

## Ch 10 The Banyan Tree

### A. Complete the following sentences.

1. The old banyan tree “did not belong” to grandfather, but only to the boy, because \_\_\_\_\_.

► the grandfather at sixty-five could no longer climb it.

2. The small gray squirrel became friendly when \_\_\_\_\_.

► he found that the boy did not arm himself with catapult or air-gun.

3. When the boy started to bring him pieces of cake and biscuit, the squirrel \_\_\_\_\_.

► quite bold and was soon taking morsels from the author's hand.

4. In the spring, the banyan tree \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ would come there.

► was full of small red figs, birds of all kinds

5. The banyan tree served the boy as a \_\_\_\_\_.

► library.

6. The young boy spent his afternoons in the tree \_\_\_\_\_.

► when it was not too hot

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### B. Answer the following questions.

1. “It was to be a battle of champions.” (8)

(i) What qualities did the two champions have? Pick out words and phrases from the paragraph above this line in the text and write them down.

| Mongoose  | Cobra     |
|-----------|-----------|
| (a) _____ | (a) _____ |
| (b) _____ | (b) _____ |
| (c) _____ | (c) _____ |

(ii) What did the cobra and the mongoose do, to show their readiness for the fight?

### Answer

| Mongoose           | Cobra           |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| (a) superb fighter | (a) skilful     |
| (b) clever         | (b) experienced |
| (c) aggressive     | (c) swift       |

(ii) To show its readiness for the fight, the cobra hissed defiance, his forked tongue darting in and out. It raised three of its six feet off the ground, and spread its broad and spectacled hood. The mongoose bushed his tail. The long hair on his spine stood up.

2. Who were the other two spectators? What did they do? (Did they watch, or did they join in the fight?) (10)

### Answer

The other two spectators were a jungle crow and a myna. They settled on a cactus to watch the outcome. But they did not just watch. They tried to join the fight by hurling themselves at the cobra.

3. Read the descriptions below of what the snake did and what the mongoose did. Arrange their actions in the proper order. (11, 16)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| (i) ceased to struggle  | • grabbed the snake by the snout            |
| (ii) tried to mesmerise the mongoose                          | • dragged the snake into the bushes         |
| (iii) coiled itself around the mongoose                       | • darted away and bit the cobra on the back |
| (iv) struck the crow  | • pretended to attack the cobra on side     |
| (v) struck again and missed                                   | • refused to look into the snake's eyes     |
| (vi) struck on the side that the mongoose pretended to attack | • sprang aside, jumped in and bit           |

### Answer

| Snake   | Mongoose                                |
|---|---|
| (ii) tried to mesmerise the mongoose                          | • refused to look into the snake's eyes |
| (vi) struck on the side that the mongoose pretended to attack | • pretended to attack the cobra on side |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| (v) struck again and missed             | • sprang aside, jumped in and bit           |
| (iv) struck the crow                    | • darted away and bit the cobra on the back |
| (iii) coiled itself around the mongoose | • grabbed the snake by the snout            |
| (i) ceased to struggle                  | • dragged the snake into the bushes         |

4. (i) What happened to the crow in the end? (16)

(ii) What did the myna do finally? (17)

### Answer

(i) In the end the crow flung nearly twenty feet across the garden by a blow from the cobra's snout. It fluttered about for a while, then lay still.

(ii) Myna finally dropped cautiously to the ground, hopped about, peered into the bushes from a safe distance and then with a shrill cry of congratulations flew away.

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### Working with Language

A. 1. The word 'round' usually means a kind of shape. What is its meaning in the story?

### Answer

The word 'round' in the story means the different phases of the fight between the cobra and the mongoose.

2. Find five words in the following paragraph, which are generally associated with trees. But here, they have been used differently. Underline the words.

Hari leaves for work at nine every morning. He works in the local branch of the firm of which his uncle is the owner. Hari's success is really the fruit of his own labour. He is happy, but he has a small problem. The root cause of his problem is a stray dog near his office. The dog welcomes Hari with a loud bark every day.

### Answer

Leaves, branch, fruit, root and bark.

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B. The words in the box are all words that describe movement. Use them to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

|  |
|--|
| dived gliding sprang<br>darting whipped... back<br>delving |
|--|

1. When he began to trust me, the squirrel began \_\_\_\_\_ into my pockets for morsels of cake.

► delving

2. I saw a cobra \_\_\_\_\_ out of a clump of cactus.

► gliding

3. The snake hissed, his forked tongue \_\_\_\_\_ in and out.

► darting

4. When the cobra tried to bite it, the mongoose \_\_\_\_\_  
— aside.

► sprang

5. The snake \_\_\_\_\_ his head \_\_\_\_\_ to strike  
at the crow.

► whipped, back

6. The birds \_\_\_\_\_ at the snake.

► dived

**C. Find words in the story, which show things striking  
violently against each other.**

1. The cobra struck the crow, his snout th \_\_\_\_\_ ing against  
its body. (15)

► thudding

2. The crow and the myna c — ll — — — in mid-air. (13)

► collided

3. The birds dived at the snake, but b — — — — d into each  
other instead. (14)

► bumped

**C. Choose would and could to replace the italicised words in the following sentences.**

**Grandfather says, in the old days,**

1. elephants *were able to* fly in the sky, like clouds. They *were also able to* change their shapes. They *used to* fly behind clouds and frighten them. People *used to* look up at the sky in wonder. ► elephants could fly in the sky like clouds. They could change their shapes. They would fly behind clouds and frighten them. People would look up at the sky and wonder.

2. because there was no electricity, he *used to* get up with the sun, and he *used to* go to bed with the sun, like the birds. ► because there was no electricity, he would get up with the sun, and he would go to bed with the sun, like the birds.

3. like the owl, he was *able to* see quite well in the dark. He was *able to* tell who was coming by listening to their footsteps. ► like the owl, he could see quite well in the dark. He could tell who was coming by listening to their footsteps.