

Sometimes, we come across people who claim to be faithful and loyal but they turn out to be fair-weather friends in the hour of need. One needs to be careful of such people. Such friends usually leave people in the lurch. The following story aptly illustrates the oft-quoted moral: *A friend in need is a friend indeed.*

Once, there lived two very fast friends in a village. They promised to stand by each other in the hour of need. There were very few opportunities to excel in the village, so they decided to try their luck in a nearby town. They left for the town very early in the morning. They had to pass through a dense jungle in order to reach the town. When they were getting through the thickest part of the jungle, they saw a bear in the distance. It was heading towards them threateningly. One of the friends ran away and climbed up a tree. The other friend was left at the mercy of the beast. He did not know how to climb a tree. In desperation, he lay on the ground and held his breath, pretending to be dead. The bear approached, sniffed the boy and thinking him dead, went away. When the bear had gone a long time, the first friend came down the tree and asked his friend, "What did the bear say in your ear?" The other friend answered, "The bear advised me to beware of a selfish friend."

Moral: A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from the sonnet "Ozymandias" by P. B. Shelley.

Context:

"Ozymandias" is an ironical poem. The reference is made to the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II. We learn that even the mighty and the powerful cannot escape the ravages of time. Time is the greatest leveller and death brings an end to all claims of superiority in man. His statue bears more a lesson for the people than his glory.

Explanation:

These lines throw light on the sculptor instead of the sculpture. Shelley also believes like John Keats that life is short and art is long. Here Shelley admires those hands which carved the sculpture of the old king. The sculptor engraved in stone more of his heart than his face. Centuries have passed, both the king and the sculptor have long been dead and lost but the artistic expressions of cruelty and hard-heartedness survive to the present day. The sculpture still keeps him alive. Here art has been considered a source of eternity. Life may come to an end but it is through art that it can last long. In the end, we should accept that nothing is immortal. Even art is to perish someday.