



## EXPERT DETECTIVES

by Sharada Dwivedi

### SUMMARY

The following chapter "Expert Detectives" has been taken from Sharada Dwivedi's book titled \*The Broken Flute\*. The story follows two siblings that try to solve the mystery behind their mother's strange patient Mr. Nath. The story has been written in two parts. The writer explores the different reactions and ways of thinking of the siblings Nishad and Maya.

#### Before you Read

Nishad is a seven-year-old boy. His name means the seventh musical note. So, he is also called Seven. Maya is the name of his curious, ten-year-old sister. One day, their marbles roll into Mr. Nath's room and Nishad sees him. The siblings have many questions about him. Their mother is Mr. Nath's doctor and she says that he is very polite.

#### Part - I

#### Maya and Seven Discuss Mr. Nath

Maya and Seven discussed Mr. Nath as they walked back to their mother's clinic. Seven said that he doesn't look like a monster and guessed whether he was poor and couldn't afford to eat. Maya replied that he couldn't be poor if he was a criminal on the run from the police. She said that he must have hidden millions of rupees in that room. Nishad stayed doubtful over his sister's theory, but Maya was very sure.

#### Maya's Theories

She told him that Mr. Nath wasn't starving because Mr. Mehta told her that Ramesh brought meals for Mr. Nath. But Nishad questioned that since Mr. Mehta told them that he doesn't work anywhere, how could he afford the food? Maya exclaimed that he must have jewels hidden in his trunk. Then they discussed his scars. Maya guessed that they must be from a police shoot-out, but Nishad reminded her that their mother

had told them that the scars were actually burn marks. However, Maya believed that the police must have had to burn the house to make Mr. Nath come out of the house.

### **Nishad and Mr. Nath Meet**

Nishad went to the clinic with his mother on the Monday after her birthday. That day, he got a chance to meet Mr. Nath, which annoyed Maya because she wanted to be there too. Nishad was worried about how thin Mr. Nath looked. So, he visited Mr. Nath later and gave him a chocolate to eat. Maya asked if he got a chance to look into the trunk, but Nishad said that he didn't even get invited in.

### **Maya's Plans**

Maya planned to investigate Mr. Nath and trap him but Nishad didn't believe that he was a criminal. Maya smartly replied that even criminals look like ordinary people and gave the example of the Hyderabadi house-breaker.

The next day schools were closed because the roads were flooded due to the monsoon and no traffic could move through the flooded streets. Maya decided to use this time in her investigation.

## **Part – II**

### **Maya's List of Facts**

Maya made a list called 'Catching a Crook' and shared it with Nishad who was reading comic books. Under the list, she listed all the facts they knew about Mr. Nath. The first or real name as most criminals take out his first name from the list and use a name that they must find out.

Then, she said that tenants in Shankar house found him mad, strange, and unfriendly. But Nishad reminded her that their mother had said that he was very polite. Maya listed that he didn't talk to anyone, didn't receive letters, didn't go to work and sat in his room, and was seen outside living in Room No. 10 for more than a year. Further, she added that kids in the Shankar House and even some adults were scared of Mr. Nath. He had only one visitor, and he was taken to his room from the restaurant downstairs.

### **The Siblings Fight**

When Nishad said that Mr. Nath must be lonely because he had no friends, Maya thought that the visitor on Sunday must be an accomplice who comes every week to give him money from the loot for expenses. Nishad got angry because he didn't believe that Mr. Nath was a criminal but maybe gave Ramesh generous tips. Maya said that he must be bribing Ramesh to keep quiet. Then, the siblings began arguing with each other and Nishad.

### **Differing Opinions of Nishad and Maya**

While Nishad was worried that Mr. Nath was lonely and thin, Maya was convinced that he was a crook and must be handed over to the cops. Nishad said that no one had tried to befriend Mr. Nath and vowed to become his friend but Maya threatened that the cops would take him to jail as well. Then Nishad walked out in anger. Maya's theories seemed to have had no impact on him.

## **Word – Meaning**

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Interrupt	Break the continuity of something
Stashed away	Keep or lay aside for future
Scar	A mark left on the skin after an injury
Shoot-out	A decisive gun battle
Gaunt	Lean and thin especially because of suffering from hunger
Peek	Look quickly or furtively
Stout	Fat or heavy built
Sighed	Emit a long, deep audible breath
Crook	A person who is dishonest or criminal, tricked
Retorted	Say something in answer to a remark
Housebreaker	The act of unlawfully breaking into and entering another's house
Tenant	A person who pays rent for the use of a room or house
Fury	Extreme strength in an action or a natural phenomenon
Downpour	A heavy fall of rain
Accompanied	To go with someone
Roaring	Flourishing
Cupped	Formed into the curved shape of a cup

Questioningly	An expression of inquiry that invites or calls for a reply
Nodded	Lower and raise one's head slightly and briefly
Alias	A false or assumed identity
Accomplice	A person who helps another commit a crime
Bribing	Dishonestly persuade someone to act in one's favour by a gift or money
Glared	Stare in an angry or fierce way
Investigation	Formal or systematic research or examination
Stubbornly	Inflexible

