellect and conscience.' Discuss.

IV Values

A. 'I could not gather the courage to tell them that I had done nothing.'

Should the narrator have accepted the credit for saving Baldev's son from imprisonment or should he have admitted openly that he had done nothing in the matter? Discuss in the class.

B. (i) 'Where the teacher's cane failed, my sympathetic approach yielded results.' It was not uncommon to see children being subjected to corporal punishment earlier. Do you think it was relevant in those times?

(ii) Do you think capital punishment is justified?

V Writing Skills

A. Baldev is extremely rejoiced at the help rendered by his old friend. On behalf of Baldev prepare a thanksgiving card for the narrator thanking him for his help.

B. You are the narrator. You are overcome with a feeling of guilt after Baldev and his son leave your house. Write a letter to Baldev expressing your guilt over accepting the honour that you did not deserve.

About the Author

Premchand is the pen name of Dhanpat Rai Srivastava, who wrote short stories, novels, biographical sketches, etc., first in Urdu and then in Hindi. His depiction of the hopes and aspirations, the little triumphs and sorrows of the rural folk as well as the lower middle classes is unparalleled in Indian literature. Authenticity of character portrayal and simplicity of style remain the salient features of Premchand's works. Two of his novels, *Gaban* and *Godan*, and his short story *Hira Moti* have been converted into movies. Many other stories have been adapted for the small screen.

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11 Bangle Sellers

by Sarojini Naidu

Pre-reading Task

1. Have you seen women wearing bangles?
2. Name any two festivals or occasions observed in India, wherein bangles hold a special significance. Talk about the importance of these festivals.

Now read the poem 'Bangle Sellers' by Sarojini Naidu.

Bangle sellers are we who bear
Our shining loads to the temple fair.
Who will buy these delicate, bright
Rainbow **tinted** circles of light?
Lustrous tokens of **radiant** lives,
For happy daughters and happy wives.

Some are fit for a maiden's wrist,
Silver and blue as the mountain mist,
Some are **flushed** like the buds that dream
On the **tranquil** brow of a woodland stream,
Some are aglow with the bloom that cleaves
To the **limpid** glory of new-born leaves.

Some are like fields of sunlit corn,
Meet for a bride on her bridal morn,
Some, like the flame of her marriage fire,
Or rich with the **hue** of her heart's desire;
Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,
Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.

tinted: slightly coloured
limpid: clear
radiant: happy looking
hue: colour
flushed: fresh
tranquil: peaceful

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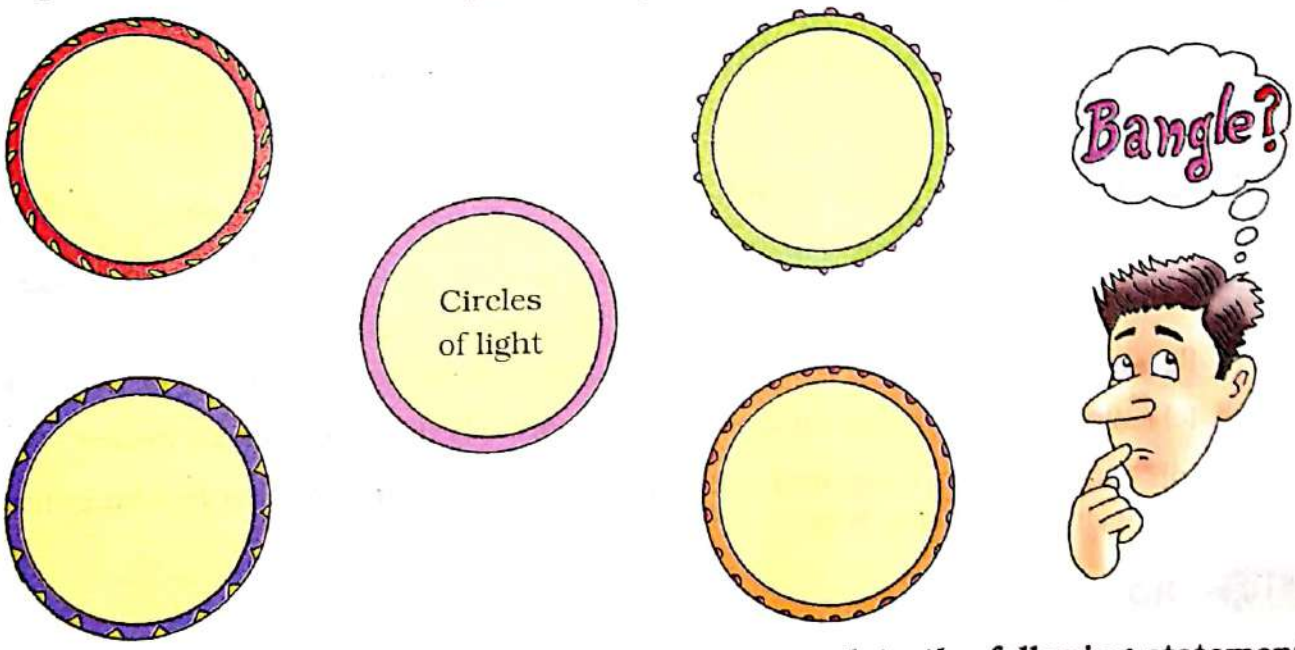
Some are purple and gold flecked grey
For she who has journeyed through life midway,
Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest
And cradled fair sons on her faithful breast,
Who serves her household in fruitful pride,
And worships the gods at her husband's side.

I Understanding the Poem

A. A few graceful phrases have been used in Stanza 1 of the poem to describe bangles. One is given below. Find out two more and write them in the space provided. Write two such phrases of your own.



B. On the basis of your reading of the poem, complete the following statements meaningfully.

1. The bangles which the poet finds fit for the maiden's wrist are of _____ and _____ colour.
2. Some bangles are fresh like _____ growing on the _____ banks of the _____ flowing through the woods.
3. Some bangles reflect the kind of glow we normally find on _____ leaves.
4. The bangles that the bride shall wear on her bridal morning are like _____ brightened by the _____.

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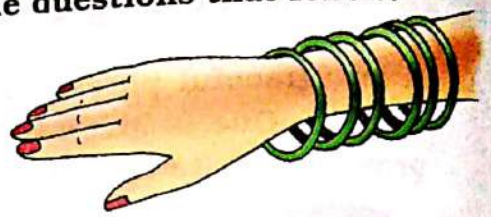
5. The bangles of the bride have the colour of the _____ of the marriage fire and some have the colour of her _____ desire.

6. Some bangles are of _____ or grey colour.

7. The hands of the middle-aged woman have _____ and loved her sons and have served her _____ and her husband.

C. Read these extracts from the poem and answer the questions that follow.



1. 'Whose hands have cherished,'

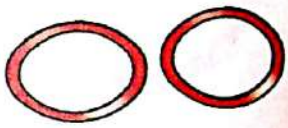
   (a) Whose hands are being referred to?

   (b) Whom have these hands cherished?

   (c) How are these hands ornamented?

   (d) Discuss the importance of these hands in the development of human race.

2. 'Some, like the flame of her marriage fire,
   Or rich with the hue of her heart's desire;'



   (a) Whom does 'her' refer to?

   (b) List any two adjectives used by the poet to describe the bangles of the bride.

   (c) What colour do you think would appropriately describe 'heart's desire'? Why?

   (d) The poet has compared the bangles of the Indian bride to her laughter as well as her tears. Why?

II HOTS

A. 'Bangles are not mere ornaments or accessories for women; they are a part of their identity.' Discuss.

B. 'Man has drawn all colours and freshness from various aspects of Nature.' Comment.

III Life Skills

'Worships the gods at her husband's side.' What is the significance of the woman's presence by her husband's side during worship?

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IV Values

Happiness lies in enjoying the little things around us rather than waiting for big things to happen. How is this idea conveyed by the poet? Give examples from the poem.

V Writing Skills

Sarojini Naidu's 'Bangle Sellers' is rooted in Indian culture and tradition.' Explain in a short paragraph of not more than 80 words.

About the Author

Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949) was a prominent freedom fighter and after independence became the first woman Governor of an Indian State (Uttar Pradesh). She wrote poems in English and was popularly known as the 'Nightingale of India'. Her collected poems appeared under the title *The Sceptred Flute*. Sarojini Naidu's poems are a true reflection of Indian culture and are marked by a rare delicacy and beauty of language.

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12 A Bad Dream

by Donn Byrne

Pre-reading Task

1. We all dream while sleeping but there are people who 'day-dream' also. Is there any difference between dreaming and day-dreaming? Discuss in the class.
2. Do your dreams connect to real life situations or are they just full of wild and weird happenings? Share a couple of your interesting dreams with your partner.

Now read this play where a dream changes the attitude of Mr Hill and brings about a major transformation in his thinking.

Characters

George Hill, the manager of a bank
Jane Hill, his wife
Annie, their cook
Mr Briggs, the assistant manager of the bank
Mr Winter, the cashier

Scene I

It is about two o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Mr and Mrs Hill have had lunch and they are drinking coffee in the sitting-room.

Mr Hill : Ugh! This coffee has a terrible taste. Why can't Annie make good coffee? It's quite easy. You can show her.

Mrs Hill : I *have* shown her. You know that. She makes good coffee for a few days, and then she forgets again. I'm afraid she isn't very clever.

Mr Hill : You're quite right. She *isn't* very clever. And she's a bad cook. The lunch was terrible, too. I wanted to talk to you about it.

Mrs Hill : Must you do it now? It's Sunday afternoon.

Mr Hill : No, it can't wait. I must speak to you about Annie.

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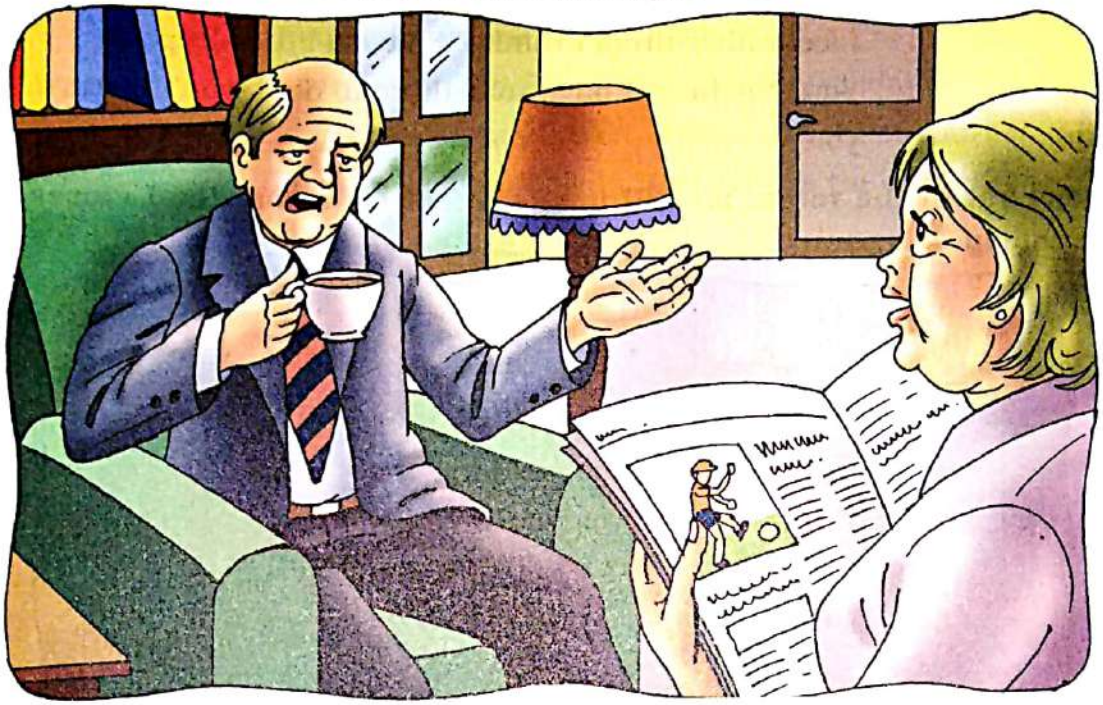
Mrs Hill : All right. Tell me.
(rather sadly)

Mr Hill : Well, the trouble is this. People come to our house. They come for dinner and they get bad food. What do these people think of me? *I'm their* bank manager.



Mrs Hill : But what can I do, George? I know the food isn't very good. Next time I'll cook the dinner myself.

Mr Hill : No, you can't do that. You're my wife and you must meet these people. You can't spend your time in the kitchen.

Mrs Hill : What is the answer, then?

Mr Hill : It's easy. We must get a new cook.

Mrs Hill : But Annie has been with us for a long time, George. Nearly twenty years. We can't do this to her. She isn't a young woman now. How will she find a new job?

Mr Hill : I don't know. She must go. Things are different now. I'm the manager of a big bank. We must have a good cook.

Mrs Hill : *You're* different now, George. You've changed. You don't care about people.

Mr Hill : I care about the bank. And I care about our customers. So Annie must go. Explain the matter to her. She'll understand. Give her three months. She can find a new job in that time.

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Mrs Hill : It won't be easy.

Mr Hill : Will you tell her today?

Mrs Hill : Can't I do it tomorrow?

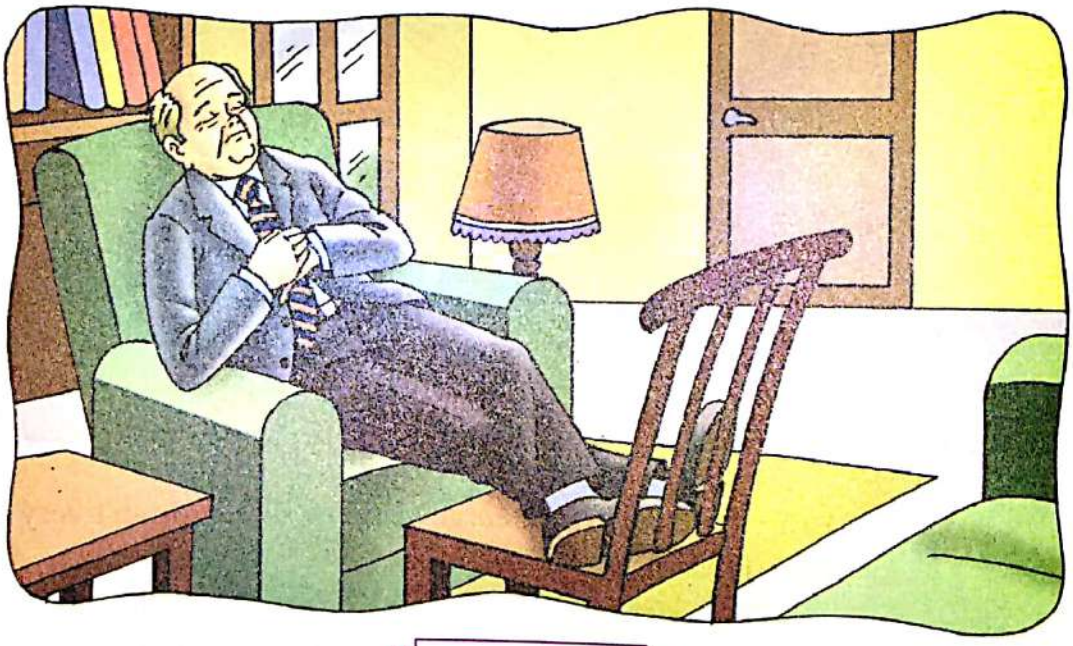
Mr Hill : No, you'll forget about it. Do it today.

Mrs Hill : All right. I'll speak to her today. Poor woman!

Mr Hill : I feel rather tired. I think I'll have a little sleep.

Mrs Hill (getting up) : You stay here. I have something to do. I won't disturb you.

Mrs Hill goes out of the room. Mr Hill puts his feet on a chair and closes his eyes. He is soon asleep.



Scene II

Mr Hill is still asleep. There is a knock at the door. Mr Hill hears the knock and wakes up.

Mr Hill (calling out) : Who's there? Come in.

Two men come into the room. The first is Briggs, the assistant manager of the bank. The second is Winter, the cashier.

Briggs : Good afternoon, sir. We're not disturbing you, are we?

Mr Hill : Why, it's Briggs! And Winter! In fact I was having a little sleep. What is it? Is it something important?

Briggs : It is rather important, sir.

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Mr Hill : I hope it isn't trouble. The bank isn't on fire, is it?

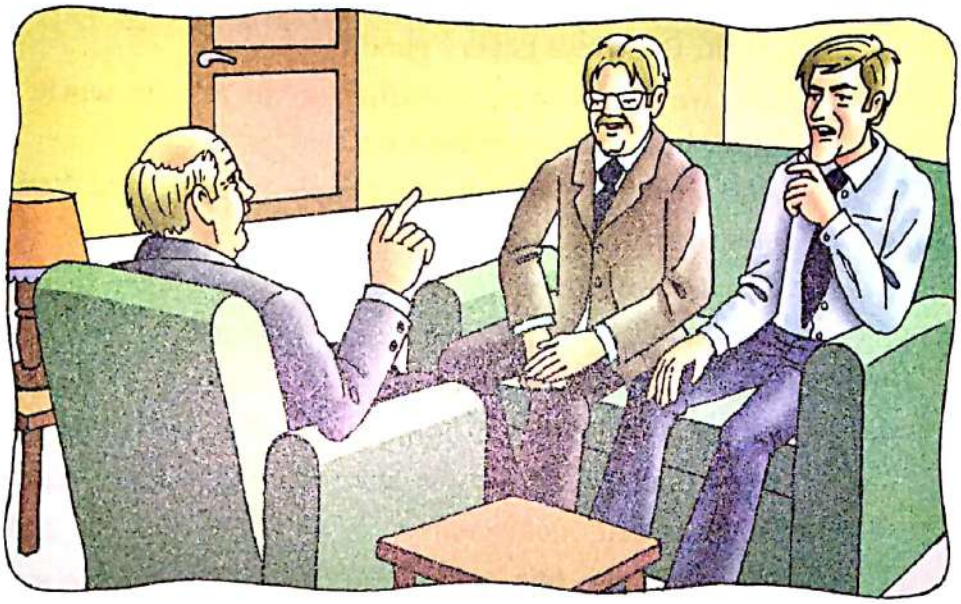
Mr Hill laughs at his joke. Briggs and Winter do not laugh.

Briggs : No, sir, the bank isn't on fire. But we had to see you. We want to talk to you.

Mr Hill : Today? It's Sunday. Can't it wait? You can tell me tomorrow. Come and see me in my office.

Winter : It can't wait, sir. We must talk to you today.

Mr Hill : I don't understand. Well, sit down, both of you. (The two men sit down.) Now, what's the matter?



Briggs : It's not easy to begin, sir.

Winter : Shall I tell him, Briggs? One of us must do it?

Briggs : No, I'll do it. I'm the assistant manager. Well, sir, we think you ought to resign.

Mr Hill (in a very surprised voice) : Resign? Leave the bank? What are you talking about? Is this a joke, Briggs?

Briggs : No, it isn't a joke.

Mr Hill (sitting up in his chair) : Now one minute, please. It's Sunday afternoon. You come to my house and disturb me. Then you tell me... that I ought to resign.

Winter : We're very sorry, sir. We know it's Sunday. But we had to tell you.

Mr Hill : But you can't do this. I'm the manager. You're only the assistant manager, Briggs. And Winter is only the cashier. You can't speak to me like this.

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Briggs : We're doing it for the bank, sir.

Winter : It will be a good thing for the bank, sir. Believe me.

Mr Hill (standing up) : I've had enough! Go home, both of you. Take a holiday tomorrow. You both need a rest.

Briggs : We're all right, sir. We don't need a holiday.

Winter : But we must have your answer today, sir. Will you resign?

Mr Hill (sitting down again) : It's like a bad dream! Why must I resign? What have I done? Tell me that.

Briggs : You don't manage the bank well, sir.

Mr Hill (angrily) : Of course I manage the bank well. Thousands of people use our bank. Business is very good.

Briggs : Oh, we know that, sir. But *we* do all the work. They use our bank because *we* work hard.

Winter : And you're not nice to the people in the bank. You're nice to the customers, but not to us. No one likes you!

Mr Hill : Oh, I know they don't like me. They have to work hard, and they don't like that.

Winter : But *you* don't work hard, sir.

Mr Hill : Of course I do.

Briggs : Oh, no, sir. For example, you come late in the morning.

Winter : And you often leave early.

Briggs : And you take two or three hours for lunch. We spend all day in the bank, but *you* are never there!

Mr Hill : But I'm the manager. That's part of my job. I have to look after important people. I have to have lunch with them. It's good for business.

Briggs : It's pleasure, sir! You're very fond of good food.

Mr Hill : I won't listen to this.

Winter : But you must.

Mr Hill : I shall write to the head office about you. Then *you* will have to resign.

Briggs : We've already written about *you*, sir.

Winter : Yes, sir. We explained the matter and they agree with us.

Mr Hill : What! You've written to the head office. Behind my back!

Briggs : We had to do it, sir. We were only thinking of the bank.

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Winter : And they agree you must resign.

Mr Hill : But they can't do this to me! I've spent thirty years in the bank.

Briggs : Think of the bank, sir. It will be a happier place without you!

Mr Hill : But what am I going to do? I'm not a young man. How can I find a new job?

Winter : Oh, you'll find something, sir. A job in an office.

Briggs : And you can have time, sir. Two or three months. You'll be able to find a new job.

Mr Hill : I'm not sure.

Briggs : But you promise to resign, don't you, sir?

Mr Hill : Well, I must. The head office agrees with you.

Winter : Thank you, sir.

Briggs : We're sorry about this, sir.

Briggs and Winter stand up.

Briggs : You'll come to the office tomorrow, won't you, sir?

Mr Hill : Er–yes, I'll be there.

Winter : But please come on time, sir.

Briggs and Winter say good afternoon and go out. Mr Hill sits with his head in his hands. After a time Mrs Hill comes in. She is wearing a heavy coat and she has a bag in her hand.

Mr Hill (looking up) : Oh, it's you, dear. Briggs and Winter were here. They left a short time ago.

Mrs Hill : Yes, I saw them when they were going out.

Mr Hill : They came to tell me something. It isn't very pleasant. (After a moment) I have to resign from the bank.

Mrs Hill : Yes, I know.

Mr Hill (surprised) : Do you know already?

Mrs Hill : Yes, they told me.

Mr Hill : They couldn't wait! Did they tell you the reason, too?

Mrs Hill : Yes, the people in the bank don't like you. I'm not very surprised.

Mr Hill : I've spent all my life in the bank and now I've lost my job.

Mr Hill notices that his wife is wearing a coat.

Mr Hill : Oh, are you going out? (He sees the bag too) And you've got a bag. Where are you going?

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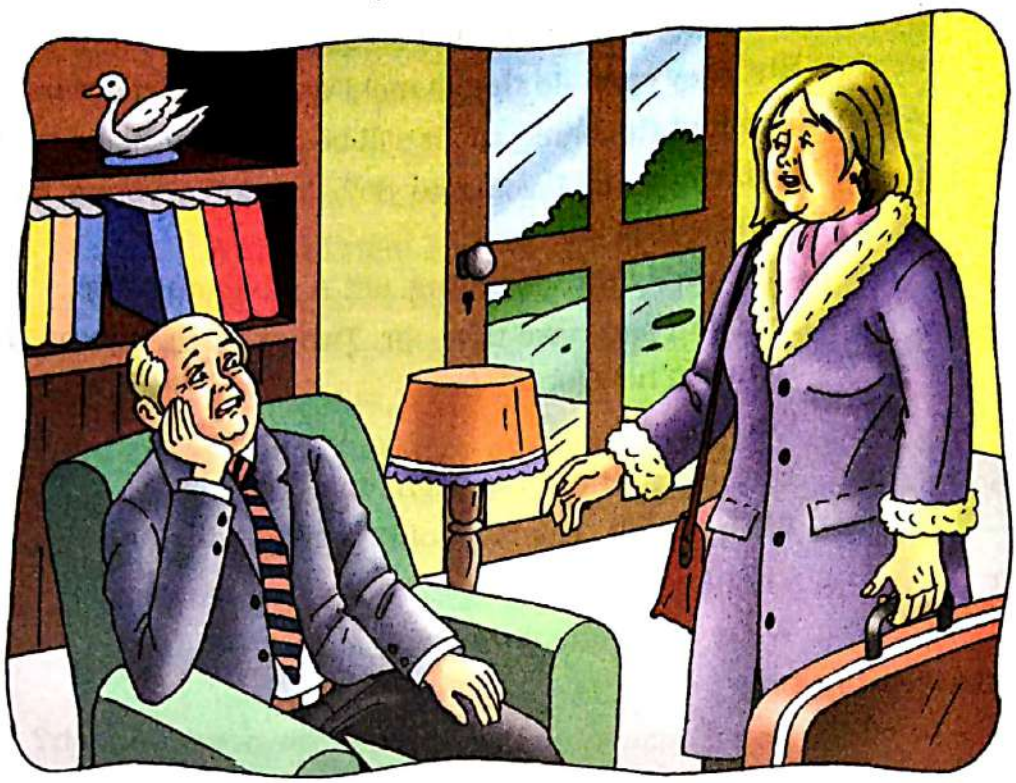

Mrs Hill : I need a holiday. I'm going to spend a few days with my sister.

Mr Hill : At this time? But I need your help now.

Mrs Hill : I can't help you. And I must have a holiday. I can't wait.

Mr Hill : But you can have a holiday later. We'll go together.

Mrs Hill : Where will you get the money for a holiday? You've lost your job. It won't be easy to find a new one. You're not a young man.

Mr Hill : I've got three months. I'll find something.

Mrs Hill : I hope you're right.

Mr Hill : You're leaving me because I'm in trouble. When are you coming back?

Mrs Hill : I have no idea. I'll write and let you know.

Mr Hill : But who's going to look after me?

Mrs Hill : There's Annie. Speak to her nicely and perhaps she'll stay. Well, goodbye, George. Write to me when you have a job.

Mrs Hill goes out of the room.

Mr Hill (to himself) : This is a terrible afternoon! I've lost my job and now my wife has gone too!

There is a knock at the door and Annie comes in.

Mr Hill : What is it, Annie? Do you want to leave, too?

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Annie : Leave, sir? I came about the tea, sir. It's almost four o'clock. Shall I bring tea, sir?

Mr Hill : So you don't want to leave. Are you sure?

Annie : No, of course not, sir. I'm very happy here.

Mr Hill : I've lost my job. Did you know that?

Annie : Yes, sir, Mrs Hill told me.

Mr Hill : And my wife has gone for a long holiday.

Annie : I know, sir. But she'll come back. I'll look after you while she isn't here.

Mr Hill : I won't have much money. Perhaps I won't be able to pay you.

Annie : It doesn't matter, sir. I've saved some money, so I don't need any now. But I want to stay here, sir. It's my home.

Mr Hill : Thank you Annie.

Annie : Shall I bring tea now, sir?

Mr Hill : Later, please. In about half an hour.

Annie : Very well, sir.

Annie goes out. Mr Hill puts his feet on the chair again and closes his eyes.

Scene III

Mrs Hill comes into the room. Her husband is still asleep.

Mr Hill : George! It's almost half past four.

Mr Hill (waking up) : What's that? Half past four? Oh, it's you, dear.

Mrs Hill : Yes, of course it's me.

Mr Hill : Then you haven't gone to your sister's.

Mrs Hill : What are you talking about? I haven't been out of the house. You've been asleep all the afternoon.

Mr Hill : Have I? Then I was dreaming. (He remembers the dream.) It wasn't a very pleasant dream.

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Mrs Hill : You must tell me about it. Shall we have tea now?

Mr Hill : That's a good idea. I need a cup of tea!

Mrs Hill rings the bell for Annie.

Mr Hill : By the way, dear. Have you spoken to Annie yet?

Mrs Hill : Not, not yet. Give me a chance. I've been busy. But I haven't forgotten. I'll tell her this evening.

Mr Hill : I was thinking about it again. Perhaps we ought to keep her. She's been with us a long time. And she may not get a new job.

Mrs Hill : I told you that, dear!

Mr Hill : I agree with you now. Of course she isn't a good cook, but she works hard.

Mrs Hill : Yes, she works very hard.

Mr Hill : Perhaps she needs help in the house. We can get someone.

Mrs Hill : That's a nice idea. Annie will like that. But what about your dinners? Who will cook when your friends come?

Mr Hill : Oh, the dinners aren't important. We won't ask people very often.

Mrs Hill : I'm glad. I never liked those dinners. (After a moment) But, George, why have you changed suddenly? You're quite different now!

Mr Hill : Am I? I'm glad you say that.

Mrs Hill : Was it your dream? You must tell me about it.

Mr Hill : No, I don't want to talk about it. But I won't forget it!

Annie comes into the room.

Annie : Shall I bring tea now, madam?

I Understanding the Play

A. Answer the following questions in about 30 words each.

1. Why was Mr Hill upset with Annie?
2. What did Mr Hill expect his wife to do in the parties?
3. How can we say that Mrs Hill was a kind-hearted, considerate lady?
4. What was Annie's reaction when she came to know that Mr Hill had lost his job?

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B. Read these extracts from the play and answer the questions that follow.

1. 'How will she find a new job?'
   (a) Who is 'she' and why should she look for a new job?
   (b) Why will it be difficult for her to find a new job?
   (c) Why does the speaker react in such a manner?

2. 'We had to do it, sir. We were only thinking of the bank.'
   (a) Who does 'sir' refer to? Who are 'we' here?
   (b) What did they have to do?
   (c) What was their reason for doing so?

3. 'But, George, why have you changed suddenly?'
   (a) What kind of a man was George earlier?
   (b) What changes have come over George?
   (c) What is the reason for these changes?

C. The words given below describe either Mr Hill or Mrs Hill. Read them carefully. Now group them appropriately in the table given below. Also find the lines from the text to support each description.

rude	arrogant	considerate	accommodating
self-centred	sensitive	compassionate	indifferent

Character	Words	Lines from the play
Mr Hill		
Mrs Hill		

On the basis of these characteristics, compare and contrast the character of Mr Hill with that of Mrs Hill.

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II HOTS

'Mr Hill had a bad dream'—was the dream really bad?

III Life Skills

A. Assuming the dream to be a reality, do you support Mrs Hill's decision to leave Mr Hill at the time when he needed her the most?

B. What, according to you, should be the code of conduct of a bank manager with their employees and their customers?

IV Values

'Compassion for our fellow beings should be an integral part of our existence.' Discuss.

V Writing Skills

Imagine you are Mr Hill. Your unpleasant conversation with Mr Briggs and Mr Winter awakens your conscience and changes your attitude towards Annie. Write a diary entry expressing your feelings for her before and after your meeting with the visitors.

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