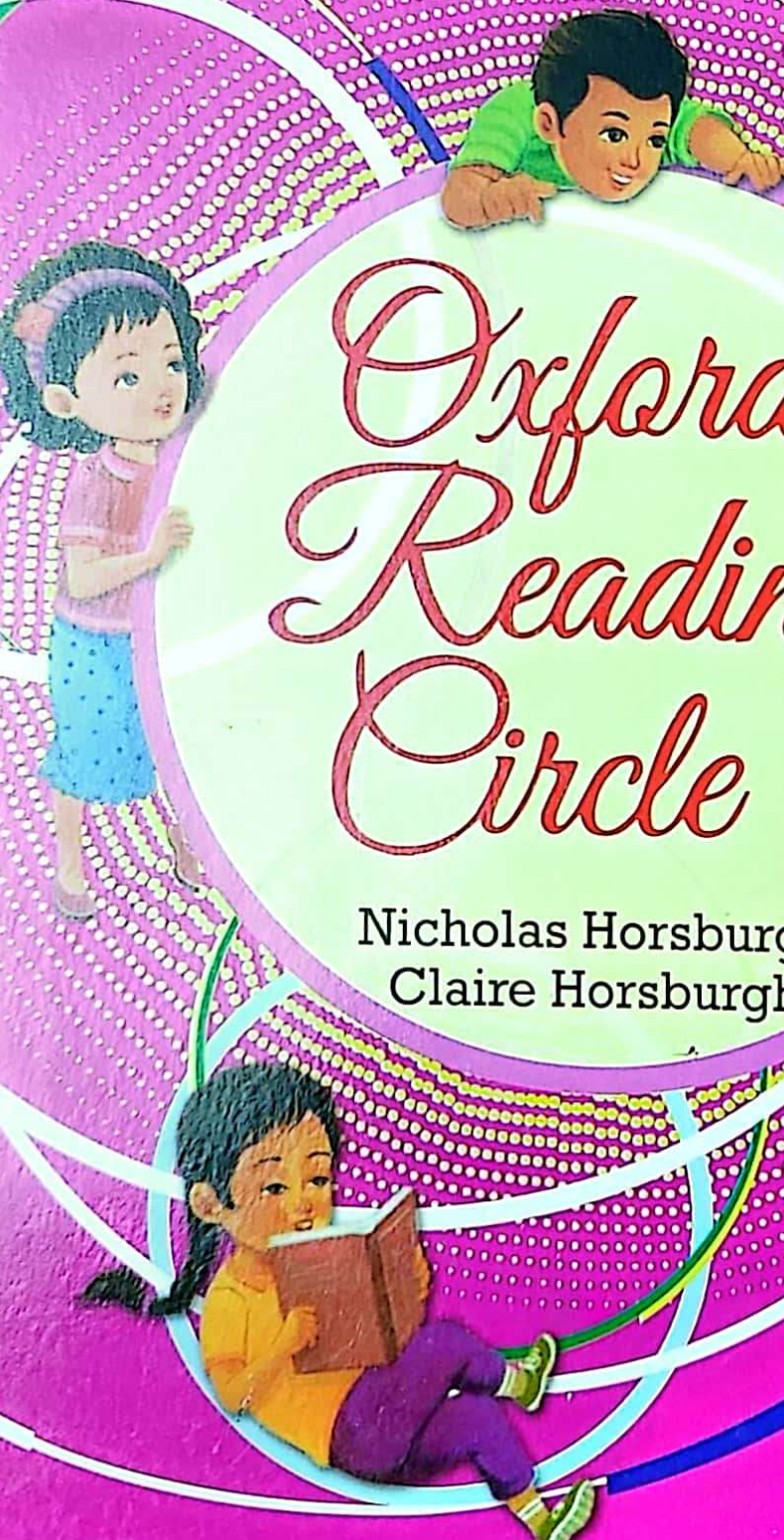


**OXFORD**  
SCHOOL EDUCATION

Revised  
Edition

5



# Oxford Reading Circle

Nicholas Horsburgh  
Claire Horsburgh

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Edition

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*For Ben*

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'The Boy who Served his Tribe' by Frances Usher; 'A Debt Made Profit' by Martin Bennett; 'The Speed Track' by Peter and 'Fly Back to Me' by A. N. Forde.

## Introduction

*Oxford Reading Circle* is a series of literature readers for students of kindergarten to class 8. The readers contain fables, legends, folk tales and short stories—a representative selection from international as well as Indian literature—and also extracts from the classical and contemporary prose of some of the most highly regarded authors in the English language. Each selection has been made with care, and has been abridged or simplified, where necessary, to suit the appropriate language level of the student.

This rich treasure trove of literature will stimulate the child's imagination. The books contain stories of excitement and adventure, heroism and romance. Great care has been taken to incorporate value-based and environmental themes. To enable the students to identify and appreciate the themes more readily, humour and liveliness form an integral part of these stories. It is hoped that appreciation of the stories presented in the *Oxford Reading Circle* will encourage students to delve deeper into the glorious world of English literature.

This revised edition, based on feedback from teachers and students from across the country, contains new poems and stories. The all-new design and refreshed artwork make the pages come alive in students' imagination. The books are in full colour, adding to the visual appeal.

It must be borne in mind that the main focus of the *Oxford Reading Circle* is to encourage students to enjoy literature and to become avid and accomplished readers. They can

only do this with the wholehearted support and assistance of the teacher.

## SELECTIONS

### PROSE

- Early books contain fables and stories specially written for this series.
- Later books contain best examples from contemporary and classical literature.
- All extracts are complete stories.

### POETRY

- Early books contain simple rhymes (chosen for their lyrical and phonic content).
- Later books include works from great poets.
- All poems are complete versions—not abridged or simplified.

### DRAMA

- Early books contain original plays that can be enacted.
- Later books contain extracted scenes from famous plays.
- The plays are short, humorous and easily staged—ideal for school functions.

## GRADATION

Great care has been taken to present themes that are appropriate to the interests and comprehension of the students at each level. Vocabulary and structures have been controlled throughout.

## UNIT STRUCTURE

Each reading passage is followed by a number of exercises to help the students understand the text better and broaden their knowledge and appreciation of the language.

### Phonics and spelling

- a number of drills, from the Primer to Book 2, to help students with pronunciation and spelling—important tools to help develop their reading skills

### Comprehension

- simple questions to test factual recall requiring objective answers based on the text
- inferential and evaluative questions requiring subjective and lengthier responses
- reference to context and extract-based questions
- extensions: variety of questions or tasks which may be used for extended classroom discussion and debate

### Author bio

- biographical notes on authors and poets in the later books

### Glossary

- extensive word lists for difficult words

### Vocabulary

- tasks and games based around homophones, homonyms, anagrams, idiomatic expressions, synonyms and antonyms
- punctuation and spelling drills

### Language

- designed to enhance students' language skills, using stimuli from the text

### Discuss and write

- involves research, writing and presentation
- ideas for projects

### Rhythm and rhyme

- rhyme, rhythm, meter and general features of poetry
- poetic devices—personification, alliteration, onomatopoeia and so on

## TEACHER'S BOOKS

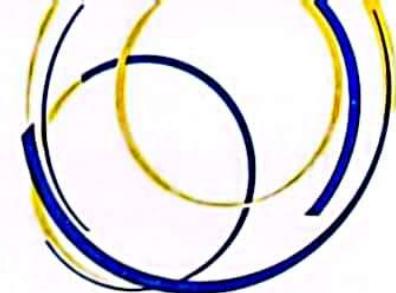
At each level, Teacher's Books provide teachers with detailed advice on how to bring to life the stories, poems and plays in the books. They also contain further exercises which might benefit students.

Features of the Teacher's Books:

- Lesson planning help
- Further work
- Answer key

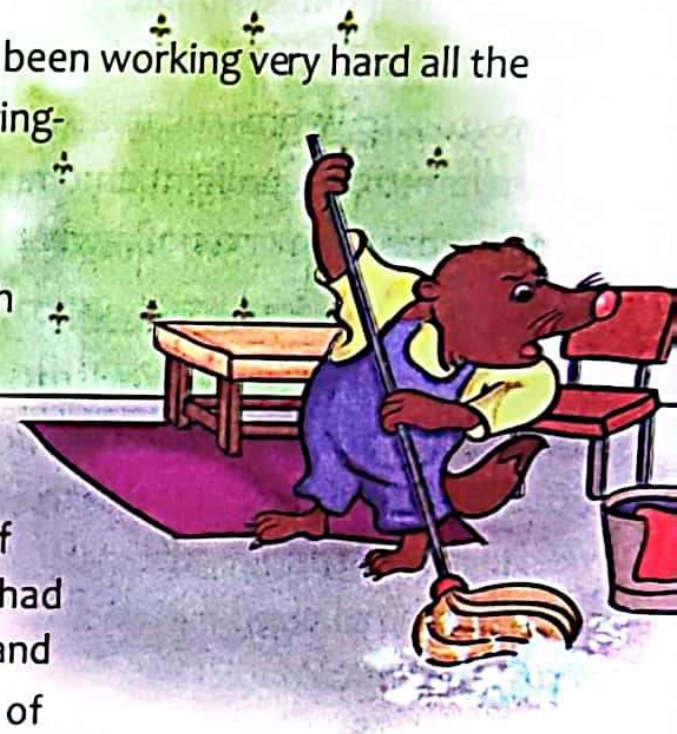
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## The River Bank

The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home. First with brooms, then with dusters; then on ladders and steps and chairs, with a brush and a pail of whitewash; till he had dust in his throat and eyes, and splashes of whitewash all over his black fur, and an aching back and weary arms. Spring was moving in the air above and in the earth below and around him, penetrating even his dark and lowly



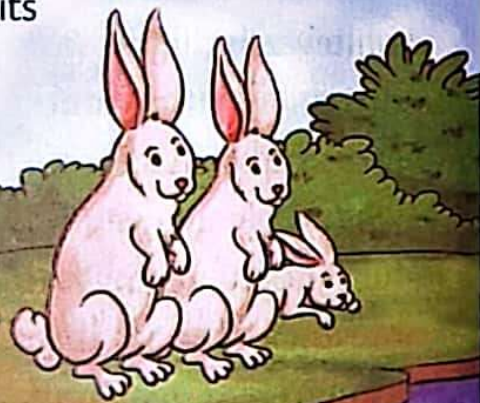
*spring-cleaning* the thorough cleaning of a house, usually carried out at the end of winter

*penetrating* strong enough to enter or spread through something

little house. He suddenly flung down his brush on the floor, said 'Bother!' and 'O blow!' and also 'Hang spring-cleaning!' and bolted out of the house without even waiting to put on his coat. Something up above was calling him, and he made for the steep little tunnel. He scraped and scratched and scabbled and scooged and then he scooged again and scabbled and scratched and scraped, working busily with his little paws and muttering to himself, 'Up we go! Up we go!' till at last, pop! his snout came out into the sunlight, and he found himself rolling in the warm grass of a great meadow.

'This is fine!' he said to himself. 'This is better than whitewashing!' The sunshine struck hot on his fur, soft breezes caressed his heated brow. Jumping off all his four legs at once, in the joy of living and the delight of spring without its cleaning, he pursued his way across the meadow till he reached the hedge on the further side.

'Hold up!' said an elderly rabbit at the gap. 'Sixpence for the privilege of passing



10

***bolted*** moved suddenly and quickly  
***privilege*** an advantage, right or benefit that is not available to all; a licence

by the private road!' He was bowled over in an instant by the impatient Mole, who trotted along the side of the hedge, chaffing the other rabbits as they peeped hurriedly from their holes to see what the row was about. 'Onion-sauce! Onion-sauce!' he remarked jeeringly and was gone before they could think of a thoroughly satisfactory reply. Then they all started grumbling at each other. 'How STUPID you are! Why didn't you tell him—' 'Well, why didn't YOU say—' 'You might have reminded him—' and so on, in the usual way; but, of course, it was then much too late, as is always the case.

It all seemed too good to be true. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the hedgerows, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting—everything happy.

He thought his happiness was complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed river. Never in his life had he seen a river before. All was glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated. By the side of the river he trotted as one trots, and when tired at last, he sat on the bank.

***chaffing*** teasing  
***jeeringly*** laughing at somebody in a rude manner, mockingly  
***meandered*** wandered along a winding path

11

As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at him. A small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

A brown little face, with whiskers.

A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice.

Small neat ears and thick silky hair.

It was the Water Rat!

Then the two animals stood and regarded each other cautiously.

'Hullo, Mole!' said the Water Rat.

'Hullo, Rat!' said the Mole.

'Would you like to come over?' enquired the Rat presently.

'Oh, it's all very well to TALK,' said the Mole, rather pettishly, he being new to a river and riverside life and its ways.

*pettishly* sulkily, irritably

The Rat said nothing, but stooped and unfastened a rope and hauled on it; then lightly stepped into a little boat which the Mole had not observed. It was painted blue outside and white within, and was just the size for two animals; and the Mole's whole heart went out to it at once, even though he did not yet fully understand its uses.

The Rat sculled smartly across and made fast. Then he held up his forepaw as the Mole stepped down. 'Lean on that!' he said. 'Now then, step lively!' and the Mole, to his surprise and rapture, found himself actually seated in the stern of a real boat.

'This has been a wonderful day!' said he, as the Rat shoved off and took to the sculls again. 'Do you know, I've never been in a boat before in all my life.'

'What?' cried the Rat, open-mouthed: 'Never been in a—you never—well I—what have you been doing, then?'

'Is it so nice as all that?' asked the Mole shyly, though he was quite prepared to believe it as he leant back in his seat and surveyed the cushions, the oars, the rowlocks, and all the fascinating fittings, and felt the boat sway lightly under him.

<i>sculled</i>	moved (the boat) forward with a scull (oar)
<i>made fast</i>	tied up (the boat) securely
<i>rapture</i>	great pleasure; joy
<i>surveyed</i>	looked at; studied

'Nice? It's the ONLY thing,' said the Water Rat, as he leant forward for his stroke. 'Believe me, my young friend, there is NOTHING—absolute nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing,' he went on dreamily: 'messing—about—in—boats; messing—'

'Look ahead, Rat!' cried the Mole suddenly.

It was too late. The boat struck the bank full tilt. The dreamer, the joyous oarsman, lay on his back at the bottom of the boat, his heels in the air.

'—about in boats—or WITH boats,' the Rat went on, picking himself up with a pleasant laugh. 'In or out of 'em, it doesn't matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that's the charm of it. Whether you get away, or whether you don't; whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you're always busy, and you never do anything in particular; and when you've done it there's always something else to do, and you can do it if you like, but you'd much better not. Look here! If you've really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?'

The Mole waggled his toes from sheer happiness, spread his chest with a sigh of full contentment, and leaned back blissfully into the soft cushions. 'WHAT a day I'm having!' he said. 'Let us start at once!'

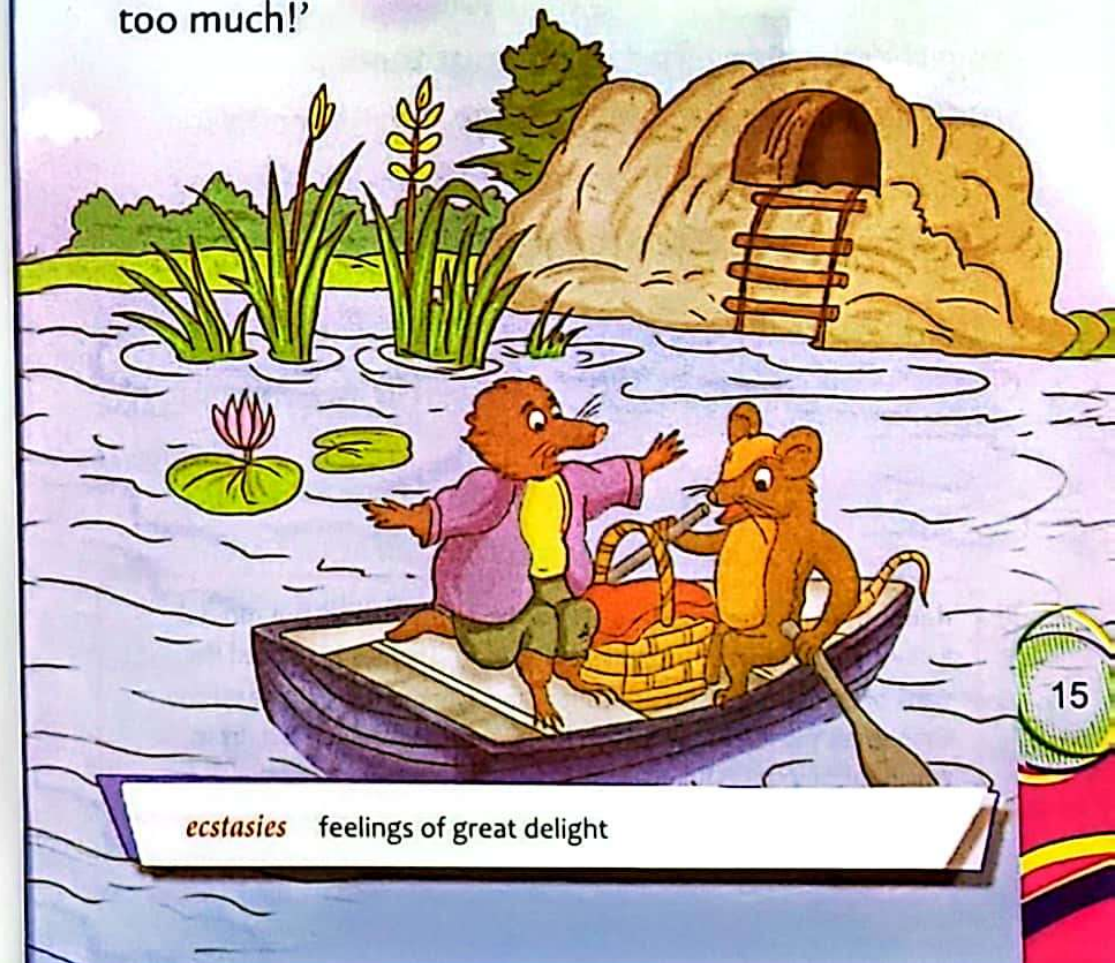
'Hold hard a minute, then!' said the Rat. He climbed up into his hole, and after a short interval reappeared staggering under a fat, wicker luncheon-basket.

'Shove that under your feet,' he observed to the Mole, as he passed it down into the boat. Then he took the sculls again.

'What's inside it?' asked the Mole, wriggling with curiosity.

'There's cold chicken inside it,' replied the Rat briefly; 'cold turkey cold cheese pickled gherkins salad french rolls cress sandwiches potted meat ginger ale lemonade soda water —'

'O stop, stop,' cried the Mole in ecstasies: 'This is too much!'



*ecstasies* feelings of great delight

'Do you really think so?' enquired the Rat seriously. 'It's only what I always take on these little excursions!'

The Mole never heard a word he was saying. Absorbed in the sparkle, the ripple, the scents and the sounds and the sunlight, he trailed a paw in the water and dreamed long waking dreams. The Water Rat, like the good little fellow he was, sculled steadily on.

'I like your clothes, old chap,' he remarked after some half an hour or so had passed. 'I'm going to get a black velvet suit myself some day, as soon as I can afford it.'

'I beg your pardon,' said the Mole, pulling himself together with an effort. 'You must think me very rude; but all this is so new to me. So—this—is—a—River!'

'THE River,' corrected the Rat.

'And you really live by the river? What a jolly life!'

KENNETH GRAHAME  
(Abridged)

**Kenneth Grahame** (1859–1932) was born in Scotland, but moved to live in England, by the banks of the River Thames. He joined the Bank of England after his education, and worked there till he retired. Grahame's most famous book is *Wind in the Willows* (1908), from which this extract is taken. Read the whole book, if you can!

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. Which words and phrases in the first paragraph tell us that the Mole wanted to be out in the fresh Spring air?
2. How did the rabbits react when the Mole passed by the private road?
3. Which words and phrases tell us that the Mole was enjoying the Spring?
4. What seemed even more attractive than the Spring to the Mole, and what was so good about it?
5. Did the Water Rat emerge quickly or slowly from his hole? How do we know?
6. What clues are there to tell us how the Water Rat felt about his boat and the river?
7. What kind of picnic were they going to have?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. *As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye.*
  - a. Who is sitting on the grass and what was the 'dark hole' that he saw?
  - b. What does he see in the hole at first?
  - c. What does he see later?

2. *'Is it so nice as all that?'* asked the Mole shyly.
- What is the Mole talking about?
  - Why does he ask this question?
  - What does the Mole think was special about 'it'?

### C. Words and meaning

- Try to explain the following in your own words.
  - ... *penetrating even his dark and lowly little house.*  
How is the word 'lowly' a suitable one to use here?
  - He scraped and scratched and scabbled and scrooged ...*  
You will not find the word 'scrooged' in the dictionary. What do you think it means? Why has it been used?
  - 'Onion-sauce! Onion-sauce!' he remarked jeeringly ...*  
Why do you think the Mole used these words? What did he mean?
- Use the following in sentences of your own.
  - thoroughly satisfactory
  - rambled busily
  - meandered aimlessly
  - unlikely situation
  - rapture

- Find examples of the use of the dash (—) in the story. Note how the dash is used. Write three sentences of your own using the dash.

### D. Discuss and write

- Work with a partner and make a list of things you would take with you on a picnic. When you have finished, find out what the others thought of taking. Are there many changes you would make to your list?
- Read the Mole's description of the river and his excitement about it. Write a short description of a river in your own words.





# The Months

January brings the snow,  
makes our feet and fingers glow.



February brings the rain,  
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes loud and shrill,  
stirs the dancing daffodil.



April brings the primrose sweet,  
Scatters daisies at our feet.



*shrill* high-pitched and piercing

May brings flocks of pretty lambs,  
Skipping by their fleecy dams.

June brings tulips, lilies, roses,  
Fills the children's hand with posies.



Hot July brings cooling showers,  
Apricots and gillyflowers.

August brings the sheaves of corn,  
Then the harvest home is borne.

Warm September brings the fruit,  
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.

Fresh October brings the pheasants,  
Then to gather nuts is pleasant.

Dull November brings the blast,  
Then the leaves are whirling fast.



Chill December brings the sleet,  
Blazing fire, and Christmas treat.

SARA COLERIDGE

<i>dam(s)</i>	a female parent of an animal
<i>posies</i>	small bunches of flowers
<i>gillyflowers</i>	fragrant flowers
<i>borne</i>	carried
<i>pheasant</i>	a type of bird that is shot for sport and eaten

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. Which months are cold?
2. What is the weather like in March?
3. Which types of flowers are mentioned in the poem?
4. Which animals are mentioned in the poem?
5. Are there any months that the poet seems to like or dislike more than others? Explain your answer.

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the poem, then answer the questions.

*Warm September brings the fruit,  
Sportsmen then begin to shoot.*

1. What is meant by 'brings the fruit'?
2. What will the 'sportsmen' shoot?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Match the following to make common expressions.

as

cold  
hungry  
innocent  
solid  
pure

as

a wolf  
a rock  
ice  
snow  
a lamb

2. Think of original similes of your own for the following, and use them in sentences.  
as round as .....  
as great as .....  
as wicked as .....  
as poor as .....  
as safe as .....  
as sly as .....
3. Notice the rhyming pairs in the poem.
  - a. Which pair is the odd one out?
  - b. Find another rhyming word to go with each pair.

### D. Discuss and write

1. Discuss the months of the year and make notes on the following.  
What is the weather like? What happens to plants and animals? Which ones are most commonly seen? What smells and sights are typical in each month? What festivals, celebrations and special events happen during this month? How do people feel about each month?
2. Write a poem about the month you have discussed. Use comparisons (especially similes).

## The Boy who Served his Tribe

Long, long ago, there was a family of the Chippewa tribe, who lived in a wigwam in the woods of North America.

Mother and father, brothers and sisters were all very happy and contented, for they loved the good things of the Earth. They loved the sunshine, the forests and the cool springs of water. But they were often cold and hungry, for at this time, the Chippewa people did not know



**tribe** a society whose members have customs, beliefs, etc. in common

**wigwam** a North American hut made of a framework of poles covered with woven rush mats or sheets of bark

about growing corn. Instead, they lived only by hunting.

Now, when boys of this tribe reached the age of fourteen, it was the custom for them to go into some lonely place, without food, so that they could be alone for several days and think about the life which lay ahead of them.

The time came for the eldest son of the family to carry out this custom.

'Come with me, my son,' said his father. The two of them walked far into the woods together. There, the father built a little wigwam for his son.

'You will be here for seven days without food,' he told the boy. 'At the end of that time, I will return for you and bring you food. While you are here, you should pray to the Great Spirit that he will send you a gift; a gift for the whole tribe.'

Left alone, the boy sat for a while and thought. What should he pray for during this week's fast?

Perhaps he should pray that his tribe would win glory in battle. Or should he pray that they would enjoy good hunting, or be sent great wealth?

No, he thought. He would ask only that life for his tribe be made in some way a little less hard. And so he began to pray to the Great Spirit.

**fast** not eating food as part of a religious custom

A day passed, and another. The boy continued to pray, and he ate nothing.

By the time the third day came, he was weak from lack of food. All he could do now was to lie inside his wigwam in a kind of dream.

All at once, the curtains of the wigwam parted, and a young warrior entered. The plumes of his headdress were green, and so were his moccasins and his cloak. When he spoke, his voice was like the rush of the wind through the trees.

'The Great Spirit has heard your prayers,' the warrior said to the boy. 'I have come to test your courage. Stand up.'

Trembling a little, the boy stood up.

'Now wrestle with me,' said the stranger.

And so the two of them began to wrestle, and they struggled together for a long time in silence.

At last the warrior said, 'That is enough for today. I will come back tomorrow.'

The next evening, the curtains of the wigwam parted again, and the warrior was back. Again, the boy wrestled with him. And although he had

felt so weak before the stranger came that he could scarcely stand, as soon as he touched the green-plumed warrior, he became strong.

'Good,' said the warrior at the end, 'You have done well. I will come back tomorrow.'

And so, each evening, it was the same. The stranger in the green headdress and moccasins and cloak came and the boy's strength returned as soon as he touched him. Each evening, they wrestled.

By the seventh evening, the boy was utterly exhausted from lack of food. When the stranger came in, he managed to pull himself to his feet. As usual, the two of them began to wrestle.

Once again, as soon as they came to grips, the boy felt his strength come back.

'It's strange,' he thought, 'but tonight I think I could even throw this stranger to the ground.'



So well did the boy wrestle, that indeed he threw the man to the ground.

The boy knelt down by his side. To his utter horror, he saw that the warrior was about to die.

The man smiled at him.

'You must not be sad,' he said, 'and you must not grieve for me. You shall see my green plumes again. But if you wish to see them, this is what you must do: Bury me, and keep my grave covered with fresh, damp earth. When I have slept a good sleep, I will break through the earth and return to the sunshine.'

So the warrior breathed his last.

With a heavy heart, the boy carried out all his instructions. No sooner had the boy finished burying the stranger, than he looked up and saw his father coming towards him through the woods.

'See, my son, I have come to fetch you,' said his father, 'and I have brought you food. Eat and your strength will soon return.'

And when the boy had eaten and regained his strength, they went home together to the family, and to everyday life.

But the boy did not forget his friend with green plumes, and he never forgot to visit the grave and to weed it and water it.

28

*grieve*

to feel sadness (at a death)

The boy told nobody about what he was doing, not even the members of his own family. He was afraid that if he told people about the warrior and his visits, they would say that he had dreamt it all because he'd been so weak from lack of food.

Then, one day, the boy was coming home from a week's hunting trip, and he decided to visit the warrior's grave.

As he came near it, he saw that something was different. The fresh clean earth of the grave was covered in green plumes! He went nearer.

'Not plumes,' he said to himself softly. 'Leaves. Wide, pale, green leaves.'

He stood there, staring at them. He had never in his life seen leaves like them, and he did not know what to do. Should he tear them out?

'No.' He shook his head, remembering how the young warrior had died, his eyes fixed on the boy's own. 'He told me to trust him, and I will.'

Weeks passed, and the boy went on watering and weeding the warrior's grave. The green shoots pushed up through the earth and became tall, strong plants. At last the day came when golden tassels swung from them; thick golden tassels. Then the boy knew that it was time to fetch his father to see them.

*tassels*

bunches of loose threads hanging together

29

The older man stood silently at the side of the grave, while the boy explained the whole story. At last the father spoke. 'My son,' he said, 'this is a gift from the Great Spirit. A gift to all the Chippewa people.'

The boy looked puzzled.

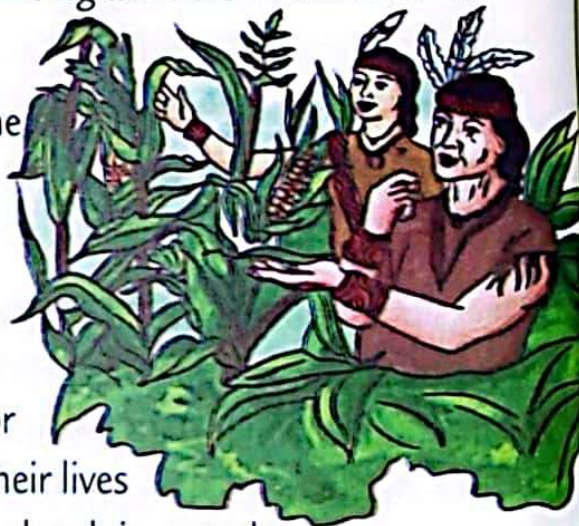
'A gift?' he asked. 'What is it, father?'

The man reached out and touched the golden tassels gently. He took a few grains from them and tasted them. Then he turned and looked at the boy, and his face was as glad as the morning sun in the sky.

'It is a new kind of food, my boy,' he answered.

'The Great Spirit has sent us food that will grow where we plant it in the earth. From now on, we Chippewas will not need to spend all our time and all our strength on hunting animals in the forests.'

The boy's father was right. By his death, the warrior had taught the Chippewas how to grow corn. In time, they harvested it and made bread for themselves. And so their lives were made a little less hard, just as the boy had asked of the Great Spirit in his prayers.



*A myth of the Chippewa people of North America*

*Retold by FRANCES USHER*

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. In what ways was the tribe content?
2. What was one of the customs of the Chippewa people?
3. Who do you think the young warrior was?
4. Why did the boy not tell anybody about what he was doing?
5. What was the gift sent by the Great Spirit to the Chippewa tribe?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. *'I have come to test your courage. Stand up.'*
  - a. Who says these words and to whom?
  - b. When are these words said?
  - c. How is his courage tested?
2. *'I will break through the earth and return to the sunshine.'*
  - a. Who says these words and to whom?
  - b. What is said by the same speaker just before this?
  - c. What happens after this?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Match the following to make sensible expressions.

harvest spend  
hunt part  
regain win

animals glory  
corn curtains  
time strength

2. Sort the words into four groups of four words each. Check the meanings in a dictionary.

wigwam tribe oats barley  
tepee pray cla rye  
revere breed race corn  
worship adore igloo kraal



### D. Discuss and write

1. Find out about the following and report to the class what you have discovered.
- Myths
  - American Indian tribes; their customs and way of life
2. In the story we learn about the Chippewa myth about how corn was discovered. Make up your own story about how fire was discovered.

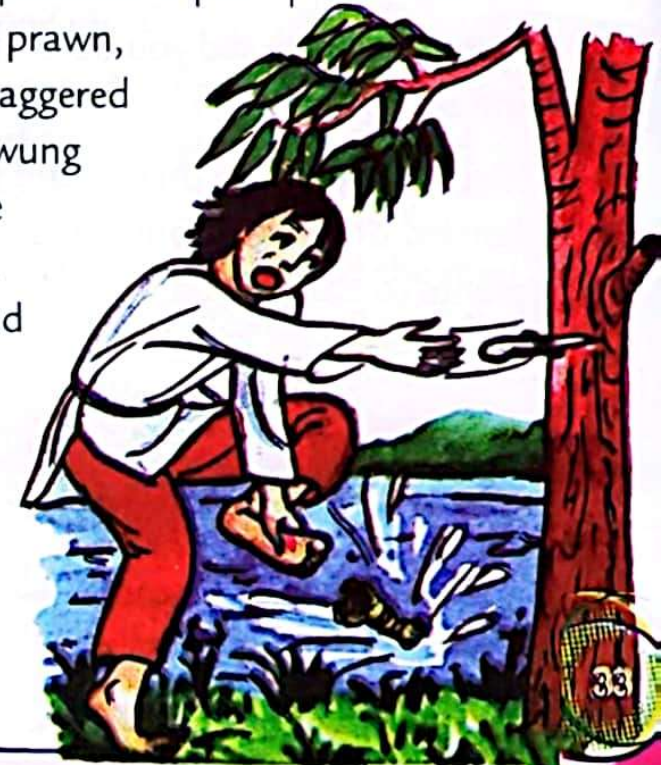


## The Toad's Warts

**A** long time ago, a man named Chemchongsaipa was standing on the bank of the great Irrawaddy river, minding his own business, and sharpening his weapons. A prawn, irritated by his stomping around, bit him in the leg.

Chemchongsaipa yelled and leaped up in the air. He could not see the prawn, and in his pain, he staggered towards a tree and swung his knife around. The sharp weapon struck the trunk of a tree and cut it.

The tree was startled and annoyed. PLOP! It immediately dropped a fruit on



*annoyed* made to feel impatient and angry; irritated

to the man. But Chemchongsaipa was still leaping around from one foot to the other. The fruit missed him and hit a cock walking by.

The confused cock was not pleased at all. It looked at the tree and noted its size. It was afraid to attack this great tree, so instead, it scratched at a nest of ants who were busy with their work.

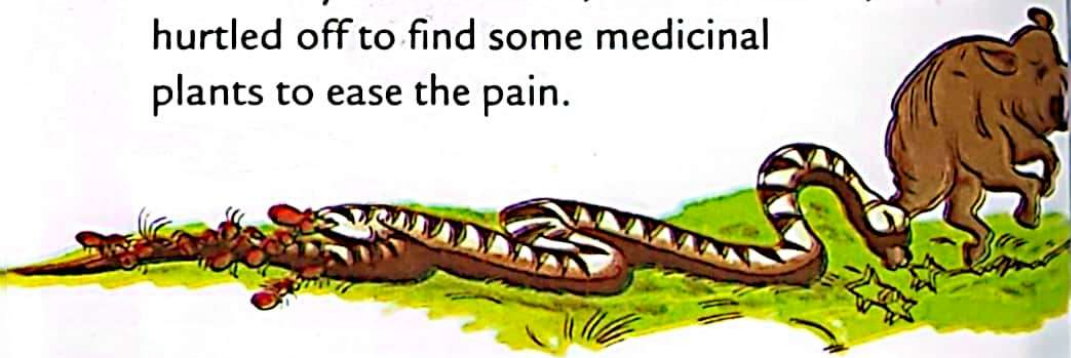
The ants had plenty of work already; the last thing they wanted to do was to rebuild their nest!

'Right!' they said, in fury. 'It's war!' And they attacked a passing snake and bit it all over.

The snake wriggled even faster and shot straight into the forest nearby, and bit a boar.

'What on earth did you do that for?' grunted the irate boar.

'Because you were there,' said the snake, and it hurtled off to find some medicinal plants to ease the pain.



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**irate** feeling great anger  
**hurtled** went very swiftly  
**medicinal** having properties that can be used to treat illness

The boar hurried off in the other direction and took out its fury on a young plantain tree. The boar lowered its head and dug furiously, till the poor plant collapsed.

A bat, living high up in the tree, just managed to get away before the tree hit the ground. It was not used to flying around in broad daylight, and it blundered about until it flew straight into an elephant's ear.

'Where am I?' thought the bat. 'It is dark and hairy in here!'

The bat bit the elephant. And the elephant trumpeted with pain and reared up into the air on its hind legs. It came crashing down again and kicked over a large stone mortar.

The mortar rolled down a slope and crashed right into the house of a little old lady. It made a huge hole in the side of the house.

The old lady may have been very little, and she may have been very old, but she was also very fierce.

'You stupid mortar,' she shouted, 'Just look what you have done! Pay me! Pay me! You will have to pay me to rebuild my house!'

'Me?' said the stunned mortar. 'Why should I pay you? It was the elephant who kicked me down the hill.'

**mortar** a hard, heavy bowl in which substances are crushed

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The old lady picked up a stout stick and ran up the hill to the elephant, 'Pay me the money to rebuild my house!' she shouted.

'Me?' spluttered the elephant. 'You should ask that bat over there. He bit me!'

'Don't blame me,' said the bat, 'it was the tree.'

The old lady wandered off to the plantain tree. The poor tree was lying flat on the ground. 'Blame the boar, not me,' it groaned.

The little old lady chased after the boar. 'Pay me the money to rebuild my house!' she shouted.

The boar grunted, 'Blame the snake who bit me.'

The little old lady found the snake and pinned it down with her stout stick. 'Pay me to rebuild my house!' she shouted.

'Sssssss ... certainly ... not,' hissed the snake.

'Ssssome antssssss sssstung me ... Sssso assssk them.'

The old lady found the trail of ants and asked them, but they told her to ask the destructive cock.

'Pay me to rebuild my house!' she shouted at the cock.

'Ask that old tree, madam. It dropped a large fruit on my head.'

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**blame** to find fault with somebody  
**destructive** causing or capable of causing damage

'Hang on,' said the tree, 'blame that man, not me. He slashed me with a knife.'

The little old lady was furious by now. She ran up to the man, and stopped in her tracks. It was her own dear son, Chemchongsaipa.

'You will have to rebuild my house, son,' she said crossly.

'Sure, mother,' replied the man, 'but first let me get that prawn who is the cause of all this trouble.'

Chemchongsaipa threw himself onto the ground and got hold of the prawn.

The tree, the cock, the ants, the snake, the boar, the plantain tree, the bat, the elephant, the mortar and the old lady looked at the prawn dangling between Chemchongsaipa's thumb and forefinger.

'You deserve to die,' they said in chorus. 'Do you wish to die in cold or hot water?'

'In cold,' said the prawn as he wriggled free and slipped down into the river.

'Get him,' they all shouted and ran after the prawn. Then the elephant slipped his trunk into the water and slurped and slurped. Very soon, the river was quite dry.

They seized the prawn and gave it to a fat toad to make into soup. They all relaxed beside what was the river and waited for the toad to make the soup.

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When the soup was ready they all gathered round to eat, but much to their astonishment, the soup did not taste of prawn.

The crafty toad had eaten the prawn! The others were so angry that they pinched him all over his back. And now you know why a toad has warts on his back.

Like a good son, Chemchongsaipa rebuilt his mother's house and because he was kind, he replanted the plantain tree. Everyone agreed that although the soup had been a disappointment, it had been an interesting day—but not for the prawn!



**wart** a small rough lump that grows on the skin

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. Which of the incidents that occurred were accidents and which were done on purpose?
2. Which animal thought about getting some treatment after being hurt?
3. Of all the animals that got hurt, which was the most affected? Give evidence from the text.
4. Which of the victims argued with or questioned the one who caused them distress?
5. In what ways did the animals (and others) co-operate or agree with one another?

### B. Reference to context

Refer to the text and figure out who might have said the following.

1. 'It's very dark in here!'
2. 'I'll suck it dry!'
3. 'I must find something to rub on it.'
4. 'I'll build it for you.'
5. 'I'll soon be in the soup!'

### C. Words and meaning

1. Put the following in order.
  - a. The plant collapsed.
  - b. It trumpeted and kicked over a stone mortar.
  - c. They attacked a passing snake.
  - d. It crashed right into the house of an old lady.

- e. The man's sharp weapon cut the tree.
- f. The fruit from the tree hit a cock walking by.
- g. The prawn bit the man in the leg.
- h. It lowered its head and dug furiously.
- i. It scratched at a nest of ants.
- j. A bat in the tree flew into an elephant's ear.
- k. It bit a boar.

2. Make three groups of four words each from the following.

angry	shock	annoyed	race
hurry	hurtle	daze	astonish
stun	furious	dash	irate

**D. Discuss and write**

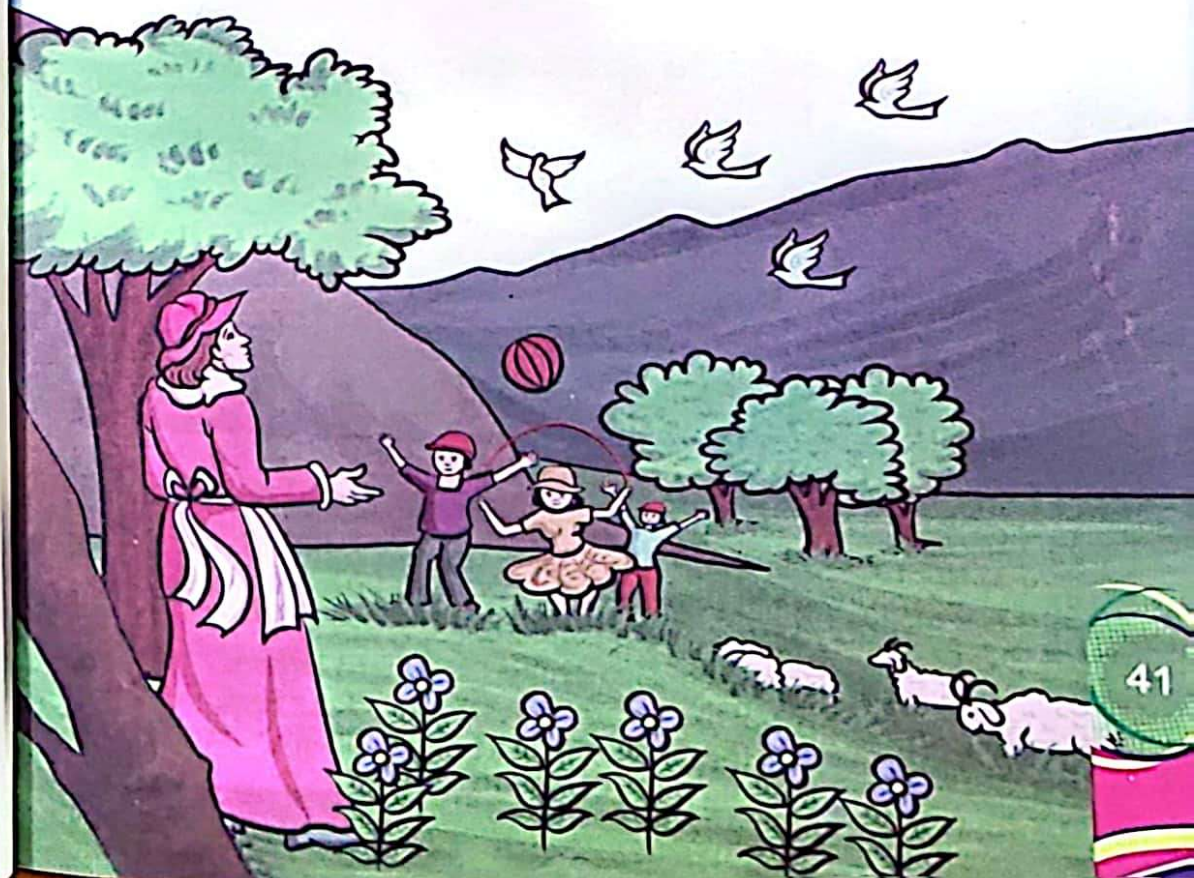
- 1. Find out what you can about Myanmar. Where is it? What was it called earlier?
- 2. The story deals with a series of events all dependent on each other. Work with a partner and come up with a story of your own in which a series of incidents take place, each caused directly by the incident before.



## Nurse's Song

When the voices of children are heard on the green,  
 And laughing is heard on the hill,  
 My heart is at rest within my breast,  
 And everything else is still.

'Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,  
 And the dews of night arise;



Come, come, leave off play, and let us away  
Till the morning appears in the skies.'

'No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,  
And we cannot go to sleep;  
Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,  
And the hills are all cover'd with sheep.'

'Well, well, go and play till the light fades away,  
And then go home to bed.'  
The little ones leapèd and shoutèd and laugh'd  
And all the hills echoèd.

WILLIAM BLAKE



*leave off* stop  
*cover'd* covered  
*fades* becomes dimmer; fainter  
*leaped, etc* the letter marked thus—è—shows that the e sound is stressed: leap-ed, shout-ed.

Note that an apostrophe is used to show that a letter is missing. In poetry, this is sometimes used to skip a beat, otherwise the rhythm of the line will be lost. When an extra letter is enclosed the e has an 'accent' on top of it.

William Blake (1757–1827) was a poet and artist who grew up and worked in London, England. He earned his living as an engraver of illustrations for books. He wrote many poems for children as well as adults; he engraved all his poems himself.

## Exercises

### A. Give one word answers.

1. This is heard . . .
2. This is at rest . . .
3. This is still . . .
4. They should come home . . .
5. This has gone down . . .
6. This should be stopped . . .
7. This will fade away . . .

### B. Questions

1. Who is speaking in the poem? To whom is the person speaking?
2. Can you give two reasons why the word 'echoèd' has an accented 'e'?
3. Is there a rhyming pattern?
4. Do you like the poem? Give reasons for your answer.

### C. Reference to context

Read these lines from the poem, then answer the questions.

*Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,  
And the hills are all cover'd with sheep.*

1. Who says these words and to whom?
2. What is said before this?
3. What reply is made to this statement?

### D. Words and meaning

Use these words in sentences of your own.

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. sleep/asleep   | 2. besides/beside |
| 3. breast/abreast | 4. a way/away     |
| 5. light/alight   | 6. skies/sky's    |

### E. Discuss and write

1. Discuss the work done by these people. How is their work different?

nurse

ayah

governess

nanny

nursemaid

housekeeper

babysitter



2. Write a short description of the work done by any one of the people mentioned above.



## The Boy with an Answer

Raman was a bright boy, but he was also very mischievous. He lived many years ago in a small village in the kingdom of Vijayanagaram in South India. Since he was an only child, his mother loved him very dearly. You could say that he was pampered too much and became a spoilt child. But Raman had a quick wit and this helped him to make friends and get along in life.

At that time, the ruler of the kingdom of Vijayanagaram was a mighty king called Krishna Deva Raya. He was a fine and powerful ruler, and at his court there were many famous musicians, artists, and other wise and skilful people.

Raman lived in a small village called Tenali. There

<i>pamper</i>	to give somebody lots of (too much) attention and care
<i>wit</i>	intelligence; the power to reason

was a school in the village, but Raman's mother thought that the other boys at school would harm her dear little boy. So she did not send her son to school. And this suited him fine! He could wander about all day, and be cheeky to whoever he liked! Of course, not being at school made Raman quite lazy.

One day, as Raman was playing with some of his friends by the village pond, a holy man passed that way. The boys ran along beside him. Any stranger in the village was a welcome sight to the boys.

The holy man stopped beside the pond to rest for a while and as he sat there, surrounded by the village boys, he noticed Raman.

'Come here, son,' said the holy man.

Raman went up to the holy man and stood before him. He was fascinated by the holy man's long hair and beads. The holy man was fascinated by Raman's smooth and handsome face and the bright sparkle in his eyes.

'What is your name?' asked the holy man.

'If you must know,' replied Raman, 'it's Raman. But I don't know how this information will help you.'

'Ah!' said the holy man, 'I see you are a boy with a

quick wit! And as you seem to be so intelligent, why do you waste your time running about by this pond?' Raman was going to say something in reply when he stopped to think more carefully about what the holy man had said.

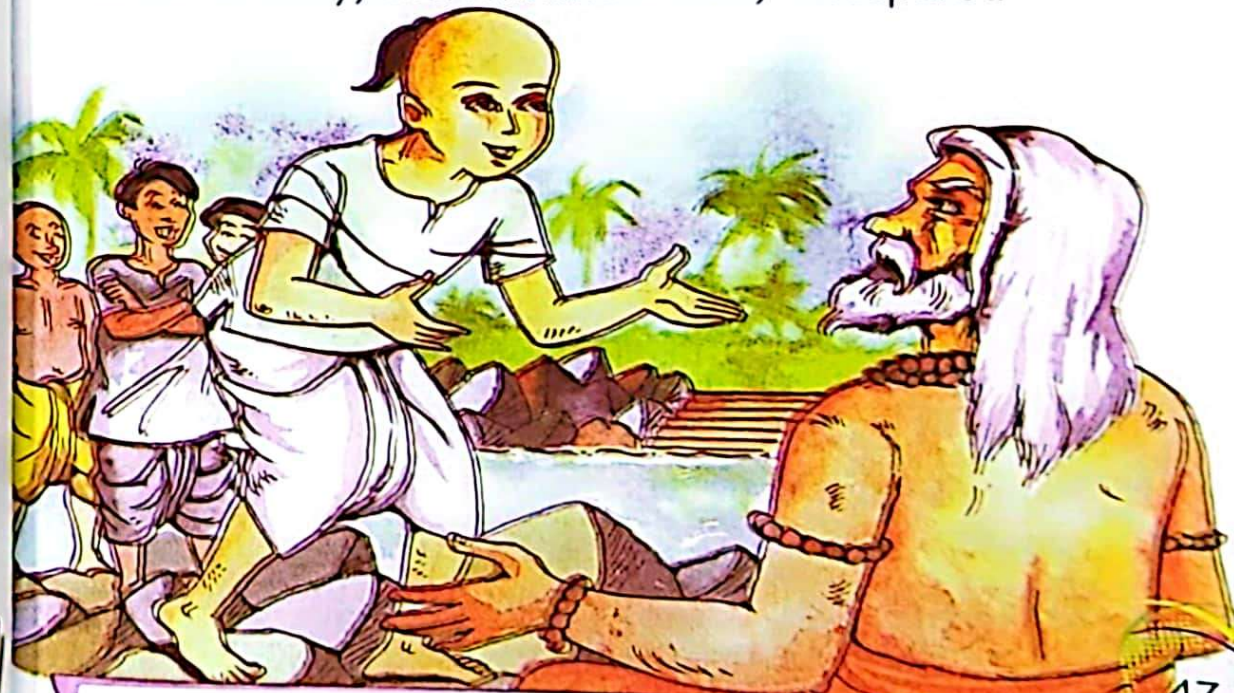
'I can teach you something useful,' said the holy man. 'Would you like to learn what I have to teach?'

Raman was curious. What could the holy man teach him? 'Is it a magic trick?' he asked eagerly.

'No, it is not,' replied the holy man. 'It is something far greater than magic. Come close and listen.'

Raman stood right next to the holy man.

'Listen carefully, and remember this,' whispered



*cheeky* playfully rude or disrespectful  
*fascinate* to hold somebody's attention completely (attractive; interesting)

*eagerly* with excitement and interest (and wanting to get something)

the holy man. Then the holy man recited a long *mantram*, and Raman listened carefully.

When the holy man had finished, he said: 'This *mantram* is far greater than any magic, my boy.

When the time is right, go to Mother Kali's temple and recite this *mantram* a thousand times. You will be surprised at how your life will change.' Then the holy man stood up and walked off down the road.

Raman laughed and shouted. He and his friends ran behind the holy man till he reached the outskirts of the village.

That night, Raman thought about what the holy man had said. He repeated the words of the *mantram* in his head. Then he tried to sleep, but for some reason he found this impossible. Raman got out of bed and crept out of the hut. He ran down the road to the tiny Kali temple at the other end of the village.

It was dark, and Raman was a little scared, but he plucked up his courage and entered the temple. Raman faced the image of Kali and began to chant the *mantram*. He repeated the words over and over again. The sound of his own voice and the repetition of the lines began to make him feel sleepy. Raman's heavy eyes were almost shut, when suddenly, a blinding flash lit up the temple.

Raman was now wide awake. His sleepy eyes were

like saucers, and he stared at the idol. The idol suddenly came to life, and instead of a painted, stone idol in front of him, there now stood a moving, breathing goddess Kali!

Most young boys of his age would have run a mile had they seen such a thing! But Raman was not like them. Instead of running away or screaming, he began to laugh. The fearsome face of Kali took on an even darker look, and the goddess' eyes flashed with anger.

Raman noticed that his reaction had angered Kali, and he stopped laughing. 'I beg your pardon, Mother,' he said, 'I didn't mean to be disrespectful.'

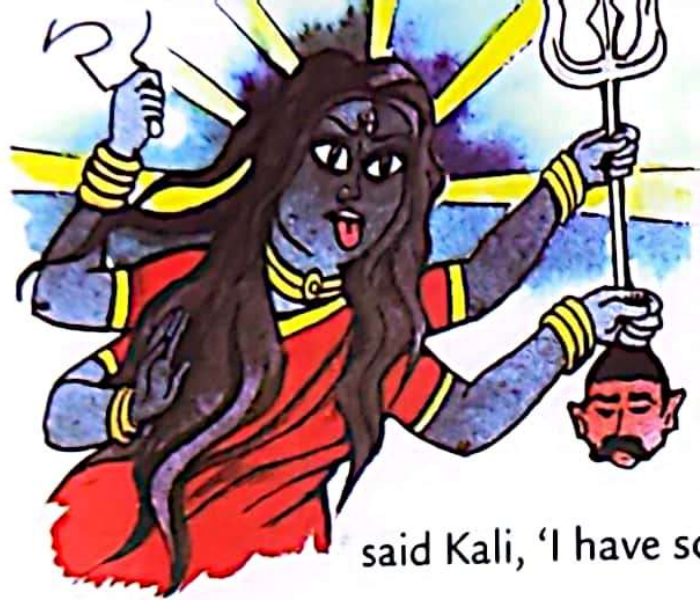
'Then why did you laugh?' asked Kali.

'Well,' replied Raman, 'You are supposed to have a thousand heads. This means that you have a thousand noses. I was just wondering how you blow all those noses when you have a cold?'

Kali's eyes flashed with rage. Then a smile appeared on the goddess' face. 'In a thousand years, never have I been asked such a strange question by a devotee,' said the goddess. 'But, I think I like it!'

**reaction** an action taken in response to something  
**devotee** a faithful and keen follower of something  
(a member of a religious group)

Note that the word *mantram* (a chant or incantation) is written in italics. Words that are not English words, but borrowed from another language, are often written in italics. You may not find such words in an English dictionary.



'I am glad,'  
said Raman,  
sounding  
relieved.

'Since you  
repeated the  
*mantram* so well,'  
said Kali, 'I have something for you.'

The goddess stretched out her arms towards Raman. In both her hands there was a bowl.

'Here is a bowl of curds and a bowl of milk,'  
said Kali. 'Take one, but choose  
carefully. The milk will give you  
much wealth; the curds will  
bring you great wisdom. You  
may have either.'

Raman did not reach out  
for the bowls. He looked  
from one to the other,  
then he asked: 'May I  
taste them first, to see  
which I like, Mother?'

'Yes, you may,' said the  
goddess.

Raman stepped forward  
and carefully took a



bowl in each hand. Then he jumped backwards,  
and instead of sipping the contents of the bowls, he  
gulped them down one after the other.

The goddess took in a sharp breath of air. Her eyes  
flashed, and she sprang forward to grab the bowls.  
But they were quite empty.

Kali caught hold of Raman by his hair and lifted  
him clean off the ground.

'I told you to taste them, not gulp the lot!' she  
shouted. 'How dare you!'

'Please!' cried Raman. 'I've a good reason for doing  
what I did! Let me down and I shall tell you.'

The goddess let go of the boy's hair and he  
collapsed in a heap on the floor.

Raman stood up and brushed off the dust from his  
arms and knees. 'I'm very sorry, Mother,' he said. 'I  
didn't mean to be rude, but you see, I had to have  
both the curds and the milk. One would be no use  
without the other.'

'What do you mean, boy?' thundered the goddess.

'Well, you said that the milk would bring me  
wealth and the curds would make me wise. No  
one respects a man who has only wealth. On the  
other hand, a man with only wisdom cannot lead a  
comfortable life.'

'I see,' said Kali. 'You really are a bright spark, aren't you! You seem to have an answer for everything and a mind of your own. Well, you may have both these gifts; wisdom and wealth. In time, you will become a wise poet. You will use your sense of humour well, but at times, this may upset people. And poets do not make much money, so you will have to work for someone. All your wishes will be granted.'

And then the temple of Kali was silent once again. Raman stared at the idol for a little while longer. Kali no longer breathed or moved.

Raman looked at his hands. Where were the bowls? He reached forward and felt the goddess's feet. The hard, smooth stone was cold to his touch.

'Was this a dream?' thought Raman to himself. 'Did the goddess really speak to me? Did she give me some milk and curds? Am I really going to be a famous person one day?'

With all these questions in his head, Raman hurriedly returned to his warm bed. Only time would tell if his dreams would ever come true. What do you think?

## Exercises

### A. Which is the best answer?

1. Raman was
  - a. mischievous but hard-working.
  - b. studious but lazy.
  - c. quick-witted but mischievous.
2. Raman's mother did not send him to school because
  - a. he was lazy.
  - b. he was pampered.
  - c. he already knew everything.
3. To Raman, the old man's hair was
  - a. astonishing.
  - b. interesting.
  - c. amazing.
4. Goddess Kali told Raman that he had
  - a. a mind of his own.
  - b. a good mind.
  - c. to mind himself.

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. 'Would you like to learn what I have to teach?'
  - a. Who says these words and to whom?
  - b. Why is the offer to teach made?
  - c. What response does the speaker get?

2. 'You are supposed to have a thousand heads.'
- Who says these words and to whom?
  - What is this statement a response to?
  - What does the speaker go on to say?

C. Words and meaning

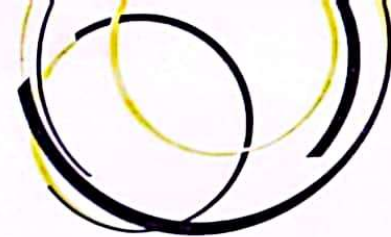
- Explain the following.
  - an only child
  - a spoilt child
  - a mighty king
  - repeated in his head
  - plucked up his courage
- What are the words? They all contain 'ie' or 'ei'. Look in a dictionary if you are not sure.
  - The most important person: c...
  - Someone who steals: t...
  - How high something is: h...
  - The noise a horse makes: n...
  - A release from tension: rel...
  - Troublesome behaviour: mis...

D. Discuss and write

- Who are they? What do they look like?

Kali Vishnu Shiva Hanuman Ganesh  
Jesus Mahavira Guru Nanak Buddha

- Choose one of the above and write a short biography of the person.



## The Poet and the Jester

Raman grew up and became a famous poet. His friends often told him to go to the king, Krishna Deva Raya, and to seek a job at the court. The king would pay him well and look after him, because in his court there were many wise and skilful people, and they were all looked after well. Raman, or Tenali Raman, as he was now called, thought that this was an excellent idea. However, he did not know how he could get into the court of the king.

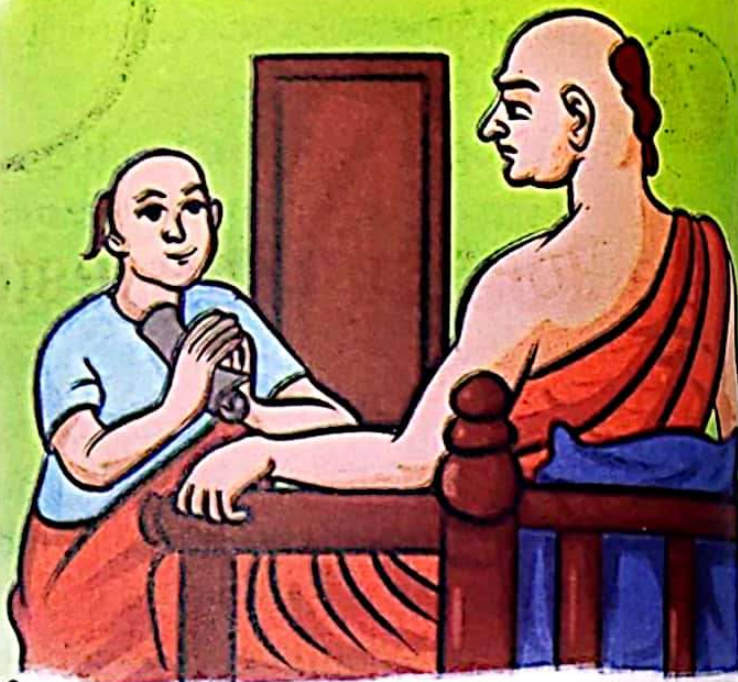
Then, one day, a man called Thathachari, who was very close to the king, came to a place near Tenali. Raman's friends told him about this man.

'Go and see him,' they urged. 'He will surely be of some help.'

Raman hurried to the nearby village and found Thathachari. He begged for an audience with him,

*urged* strongly advised; encouraged  
*audience* (here) meeting or interview

and when Thathachari heard it was the famous poet, he readily agreed to see Tenali Raman.



Raman came before Thathachari and was careful to be polite. He did not want to upset the man with his jokes or sharp comments. Instead, he read out some of his poems.

Thathachari was most impressed.

'What a fine way you have with words, young man,' he said. 'They are fine poems. You must come along and read them to the king.'

Raman thanked Thathachari most gratefully.

'Yes, indeed,' continued Thathachari, and then added rather grandly, and much to Raman's disappointment, 'I shall try and remember to send for you one of these days.'

Raman returned to Tenali. He hoped that

**impress** to bring about a favourable and lasting effect

Thathachari would remember to call him. But the weeks rolled on. Still, there was no news from Thathachari.

Raman became impatient. One day, he packed up his poems and personal belongings and, along with his family, set off for Vijayanagaram, the capital.

The very day he arrived in Vijayanagaram, Raman went to Thathachari's grand house. It was surrounded by gardens and a huge wall; there were guards at the gate. But the walls and the guards did not stop Raman. He marched straight into the grounds. When the guards tried to stop him, he brushed them aside. 'How dare you lay your hands on me!' he complained. 'Do you know who I am? An old friend!'

The guards were taken aback and allowed Raman to enter the house. They did not think to ask, 'Whose old friend are you?'

Once inside, Raman found his way to where Thathachari was sitting. The great man was relaxing after his breakfast. He was surprised and annoyed to see this uninvited visitor in his house.

'Who are you? What on earth are you doing here?' he spluttered.

'I am Raman. Tenali Raman. You remember? You told me to come and ...'

But the great man did not let Raman finish.

'Guards! Guards!' yelled Thathachari, 'Get this man out of here!'

And the guards, who had followed Raman into the house, but had kept their distance, pounced on him and pinned him to the floor.

'Tenali Raman, indeed! This is Vijayanagaram, not Tenali!' said Thathachari, as the guards bundled poor Raman out onto the street.

Raman sat in the street feeling very sore; he made up his mind to get even with the king's friend.

The following day, after Raman had had time to think and to nurse his hurt limbs and his pride, he made his way to the king's court. Many common citizens were going to be at the court that day, as the king had arranged for a famous magician from the north to entertain his people. Raman slipped unnoticed into the court with all the others.

The king and all the ministers and other important guests sat close to the stage. The magician, dressed in a long flowing robe and wearing a turban decorated with stars and a bright yellow moon, suddenly appeared on the stage in a cloud of blue smoke.

The king clapped and applauded as did the

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*pounce* to jump or swoop down onto somebody or something

ministers and guests. The common folk, standing apart, shouted and whistled and cheered. Raman edged closer to the stage and to the king. He was also getting closer to Thathachari who was sitting right next to the king.

The magician was superb. He performed trick after trick that amazed and greatly entertained the audience. After the last and most difficult trick in the programme, one in which the magician appeared to remove his head and hold it aloft in his outstretched hands, the crowd went wild with delight. The applause in the hall rattled the rooftop like thunder!

Then, as silence slowly returned, the magician turned to the king and announced: 'Your Majesty! I hope you have enjoyed my performance. With your permission, I would like to challenge anyone in your court to equal the feats I have performed today.'

'You have my permission,' said the king, and he turned to see whether anybody would take up the challenge. No hands were raised, and no voices were heard.

The king was ashamed that there was no one brave enough to take up the challenge. Thathachari and

*superb* of the highest quality  
*alpft* high up; in a higher position  
*feat* a skilful or courageous act; an art or skill

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the other ministers did not know quite where to look.

Then there was a buzz of excitement in the hall as Raman pushed his way to the front saying, 'Make way! Make way! Let me through.'

Raman stepped onto the stage and bowed to the king. 'Your Majesty,' he said, 'with your permission I would like to take up the challenge. I have better tricks up my sleeve than he could ever dream of.'

The king was encouraged by Raman's words. Nobody else had stepped forward, so this brave soul must have some good trick to perform. Otherwise, the king and his kingdom would be laughed at for evermore. 'Please continue, young man,' said the king.

'I first need something for the trick, Your Majesty, so I'd like to ask one of your servants to fetch something for me.'

'Go ahead, but be quick about it. We haven't got all day,' replied the king.

Raman whispered in the ear of one of the attendants, and the man trotted off. While the crowd watched and waited, Raman paced up and down the stage.

'Who are you and where are you from?' asked the king.

'I am Raman, from a small village called Tenali,'

replied Raman. 'But nobody here, not even Thathachari, your friend and guru, knows or cares where it is!'

Thathachari turned crimson, as all eyes in the hall turned towards him. His further blushes were saved by the arrival of the attendant carrying a small packet. The attendant handed it to Raman.

'I'm not really a magician, Your Majesty, but a humble poet,' said Raman.

The king smiled and nodded. 'Well, Tenali Raman, your name is known here today. And if you perform a trick that our friend here cannot equal, then you shall be rewarded with a bag of gold. But I must warn you that if you fail, you will get a thousand lashes for wasting our time.'

'Certainly, Your Majesty,' said Raman, bowing.

Raman now addressed the magician. 'Sir,' he said, 'I shall perform a trick with my eyes closed. All you have to do is to perform the same trick with your eyes open.' The magician held his belly and laughed loudly.

'With my eyes open?' he said. 'I too shall do any trick that you can do with my eyes closed.'

'No, I shall do it with my eyes closed, you must agree to do it with your eyes open,' replied Raman.

*lashes* strokes with a whip

'All right, all right!' replied the magician, 'I shall do it with my eyes open, with pleasure!'

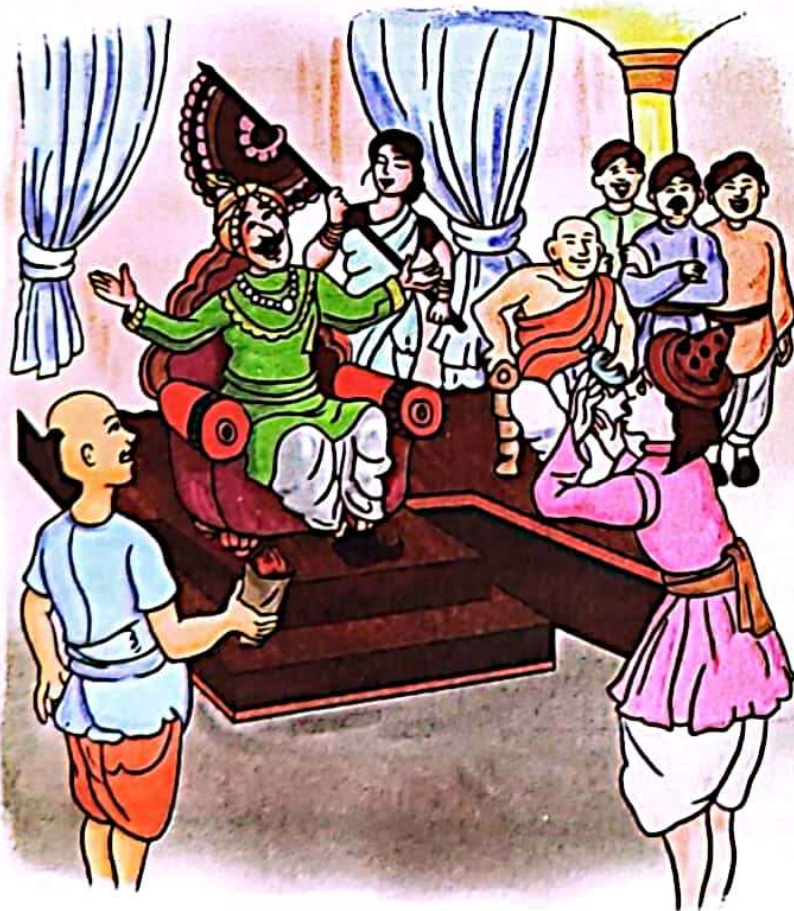
Raman opened the packet that the attendant had brought. He took a handful of the powder that was in it and then closed his eyes. He sprinkled the powder all over his face and eyes. 'Atishoo! Atishoo!' Raman sneezed loudly. Then he dusted the powder from his face with his towel and opened his eyes.

The audience looked on in amazement.

'Now it's your turn,' said Raman to the magician, 'but remember—do it with your eyes open!'

'But what is this powder?' asked the magician.

'It is only a little chilli powder,' said Raman smiling broadly.



Cheers and applause broke out; the audience fell to the floor with laughter. The king laughed too, and even Thathachari permitted himself a little smile.

'Excellent!' said the king, wiping away his tears.

'You deserve your reward. And from today, you shall be part of my court. I have not laughed so much in ages. You really are a funny fellow!'

Tenali Raman was delighted. He spent many happy years at the court, and his fame grew from day to day.

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. What did Raman want from Thathachari?
2. In what way was Thathachari impressed?
3. Did Raman get a good welcome at Thathachari's house?
4. How did Raman trick the magician?
5. Why do you think Thathachari only 'permitted himself a little smile'?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. 'What a fine way you have with words, young man,' he said.
  - a. Who says these words and to whom?

- b. What fine words is the speaker referring to?
  - c. What does the speaker go on to say?
2. *No hands were raised, and no voices were heard.*
- a. Where does this happen?
  - b. What are the hands to be raised for?
  - c. What happens after no hands were raised?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Explain the following expressions in your own words.
  - a. made up his mind
  - b. taken aback
  - c. get even with
  - d. standing apart
  - e. tricks up his sleeve
  - f. his blushes were saved
2. Use these expressions in sentences of your own.

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| a. far and wide   | b. high and low |
| c. here and there | d. now and then |
| e. over and over  | f. in and out   |

### D. Discuss and write

1. What work or function is performed by these people? Find out and report your findings to the class.

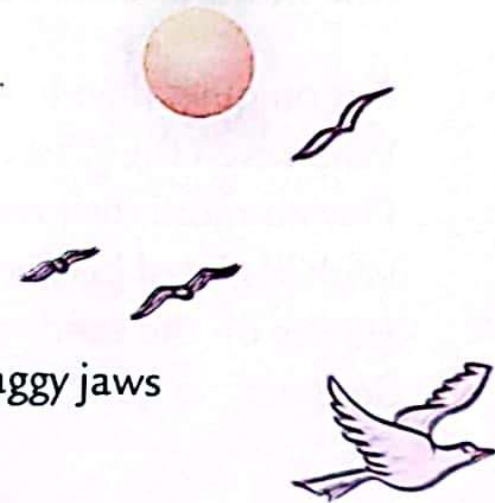
- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| a. magician      | b. conjuror     |
| c. illusionist   | d. juggler      |
| e. ventriloquist | f. escapologist |

2. Do you think Tenali Raman's trick was a good one? Write a short description of the trick and give your opinion about it.



## The Sea

The sea is a hungry dog,  
Giant and grey.  
He rolls on the beach all day.  
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws  
Hour upon hour he gnaws  
The rumbling, tumbling stones,  
And 'Bones, bones, bones, bones!'  
The giant sea-dog moans,  
Licking his greasy paws.



<i>clashing</i>	crashing together loudly
<i>shaggy</i>	having long, thick and messy hair
<i>gnaws</i>	bites and nibbles at something persistently

And when the night wind roars  
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,  
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,  
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,  
And howls and hollos long and loud.

But on quiet days in May or June,  
When even the grasses on the dune  
Play no more their reedy tune,  
With his head between his paws  
He lies on the sandy shores,  
So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.

JAMES REEVES

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<i>bounds</i>	leaps
<i>reedy</i>	(of a sound) high and thin in tone
<i>scarcely</i>	only just; almost not

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. What is the sea being compared to?
2. What gets gnawed?
3. What happens to the sea during a storm?
4. When is the sea calm and quiet?
5. What is the calm, quiet sea compared to?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the poem, then answer the questions.

1. *He rolls on the beach all day.*
  - a. What is really being described here?
  - b. Who rolls on the beach?
  - c. Why does he roll on the beach? What is he doing?
2. *the rumbling, tumbling stones*
  - a. What really makes the stones move?
  - b. What are the stones compared to?
  - c. What is being done to the stones in the comparison?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Which of the words below would be the best one to use in this sentence.  
His stomach was \_\_\_\_\_ because he had not had any breakfast.

moans	roars	tumbling
reedy	rumbling	howls

2. Use the other words given above in sentences of your own.
3. *The sea is a hungry dog.* List the verbs used for the actions of the dog in the rest of the poem. (Clue: there are 11.)

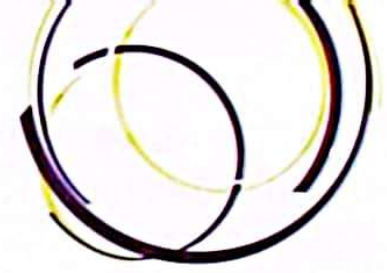
D. Discuss and write

1. Which creatures might you compare the following things to? Discuss them and come up with ideas for a comparison.



a. river   a volcano   a fire   a storm

2. Write a short paragraph of your own, describing one of the things above and using comparisons to an animal. Read your paragraph to the others in class and hear what they have written.



## The Cruel Crane

**L**ong ago, a wise spirit lived in a willow tree that stood by a certain lotus pond. It watched the creatures who lived in and around the pond and learned a lot about life.

Now, at that time the water in the pond used to run short at the dry season. Even though the pond was not over large, it contained a good many fish.



A crane, who was cruel and heartless, visited one day. He was hungry. As he stood by the bank, he saw the fish and thought, 'I must outwit these fish somehow or other and make a prey of them.'

And he went and sat down at the edge of the water, thinking how he should do it.

When the fish saw him, they hid under the lotus leaves and they asked him, 'What are you sitting there for, lost in thought?'

'I am sitting thinking about you,' said he.

'Oh, sir! What are you thinking about us?' they asked.

'Why,' he replied; 'there is very little water in this pond, and but little for you to eat; and the heat is so great! So I was thinking, 'What in the world will these fish do now?'

'Yes, indeed, sir! What *are* we to do?' they cried.

'If you will only do as I ask you, I will take you in my beak to a fine large pond, covered with all the kinds of lotuses, and put you into it,' answered the crane.



'That a crane should take thought for the fishes is a thing unheard of, sir, since the world began. It's eating us, one after the other, that you're aiming at.'

'Not I! So long as you trust me, I won't eat you. But if you don't believe me that there is such a pond, send one of you with me to go and see it.'

Then they trusted him, and handed over to him one of their number—a big fellow, blind of one eye, whom they thought sharp enough in any emergency, afloat or ashore.

The crane took him, and let him go in the pond. He showed the fish the whole of it, brought him

back, and let him go again close to the other fish.  
And he told them all the glories of the pond.

And when they heard what he said, they exclaimed,  
'All right, sir! You may take us with you.'

Then the crane took the old half-blind fish first  
to the bank of the other pond, and alighted in  
a willow-tree growing on the bank there. But he  
threw it into a fork of the tree, struck it with his  
beak, and killed it; and then ate its flesh, and  
threw its bones away at the foot of the tree. Then  
he went back and called out:

'I've thrown that fish in; let another one come.'

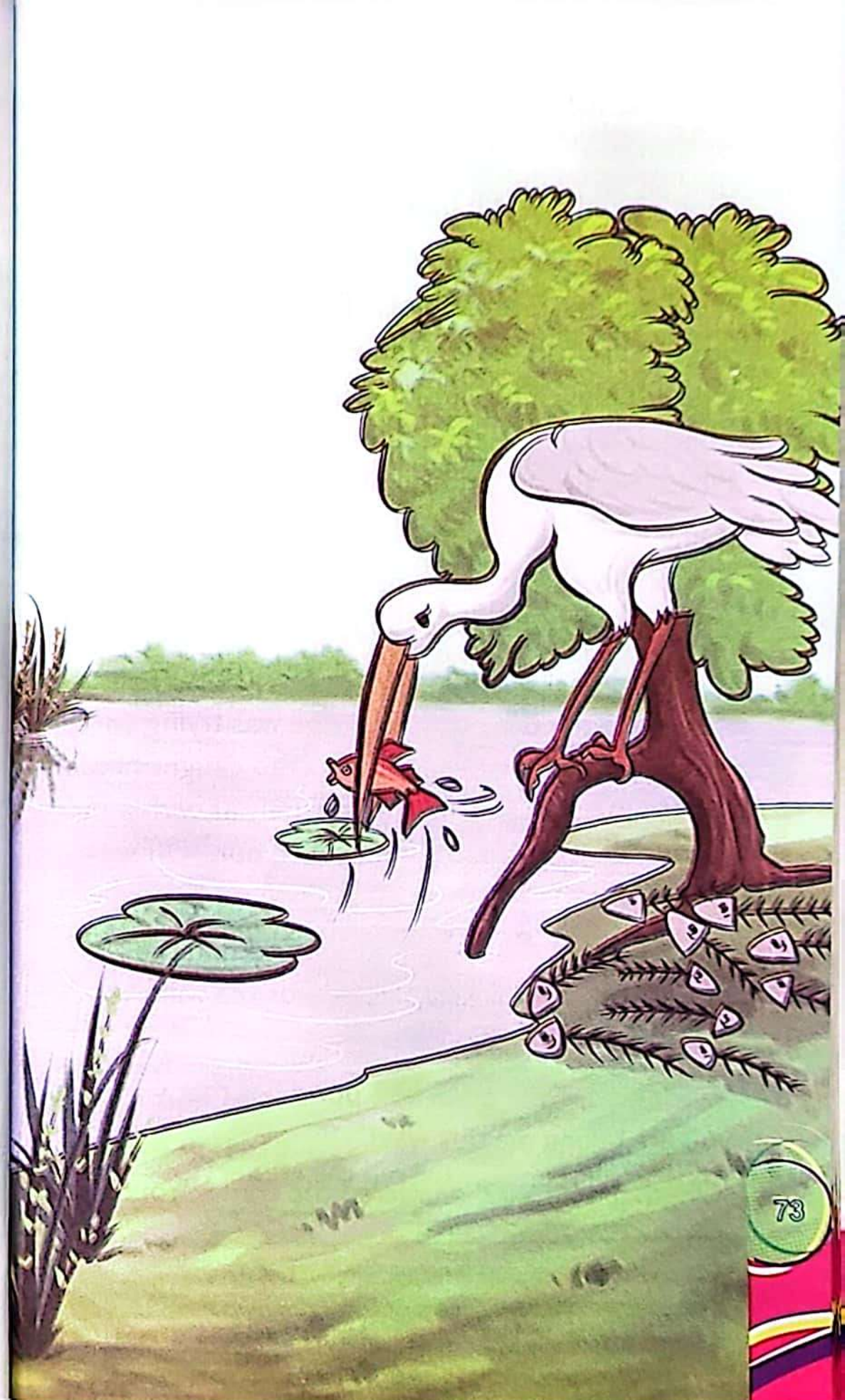
And in that manner he took all the fish, one by  
one, and ate them, till he came back and found  
no more!

But there was still a crab left behind there; and  
the crane thought he would eat him too, and  
called out:

'I say, good crab, I've taken all the fish away, and  
put them into a fine large pond. Come along.  
I'll take you too!'

'But how will you take hold of me to carry  
me along?'

'I'll bite hold of you with my beak.'



'You'll let me fall if you carry me like that. I won't go with you!'

'Don't be afraid! I'll hold you quite tight all the way.'

Then said the crab to himself, 'If this fellow once got hold of fish, he would never let them go in a pond! Now if he should really put me into the pond, it would be capital; but if he doesn't—then I'll cut his throat, and kill him!' So he said to him:

'Look here, friend, you won't be able to hold me tight enough; but we crabs have a famous grip. If you let me catch hold of you round the neck with my claws, I shall be glad to go with you.'

And the other did not see that he was trying to outwit him, and agreed. So the crab caught hold of his neck with his claws as securely as with a pair of blacksmith's pincers, and called out, 'Off with you, now!'

And the crane took him and showed him the pond, and then turned off towards the willow-tree.

'Uncle!' cried the crab, 'the pond lies that way, but you are taking me this way!'

'Oh, that's it, is it?' answered the crane. 'Your dear

*blacksmith's pincers* tool for gripping hot metals

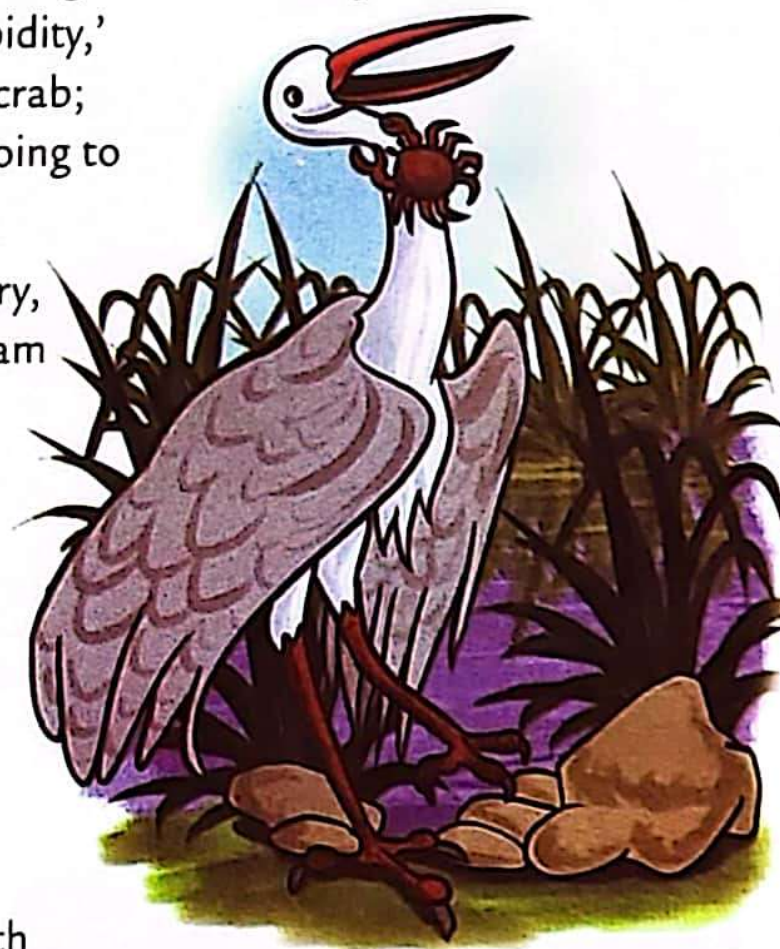
little uncle, you very sweet nephew, you call me! You mean me to understand, I suppose, that I am your slave, who has to lift you up and carry you about with him! Now look at the heap of fish-bones lying at the root of that willow-tree. Just as I have eaten those fish, every one of them, just so I will devour you as well!'

'Ah! Those fishes got eaten through their own stupidity,' answered the crab; 'but I'm not going to let you eat *me*.

On the contrary, it is *you* that I am going to destroy.

For you in your folly have not seen that I was outwitting you. If we die, we die both together; for I will cut off this head of yours, and

*contrary* the opposite  
*folly* lack of good sense



cast it to the ground!' And so saying, he gave the crane's neck a grip with his claws, as with a vice.

Then gasping, and with tears trickling from his eyes, and trembling with the fear of death, the crane begged him, saying, 'O my Lord! Indeed I did not intend to eat you. Grant me my life!'

'Well, well! Step down into the pond, and put me in there.'

And he turned round and stepped down into the pond, and placed the crab on the mud at its edge. But the crab cut through its neck as clean as one would cut a lotus-stalk with a hunting-knife, and only then entered the water!

When the spirit who lived in the willow tree saw this strange affair, he made the wood resound with his plaudits, uttering in a pleasant voice the verse:

'The villain, though exceeding clever,  
Shall prosper not by his villainy.  
He may win indeed, sharp-witted in deceit,  
But only as the Crane here from the Crab!'

*vice* a metal tool with movable jaws, used to hold an object firmly in place while work is done on it  
*resound* to fill or echo throughout a place  
*plaudits* enthusiastic approval  
*deceit* the act of hiding the truth or making someone believe something that is not true



## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. Why did the crane stop by the pond?
2. What did the crane say he would do to help the fish?
3. Why did the fish believe the crane?
4. How did the crab outwit the crane?
5. What is the moral of the story?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. *'I must ... make a prey of them.'*
  - a. Who says this? To whom?
  - b. What does 'make a prey of them' mean?
  - c. What does he do after this?
2. *'those fishes got eaten through their own stupidity,'*
  - a. Who says these words and to whom?
  - b. In what way might the fish have been stupid?
  - c. Do you agree with what he says about the fish?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Explain these words and expressions.
  - a. cast it on the ground
  - b. it will be capital

- c. told them all the glories
- d. he's sharp enough in any situation
- e. it's unheard of
- f. lost in thought

2. What activity links all these words? Look up the words that you don't know in a dictionary. Discuss when you would use these words. Which words are similar in meaning or usage?

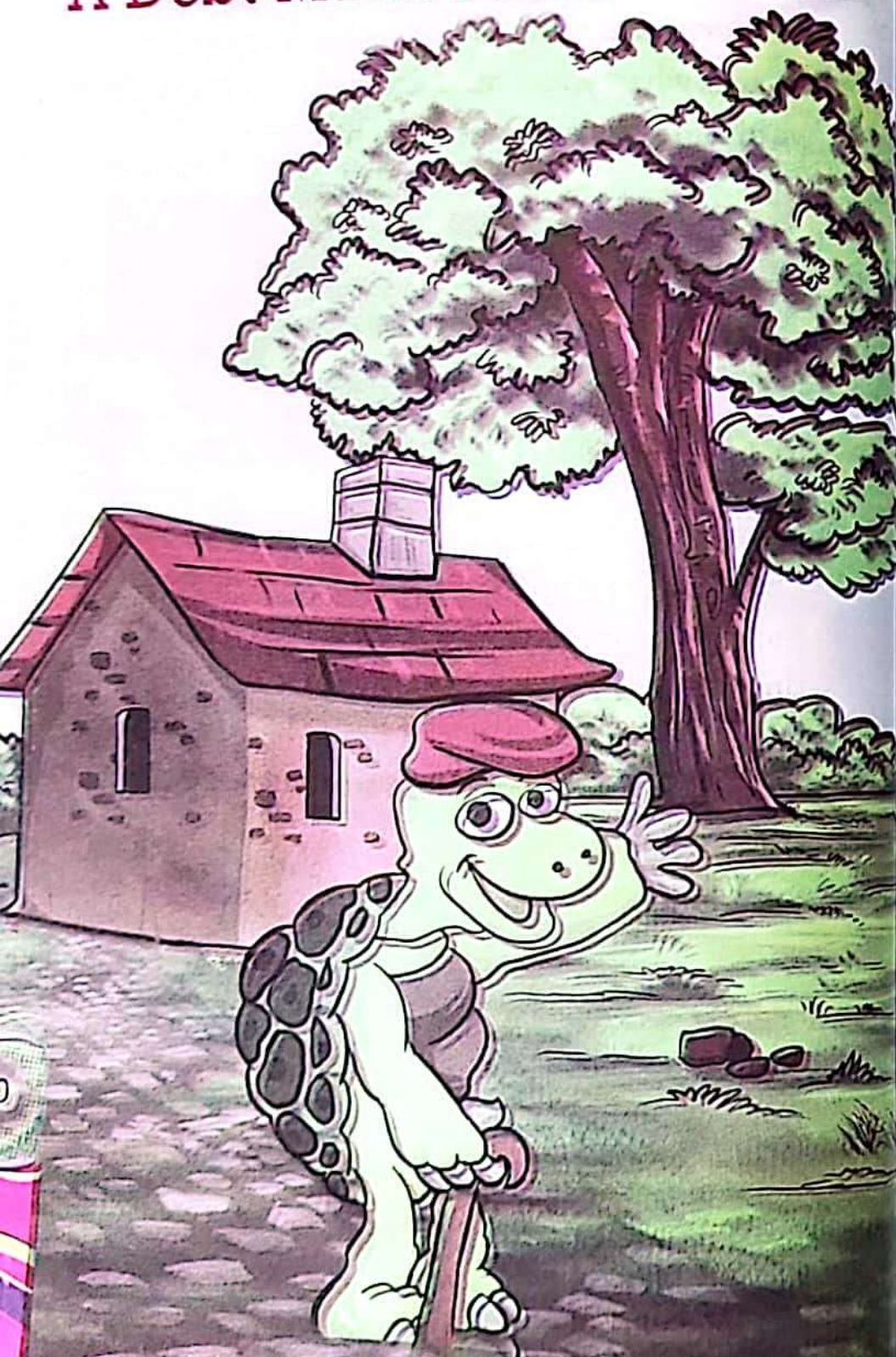
attack	bite	bolt	chew
chomp	devour	dine	feed
gobble up	gorge	graze	ingest
munch	nibble	peck at	pick
scoff	wolf		

### D. Discuss and write

1. Have you (or someone you know) ever been tricked? Listen to others in your class recall a time when they have been tricked.
2. Write a short account of a time when you were tricked. Use someone else's story as inspiration if you need to.



## A Debt Made Profit



Tortoise picked up his walking stick, put on his cap, and announced to his wife, 'I am going to town. I won't be long.'

What Tortoise did not announce was that he had just spied his friend Monkey bounding full-speed towards the house. And what again Tortoise did not announce was that Tortoise owed him three months' salary.

So Tortoise crept out through the back door. A few steps later he was hidden in the tall grass to listen to what went on while he was 'away'.

A minute later there was a very angry Mister Monkey, hammering at Tortoise's door.

'Tortoise, open up at once! I have had enough of your dirty tricks. Open up, I say!'

When the door did open, there was no Tortoise inside the house. Only Tortesia, Tortoise's wife. Awkwardly, Monkey began to eat his words. And they tasted very prickly and embarrassing indeed!

'Oh, er, madam, I'm dreadfully sorry, I didn't realize it was you. It's just that poverty can make one bad-tempered. Is your husband home? I've a small matter to discuss with him.'

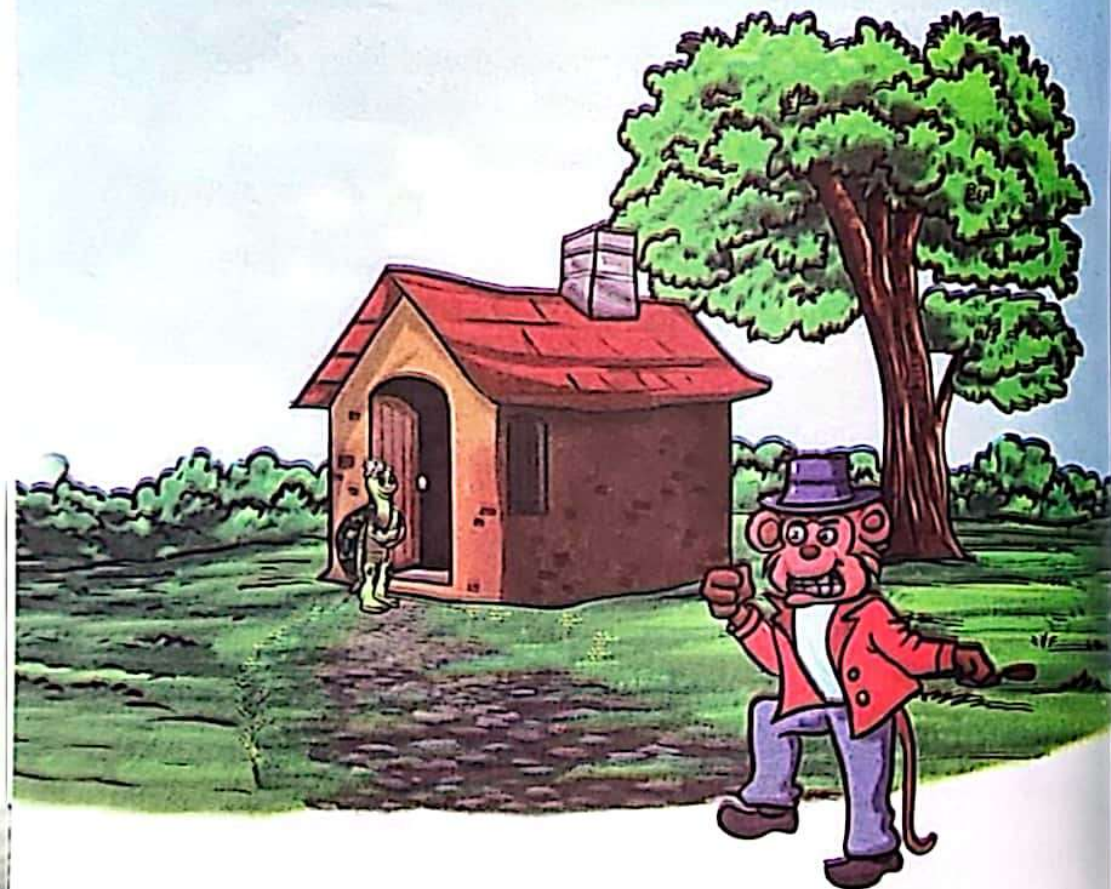
'My husband? Oh dear! He left a moment ago.'  
Monkey fought down his anger.

'Of course, Mister Monkey, would you like to leave

a message? I'd be happy to pass it on when he returns.'

'No, madam. Just tell him I will be back, that's all. He'll know what for.'

Monkey left as hungry as he had come. Now he



was also angry. The two feelings mingled inside him and, as if electrified, twitched his long arms this way and that. 'That Tortoise! If I could get hold of him, I would break his head like a coconut!'

Tortoise quietly watched his debt-collector vanish

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<i>mingled</i>	Mixed
<i>vanish</i>	disappear

round the bend. A few slow steps and he was back at his own front door.

'Any visitors while I was away, my sweet?' he enquired in his most innocent voice.

'Only Mister Monkey,' replied Tortesca.

'Oh, it must have been about that expensive contract he promised to award me,' Tortoise lied. 'But you know these contractors, how unreliable they are. Still, we should hope for the best. But, now, Tortesca, let's eat dinner.'

Tomorrow came. And with it came Monkey. Tortoise still owed him money, yet Monkey could not afford a single groundnut. Yes, a hungry monkey is an angry monkey. Especially if he is hungry through no fault of his own.

'Hmmm, Tortoise will pay today. Just let him wait and see!' Monkey mumbled to himself as again he knocked on Tortoise's door.

But again it was the same story as yesterday.

No Tortoise. No money. Only Madam Tortesca. And, even more infuriatingly, the delicious smell of groundnut soup wafting from the kitchen. He sniffed and his appetite made him feel dizzy.

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<i>contract</i>	an agreement (usually concerning work or sales)
<i>infuriatingly</i>	causing anger



Yet even monkeys have their pride. No, he would not beg. He left, his debt still unpaid. Another tomorrow came. And again came Monkey, hungrier and angrier than ever. And Tortoise hid in the long grass at the back of the house till Monkey had gone. 'This is too much,' complained Tortoise into his soup. 'A tortoise can have no peace or privacy in his own home, or what? No, this monkey needs to be taught a lesson.'

And in his trickish mind, Tortoise weighed one trick against another.

'Let me see now,' the words echoed from some studious corner inside Tortoise's shell. 'Ah! Yes... That's it... That's what I will do...' And Tortoise stuck out his head, a triumphant smile crinkled across his mouth.

It was time to call Tortesca, his better half and partner in trickery.

'Tortesca, my sweet, come! Now, there's one small thing I want you to do for me.'

'Yes, Tortie, what is it?'

'This Monkey is getting too troublesome for his own good. The way he is always disturbing you, I don't like it at all. Now, I have just been thinking about what to do about it. Next time Monkey comes clattering and battering at our door, I want you to turn me upside-down, you understand?'



'Upside-down?' laughed Tortesca.

'Yes, upside-down. Don't laugh, I am serious. Then, after you have turned me upside-down, place me in the same place that you usually keep your grinding stone. Then, when Monkey comes, tell him I am out as usual. Then ... I will explain the rest later.'

However peculiar it was, Tortesca agreed to do what Tortoise had asked.

Next day, at the crack of dawn, there was Monkey clattering and battering at Tortoise's door and shouting.

'All right, Tortesca,' whispered Tortoise into her ear. 'You know what to do. Now do it.'

Tortesca lifted her husband into mid-air ... One ... Two ... Three and there Tortoise found himself upside-down and right in the place where Tortesca usually kept her grinding stone. With his head and feet tucked inside his shell and his shiny flat stomach, you could hardly tell the difference.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Again came Monkey's knocks, like a machine gun. You could hear the anger inside them. This time Monkey meant business.

But Tortoise meant business also.

Tortesca opened the door.

'Where is Tortoise?' Monkey demanded without stopping for so much as a greeting.

'Good morning,' greeted Tortesca nevertheless, bravely and politely standing her ground.

'No, it is not good morning, Mrs Tortoise. It is a bad morning. Now I don't want any nonsense this time. I said, where is he?'

'Mister Monkey, I am terribly sorry, but he has gone out again. I can't help it that my husband is such a walk-about ...'

'I have had enough. Every time the same story: playing me up and down like a small boy, like I am the one who owes him, not the other way round. Well, I won't stand for it!'

And as if to emphasize his point, Monkey started to jump up-and-down and from side-to-side, waving his long arms about like a windmill in a hurricane. He continued his furious dancing and prancing and started to look for something to throw. It didn't matter what. (Head tucked inside his shell, Tortoise 'The Grinding Stone' was having great difficulty stopping himself from laughing aloud: Mister Monkey was acting exactly according to plan.) Barging his way past Tortesca, first Monkey threw a

*barging* pushing past

cooking pot. Then he threw some tomatoes. Then he threw a bar of soap, and then... And then he threw the grinding stone.

Or what he thought was a grinding stone.

Powered by all the might of Monkey's anger,

Tortoise flew through the air like a rocket,  
scattering leaves and nesting  
birds along the way. His



head tucked  
safely  
inside his  
shell, he  
prepared

himself for quite

a long journey. But even the most powerful rocket has to land sometime. The green flashed past him and the occasional blue blur of sky. Tortoise buried his head still deeper inside his shell and waited for the coming crash. Meanwhile, back inside the house Tortesca was weeping.

'So is this how you behave, Mister Monkey?' she sobbed. 'And to think that was my prize grinding stone, which my Tortie gave me as a wedding present. How am I going to get another one? Oh, Monkey, it is too bad of you!'

Monkey, who had been so angry before, was now highly embarrassed. His anger had blown itself out

like a tornado and now he felt only regret. After all, it was not Tortesca who owed him money. He bowed his head in shame.

'Madam ... Madam Tortesca, I am so sorry ... I just lost my temper and ...'

And as Monkey was groping for excuses and eating his words, there was a sound at the door. Tortoise was back from his journey in space.

'Ah, Mister Monkey, I am so glad to see you. Welcome. I have been expecting you all these days now so I can pay off my debt. But let me just go and greet my wife. You look like you could do with a decent meal. After all, you have lent me money, and one good turn deserves another ...'

Tortoise went into the kitchen. Then he saw his wife in tears. What had happened? Tortoise turned to Monkey and demanded an answer.

'Oh, Tortoise, forgive me, I beg. I threw your wife's grinding stone into the forest.'

'Threw her grinding stone into the forest, what on earth do you mean?' Tortoise recoiled in false surprise.

'Yes, that is why she is so upset.' Monkey hopped

*recoiled*

suddenly moved back in alarm or horror

from one leg to another in further embarrassment. 'You see, I didn't mean to throw it. Only I was angry because you had not paid me my money and...'

'But, Monkey, how unfortunate! I can hardly believe it! That grinding stone was the very place where I kept your money. Armed robberies are common these days, so, I wanted a safe place nobody would think of looking in. What better place than inside a grinding stone? And now you have thrown it into the forest. How very unfortunate for both of us!'

Monkey groaned and started jumping up-and-down again.

If he wanted his money back, what choice had he but to enter the forest and look for it? Back into the trees Monkey scampered, moneyless as he had come, to start his search.

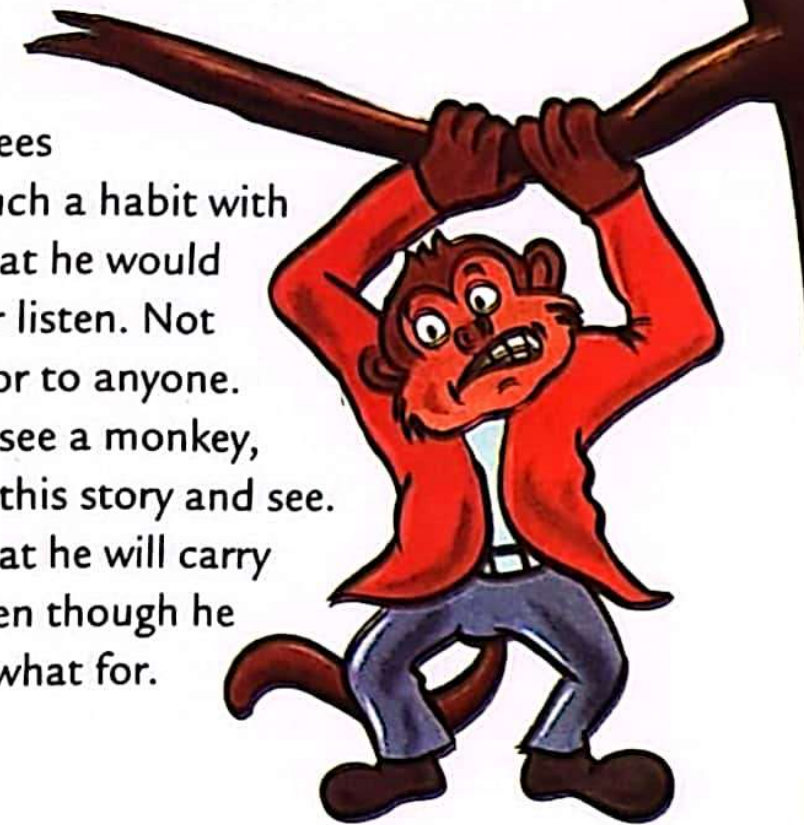
Of course, he never found his money. Or Tortesca's grinding stone, even though it had been standing before him and talking to him only moments before.

Tortoise never paid his debt either.

Sometimes, he hears Monkey swinging and crashing through the trees. (Or—this story is so old—perhaps it is one of Monkey's great-great-

grandchildren.) Sometimes, it crosses Tortoise's mind to tell Monkey (or Monkey's great-great-grandchild) the truth and save him all that wasted energy.

But swinging and crashing through the trees has become such a habit with the Monkey that he would probably never listen. Not to Tortoise. Nor to anyone. Next time you see a monkey, try telling him this story and see. You can bet that he will carry on looking, even though he has forgotten what for.



MARTIN BENNETT  
(*Oxford Tales from West Africa*. Abridged.)

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. What did Tortoise do the first time he saw Mister Monkey coming to his house?
2. How much money did Tortoise owe Mister Monkey?
3. Why didn't Mister Monkey ask Tortoise for some soup?
4. What time of day was it when Mister Monkey visited Tortoise's house for the last time?
5. Where did Tortoise go to think up his plan to trick Mister Monkey?
6. Where did Tortoise say she got her grinding stone from?
7. What do you think about what Tortoise and Tortoise did to Mister Monkey?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. 'This is too much.'
  - a. Who says this to whom?
  - b. What is 'too much'?
  - c. What does the speaker decide to do?
2. 'I can't help it that my husband is such a walk-about...'
  - a. Who says these words and to whom?

- b. Who is the speaker referring to?
- c. Explain what is meant by 'a walk-about'.

### C. Words and meaning

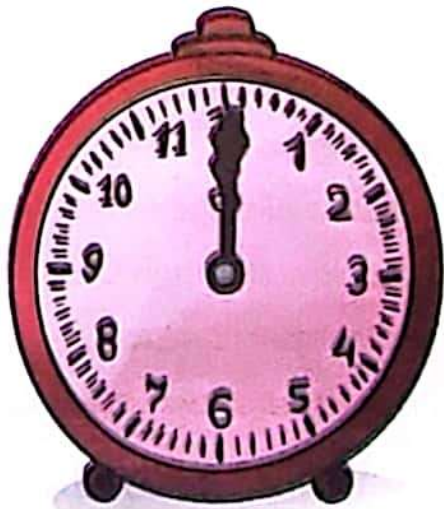
1. What is meant by 'eat his words'?
2. Mister Monkey says Tortoise is 'playing me up and down like a small boy'. Discuss what he means.
3. Find the simile in the story to complete the descriptions below.
  - a. Again came Monkey's knocks, ...
  - b. Tortoise flew through the air ...
  - c. I would break his head ...
  - d. His anger had blown itself out ...
  - e. waving his long arms about ...

### D. Discuss and write

1. Have you heard the saying, *never a borrower or a lender be*? Discuss what it means in class. Have you ever borrowed something and not given it back? Have you ever lent someone something and not had it back?
2. Write about a time when you have been a borrower or a lender and describe what happened.



## The Speed Track



The Hour-hand and the Minute-hand upon a  
polished dial  
A meeting planned at twelve o'clock to walk and  
talk awhile,  
The Hour-hand with the Minute-hand could never  
keep apace,  
'The speed at which you move:' he said, 'is really  
a disgrace!'

*dial* the round face of a clock  
*apace* at a good or fast pace; at a sufficient rate to keep up  
with  
*disgrace* shame or loss of respect arising from bad behaviour



Then laughed the Minute-hand and sang, 'The way  
that I must go  
Is marked with milestones all along, and there are  
twelve, you know.

And I must call at each of these before my journey's  
done,

While you are creeping like a snail from twelve  
o'clock to one.

So now, farewell! But we shall meet again, good  
sir,' said he,

'The road that we are following is circular,  
you see!'

PETER



*milestone* a stone by the side of the road indicating the  
number of miles to a certain place (here, it stands  
for the marks indicating the hours)

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. Which hand moves faster—the Hour-hand or the Minute-hand?
2. Whose speed was a disgrace?
3. Which hand had to move further?
4. Why does the poem have the title 'The Speed Track'?
5. Which things in the poem are compared with other things? Find out how these are described:
  - a. speed
  - b. creeping
  - c. the road
  - d. the hour markers

### B. Reference to context

Read this line from the poem, then answer the questions.

*'And I must call at each of these before my journey's done.'*

1. Who says these words and to whom?
2. Why is this explanation being given?
3. What does 'each of these' refer to?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Explain the following.
  - a. grandfather clock
  - b. 24-hour clock
  - c. digital
  - d. stopwatch
  - e. kph
  - f. pm
  - g. am
  - h. sundial

2. Can you think of suitable ways to complete the following?

example: creeping like a snail

- a. chattering like . . .
- b. snoring like . . .
- c. flying like . . .
- d. soaring like . . .
- e. dancing like . . .
- f. singing like . . .
- g. croaking like . . .
- h. wobbling like . . .



### D. Something to think about!

1. At twelve o'clock exactly, only one hand can be seen on the clock dial (because both hands are together). When is the next time at which the hands will be together? (Answer to the approximate minute.)
2. How many seconds are there in a week?
3. How many words can you think of that are associated in some way with time? (example: morning, now.) Make your list, count the words, then find out who in class has found the most words.

## The Winged Monkeys

There was no road between the castle of the Wicked Witch and the Emerald City. They knew they must go straight east, toward the rising sun; and they started off in the right way. But at noon, when the sun was over their heads, they did not know which was east and which was west, and that was the reason they were lost in the great fields. They kept on walking, however, and at night the moon came out and shone brightly. So they lay down and slept soundly until morning.

The next morning the sun was behind a cloud, but they started on, as if they were quite sure which way they were going.

'If we walk far enough,' said Dorothy, 'I am sure we shall sometime come to some place.'

But days passed, and they still saw nothing before them but the scarlet fields. The Scarecrow began to grumble a bit.

*scarlet* a brilliant red colour

'We have lost our way,' he said, 'and unless we find it again in time to reach the Emerald City, I shall never get my brains.'

'Nor I my heart,' declared the Tin Woodman.

'You see,' said the Cowardly Lion, with a whimper, 'I haven't the courage to keep tramping forever, without getting anywhere at all.'

Then Dorothy lost heart. She sat down on the grass and looked at her companions, and they sat down and looked at her, as if to ask what they should do next.

'Suppose we call the field mice,' she suggested. 'They could probably tell us the way to the Emerald City.'

'Yes,' cried the Scarecrow. 'Why didn't we think of that before?'

Dorothy blew the little whistle the Queen of the Mice had given to her. In a few minutes, many of the small grey mice came running up to her. Among them was the Queen herself, who asked, in her squeaky little voice: 'What can I do for my friends?'

*courage* bravery; strength to do something despite pain or hardship

'We are lost,' said Dorothy. 'Can you tell us where the Emerald City is?'

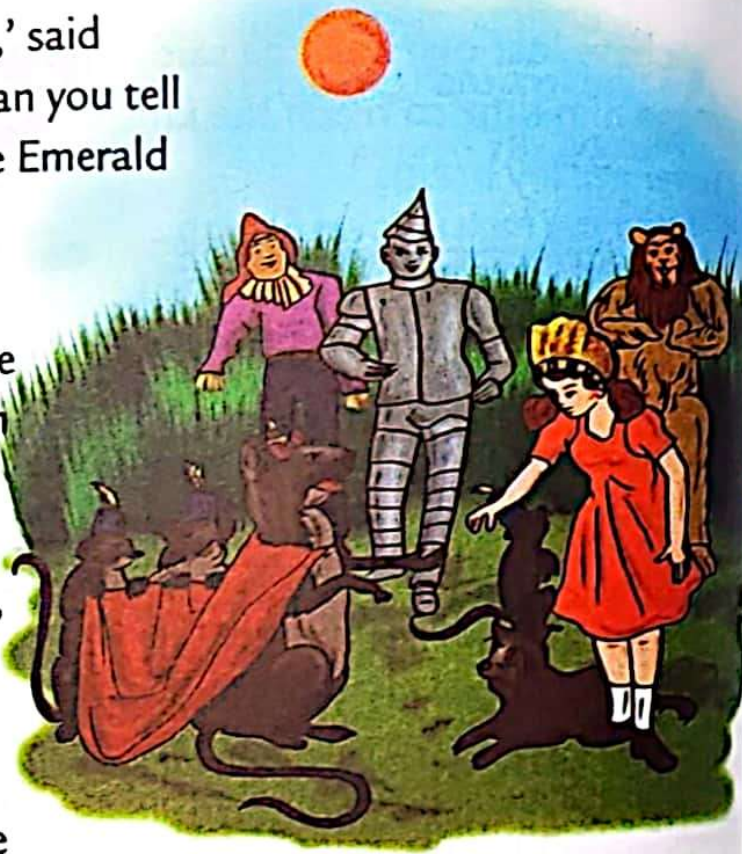
'Certainly,' answered the Queen. Then she noticed Dorothy's Golden Cap, and said, 'Why don't you use the charm of the Cap, and call the Winged Monkeys to you? They will carry you to the City of Oz in less than an hour.'

'I didn't know there was a charm,' answered Dorothy, in surprise. 'What is it?'

'It is written inside the Golden Cap,' replied the Queen of the Mice. 'But if you are going to call the Winged Monkeys we must run away, for they are full of mischief and think it great fun to plague us.'

'Won't they hurt me?' asked the girl anxiously.

'Oh, no. They must obey the wearer of the Cap.'



Good-bye!' And she scampered out of sight, with all the mice hurrying after her.

Dorothy looked inside the Golden Cap and saw some words written upon the lining. These, she thought, must be the charm, so she read the directions carefully and put the Cap upon her head.

'Ep-pe, pep-pe, kak-ke!' she said, standing on her left foot.

'What did you say?' asked the Scarecrow, who did not know what she was doing.

'Hil-lo, hol-lo, hel-lo!' Dorothy went on, standing this time on her right foot.

'Hello!' replied the Tin Woodman calmly.

'Ziz-zy, zuz-zy, zik!' said Dorothy, who was now standing on both feet. This ended the saying of the charm, and they heard a great chattering and flapping of wings, as the band of Winged Monkeys flew up to them.

The King bowed low before Dorothy, and asked, 'What is your command?'

'We wish to go to the Emerald City,' said the child, 'and we have lost our way.'

'We will carry you,' replied the King, and no sooner had he spoken than two of the Monkeys caught Dorothy in their arms and flew away with her.

**charm** an object, action or saying that has magical powers

Others took the Scarecrow and the Woodman and the Lion, and one little Monkey seized Toto and flew after them.

The Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman were rather frightened at first, for they remembered how badly the Winged Monkeys had treated them before; but they saw that no harm was intended, so they rode through the air quite cheerfully, and had a fine time looking at the pretty gardens and woods far below them.

Dorothy found herself riding easily between two of the biggest Monkeys, one of them the King himself. They had made a chair of their hands and were careful not to hurt her.

'Why do you have to obey the charm of the Golden Cap?' she asked.



'That is a long story,' answered the King, with a laugh; 'but as we have a long journey before us, I will tell you about it, if you wish.'

'I shall be glad to hear it,' she replied.

'Once,' began the leader, 'we were a free people, living happily in the great forest, and doing just as we pleased without calling anybody master. Perhaps some of us were rather too full of mischief at times, flying down to pull the tails of the animals that had no wings, chasing birds, and throwing nuts at the people who walked in the forest. But we were careless and happy and full of fun, and enjoyed every minute of the day. This was many years ago.'

'There lived here then a beautiful princess, who was also a powerful sorceress. All her magic was used to help the people, and she was never known to hurt anyone who was good. Her name was Gayelette, and she lived in a handsome palace built from great blocks of ruby. Everyone loved her, but her greatest sorrow was that she could find no one to love in return, since all the men were much too stupid and ugly to marry one so beautiful and wise. At last, however, she found a man who was handsome and

*sorceress* a witch, who uses magic

manly and wise beyond his years. Quelala, as he was called, was said to be the best and wisest man in all the land, while his manly beauty was so great that Gayelette loved him dearly, and hastened to make everything ready for the wedding.

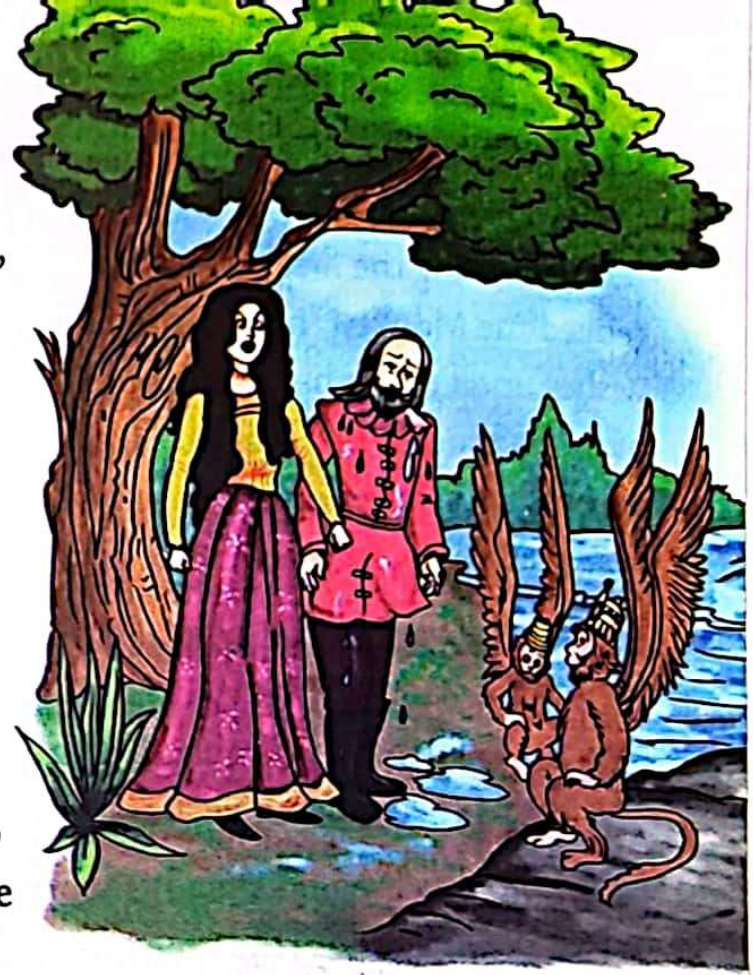
'My grandfather was at that time the King of the Winged Monkeys, and the old fellow loved a joke better than a good dinner. One day, just before the wedding, my grandfather was flying out with his band when he saw Quelala walking beside the river. He was dressed in a rich costume of pink silk and purple velvet, and my grandfather thought he would see what he could do. At his word, the band flew down and seized Quelala, carried him in their arms until they were over the middle of the river, and then dropped him into the water.

Quelala laughed, and swam in to shore. But when Gayelette came running out to him, she found his silks and velvet all ruined by the river.

'The princess was angry, and she knew, of course, who did it. She had all the Winged Monkeys brought before her, and she said at first that their wings should be tied and they should be treated as they had treated Quelala, and dropped in the

river. But my grandfather pleaded hard, for he knew the Monkeys would drown in the river with their wings tied, and Quelala said a kind word for them also; so that Gayelette finally spared them, on

condition that the Winged Monkeys should ever after do three times the bidding of the owner of the Golden Cap. Of course my grandfather and all the other Monkeys at once agreed to the condition, and that is how it happens that we are three times the slaves of the owner of the Golden Cap, whosoever he may be.'



*hastened* moved quickly (to get something done)  
*velvet* a rich, soft fabric

*pleaded* made a serious appeal from the heart  
*bidding* the ordering or requesting of someone to do something

'And what became of them?' asked Dorothy, who had been greatly interested in the story.

'Quelala being the first owner of the Golden Cap,' replied the Monkey, 'he was the first to lay his wishes upon us. As his bride could not bear the sight of us, he ordered us always to keep where she could never again set eyes on a Winged Monkey, which we were glad to do, for we were all afraid of her.'

'This was all we ever had to do until the Golden Cap fell into the hands of the Wicked Witch of the West. Now the Golden Cap is yours, and three times you have the right to lay your wishes upon us.'

As the Monkey King finished his story, Dorothy looked down and saw the green, shining walls of the Emerald City before them. The strange creatures set the travellers down carefully before the gate of the City, the King bowed low to Dorothy, and then flew swiftly away, followed by all his band.

'That was a good ride,' said the little girl.

'Yes, and a quick way out of our troubles,' replied the Lion. 'How lucky that you have that wonderful Cap!'

FRANK L. BAUM  
(*The Wizard of Oz*)

## Exercises

### A. Right or wrong?

1. The group was travelling from east to west.
2. The group was travelling from the Emerald City to the Wicked Witch's palace.
3. There are five travellers in the group.
4. Gayelette marries the Tin Woodman.
5. The Winged Monkeys are mischievous.
6. Dorothy is carried by the King.
7. Quelala is foolish.
8. The City of Oz is also known as the Emerald City.

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. '*She lived in a handsome palace built from great blocks of ruby.*'
  - a. Who is being described?
  - b. What do people think of this person?
  - c. Which details in the story tell us that this person is rich?
2. '*The old fellow loved a joke better than a good dinner.*'
  - a. Who says these words and to whom?
  - b. Who is the speaker describing?
  - c. Write the sentence in your own words while keeping the same meaning.

3. Then Dorothy lost heart.

- What does this mean?
- Why does she lose heart?
- What idea does she have after this?

C. Words and meaning

- Say the charm that Dorothy recites.
- These are words that can be used to describe speech. Discuss what they mean and when you would use them. Use them in sentences of your own, trying to bring out the meaning clearly.

said	grumbled	whimpered
answered	asked	declared
pleaded	replied	agreed

- These words describe how someone says or does something. Use each one in a short sentence. Example: She whistled cheerfully.

a. anxiously	b. brightly	c. carefully
d. soundly	e. badly	f. easily
g. calmly	h. swiftly	i. happily

D. Discuss and write

- Discuss what it might be like to be carried through the air by winged creatures. What would you see and how would you feel? Where would you like to be taken?
- Write a description of what such a flight might be like.



## Haggard's Crossing

**H**aggard's Crossing, in the valley, is a cold and unfriendly place. Usually, the point where two or more roads come together is one where weary travellers stop to rest. Somebody—perhaps some traveller with whom one might exchange a friendly word—might come by.

But Haggard's Crossing, in the valley, was not a place where people stopped for long. Travellers hastened on their way, and avoided the crossroads. There were other routes to the village at the head of the valley, so this one was seldom used.

The valley was deep and dark, and the river at its base often rose above its banks and flooded the road running alongside. A cold, damp mist masked the view in the valley.

But it was not merely the geography and climate of the place that kept people away; there was another reason why people feared it. The locals said that some years before, a man had been robbed and

killed here. The dead man's restless spirit roamed the valley in search of the person who had taken his life. It was this very spirit that was blamed for causing further 'accidents' which occurred there from time to time.

Jack Drummond lived on his own in the little village of Sindleford, at the head of the valley. He had spent his whole life there. He could remember the times when, as a child, he had sat on top of a cartload of turnips or potatoes and travelled with his father to the city, along this very road; when the sun had shone and he had not a care in the world; when he had played his banjo and sung at the top of his voice; and when he had laughed. What happy times those were, but that was before the incident—and before the cold mist began to shroud the valley. Jack was now getting on in years. Although he was

a loner, and kept to himself, he was an excellent banjo player. The villagers always sent for him to liven up an occasion. Jack was always ready to strum away and tap out a beat all night long. In fact, he was so much in demand that whenever there was a celebration in the village of Barkham, at the top of the valley, he was summoned to perform. Of course, Jack always left in good time, and always travelled by the longer route to Barkham, across the top of the hills. He was not superstitious or fearful, but he stayed away from the crossroads. And at the end of a musical evening, Jack always made sure he got a lift back home on somebody's cart.

The winter arrived. The evenings became darker and gloomier. In the valley, the mist was thicker and seemed more damp than usual. The moisture got into one's throat and nostrils, and it was no surprise that half the village came down with the flu. But Jack seemed to be in good health. The damp had not affected his voice, nor had it chilled his bones.

One day, Jack was asked by his old friends Martin and Anne Robson, to play his banjo at a celebration in Barkham. The Robsons were throwing a surprise party for their daughter, Samantha, and Jack was asked to play.



**shroud** to cover or conceal something

**superstitious** thinking that performing or not performing certain actions brings good or bad luck

'It won't be late, will it?' asked Jack, when the invitation came.

'No, no,' he was assured.

'The road is not safe, and Sindleford is quite some way,' said Jack.

'Yes, that's true enough,' came the reply. 'But Charlie Welling and his family are coming over, and I expect they will be riding in their cart. So you can get a lift back with them, eh?' Jack was relieved. The Wellings lived just down the road from him. He would be quite safe with them.

A big crowd turned up for the Robson's party. The house was too small, so the guests gathered in the barn. Long tables had been arranged along one side, for the food and the drinks. There were sacks and drums, chairs and benches along the opposite length of the barn. The centre was kept clear, so that the merry-makers could dance and talk. In one corner sat the musicians; Jack with his banjo, John with his accordion, the Partridge twins with their fiddles, and others who joined in from time to time.

The music played on; food and drink was taken in vast quantities; everyone was having fun. The dancing became more vigorous, and the volume and rhythm of the music increased.

Jack strummed with all his might. He had never known an evening quite like this. His long, grey hair hung over his eyes, and the sweat trickled down his locks. His cheeks were fiery red. The tips of his fingers felt like smouldering embers. But Jack played; he strummed on, and on, and on ...

It was after midnight when Jack rose and looked anxiously around the barn. Where was Charlie Welling? Had he left without him? Jack could not see him anywhere.

The twins were now playing a sad tune on their fiddles which brought a lump to Jack's throat. It was time to go home. A few of the guests still stood around in small groups.

'Why are they staring at me?' thought Jack as he walked towards the door. It felt stuffy and hot in the barn, and he wanted to be out in the open, breathing the fresh night air.

Jack waved a drowsy farewell as he passed through the open doorway. He walked slowly and steadily until he reached a fork in the road on the outskirts of the village. As if in a dream, Jack remembered that one track went over the hills to Sindleford, and the other, the shorter route, went through the valley past Haggard's Crossing.

*anxiously* in a worried or frightened manner

Jack's head felt heavy. He longed to rest it on his pillow in his warm, comfortable bed at home. The night ahead was dark and cold and not a living thing was to be seen. He turned and looked at the barn in the distance. A warm, yellow glow lit up the darkness. The muffled sounds of singing and laughter floated gently into the night. Jack stood for a while in the stillness.

Jack felt too fearful to take the shorter route past Haggard's Crossing, so he set off upon the longer, hill road.

There was no moon in the sky, and his passage was slow. After walking for some minutes, Jack began to trip over rocks in the road. And then, all of a sudden, a dark shape ahead of him blocked the road. Jack drew closer and found that it was a mound of loose earth. The road had completely disappeared. It took him a few moments to realize that there had been a landslide; part of the road had fallen away. The earth and rocks from the hill above had tumbled onto the road. His way was blocked.

Jack returned to the fork. He had no choice but to take the other road home. His body trembled, but he was not sure whether it was from the cold or

from fear. He swung the banjo off his shoulder and began to strum it as he went along. Somehow, the sound felt comforting.

Jack strummed louder and louder as he approached Haggard's Crossing. The rippling river provided a background to his playing. And then he stopped in his tracks. Before him, at the point where the four roads crossed, he saw a dark figure. Although his strumming had stopped, the lapping waters could still be heard. And the beat of Jack's heart hammered in his ears.

Jack moved cautiously, his eyes fixed on the still figure ahead. The nearer he got, the louder his heart thumped against his aching ribs. His palms felt damp.

Jack drew closer to the motionless figure in the darkness. He was but an arm's length away, yet the figure had still not moved. Jack could now make out the form of a man. Jack's heart missed a beat. Was the man alive? Was this the ghost of the traveller who had been killed so long ago?

Suddenly Jack no longer felt afraid. He too stood motionless just like the man—the man wearing clothes just like his own—a long, dark coat, a scarf, a hat pulled low over his brow. There was a musty smell about the man's clothes. It was too dark to see who the man was. Then the man spoke:

*muffled*  
*landslide*

unable to be heard clearly  
the collapse of part of a mountainside

'Come, Jack, strum your banjo again. It is grim and lonely here, and your music brings warmth and comfort. I have waited so long for you to come this way.'

The people of the valley say that you can still hear Jack's banjo if you pass by Haggard's Crossing on a dark night. And if you have a lantern, you may just make out two figures standing there.



## B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. *'The road is not safe and Sindleford is quite some way,' said Jack.*
  - a. To whom is Jack speaking?
  - b. Why is Jack speaking about Sindleford?
  - c. What answer does Jack get to make him feel less fearful?
2. *'I have waited so long for you to come this way.'*
  - a. Who says these words and to whom?
  - b. Where has the person been waiting?
  - c. Why has Jack come that way?

## C. Words and meaning

1. With the help of a dictionary, find out what these words mean. Use them in sentences.

a. soul      b. spirit      c. ghost  
d. phantom      e. ghoul      f. poltergeist

2. Can you find nine musical instruments from the list in the word square on page 118?

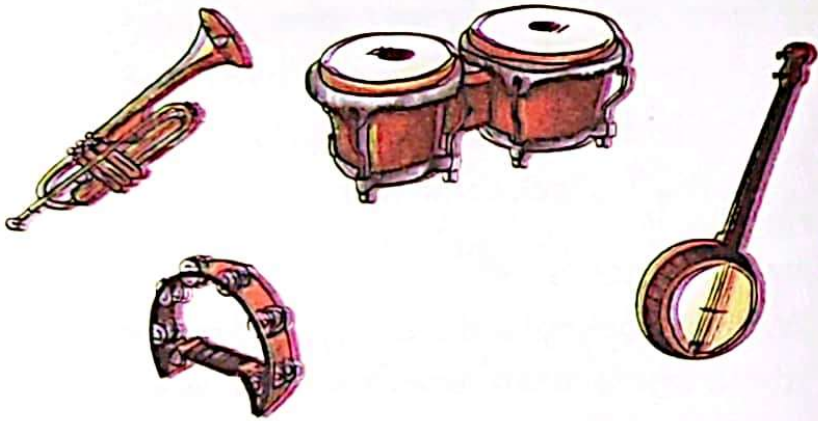
accordion, banjo, bongos, clarinet,  
cymbals, drum, flute, guitar, horn, lute,  
oboe, organ, piano, saxophone,  
tambourine, trombone, trumpet, tuba,  
viola, violin, zither

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. Why did people not stop at Haggard's Crossing?
2. Why was Jack much in demand by the villagers?
3. Why did Jack play his banjo on the way home?
4. Who do you think the man at Haggard's Crossing was? How did he know Jack?
5. Look for any clues in the story and explain what you think happened.

C	L	A	R	I	N	E	T	S	A
Y	N	T	P	D	H	D	R	U	M
M	G	U	I	T	A	R	O	Y	A
P	P	S	J	R	I	S	M	S	B
B	I	B	A	S	T	H	B	E	V
A	E	A	N	R	V	I	O	L	A
L	Y	B	O	R	G	A	N	E	S
S	T	O	F	L	U	T	E	N	E

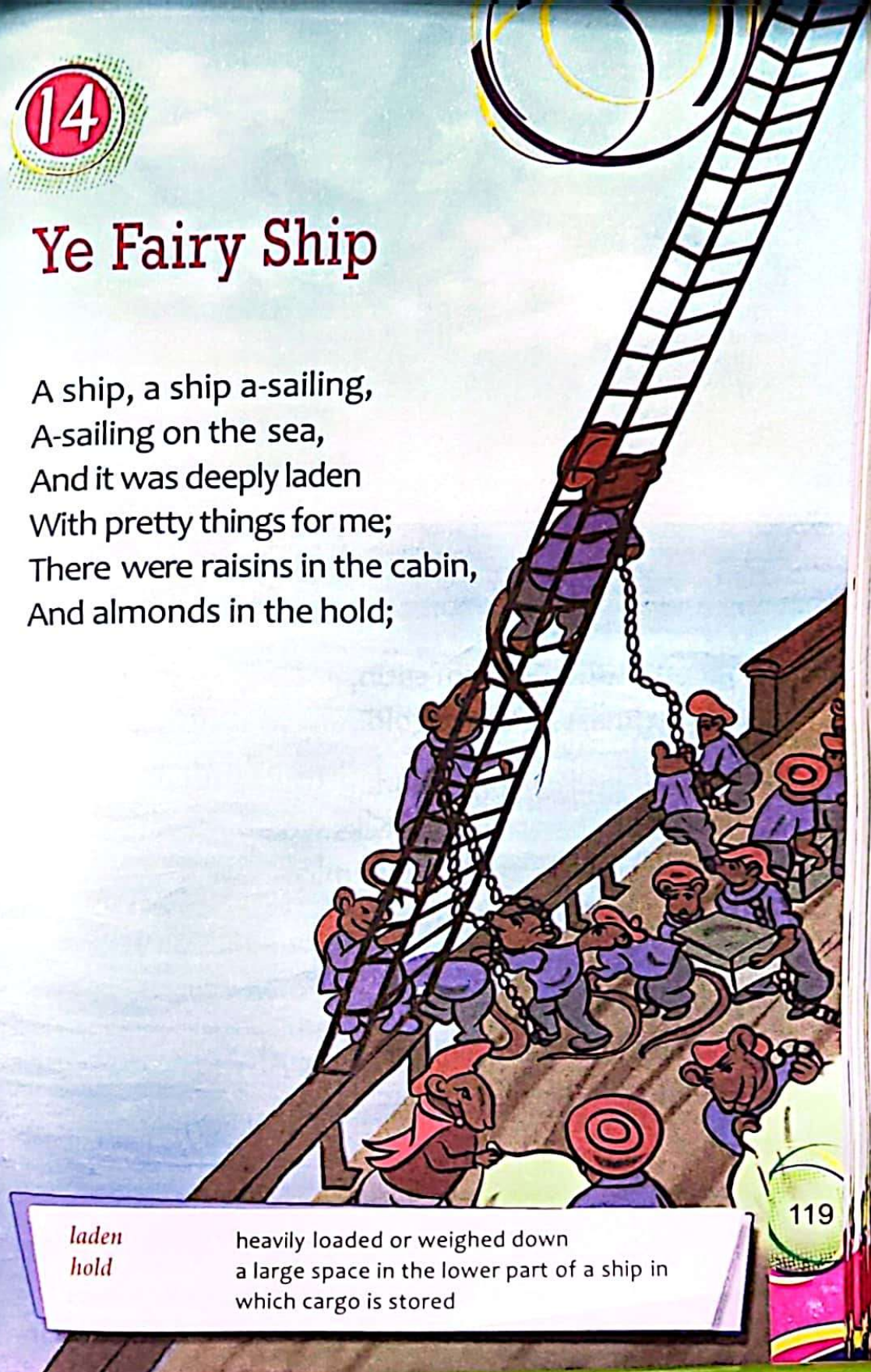


D. Discuss and write

1. Are there any places that you are afraid to visit? Tell the others in class about which places and why.
2. Do you believe in ghosts? What are they? Find out what you can about ghosts and spirits. Make up your mind, then tell the others what you think.

## Ye Fairy Ship

A ship, a ship a-sailing,  
A-sailing on the sea,  
And it was deeply laden  
With pretty things for me;  
There were raisins in the cabin,  
And almonds in the hold;



*laden*  
*hold*

heavily loaded or weighed down  
a large space in the lower part of a ship in  
which cargo is stored



The sails were made of satin,  
And the mast it was of gold.

The four-and-twenty sailors  
That stood between the decks,  
Were four-and-twenty white mice  
With rings about their necks.  
The captain was a duck, a duck,  
With a jacket on his back,  
And when this fairy ship set sail,  
The captain he said, 'Quack!'

WALTER CRANE

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<i>satin</i>	a smooth, glossy fabric, usually made from silk
<i>four-and-twenty</i>	twenty-four
<i>fairy</i>	small, imaginary and winged magical creatures

## Exercises

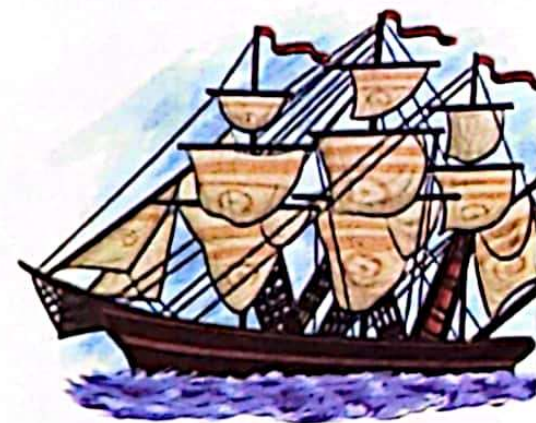
### A. Questions

1. Where was the ship? Use the sentence from the poem in your answer.
2. What items was the ship carrying?
3. What was the ship made of?
4. What were the sailors and how many of them were there?
5. Which detail might make it seem like the mice are captives?
6. What makes the ship seem magical?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the poem, then answer the questions.

1. *There were raisins in the cabin*
  - a. What is unusual about where the raisins are stored?
  - b. What is a cabin usually used for?
  - c. Where would you expect the cargo to be stowed?
2. *The captain he said, 'Quack!'*
  - a. Who is the captain?



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- b. What is the captain wearing?
- c. In your opinion, what could he mean when he says, 'Quack!'?

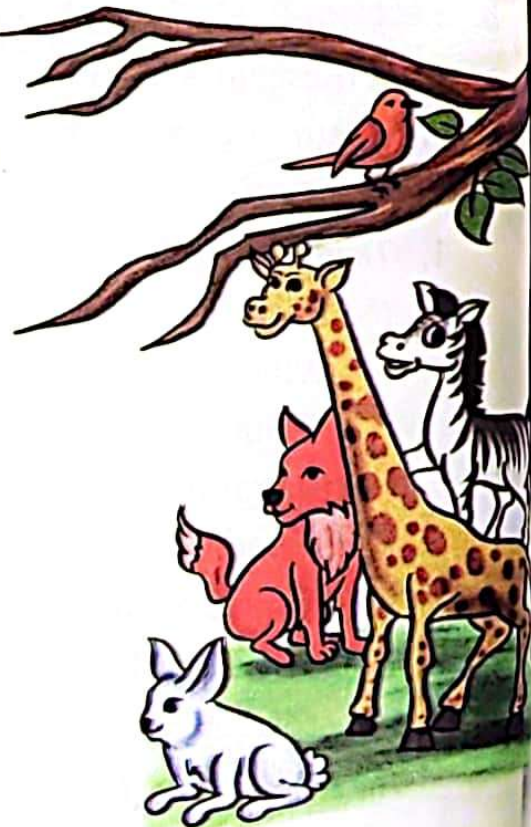
C. Words and meaning

Think of suitable animals to complete the following.

1. As tricky as a .....
2. As blind as a .....
3. As busy as a .....
4. As fierce as a .....
5. As gentle as a .....
6. As playful as a .....
7. As innocent as a .....

D. Discuss and write

1. Which is your favourite animal? Say what it is and why it is your favourite.
2. Find out about one animal of your choice (but not your favourite). Try to write a short poem about it. Read your poem to the class.

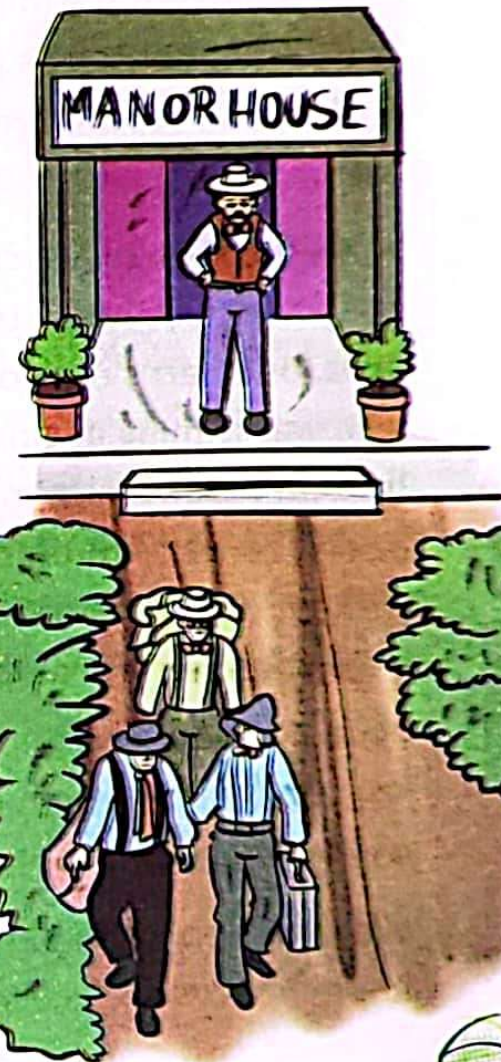


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## Three Men in a Boat

After you pass Old Windsor, the river is somewhat uninteresting. George and I towed up past the Victoria bridge; and as we were passing Datchet, George asked me if I remembered our first trip up the river. And when we landed at Datchet at ten o'clock at night and wanted to go to bed.

I answered that I did remember it. It will be some time before I forget it.



*towed up* the men are in a barge; in certain places, the barge has to be pulled by someone on the bank

It was a Saturday in August. We were tired and hungry, we same three, and when we got to Datchet we took out the hamper, the two bags, and the rugs and coats, and started off to look for lodgings. We passed a very pretty little hotel, with clematis and creeper over the porch. But there was no honeysuckle about it, and, for some reason or other, I had got my mind fixed on honeysuckle, and I said, 'Oh, don't let's go in there! Let's go on a bit farther, and see if there isn't one with honeysuckle over it.'

So we went on till we came to another hotel. That was a very nice hotel, too, and it had honeysuckle on it, but Harris did not like the look of a man who was leaning against the front door. He said he didn't look a nice man at all, and he wore ugly boots. So we went on farther. We went a fair way without coming across any more hotels, and then we met a man and asked him to direct us to a few. He said, 'Why, you are coming away from them. You must turn right round and go back, and then you will come to the Stag.'

We said, 'Oh, we had been there, and didn't like it—no honeysuckle over it.'

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*hamper* a large basket used for carrying food for a picnic  
*clematis* a climbing plant (also, honeysuckle)  
*the Stag* the name of an inn, a place to take refreshment or stay

'Well, then,' he said, 'there's the Manor House, just opposite. Have you tried that?'

Harris replied that we did not want to go there—didn't like the looks of a man who was stopping there—Harris did not like the colour of his hair, didn't like his boots, either.

'Well, I don't know what you'll do, I'm sure,' said the man, 'because they are the only two inns in the place.'

'No other inns!' exclaimed Harris.

'None,' replied the man.

'What on earth are we to do?' cried Harris.

Then George spoke up. He said Harris and I could get a hotel built for us, if we liked, and have some people made to put in. For his part, he was going back to the Stag. Harris and I sighed, and followed George. We took our things into the Stag, and laid them down in the hall.

The landlord came up and said: 'Good evening, gentlemen.'

'Oh, good evening,' said George, 'we want three beds, please.'

'Very sorry, sir,' said the landlord; 'but I'm afraid we can't manage it.'

'Oh well, never mind,' said George, 'two will do.'

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Two of us can sleep in one bed, can't we?' he continued, turning to Harris and me.

Harris said, 'Oh yes'; he thought George and I could sleep in one bed very easily.

'Very sorry, sir,' again repeated the landlord; 'but we really haven't got a bed vacant in the whole house. In fact, we are putting two, and even three gentlemen in one bed, as it is.'

This staggered us for a bit.

But Harris, who is an old traveller, rose to the occasion, and, laughing cheerily, said, 'Oh well, we can't help it. We must rough it. You must give us a space to sleep in the billiard room.'

'Very sorry, sir. Three gentlemen are sleeping on the billiard table already, and two in the coffee room. Can't possibly take you in tonight.'

We picked up our things, and went over to the Manor House. It was a pretty little place. I said I thought I should like it better than the other house, and Harris said: 'Oh yes;' it would be all right, and we needn't look at the man with the red hair. Besides, the poor fellow couldn't help having red hair. Harris spoke quite kindly and sensibly about it.

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**vacant** unoccupied or empty; available for hire

The people at the Manor House did not wait to hear us talk. The landlady met us on the doorstep with the greeting that we were the fourteenth party she had turned away within the last hour and a half. As for our meek suggestions of stables, billiard room or coal cellars, she laughed at them. All these corners had been snatched up long ago.

Did she know of any place in the whole village where we could get shelter for the night?

Well, if we didn't mind roughing it—she did not recommend it, mind—but there was a little inn half a mile down the Eton road ...

We waited to hear no more; we picked up the hamper and the bags, and other things, and ran. The distance seemed more like a mile than half a mile, but we reached the place at last, and rushed, panting, into the bar.

The people at the inn were rude. They merely laughed at us. There were only three beds in the whole house, and they had seven single gentlemen and two married couples sleeping there already. A kind-hearted bargeman, however, who happened to be in the inn thought we might try the grocer's next door to the Stag, and we went back.

The grocer's was full. An old woman we met in

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**meek** showing mildness; weak  
**coal cellar** a room under a house where coal is stored

the shop then kindly took us along with her for a quarter of a mile to a lady friend of hers who occasionally let rooms to gentlemen.

This old woman walked very slowly, and we were twenty minutes getting to her lady friend's. She enlivened the journey by describing to us, as we trailed along, the various pains she had in her back.

Her lady friend's rooms were let. From there we were recommended to No. 27. No. 27 was full and sent us to No. 32, and No. 32 was full.

Then we went back into the high road, and Harris sat down on the hamper and said he would go no further. He said it seemed a quiet spot, and he would like to die there. He requested George and me to kiss his mother for him, and to tell all his relations that he forgave them and died happy.

At that moment, an angel came by in the disguise of a small boy (and I cannot think of any more effective disguise an angel could have assumed), with a can of pop in one hand, and in the other, something at the end of a string, which he let down on to every flat stone he came across, and then pulled up again.

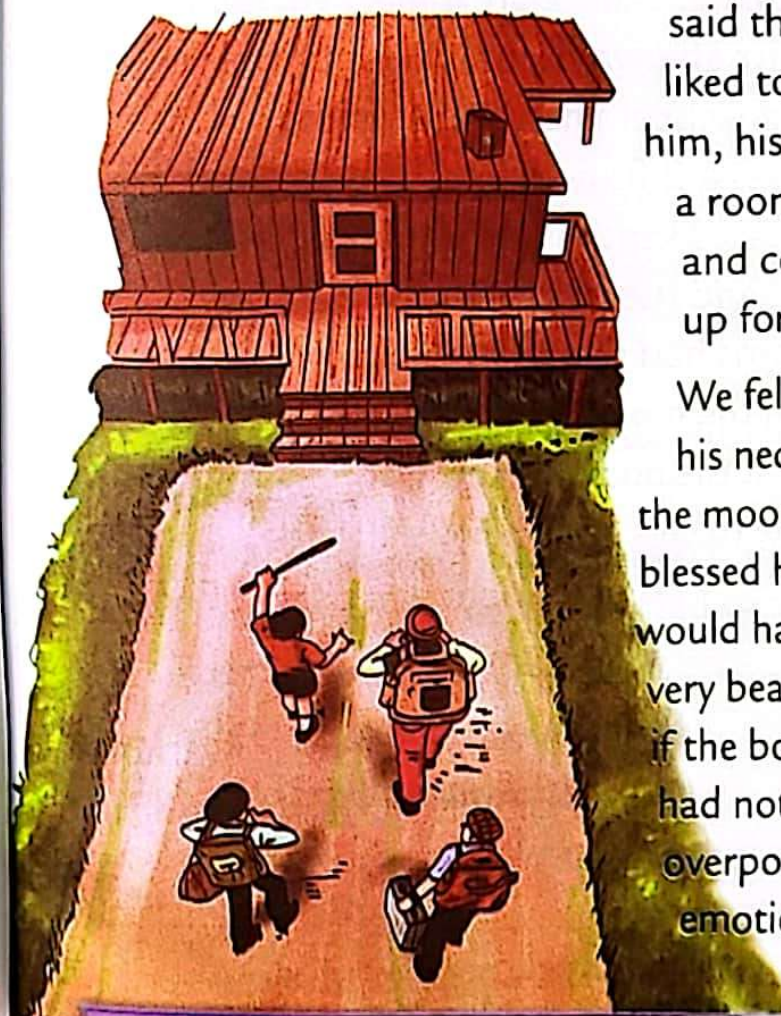
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**enliven** to make somebody or something more lively or interesting  
**assume** to take on (a role or function)

We asked this heavenly messenger (as we discovered him afterwards to be) if he knew of any lonely house, whose occupants were few and feeble (old ladies or paralysed gentlemen preferred), who could be easily frightened into giving up their beds for the night to three desperate men; or, if not this, could he recommend us to an empty barn, or a disused limekiln or anything of that sort. He did not know of any such place—at least, not one handy, but he

said that if we liked to come with him, his mother had a room to spare, and could put us up for the night.

We fell upon his neck there in the moonlight and blessed him, and it would have made a very beautiful picture if the boy himself had not been so overpowered by our emotion, and sunk



**limekiln** an oven for heating limestone to produce quicklime (used for improving soil)

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to the ground, letting us all down on top of him. Harris was so overcome with joy that he fainted, and had to seize the boy's can and half empty it before he could recover consciousness, and then he started off at a run, and left George and me to bring on the luggage.

It was a little four-roomed cottage where the boy lived, and his mother—good soul!—gave us hot bacon for supper, and we ate it all—five pounds—and a jam tart afterwards, and two pots of tea, and then we went to bed. There were two beds in the room; one was a 2-ft. 6-in. bed, and George and I slept in that, and kept in by tying ourselves together with a sheet; and the other was the little boy's bed, and Harris had that all to himself, and we found him in the morning, with two feet of bare leg sticking out at the bottom, and George and I used it to hang the towels on, while we bathed.

We were not so particular about what sort of hotel we would have next time we went to Datchet.

JEROME K. JEROME

From *Three Men in a Boat* (Abridged)

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The extract is from a story about three men (and a dog) who go for a trip down the River Thames in England. They have many humorous adventures. Read the book if you can.

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. Why does the author say: 'It will be some time before I forget it'? Why do you think he remembers it so well?
2. What objection did Harris have to staying at the Manor House?
3. Did George mind where he stayed? Which sentence tells us how he felt?
4. List all the places that the desperate men were prepared to sleep in.
5. Why did Harris tell the others to kiss his mother for him?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. '*We passed a very pretty little hotel, with clematis and creeper over the porch.*'
  - a. Who was passing the hotel and when?
  - b. Were they carrying anything?
  - c. Did they stay at the hotel? If not, why?
2. '*We fell upon his neck there in the moonlight and blessed him.*'
  - a. Who is blessed by whom?
  - b. Why is he blessed by them?

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- c. Where does the person who was blessed take the others and what happens to them there?

### C. Words and meaning

1. What do you think these expressions mean?
  - a. This staggered us for a bit.
  - b. Harris rose to the occasion.
  - c. We must rough it.
  - d. two feet of bare leg sticking out
2. Can you make sense of the following? Some punctuation marks might help!
  - a. i said oh dont lets go in there lets go on a bit farther and see if there isnt one with honeysuckle over it
  - b. well then he said theres the manor house just opposite have you tried that
  - c. oh well never mind said george two will do two of us can sleep in one bed cant we

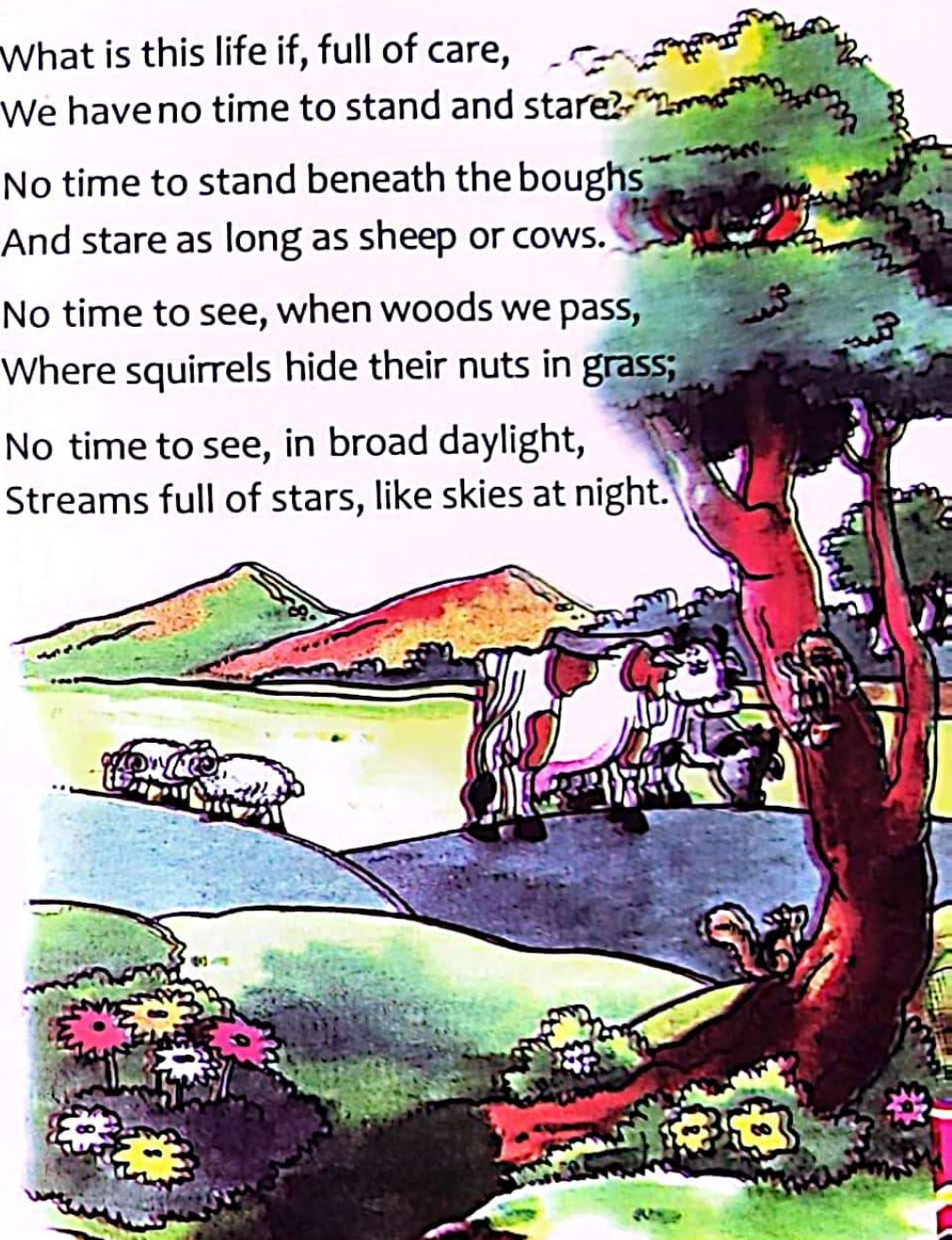
### D. Discuss and write

1. Discuss the following. Are any of these proverbs appropriate for this story?
  - a. All good things come to an end.
  - b. All's well that ends well.
  - c. Beggars can't be choosers.
  - d. The early bird catches the worm.
2. Write your own story to illustrate one of the sayings above.

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## Leisure

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare?  
No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.  
No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass;  
No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.



No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance,  
No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began?  
A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

W. H. DAVIES

**Beauty** You know the meaning of this word. But why does it start with a capital letter? This is because the poet wants us to think of Beauty as a person, not merely a quality possessed by a person. When we do this in literature—give abstract things human qualities—we call it 'personification'. Note that there are other statements in the poem which make us believe that Beauty is a person. Example: Beauty's glance; her feet; they can dance; her mouth can enrich that smile her eyes began.

**William Henry Davies** (1871–1940) was born in Newport, UK. At school, he discovered a liking for poetry. He became an apprentice picture framer, but he gave this up and went to try his luck in America. There he became a traveller, riding freight cars, working in the fruit fields, and narrowly escaping with his life after an attack of malaria and an assault by armed robbers!

He wrote many enjoyable poems. 'Leisure' is probably the best remembered.

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. What is the poet asking us to do?
2. What are some of the things we might not have time to see?
3. What do you think the poet means by 'streams full of stars'? Are there really stars there?
4. In what way might our lives be 'poor'?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the poem, then answer the questions.

1. *No time to see, when woods we pass, ...*
  - a. What might be seen in the woods?
  - b. What is the poet telling us to do and why?
2. *No time to turn at Beauty's glance, ...*
  - a. Why is 'Beauty' written with a capital letter?
  - b. What are the images of Beauty that the poet illustrates?
  - c. What lesson about life does the poet want us to learn?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Can you find these words in the poem?
  - a. to look directly at somebody or something
  - b. in, at, or to a lower position than something else
  - c. forested areas

- d. large main branches
  - e. bright bodies in space
  - f. to improve the quality of something
2. Can you find the silent letters in the following?
- a. boughs
  - b. where
  - c. daylight
  - d. watch
  - e. knuckle
  - f. comb

D. Discuss and write

1. The poem is an easy one to learn by heart. Why don't you try to learn it?
2. Look through the poems and stories you have read so far, and find all the examples of characters working and not working. Do you agree with the idea of the poet that we should take some time to enjoy life?



## The Boy who Broke the Bank

**N**athu grumbled to himself as he swept the steps of the Pipalnagar Bank, owned by Seth Govind Ram. He used the broom hurriedly and carelessly, and the dust, after rising in a cloud above his head settled down again on the steps. As



Nathu was banging his pan against a dustbin, Sitaram, the washerman's son, passed by.

Sitaram was on his delivery round. He had a bundle of freshly pressed clothes balanced on his head.

'Don't raise such dust!' he called

out to Nathu. 'Are you annoyed because they are still refusing to pay you an extra two rupees a month?'

'I don't wish to talk about it,' complained the sweeper-boy. 'I haven't even received my regular pay. And this is the twentieth of the month. Who would think a bank would hold up a poor man's salary? As soon as I get my money, I'm off! Not another week I work in this place.' And Nathu banged the pan against a dustbin several times, just to make the point.

'Well, I wish you luck,' said Sitaram. 'I'll keep a lookout for any jobs that might suit you.' And he plodded barefoot along the road, the big bundle of clothes hiding most of his head and shoulders.

At the fourth house he visited, Sitaram heard the lady of the house mention that she was in need of a sweeper. Tying his bundle together, he said; 'I know of a sweeper-boy who's looking for work. He can start from next month. He's with the bank just now but they aren't giving him his pay, and he wants to leave.'

'Is that so?' said Mrs Srivastava. 'Well, tell him to come and see me tomorrow.'

And Sitaram, glad that he had been of some service to both a customer and his friend, picked up his bag and went on his way.

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Mrs Srivastava had to do some shopping. She gave

**salary** regular money received for work done

instructions to the *ayah* about looking after the baby, and told the cook not to be late with the midday meal. Then she set out for the Pipalnagar market place, to make her usual tour of the cloth shops.

A large shady tamarind tree grew at one end of the bazaar. It was here that Mrs Srivastava found her friend Mrs Bhushan sheltering from the heat. Mrs Bhushan was fanning herself with a large handkerchief. She complained of the summer, which she said was definitely the hottest in the history of Pipalnagar. She then showed Mrs Srivastava a sample of the cloth she was going to buy, and for five minutes they discussed its shade, texture and design. Having exhausted this topic, Mrs Srivastava said, 'Do you know, my dear, that Seth Govind Ram's bank can't even pay its employees. Only this morning I heard a complaint from their sweeper, who hasn't received his wages for over a month!'

'Shocking!' remarked Mrs Bhushan. 'If they can't pay the sweeper they must be in a bad way. None of the others could be getting paid either.'

She left Mrs Srivastava at the tamarind tree and went in search of her husband, who was sitting in front of Kamal Kishore's photographic shop, talking with the owner.

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**texture** the feel and appearance of a surface

'So there you are!' cried Mrs Bhushan. 'I've been looking for you for almost an hour. Where did you disappear?'

'Nowhere,' replied Mr Bhushan. 'Had you remained in one shop, I might have found you. But you go from one shop to another, like a bee in a flower garden.'

'Don't start grumbling. The heat is bad enough. I don't know what's happening to Pipalnagar. Even the bank's about to go bankrupt.'

'What's that?' said Kamal Kishore, sitting up suddenly. 'Which bank?'

'Why, the Pipalnagar Bank, of course. I hear they have stopped paying employees. Don't tell me you have an account there, Mr Kishore?'

'No, but my neighbour has!' he exclaimed; and he called out to the barber next door. 'Deep Chand, have you heard the latest? The Pipalnagar Bank is about to collapse. You'd better get your money out as soon as you can!'

Deep Chand, who was cutting the hair of an elderly gentleman, was so startled that his hand shook and he nicked his customer's right ear. The customer yelped with pain and distress: pain, because of the

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*bankrupt* ruined; without money to pay off debts  
*collapse* to fail or come to an end suddenly  
*nick* a small cut

cut and distress because of the awful news he had just heard. With one side of his neck still unshaven, he sped across the road to the general merchant's store where there was a telephone. He dialled Seth Govind Ram's number. But Seth was not at home. Where was he, then? The elderly gentleman did not believe it. He hurried back to the barber's shop and told Deep Chand: 'The bird has flown! Seth Govind Ram has left town. Definitely, it means a collapse.' And then he dashed out of the shop, making a beeline for his office and chequebook.

The news spread through the bazaar with the rapidity of forest fire. From the general merchant's it travelled to the shop, circulated amongst the customers, and then spread with them in various directions, to the betel-seller, the tailor, the jeweller and the beggar sitting on the pavement.

Old Ganpat, the beggar, had a crooked leg. He had been squatting on the pavement for years, calling for alms. In the evening, someone would come with a barrow and take him away. He had never been known to walk. But now, on learning that the bank was about to collapse, Ganpat astonished everyone by leaping to his feet and running at top speed in the direction of the bank. It soon became known that he had a thousand rupees in savings!

Men stood in groups at street corners discussing

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the situation. Pipalnagar seldom had a crisis, seldom or never had floods, earthquakes or drought; and the imminent crash of the Pipalnagar Bank set everyone talking and rushing about. Some congratulated themselves on having already taken out their money, or on never having put any in; others guessed the reasons for the crash. They blamed Seth Govind Ram. The Seth had fled the state, said one. He had fled the country, said another. He was hiding in Pipalnagar, said a third. He had hanged himself from the tamarind tree, said a fourth, and had been found that morning by the sweeper-boy.

By noon, the small bank had gone through all its ready cash, and the manager was worried. Emergency funds could only be obtained from another bank some thirty miles distant, and he wasn't sure he could persuade the crowd to wait until then. And there was no way of contacting Seth Govind Ram on his houseboat in Kashmir.

People were turned back from the counters and told to return the following day. They did not like the sound of that. And so they gathered outside, on the steps of the bank, shouting 'Give us our

money or we'll break in!' and 'Fetch the Seth, we know he's hiding in a safe deposit locker!' Mischief-makers who didn't have a paisa in the bank, joined the crowd. The manager tried to calm them. He declared that the bank had plenty of money but no immediate way of collecting it; he requested them to come back the next day.

'We want it now!' chanted some of the crowd.

'Now, now, now!'

And a brick crashed through the plate glass window of the Pipalnagar Bank.

Nathu arrived next morning to sweep the steps of the bank. He saw the refuse and the broken glass



*situation* the state; the general condition  
*crisis* a point of time when things are uncertain, difficult or painful  
*imminent* about to happen

*refuse* (pron: ref-yoos) rubbish; things thrown away

and the stones on the steps. Raising his hands in horror and disgust he cried: 'Hooligans! As though it isn't bad enough to be paid late, it seems my work has also to be increased!' He hit the steps with his broom scattering refuse.

'Good morning, Nathu,' said the washerman's boy, getting down from his bicycle. 'Are you ready to take up a new job from the first of next month? You'll have to I suppose, now that the bank is going out of business.'

'How's that?' said Nathu.

'Haven't you heard? Well you'd better wait here until half the population of Pipalnagar arrives to claim their money.' And he waved cheerfully—he did not have a bank account—and sped away on his cycle.

Nathu went back to sweeping the steps, muttering to himself. When he had finished his work, he sat down on the highest step, to await the arrival of the manager. He was going to get his pay somehow.

'Who would have thought the bank would collapse!' he said to himself, and looked thoughtfully into the distance. 'I wonder how it could have happened ...'

RUSKIN BOND  
(Adapted)

**hooligan** a person who is violent; a rowdy



**Ruskin Bond** was born in Kasauli, in Himachal Pradesh, in 1934. He lives in Landaur, a hill station in the Himalayas near Mussoorie. He has written over a hundred short stories, essays, novels, and a great many books for children. Much of his writing is centred on the hills where he has lived for most of his life. Bond was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999.

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. How did the washerman's son help Nathu?
2. In what way was the barber's customer upset?
3. What astonished people about Ganpat's actions?
4. What did the manager tell the crowd?
5. Who do you think was most to blame for the collapse of the bank?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. *And Nathu banged the pan against a dustbin several times, just to make the point.*
  - a. What is the point Nathu was making?
  - b. To whom has he been talking and what had he said?
  - c. What response does Nathu get?

2. 'The bird has flown!'

- Who says these words and to whom?
- Who is the bird and why did the bird fly?
- Where is the speaker before this and where does he get all his information?

C. Words and meaning

- What can you say about the following people? Search for clues in the story.

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| a. Sitaram        | b. Mrs Bhushan     |
| c. Mrs Srivastava | d. Seth Govind Ram |
| e. Ganpat         |                    |

- How did the news about the bank spread through the town? Make a list of people to show who said what to whom.

D. Discuss and write

- What services do these people offer? Find out about each one.

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| butcher       | grocer     |
| ironmonger    | draper     |
| street vendor | tailor     |
| jeweller      | tinker     |
| barber        | pharmacist |

- Choose one of the professions from the list above and write a short account entitled: 'A day in the life of a ...'

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## How I Learned to Ride

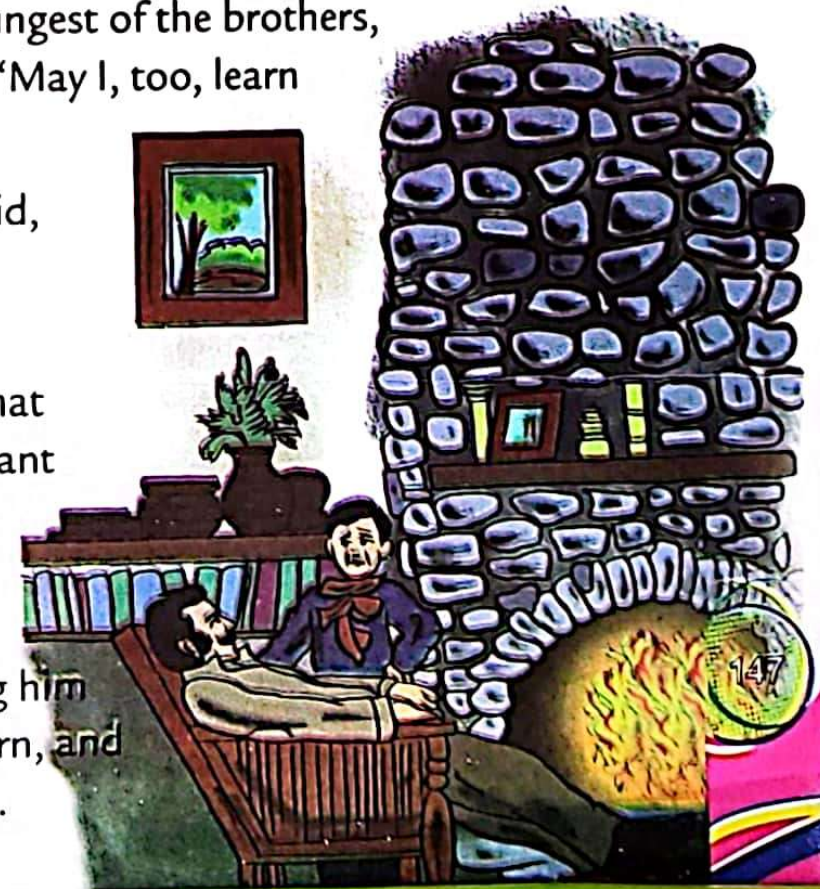
When I was a little fellow, we used to study every day, and only on Sundays and holidays went out and played with our brothers.

Once my father said: 'The children must learn to ride. Send them to the riding-school!'

I was the youngest of the brothers, and I asked, 'May I, too, learn to ride?'

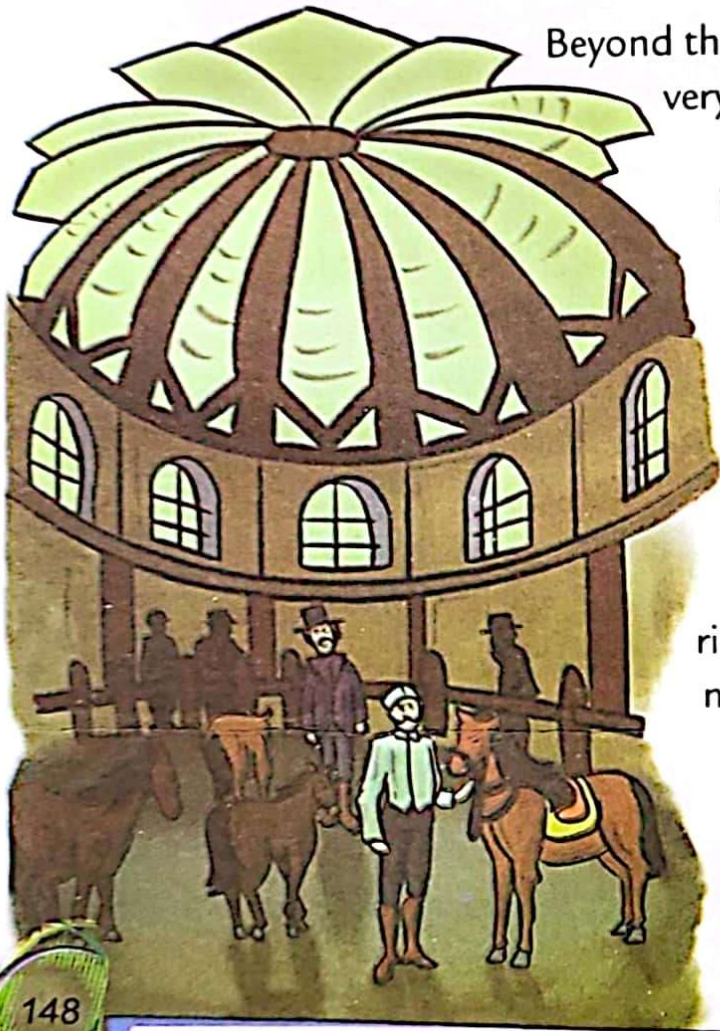
My father said, 'You will fall down.'

I could see that he did not want me to join my older brothers. I began to beg him to let me learn, and almost cried.



'All right,' my father said. 'You may go, too. Only look out! Don't cry when you fall off. He who does not once fall down from a horse will not learn to ride.'

When Wednesday came, all three of us were taken to the riding-school. We entered by a large porch, and from the large porch went to a smaller one.



Beyond the porch was a very large room: instead of a floor it had sand. And in this room were gentlemen and ladies and just such boys as we. That was the riding-school. The riding-school was not very light, and there was a smell of horses, and you could hear them snap whips and call to the

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*porch* a covered structure attached to the entrance of a building

horses, and the horses strike their hoofs against the wooden walls.

At first I was frightened and could not see things well. Then our valet called the riding-master over to us. He said, 'Give these boys some horses; they are going to learn how to ride.'

The master said, 'All right!' Then he looked at me, and said, 'He is very small, yet.'

But the valet said, 'He promised not to cry when he falls down.'

The master laughed and went away.

Then they brought three saddled horses, and we took off our cloaks and walked down a staircase to the riding-school. My brothers climbed onto their horses and sat up straight and tall on the saddles. The master was holding a horse by a cord, and my brothers rode around him. At first they rode at a slow pace, and later at a trot. Then they brought a pony. It was a red horse, and his tail was cut off. He was called Ruddy. The master laughed, and said to me, 'Well, young gentleman, get on your horse!'

I was both happy and afraid, and tried to act in such a manner as not to be noticed by anybody. For a long time I tried to get my foot into the stirrup, but could not do it because I was too small.

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*valet* a male servant

Then the master noticed that I was still standing by the pony. He raised me up in his hands and put me on the saddle. 'The young master is not heavy,' he said, '— about two pounds in weight, that is all.'

At first he held me by my hand, but I saw that my brothers were not held, and so I begged him to let go of me.

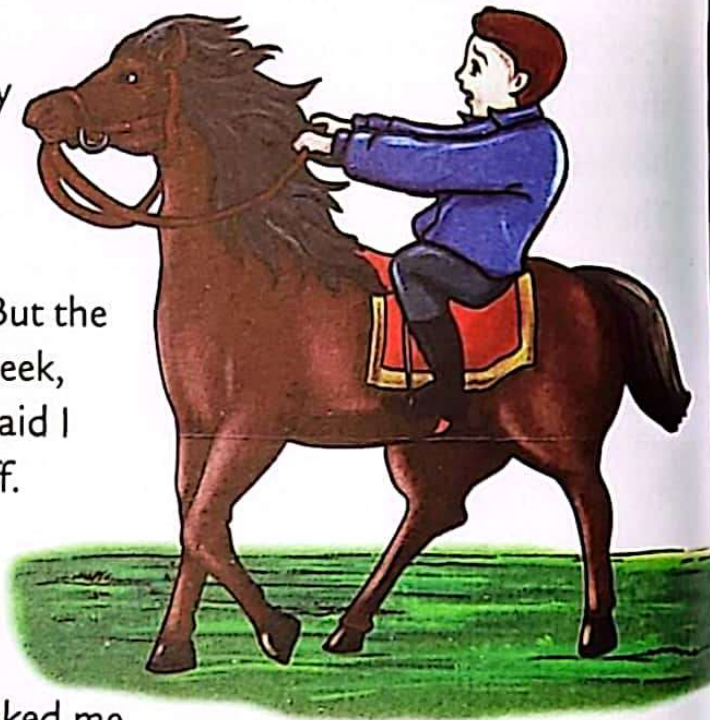
'Are you not afraid?' he asked.

I was very much afraid, but I said that I was not. I was so afraid because Ruddy kept dropping his ears. I thought he was angry at me.

The master said, 'Look out, don't fall down!' and let go of me.

At first Ruddy went at a slow pace, and I sat up straight. But the saddle was sleek, and I was afraid I would slip off.

'Well, are you fast in the saddle?' the master asked me.



<i>sleek</i>	smooth and glossy
<i>fast</i>	firmly fixed or attached

'Yes, I am,' I said.

'If so, go at a slow trot!' and the master clicked his tongue.

Ruddy started at a slow trot, and began to jog me. But I kept silent, and tried not to slip to one side.

'Oh, a fine young gentleman, indeed!' the master praised me.

I was very glad to hear it.

Just then the master's friend went up to him and began to talk with him, and the master stopped looking at me.

Suddenly I felt that I had slipped a little to one side on my saddle. I wanted to straighten myself up, but was unable to do so. I wanted to call out to the master to stop the horse, but I thought it would be a disgrace if I did it, and so kept silence.

The master was not looking at me and Ruddy ran at a trot, and I slipped still more to one side. I looked at the master and thought that he would help me, but he was still talking with his friend, and without looking at me, kept repeating: 'Well done, young gentleman!'

I was now altogether to one side, and was very much frightened. I thought that I was lost; but I felt ashamed to cry. Ruddy shook me up once more, and I slipped off entirely and fell to the ground.



Then Ruddy stopped, and the master looked at the horse and saw that I was not on him. He said: 'I declare, my young gentleman has dropped off!' and walked over to me.

When I told him that I was not hurt, he laughed and said, 'A child's body is soft.'

I felt like crying. I held back my tears. I asked him to put me again on the horse, and I was lifted on the horse. After that I did not fall down again.

Thus we rode twice a week in the riding-school, and I soon learned to ride well, and was not afraid of anything.

LEO TOLSTOY (*adapted*)

## Exercises

### A. Questions

#### 1. Right or wrong?

- The boys had to study every day of the week.
- The youngest boy was not allowed to ride.
- The boy climbed on to his horse by himself.
- The boy's horse was called Ruddy.
- The master watched the boy all the time.
- The boy was afraid but did not show his feelings.

#### 2. What is the message of this story?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

- 'He who does not once fall down from a horse will not learn to ride.'*
  - Who says this and to whom?
  - What does he say before this?
  - What impact do his words have on the listener?
- 'A child's body is soft.'*
  - Who says this?
  - Why does he say it?
  - What does he mean?

### C. Words and meaning

#### 1. Choose the best answer.

- a. The father did not want his son to learn to ride because:
  - i. he thought he was too light
  - ii. he wanted him to study
  - iii. he was worried that he would fall off
- b. The boy was frightened in the riding-school because:
  - i. the horses were noisy
  - ii. it was dark and unfamiliar
  - iii. he could not see
- c. The boy fell off the horse because:
  - i. the saddle was broken
  - ii. the master was not paying attention
  - iii. the horse threw him off

#### 2. Can you think of homophones for the following?

Note: A homophone is a word that sounds the same as another, but is spelt in a different way.  
For example: their/there

- |           |         |          |         |
|-----------|---------|----------|---------|
| a. mane   | b. tale | c. horse | d. nay  |
| e. reigns | f. hair | g. road  | h. whoa |

### D. Discuss and write

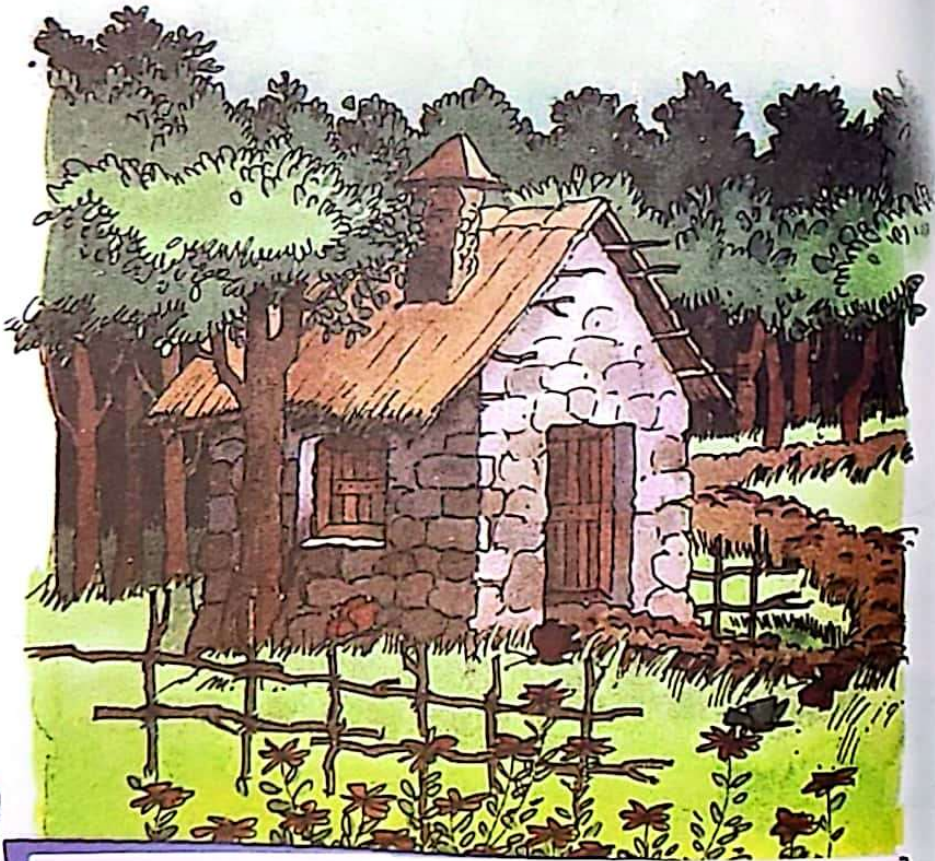
1. Do you play an instrument, do an activity or sport, or have any other hobby? Which of these do you do or what is it that you would like to learn to do?



2. Write about something you do (or that you would like to do).

## The Lake Isle of innisfree

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles  
made:



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*Innisfree* a place in Ireland  
*wattles* materials such as branches and twigs, which are used to make a fence or wall



Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the  
honey-bee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes  
dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where  
the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a-glimmer, and noon a  
purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

*bee-loud* loud with the sound of buzzing bees  
*glade* an area in a wood or forest without trees or bushes  
*cricket* a leaping insect that produces a chirping sound by rubbing its forewings together  
*linnet* a small brownish songbird

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I will arise and go now; for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by  
the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements  
grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

**William Butler Yeats** (1865–1939) was born in County Dublin, Ireland. He was fascinated from an early age by Irish folklore. Yeats lived for long periods of his life in London. He won the Nobel Prize in 1923. He died in France. Yeats said he wrote 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' when reminded of the holidays of his childhood by a novelty fountain in the window of a shop in Fleet Street, London.

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. What are the simple things that the poet wants to do in Innisfree?
2. What clues are there in the poem to tell us that the poet has set his mind on doing this?
3. Why do you think the poet dreams of Innisfree?

**core** the central or most important part of something

4. How are the following described?

a. morning   b. midnight   c. evening

5. When does the poet hear the water of the lake?  
(Think carefully!)

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the poem, then answer the questions.

1. *And evening full of the linnet's wings.*
  - a. What other times of the day does the poet describe? What does he say about these?
  - b. What are linnets?
  - c. Does the poet mean that the linnets are big? How do they fill the evening?
2. *I hear it in the deep heart's core.*
  - a. What does the poet hear?
  - b. What is meant by 'deep heart's core'?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Use these expressions in sentences of your own.

a. arise                      b. veils of the morning  
c. a purple glow          d. water lapping

2. Think carefully and solve the crossword.

## Clues

### Across

- 5 The opposite of white
- 6 All of these lead to Rome
- 8 A way to cook meat
- 9 Enquires
- 10 High mountains in Switzerland
- 13 People keep money in these
- 14 Exactly opposite the ceiling
- 15 An award for bravery (And for you, if you complete this crossword!)



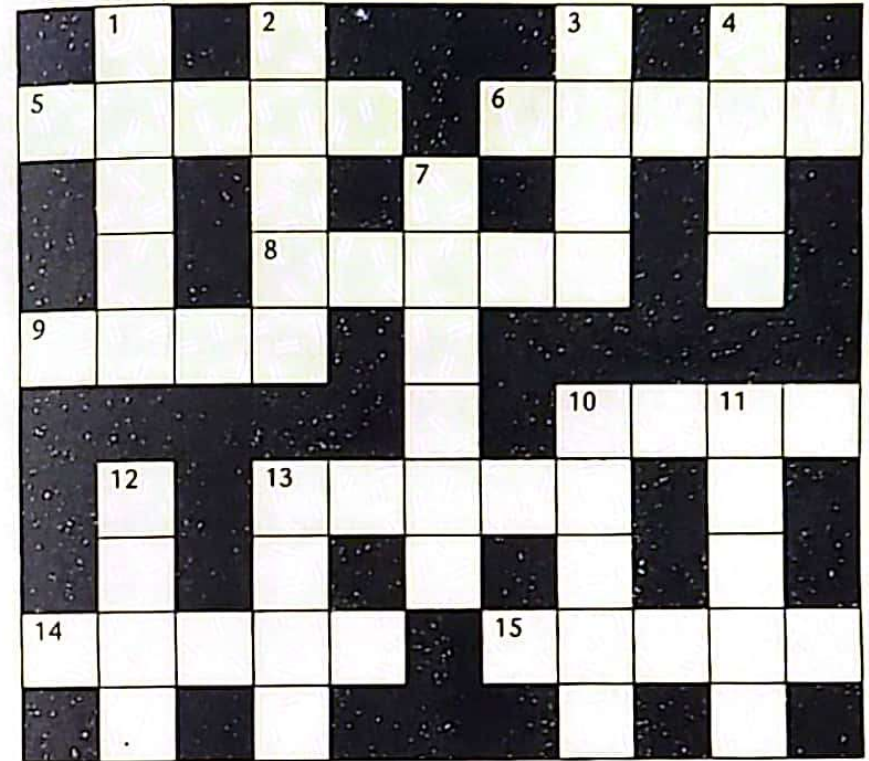
### Down

- 1 Animals have these in place of nails
- 2 If you are scratched by 1 Down, you might end up with these marks on your skin
- 3 Carries people on water
- 4 A thought or plan
- 7 Your mother or your father
- 10 Beasts of burden or fools
- 11 One of the coloured parts of a flower



12 Aid

13 *Three Men in a Boat* is one



## D. Discuss and write

1. Try to learn this poem by heart.
2. In the poem, the poet speaks of a place that has affected him deeply. He longs to return. Is there such a place that you miss greatly? Write about it, saying what it is that you miss.

## Fly Back to Me

Jerry opened the door of the pigeon loft. The pigeons came flocking out into the cool morning. They were greedy for their feed.

They flew crazily in the air waiting for him to throw the feed upon the ground.

Jerry flung his hand in a careless arc and let the broken scrap corn fall through his fingers. From all angles they came towards the corn, slapping him unwarily with their wings.

But Jerry was not happy this morning.

Two days had passed since his best pigeon



**loft** a box-like structure for pigeons, usually built on the flat roof of a house

**unwarily** not being alert or cautious

had disappeared. He had called it Wonder, after the name of an aeroplane he had seen in a *Boy's Own Magazine*. Yes, Wonder had disappeared.

Jerry looked up into the sky more from the habit than anything else. A small school of gauldings was soaring high over his head. But there was no sign of Wonder.

He had never realized before how much his pigeon meant to him. He hadn't reared it. It was really a stranger that had arrived months ago out of the blue. Since then, it came and went, day after day, and had become a feature as casual as the rise and set of the sun. He had taken a fancy to it and accepted it as theirs—his and his mother's. Strangely enough, his mother liked it, too—and she usually hated the sight of any pigeon in her yard. But with Wonder it was different. You couldn't help liking that pigeon.

It was a beautiful pigeon. The most delicate shades of green, blue, and fawn, bright and dull, blended on its breast. And, when it shook its head, the colours on neck and wings merged in a delightful shifting harmony. Its tail was black and white like a draught-board in pattern and its feet were pink.

**gaulding** a bird like a heron, found in Guyana

**harmony** a pleasing effect produced by an arrangement of things or colours

Jerry looked back up into the sky. A few scattered pieces of corn still lay on the ground, exciting the pigeons. The gauldings were out of sight, but there was still no sign of Wonder.

Two days! Perhaps he might never see it again!

His heart felt heavy and the chuckling of the pigeons near him went unnoticed. He hardly thought of them today; and when his mother called, he answered. 'Yes, Mom.'

'Wonder come?'

'No, Mom.'

'Where could it be?'

'I don't know, Mom.'

'Perhaps it had died,' he thought; 'Or had been killed!'

Then his mother spoke again. 'I bet you anyt'ing, one of them boys hit it with a catapult. That is why I always stop you from using one. You all does kill people's chicken and things just for fun. I will brek your hand if I see yo' with one.'

Jerry did not answer. He could not. He felt uneasy, for he had a catapult—though his mother did not know about it. He had made it himself with his scout knife and was very proud of it. Its edges were smooth and well-turned. And the fork narrowed neatly down into the stem. He had made it shine

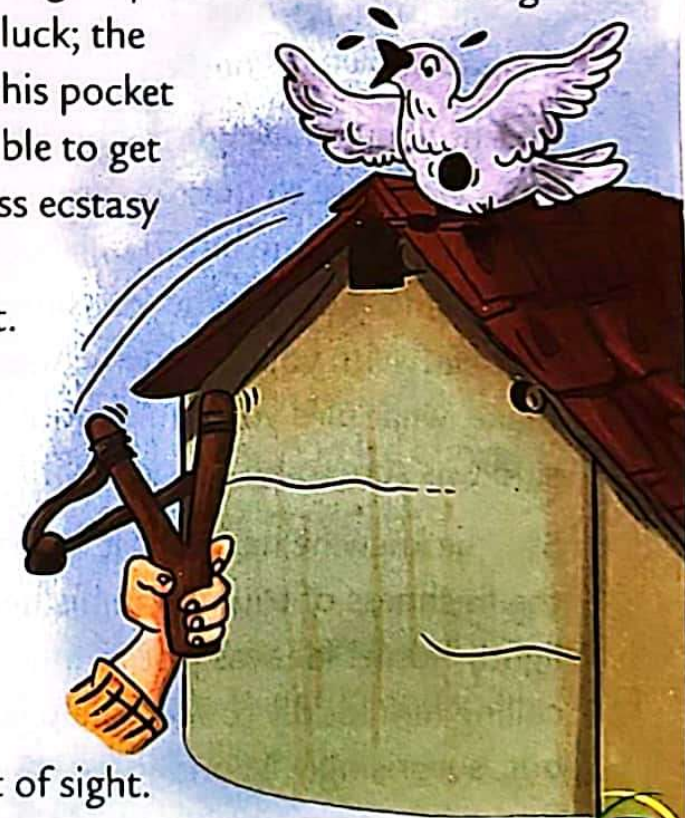
with some stolen varnish, and the clean red rubber, which he had got by swapping the face of a watch for it, was tied with thin wire to the branches of the fork. He had made the catapult in moments of quiet, always out of sight of his mother.

Two days ago, he had had his first hit with the catapult; had drawn his first blood.

He remembered it as if it were now. The head and upper breast of the dove peeping out over the house-top; the challenge it presented. His trembling eagerness to try his luck; the catapult sticking in his pocket and giving him trouble to get it out. The breathless ecstasy of taking aim; the suspended moment.

And then he had loosened the tight straining length of rubber and the stone flew from the sling.

The bird toppled over backwards out of sight.



*suspended* as if hanging or floating in space  
*sling* a loop of leather attached to a catapult

He stood stunned with the delight of it all, unable to gather his thoughts together. He was a hero. But he must get the bird, he said to himself. He wanted to run around into the person's yard and ask if he could climb the house and take it off the roof. But he dared not. His mother would hear of it and he was sure to get a 'cussing'. He stifled his eagerness to see the dead bird and went on home. Now he could speak with authority. This was the first of many—perhaps he would become a better bird-catcher than any other boy in the district. At least, he had shown his mastery. He had made the grade.

But he should have got the bird as proof. Those boys were sure to question and suspect something if they didn't see the bird themselves. He could almost hear Dan's laugh, 'Who yo' think yo' can fool? Ha! Ha! Ha! With your mother watching every step you make, what bird you can shoot?' And whatever Dan said was sure to be echoed by his pals.

Still, he knew he had shot it. What more? And with the freshness of triumph in his heart he had walked lightly home. He was just in time to hear his mother calling him loudly to feed the pigeons. He fed them but, surprisingly, Wonder had not turned up. He found it strange but it was not till evening that he

*'cussing'* a 'telling-off'; a scolding  
*stifle* to cut off a physical act before it develops

began to think seriously about Wonder's absence. Where was the pigeon?

Suppose he had killed it!

The next day came and the absence of the bird became more perplexing. And two days had now passed.

Yes, it was quite possible. He wasn't sure it was a dove he had shot. It might have been a pigeon for that matter. And why not Wonder? And it was with his first catapult, his first shot, his first bird had taken away the creature dearest to him. What a nasty thing to happen!

He moved away from the pigeon roost. Almost in a trance, he heard the pigeons suddenly rush out of the loft and knew by the whirring sound that they were wheeling in the air above. They didn't feel like him, he thought. Without interest, he turned and followed them with slow eyes as they circled above.

And then he saw it. There could be no doubt about it!

Moving slowly from the upper air, a pigeon was coming down to earth. He knew. It was Wonder. His eyes clung to the small moving creature.

It seemed in danger of toppling over into space and one wing was paddling inexpertly, but there

*trance* a dreamlike state

was greatness in the way it came—like a torn fishing vessel limping into harbour.

Jerry stood and watched, amazed and heartened in the same breath. He felt the pressure of a new joy rising inside him and he shouted with all his might!

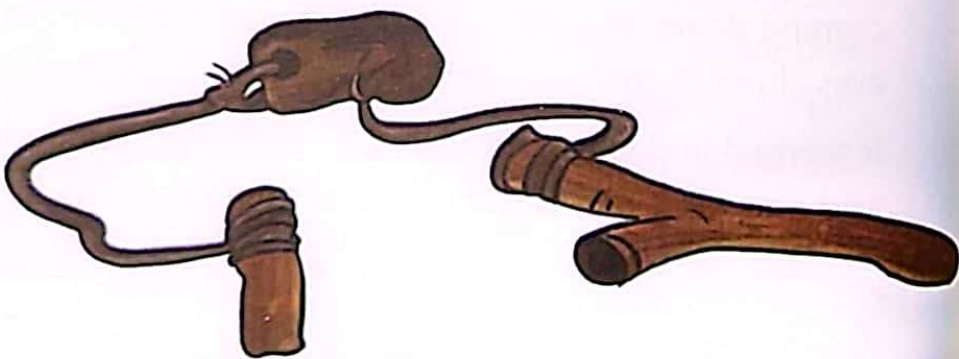
‘Mom, here it is!’

The bird descended slowly—majestically, and the other pigeons flew restlessly about it. It was sheer joy to watch the act. They flew around like excited guards of honour, and the bird at last landed safely at Jerry’s feet. He stood and looked down at it, not yet sure of himself, not quite sure what to do with the joy in his heart.

Then, in a childish but masterful manner, he took something from his pocket in haste and broke it in two. It fell a yard or two from the bird.

When his mother ran out, Jerry was fondling the fluttering bird and at his feet was a smooth, well-polished, but now a useless catapult.

A. N. FORDE



## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. What is meant by the phrase ‘out of the blue’?
2. In what way was Wonder beautiful?
3. Why did Jerry not bring back the bird he had shot?
4. What did Jerry begin to fear he had done?
5. With what comparison does Jerry describe the return of Wonder?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the story, then answer the questions.

1. *Two days! Perhaps he might never see it again!*
  - a. What does ‘two days’ refer to?
  - b. Why might the person never see it again?
  - c. Describe ‘it’, recalling phrases used in the story.
2. *I will brek your hand if I see yo’ with one.*
  - a. Who says these words and to whom?
  - b. What is he or she going to ‘brek’ and why?
  - c. Is anything broken later on? What is it and who breaks it?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Speech in the story is written as it is spoken. Can you put the following in correct English?
  - a. anyt’ing
  - b. Wonder come?

- c. I doan know.
  - d. You all does kill people's chicken and things just for fun.
  - e. Who yo' think yo' can fool?
2. Use these words in sentences, once as a noun and once as a verb. (The meaning may not be the same!)

a. loft      b. flock      c. feed  
d. mother    e. present      f. sling

D. Discuss and write

1. Do you think it is right to kill animals for sport? Discuss this.
2. Why did the boy in the story break his catapult? Think about this, then think whether you have ever felt sorry for or regretted doing something. What happened? Write about it.

# Sea Fever

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea  
and the sky,  
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;  
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the  
white sail's shaking,  
And a grey mist on the sea's face and, a grey dawn  
breaking.



*star* sailors long ago used to navigate by observing the position of the stars in the sky  
*wheel* the steering wheel on a ship

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the  
running tide

Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be  
denied;

And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds  
flying,

And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the  
seagulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant  
gypsy life,

To the gull's way and the whale's way where the  
wind's like a whetted knife;

And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-  
rover,

And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long  
trick's over.

JOHN MASEFIELD

**John Masefield** (1878–1967) was born in Herefordshire, England. He was the son of a solicitor. Masefield went to sea at the age of thirteen! He lived as a vagrant in the US and then returned to London to work as a bank clerk. He wrote many poems about the sea and became famous as a poet during the 1920s. He was made Poet Laureate in 1930. He received other honours too.

<i>denied</i>	refused
<i>spray</i>	a moving cloud or mist of water
<i>spume</i>	a mass of fine bubbles on the surface of the ocean
<i>vagrant</i>	a person who wanders from one place to another
<i>whetted</i>	sharpened
<i>yarn</i>	a (long, exciting) story
<i>trick</i>	a period of duty, for example, at the helm of a ship

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. Where does the speaker want to go?
2. What kind of life does the speaker wish to have?
3. What does the speaker wish for after his turn at the helm?

### B. Reference to context

Read these lines from the poem, then answer the questions.

1. *Is a wild call and a clear call ...*
  - a. Where is this 'wild' and 'clear' call coming from?
  - b. What does the poet think about this call?
  - c. What does the poet require to fulfill this call?
2. *I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life*
  - a. What do the words 'vagrant' and 'gypsy' mean?
  - b. What other examples of this life are given by the poet?
  - c. What is it about this way of life that appeals to the poet?

### C. Words and meaning

1. Refer to the poem and fill in the blanks.

- a. .... kick      b. .... way      c. .... song  
d. .... shaking      e. .... face

2. Oops! Can you sort the adjectives and nouns so that they are paired correctly?

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| a. lonely mist   | b. tall spray    |
| c. white sea     | d. grey spume    |
| e. running dream | f. wild sleep    |
| g. windy knife   | h. flung tide    |
| i. blown yarn    | j. whetted trick |
| k. merry sail    | l. quiet call    |
| m. sweet ship    | n. long day      |

### D. Discuss and write

1. Compare this poem to 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree'. In what ways are they similar?
2. Use some of the expressions from the poem to write a short description of the sea. If you prefer, think of your own expressions to describe a rough, unfriendly sea!



## The Dance Class

### A Play

#### Characters in the play

Mr Thomas—The Headmaster

Mr Leonard—The Maths teacher

Mrs Gupta—The Geography teacher

Mr Iyengar—The Science teacher

Pupils: Velu      Pratap      Bala      Nikhil      Anil  
                 Aruna      Roopa      Uma      Sara      Geeta

#### Scene 1: In the staff common-room

*Velu enters the empty staff common-room and begins searching all over. There is a desk with drawers in the centre and four chairs round it. There are cupboards on one side.*

VELU (*grumbling*) I don't know why they always send me to do these chores. If any of the teachers catches me in here, I shall be for it. I am in enough trouble as it is. (*He continues searching and mumbling and then hears voices and*



footsteps approaching. He looks alarmed and hides under the table.)

Enter Mr Thomas, Mrs Gupta and Mr Leonard.

MR THOMAS Let us sit down in here for a few minutes and discuss this problem.

MR LEONARD Certainly, Headmaster. Mrs Gupta and I will do anything to help out, won't we, Mrs Gupta? (They each take a seat round the table.)

MRS GUPTA Yes, indeed, Mr Leonard. I feel that the Headmaster is quite right about this.

MR THOMAS As I was saying earlier, Mrs Gupta, the lack of cultural activities in this school is simply appalling.

MR LEONARD Quite right, Headmaster. We have to do something about it quickly, especially with the Annual Day Variety Entertainment coming up next month.

MR THOMAS The whole Board will be here, and we have to show them that we have been making an effort.

**cultural** relating to a particular culture, the arts and intellectual activity  
**appalling** very bad; much worse than expected  
**Board** a group of people chosen to make management decisions for an organization

MRS GUPTA I have been saying this all along!

MR LEONARD What? That the Board will be here?

MRS GUPTA (*Glowering at him*) No, no. That something must be done—especially with the boys. And they are your responsibility, Mr Leonard.

MR LEONARD Yes, I am well aware of that, but it is very difficult to get them to do anything, let alone dance, as was suggested by you, Mrs Gupta!

MR THOMAS Now, now, let us not get heated about this. Allow me to summarize. Fact one. We have an entertainment to produce. Fact two. Culture is sadly lacking here. Fact three. Mr Leonard is in charge of the boys, and the entertainment. Fact four. The boys will not dance, and ...

MRS GUPTA Fact five. Mr Leonard has to get moving on this pretty sharply.

MR LEONARD Well, all I can do is try. I think I have an idea. But I shall have to seek the help of Mr Iyengar.

MR THOMAS Which Iyengar? Pottery Iyengar or Science Iyengar?

MR LEONARD Science Iyengar, of course. Leave it to me.

MRS GUPTA I don't know how he is going to help you. He knows absolutely nothing about ballet or waltzes or the tango.

MR THOMAS Mrs Gupta, please... we are not thinking of a Western Cultural Show here. Indian, Indian, dear lady.

MRS GUPTA Yes, yes, I quite forgot. But he knows nothing about Bharatanatyam or Kathakali or Kuchipudi, either!

MR LEONARD Since I will be organizing this, Mrs Gupta, and since it is my problem, please leave it to me to sort out.

MRS GUPTA Fine! But I shall enjoy watching the boys practise! That should be entertaining for all of us.

*Curtain*

### Scene 2: Mr Leonard's Classroom

*The curtain rises. The pupils are wandering about the classroom. Some are huddled together whispering. The girls*

*ballet, waltz, tango* western dance styles



*are sitting at their desks. Velu enters hurriedly and in great excitement.*

VELU Hey guys! Listen to this! Listen! I was in the staff common room just now, and I heard the headmaster, Mr Leonard and Mrs Gupta talking.

BALA And what were you doing there, Velu? You are not allowed in there.

VELU Nobody saw me. I hid under the table. I heard Mr Leonard saying that he is going to get the boys to dance for the Annual Day Entertainment.

NIKHIL No way! Yuck!

ANIL Not me!

PRATAP Me neither!

ARUNA Why not? *We* have to dance!

UMA I agree. If we can dance, so can you.

ARUNA And why can you not dance, may we ask?

BALA You are girls! Girls are supposed to dance!

PRATAP And prance and glance, in France!

BALA We don't dance, we play football. We have scraps. We argue. (*Puffing out his chest like a weightlifter*) We do manly things.

*prance* to move around in a lively manner  
*manly* having or showing the qualities of a man

ANIL (*Imitating Bala*) Yes, manly things, like Mr Universe!

ROOPA You are all really sad creatures. Dancing brings out the inner beauty in a human being. You obviously have no inner beauty.

GEETA Or outer, for that matter.

NIKHIL Are you calling us ugly? Some of you can ...

PRATAP Hey, Velu, Nikhil, watch this. (*He stoops like Mr Leonard, and imitates his voice.*) Now boys, we are going to study sequential numbers according to the Latin system. One, two, cha, cha, cha! One, two, cha, cha, cha! (*He dances around the class. The pupils laugh.*)

ANIL (*Clapping, as Nikhil too joins in the dance.*) That's it! Tango, man go!

VELU Don't be too clever, you two. If Mr Leonard comes in now, you will be in as much trouble as I am in. And he will probably blame me, anyway. I carry the can for everything. The other day when that calculator went missing, he ...

*Velu does not finish the sentence, because Mr Leonard enters. The pupils hurriedly take their seats.*

MR LEONARD (*Shouting*) What a racket! I could hear you all the way down the corridor in the Science

**sequential** coming one after another, in a sequence  
**carry the can** take the blame

Lab. Now settle down. I have some important information to give you.

VELU It's not about the Entertainment, is it Sir?

MR LEONARD (*Suspiciously*) And what makes you ask that, Mr Velu?

VELU Er ... nothing, Sir. It's er ...

NIKHIL It's because you are in charge of the Entertainment, Sir.

PRATAP And because Velu has been taking extra classes in telepathy and mind-reading, Sir!

MR LEONARD Pull the other one, Pratap. I will believe that, when it snows in Madurai.

BALA Snow in Madurai is highly unlikely, Sir. At a latitude of 9.58 North, and being only 101 metres above mean sea level, it is not ...

MR LEONARD Yes, yes, yes, Bala. You seem to be well-informed about the geographical facts concerning Madurai ... I am sure Mrs Gupta will be proud of you ... but the real question concerns Velu, and his knowledge about the Entertainment. He knows this only because he is a sly little fellow, and I have my suspicions ...

**telepathy** communication directly from one person's mind to another's

**latitude** an imaginary line joining points on the Earth's surface that are all of equal distance north or south of the equator

(Mr Leonard advances towards Velu in a menacing way. He glares at him for a few seconds.)

MR LEONARD Now, enough of this banter. Madurai, indeed! I have to prepare you all for the forthcoming Entertainment. The girls will learn to sing. The boys will learn to dance. That's final.

BOYS (All together) Never! No, Sir! Impossible! We can never dance, Sir! Oh, no! It's just not manly.

MR LEONARD (Shouting) Quiet! Stop talking IMMEDIATELY!

*There is instant silence. A knock is heard at the door.*

MR LEONARD (Still agitated, and shouting) COME IN!  
*The door opens and a nervous-looking Mr Iyengar pokes his head round the corner.*

MR IYENGAR I hope I am not interrupting anything. May I speak to you for a moment, Mr Leonard?

MR LEONARD (Quietly and apologetically) Yes, yes, of course! Do come in Mr Iyengar. I'm sorry, I was just ...

MR IYENGAR (Entering the classroom) No need to apologize, Mr Leonard. They have the same effect on me. I have come to see you about that little ...

**menacing** threatening, frightening  
**forthcoming** that which is to come

MR LEONARD Ahem! (Stopping him from speaking further and ushering him into the corner of the classroom) Yes, thank you, Mr Iyengar. (Whispering) Have you got it?

*The two teachers whisper together in the corner, and Mr Iyengar secretly passes an envelope to Mr Leonard, who puts it in his jacket pocket. Mr Iyengar is shown out.*

SARA Sir, will the boys be doing the cha cha cha?

MR LEONARD Che! What is this cha cha cha? Is it a tea dance?

PRATAP (Laughing loudly) Hahaha! Very good, Sir! Nice one! I must remember that ... tea dance. Hahaha!

MR LEONARD Be quiet! Now take out your books and read. You have managed to waste a whole lesson, and we won't finish the syllabus. You will all fail miserably.

NIKHIL To fail is miserable, Sir. There is no way we can do so joyfully.

*The sound of a bell. The pupils all rise. Mr Leonard shouts above the noise.*

MR LEONARD Be here at three p.m. sharp. Rehearsals will begin at three. And don't be absent, or you really will be miserable.

*Curtain*

### Scene 3: Mr Leonard's Classroom

*The pupils are moving about the classroom as before. They are talking, but not loudly. Some are looking subdued!*

NIKHIL I am not looking forward to this.

PRATAP Nor am I. Dancing the cha cha cha when no one is around is one thing, but doing Bharatanatyam in front of the whole school is another.

VELU Don't worry! They will get the bored there.

GEETA Velu, your grammar is atrocious. You do not have to use 'the' in front of 'bored'.

VELU I know what I heard. Even the Headmaster uses 'the' before 'bored'. He said 'the whole bored'. So, everyone will get bored by the dancing.

ANIL Hahaha! I think you mean the Governing Board. Yes, they will be there too.

BALA Well, whatever. We are not dancing. Full stop. Culture or no culture. He can't make us dance.

NIKHIL Quite! Let's see him try!

VELU Are we going to go on strike?

PRATAP That's it! Nobody dance. Even if he tries ...

UMA You are all crazy!

ROOPA They just lack soul, Uma. There is no point in trying to convince them otherwise.

BOYS *(All together)* Strike! Strike! No dancing! Cha cha cha! No dancing! Bha bha bha! No natyam, ra ra ra! Strike! ...

*The boys are chanting and stamping about the classroom. Mr Leonard enters. The boys hastily take their seats.*

MR LEONARD Good, good. I see you have begun practising before the practice! Well done!

ARUNA They were not practising, Sir.

SARA It was more of a war dance, Sir.

MR LEONARD War dance? Ah good! There is a scene from the Mahabharata that requires a war dance. I shall get the music teacher to help me with that.

GEETA This should be very interesting, Sir. The boys are on strike.

MR LEONARD Strike is it? Let me see who gets a strike! The first strike will be from me!

PRATAP *(Forgetting himself)* Hahaha! Another good one, Sir. Strike! Hahaha! *(Looking round and seeing that no one is laughing with him)* ... er. Ha. Heh. Ahem! *(He becomes serious, like the other boys.)*

MR LEONARD So, we do not want a strike, do we, boys? (*Showing them his open palm.*) Come on. Come up here, all of you. Line up in front of the class, facing the girls. They will clap and hum. You will dance.

*The boys shuffle to the front in a lethargic manner and line up facing the others. Mr Leonard marches up and down behind them, patting them gently one at a time on the neck.*

ROOPA Sir, I don't think we should perform something that is too violent. We are a peace-loving nation, and to show our culture in that light we should ...

MR LEONARD (*Walking towards the girls*) Yes, Roopa. A fine sentiment. But the boys are doing the dancing, and I want to see how they leap about like warriors! If they can do that, then they can perform something sublime, too.

VELU (*Muttering to the others*) Does he now think we are fruit?

NIKHIL (*Looking puzzled*) What?

PRATAP (*Stifling laughter*) Nice one, Velu! I must remember that.

*Mr Leonard returns to the boys and continues to march up and down behind them. He slyly takes an envelope from his*

**lethargic** sluggish, tired and weary  
**sentiment** a thought or idea based on a feeling of emotion

*pocket and taps the contents into his other palm. He once again pats the boys' necks one at a time with this palm.*

MR LEONARD Now boys, think of culture! Think of the glory you will bring to your school! The Fifth Standard performs the Bharatanatyam, like it has never been seen before! See your names in lights! Bollywood, Hollywood and Mollywood are here! Bring glory to the Mahabharata! Bring honours to the class! Dance, my beauties! Dance!

BOYS (*All looking very grouchy*) No way, Sir! We are not girls. We shall not dance. Why can't we just perform a fight scene for the Entertainment? We are not dancing.

MR LEONARD (*Coming round to the front and addressing the girls*) You can tell by their comments that they are keen, can't you girls? Our boys of the Fifth Brigade are going to dance.

PRATAP Hahaha. Fifth Brigade! I must ...

BALA Do be quiet, Pratap. Look serious, and whatever you do, don't start dancing like you did earlier.

MR LEONARD (*Continuing to address the girls*) Have you got a catchy little number from the Mahabharata to hum girls? What about a little background music?

**grouchy** sullen and grumpy



*The girls nod to each other, and then begin to hum and clap softly.*

MR LEONARD Pick up the beat. Louder! Perhaps that will encourage them!

*The girls do as instructed. Velu and Pratap, much to the amazement of the girls,*

*begin to squirm and twist about. They try to reach their backs with their arms, and in doing so begin to perform a weird dance. The other boys soon join in, although they are all looking decidedly uncomfortable. Soon they are all twisting and turning about in a frenzy. Mr Leonard is beaming; the girls are clapping and humming ever more loudly. The door opens. Enter Mr Thomas, Mrs Gupta and Mr Iyengar.*

MR LEONARD (*Unaware that the members of staff have entered*) Come on! Come on! That's it! Strike, eh? What's this then, if it is not dancing?

*Even Mr Leonard starts to mimic the boys. Then he sees the Headmaster, and stops abruptly. The girls stop humming and clapping. The boys continue to twist about.*

MR LEONARD Oh! Good afternoon, Headmaster!

MR THOMAS What is all this? What on earth is going on here?

MR LEONARD The boys refused to dance, headmaster. But look! They can't stop now!

MRS GUPTA But, Mr Leonard, this is a very strange dance indeed! The Headmaster specifically told you ... er ... told me ... that this was to be a purely Indian cultural dance ... the Bharatanatyam, or Kathakali or Kuchipudi.

MR LEONARD But, see, Mrs Gupta. The boys who would not dance are now dancing! They have taken their first steps. (*Unconsciously, rubbing his neck with his palm.*)

MR THOMAS But what kind of dance is this, man? It looks like a western dance to me. Or a war dance.

MR LEONARD You are dead right, Headmaster. It is a war dance from the Mahabharata. And it is very much based on Indian culture. It is just like the Kuchipudi, but this one is called the itchy pudu ... er ... itchy powder dance!

MR THOMAS Itchy powder? Have you lost your senses, man? There is no such dance!

MR LEONARD All will be made clear, Headmaster. This is the itchy powder dance. (*Begins twitching and twisting.*)

MR IYENGAR (*Laughing*) He means itching powder, Headmaster. And it appears that Mr Leonard

has also become a victim of his own devious scheme. Perhaps he should call it the 'catchy pudi' dance now. (*Giggling, as Mr Leonard begins to writhe more frenziedly.*) I think Mr Leonard has a confession to make.



MR THOMAS Confession? What confession? Have you all gone mad?

MR LEONARD (*Wiping his brow in exhaustion, and trying to control his twitching.*) Yes, Headmaster. You see, I knew the boys would never agree to dance, so I obtained some itching powder from Mr Iyengar. He kindly made some up for me in the Science Lab. And now they are dancing.

MRS GUPTA So that's what all this is about! How clever!

MR LEONARD Yes, Mrs Gupta. See how they dance! (*Looking at his palm.*) And me too. Their first steps. No more shyness.

**devious** tricky; not straightforward

MR THOMAS Well done, Mr Leonard. It's a start. I hope this develops into a real cultural event.

MR LEONARD It will, Sir. It will.

*The boys dance more enthusiastically and freely; the girls clap and hum loudly; music fills the classroom; and even the members of the staff join in.*

*Curtain*

## Exercises

### A. Questions

1. Why do you think Velu was in the staff common-room?
2. What do the headmaster and teachers discuss in the common-room?
3. Which boy (in your opinion) is the joker in the pack? Give evidence from the text.
4. How do the boys react to the suggestion that they should dance?
5. In what ways do the girls and boys disagree with each other?
6. In what ways is Mr Leonard clever and not so clever?
7. In the play, there are some puns. Which words cause confusion in meaning?

8. Do you think the boys would have learnt a dance to perform at the Entertainment? Give reasons for your answer.

**B. Reference to context**

Read these lines from the play, then answer the questions.

1. *'He knows absolutely nothing about ballet or waltzes or the tango.'*

- a. Who says these words and to whom?
- b. Who is the speaker referring to?
- c. What does that person know about?

2. *'Nice one! I must remember that ... tea dance.'*

- a. Who says these words and to whom?
- b. What is the speaker referring to?
- c. Which dances are mentioned in the play?

**C. Discuss and write**

1. Read the play a number of times, taking turns to read different parts. Perform the play in class.
2. Write short character sketches of three of the characters. Discuss what you and the others in class have written about them.