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LESSON 1

THE ENCHANTING SPOTS OF MANIPUR

Do you know that your state Manipur is one of the most beautiful and scenic places in India ? Would you like to know more about this enchanting land ? Then, read on.....

The lovely state of Manipur is in the North-Eastern corner of India. People who visited the state always feel the charm of the state. Lord Irwin described it as the ‘Switzerland of India’. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru called it ‘A Jewel of India’. The Japanese called it ‘A flower on a lofty height’. In fact, the lush green mountain ranges, surrounding a small valley presents a charming view. The beauty of Nature merges with the works of human beings. It is a land where the colourful people of the valley and the hills live together in the lap of Nature. The state is dotted with enchanting spots which charm visitors from far and near.

KHWAIRAMBAND MARKET

In the heart of the Imphal City there is the **Khwairamband Market**. There you will find the **Ima Market**, the only market in the world run by women only. From colourful handloom clothes to tasty vegetables and fish, a variety of things are available. There are household utensils, implements, fruits, cane and bamboo products. To the people of the world outside, it presents the manifold qualities of Manipuri women.



MANIPUR ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN

A little away from the noise of the market there is the Manipur Zoological Garden at Iroisemba. It is 6 km from Imphal on the Imphal-Kangchup Road. The garden is near the Iroisemba and Langol hill ranges, and on the northern side of Central Agricultural University. The garden has one of the rarest species of deer, the brow-antlered deer, the Sangai. Different species of animals and birds are in the zoo. Some of these are the hornbills, many variety of birds, Sangai, the dancing deer and a host of other wild animals. A favourite place of children is the enclosure for different types of monkeys.

MAIBAM LOKPA CHING

In the south, 17 km from Imphal on the Tiddim Road is the Maibam Lokpa Ching. It is under the title, **India Peace Memorial**. It was the place where the Japanese Army had a fierce battle with the Allied Army during the Second World War. Though it is not a big spot, the little Memorial on the side of the beautiful hillock – **Maibam Lokpa Ching**, is a serene spot for tourists.

MOIRANG

Further south, 45 km from Imphal is Moirang. The ancient temple of **Thangjing** is located here. The graceful dance called the Khamba Thoibi dance originated from here. The **I.N.A Museum** is located at this place.



The Indian National Army under Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose hoisted its flag here on April 14, 1944. Once you look out of the market, you will see the beautiful scenery of Loktak Lake with small floating islands in its water.

KEIBUL LAMJAO NATIONAL PARK

Further south, 53 km from Imphal lies the **Keibul Lamjao National Park**. This is the only floating National Park in the world. This is the natural habitat of Sangai, the brow-antlered deer also known as dancing deer.



UKHRUL

Let us go to the other side. There is the highest hill station of the state, Ukhrul. The world famous **Sirui Lily** grows here on the

Sirui hills. The Khangkhui lime caves are tourist spots. During Christmas, Ukhrul is a beautiful town where nature and men show their festive appearances.



DZUKO VALLEY



Nature shows its beauty though man can't enjoy all of them. Dzuko valley is proud of the Dzuko Lily. But communication facility has not been fully developed.

ANDRO

The ancient Scheduled Caste village of Andro lies 27 km from Imphal in the east. The place is famous for the fire maintained here for years. It is believed to be sacred fire. Now a cultural complex has been established by the Mutua Museum.



THARON CAVE

One cannot forget Tharon Village in Tamenglong. There is a wonderful cave here. Its entrance is small but it becomes wider in the interior . On one side there is only one hole but on the other side there are multiple holes.

SUANGPHA CAVE

It is in the Churachandpur District of Manipur near Suangpha village. The entrance is small and its exit is near Kamkeilon village.

MOREH

No account of Manipur will be complete without Moreh. It is on the Indo-Myanmar border, 110 km from Imphal. The opening of Moreh as a trade-centre is regarded as the opening of the Eastern Gate of India. It has become an important commercial centre in the North-East.

There are many more enchanting places. The War cemeteries, Shree Shree Govindaji Temple, Shahid Minar, Nupilal Complex, the conical Vishnu temple, Loukoipat, Sekta Orchidarium, Kaina, Khongjom War Memorial and a host of others are there. Nature has been kind to bless Manipur with beautiful spots. No one can miss the historical *Kangla* in the heart of Imphal. Different communities of both the valley and the hills have been living together for years in this

beautiful land. Mrs. St. Clair Grimwood, better known as Mrs. Grimwood, wrote in her book *‘My Three Years in Manipur’*: “Manipur is a pretty place, more beautiful than many of the show places of the world; beautiful in its habitable parts, but more beautiful in those tracts covered with forest jungle.”

Glossary

enchancing	– delightful
charm	– please
merged	– combined, joined
dotted	– covered with a number of dots, spots
<i>Ima</i>	– Manipuri word meaning mother (woman)
rarest	– not often found
graceful	– showing a pleasing beauty of form
haunt	– a place often visited
gleaming	– soft light

Comprehension

1. Answer the following questions :

- (i) How did Lord Irwin describe Manipur ?
- (ii) Who called Manipur 'A Jewel of India' ?
- (iii) What is the name of Manipur given by the Japanese ?
- (iv) Why is there a memorial at Maibam Lokpa Ching ?
- (v) Why is there an INA Museum at Moirang ?
- (vi) What is the cave found at Tamenglong ?
- (vii) What are the specialities of Moirang ?
- (viii) Describe the view of Loktak as seen from Sendra Tourist-Home.
- (ix) Describe Suangpha cave.
- (x) Why is Manipur an enchanting place ?
- (xi) What are the enchanting spots in the southern side of Imphal ?

2. EXERCISE IN LANGUAGE

Look at these sentences:

- (i) Chaoba is tall.
- (ii) Chaoba is taller than Amu.
- (iii) Chaoba is the tallest of all.

The word “tall” represents the positive degree, ‘taller’ is the comparative degree and ‘tallest’ is the superlative degree. Now, give the words in comparative and superlative degrees of the following words

Old, sweet, heavy, rare, fierce

[Try to frame sentences using the words]

LESSON 2

THE DAUGHTER OF THE HUNDUNG CHIEF

Do you like folk tales ? Every culture and community has their own folk tales. This story is a Tangkhul folk-tale. It is about a young girl who married a serpent.

Once upon a time, there lived a very beautiful girl. She was the only child of the Chief of Hundung village. Everyday, the girl went to the field with her parents. However, one day, she went to the field alone. All of a sudden, a butterfly came and sat on her navel. She desperately tried to remove it but failed. After some time, it flew away. From that day onwards, she became pregnant. She was extremely scared of her parents. She wept silently. She went to the field and spread her *Karouphi*. She cried loudly, "Spirit or human being, God or man, whosoever has made me so miserable, please come and sit here so that I can see you." Hearing her cries, a God came in the form of a serpent and sat on the *Karouphi*. She was taken aback and frightened. The serpent spoke, "Don't be scared. Come and sit beside me." The girl was still afraid. Then, the serpent turned into a handsome young man. Her fears subsided on seeing the young man. She drew closer and sat beside him.



They met secretly in the field everyday. She was still scared of her parents. As time passed, she could no longer hide the truth. She told the story to her mother. However, they could not tell the story to the Chief. They were afraid of him. One day, the Chief discovered his daughter's condition. He spoke angrily,

“Tell me who is responsible for this.” The daughter replied, “Father, he is not a human being. He is a god.” The Chief ordered his daughter to bring the god.

They went to the field. Then, she spread the *Karouphi* on the ground and prayed to the man to come. Nobody appeared. The Chief shouted angrily, “You are trying to fool me ! Bring the man to me quickly, otherwise you will be killed tomorrow.” Throughout the night, the girl wept. She slept without taking food. In her dream the god appeared and said, “I did not appear because I did not want any other human being to see me. If you stay here, your father will kill you. Leave the house and go to Huimei village. I will be waiting for you there.” The girl woke up and left the house.

Next morning, the Chief discovered that his daughter was missing. He became furious and started searching for her. The girl was frightened. She hid herself among *nongmangkha* plants. To prevent coughing, she ate *nongmangkha* leaves. She came to Huimei village where she met the man. They lived happily. She gave birth to two sons. But from that day onwards, the God never came back to the house again. She alone brought up her two sons in the same village.

One day, the younger son made a request, “Mother, I want to go and see the valley.” She replied, “Son, you are young and weak. How can you go to the valley alone ?” But he insisted on going. Finally, the mother gave her son a female *ok* (pig), a piece of *yaingang* and some paddy. With these things, the younger son started his journey. As night approached, he decided to take rest somewhere. There his female *ok* (pig) met a male *ok* (pig). The place where the *oks* (pigs) met came to be known as Ukhrul.



Next morning, he continued his journey. After travelling for some time, the female *ok* (pig) gave birth to a piglet. This place came to be known as *Okpokpi*.

He then planted the piece of *yaingang*. Thus, the place came to be known as *Yaingangpokpi*. Later on, he reached the valley. There, he built a house and lived alone. One day, it rained heavily. A Kabui brother and sister approached him for shelter for the night. As they stayed in the house, he fell in love with the Kabui girl. They decided to get married. After they got married, the Kabui brother went back home alone.

The young couple worked hard in the valley. They tilled the land and grew various crops. The husband sowed the paddy given by his mother. Then the wife gave birth to a son. On that day, the husband's mother and elder brother came to the valley looking for him.

The Kabui brother had also come to the valley to meet his sister. All of them agreed that the newly born child belonged to the two communities. They decided to call the child *Meeteen*.

Legend has it that the Tangkhul man and the Kabui woman got married and started settling in the valley in this way.

— *A Tangkhul folk-tale retold*

Glossary

navel	– small depression on the belly left by detachment of the umbilical cord
serpent	– snake
<i>karouphi</i>	– a traditional cloth used by Tankhuls
furious	– very angry
<i>nongmangkha</i>	– a plant with herbal qualities. Even today, the leaves are used for the treatment of cold and cough
<i>ok</i>	– a Manipuri word for pig
<i>Yaingang</i>	– a Manipuri word for turmeric
<i>meeteen</i>	– the term Meetei may have derived from this word
valley	– flat or plain area between hills
tilled	– prepared the land for growing crops

Comprehension

1. Answer the following questions :

- (i) What happened when the girl went to the field alone ?
- (ii) Who came on hearing her cries ?
- (iii) Why was the Chief angry with his daughter ?
- (iv) What did the god tell her in her dream ?

- (v) Where did the girl hide herself ?
- (vi) What did the mother give to her younger son at the time of his journey to the valley ?
- (vii) Write briefly how he married the Kabui girl.
- (viii) How was the place *Yaingangpokpi* named ?

2. EXERCISE IN LANGUAGE

The opposite of 'fasten' is 'unfasten' and of 'polite' is 'impolite'. Opposites are also called 'antonyms'. Give antonyms of the following words by using the prefixes :

in....., un....., dis....., mis....., im.....

Word	Antonyms	Word	Antonyms
do	judged
decision	obedient
decent	patient
obey	perfect
favourable	understood

3. DISCUSSION

Make groups of 5 or 6 six students and let them discuss the following topic.

Any other folk-tale in which the human beings change forms into that of animals or birds. Share it with the whole class.

LESSON 3

THE BOY WITH A CATAPULT

In life, you come across many interesting characters. Some make you laugh, others make you cry. Can you remember any remarkable characters or persons, you have met? What makes them so memorable? Read on this story, and you will discover a very remarkable, unforgettable character ...

Our class had an odd assortment of boys. There was Harbans Lal who, when asked a difficult question, would take a sip out of his inkpot because he believed it sharpened his wits. If the teacher boxed his ears he would yell, “Help! Murder!” so loudly that teachers and boys from other classes would come running to see what had happened. This caused much embarrassment to the teacher. If the teacher tried to cane him, he would put his arms round him and implore, “Forgive me, Your Majesty! You are like Akbar the Great. You are Emperor Ashoka. You are my father, my grandfather, my great grandfather.”

This made the boys giggle and put the teacher out of countenance. Harbans Lal would catch frogs and tell us, “If you smear your hands with frog fat you will not feel the teacher’s cane.”

But the oddest fellow in the class was Bodh Raj. We were all afraid of him. If he pinched anyone’s arm, the arm would swell up as if from a snake-bite. He was utterly callous. He would catch a

wasp with his bare fingers, pull out its sting, tie a thread round it and fly it like a kite. He would pounce on a butterfly sitting on a flower and crush it between his fingers; or else stick a pin through it and put it in his notebook.

It was said that if a scorpion stung Bodh Raj the scorpion would fall dead. Bodh Raj's blood was believed to be so full of venom that even snake-bite had no effect on him. He always had a catapult in his hand and was an excellent shot. His favourite targets were birds. He would stand under a tree, take aim and the next moment bird cries would rend the air and the fluff of feathers float down. Or else he would climb up a tree, take away the eggs and completely destroy the nest.

He was vindictive and took pleasure in hurting others. All the boys were scared of him. Even his mother called him a *rakshasa*. His pockets bulged with strange things, a live parrot, an assortment of eggs, or a prickly hedgehog.

If Bodh Raj quarrelled with anyone, he would charge at him head on like a bull, or viciously kick and bite him. After school, we would return home, but Bodh Raj would be off on his wanderings.

He always had a fund of strange tales to tell. One day he said, "There is a *goh* living in our house. Do you know what a *goh* is ?"

"No. What is a *goh* ?"

"It's a kind of reptile, about a foot long. It has many feet and claws."

We shuddered.

“We have a *goh* living under our staircase at home,” he continued. “Once it catches hold of anything, it won’t loosen its grip come what may.”

We shuddered again.

“Thieves keep *gohs*. They use them to scale high walls. They tie a rope on the *goh*’s hind legs and fling it up. As soon as the *goh* touches the wall, it clamps firmly on it, so firmly that even ten men cannot dislodge it. The thieves then pull themselves up the wall with the help of the rope.”



“When does the *goh* loosen its hold ?”

“After the thieves have climbed over they give it some milk. It immediately relaxes its hold.”

Such were the stories Bodh Raj would relate.



My father was given a promotion in his job and we moved into a large bungalow. It was an old style bungalow on the outskirts of the city. It had brick floors, high walls, a slanting roof and a garden full of trees and shrubs. Though comfortable it seemed rather empty and big, and being far from the city my friends seldom came to visit me.

The only exception was Bodh Raj. He found it good hunting ground. The trees had many nests, monkeys roamed about, and under the bushes lived a pair of mongooses. Behind the house there was a big room, where my mother stored our extra luggage. This room had become a haunt of pigeons. You could hear their cooing all day. Near the broken glass of the ventilator there was also a myna's nest. The floor of the room was littered with feathers, bird droppings, broken eggs, and bits of straw from the nests.

Once, Bodh Raj brought a hedgehog with him. The sight of the black mouth and sharp bristles gave me quite a turn. My mother did not approve of my friendship with Bodh Raj, but she realised that I was lonely and needed company. My mother called him a devil and often told him not to torment birds.

One day my mother said to me, "If your friend is so fond of destroying nests tell him to clean our store-room. The birds have made it very filthy."

I protested, "You said it's cruel to destroy nests."

"I didn't suggest he should kill the birds. He can remove the nests without harming them."

The next time Bodh Raj came I took him to the godown. It was dark and smelly as though we had entered an animal's lair.

I confess I was somewhat apprehensive. What if Bodh Raj acted true to form and destroyed the nests, pulled out the birds' feathers and broke their eggs. I couldn't understand why my mother who discouraged our friendship should have asked me to get Bodh Raj to clear the godown.

"The myna's little ones are up there," said Bodh Raj aiming with his catapult.

I noticed two tiny yellow beaks peeping out of the nest.

"Look!" Bodh Raj exclaimed, "This is a Ganga myna. It isn't usually found in these areas. The parents must have got separated from their flock and come here."

"Where are the parents?" I asked.

"Must have gone in search of food. They should be back soon." Bodh Raj raised his catapult.

I wanted to stop him but before I could open my mouth there was a whizzing sound, and then a loud clang as the pebble hit the corrugated iron-sheet on the roof. The tiny beaks vanished. The cooing and tittering ceased. It seemed as if all the birds had been frightened into silence.

Bodh Raj let fly another pebble. This time it struck the rafter. Bodh Raj was proud of his aim; he had missed his target twice and was very angry with himself. When the chicks peeped over the rim of the nest Bodh Raj had a third try. This time the pebble hit the side of the nest, a few straws and bits of cottonwool fell, but the nest was not dislodged.

Bodh Raj lifted his catapult again. Suddenly a large shadow flitted across the room, blocking the light from the ventilator. Startled we looked up. Gazing down at us menacingly was a large kite with its wings outstretched.

“This must be the kite’s nest,” I said.

“No, how can a kite have its nest here ? A kite always makes its nest in a tree. This is a myna’s nest.”

The chicks began fluttering their wings and shrieking loudly. We held our breath. What would the kite do ?

The kite left the ventilator and perched on the rafter. It had folded back its wings. It shook its scraggy neck, and peered to the right, and the left.

The birds’ frightened cries filled the air.

“The kite has been coming here very day,” said Bodh Raj. I realised why broken wings, straw and bits of bird flesh littered the floor. The kite must have ravaged the nest often.

Bodh Raj had not taken his eyes off the kite which was slowly edging its way towards the nest. The cries rose to a crescendo.

I was a bundle of nerves. What difference did it make whether the kite or Bodh Raj killed the myna's young ? If the kite had not come Bodh Raj would certainly have made short work of the nest.

Bodh Raj raised his catapult and aimed at the kite.

"Don't hit the kite. It will attack you," I shouted. But Bodh Raj paid no attention. The pebble missed the kite and hit the ceiling. The kite spread its wings wide and peered down.

"Let's get out of here," I said, frightened.

"The kite will eat up the little ones." This sounded rather strange coming from him.

Bodh Raj aimed again. The kite left the rafter and spreading its wings, flew in a semi-circle and alighted on the beam. The chicks continued to scream.

Bodh Raj handed me the catapult and some pebbles from his pocket.

"Aim at the kite. Go on hitting it. Don't let it sit down," he instructed. Then he ran and pulled up a table standing against the wall to the middle of the room.

I didn't know how to use the catapult. I tried once, but the kite had left the beam and flown to another.

Bodh Raj brought the table right under the myna's nest. Then he picked up a broken chair and placed it on the table. He climbed on the chair, gently lifted the nest and slowly stepped down.

"Let's get out of here," he said, and ran towards the door. I followed.

We went into the garage. It had only one door and a small window in the back wall. A beam ran across its width.

"The kite can't get in here," he said, and climbing on to a box, placed the nest on the beam.

The myna's young had quietened down. Standing on the box Bodh Raj had his first peep into the nest. I thought that he would pick them both up and put them in his pocket, as he usually did. But after looking at them for a long time he said, "Bring some water, the chicks are thirsty. We'll put it, drop by drop, into their mouths."

I brought a glass of water. Both the chicks, beaks open, were panting. Bodh Raj fed them with drops of water. He told me not to touch them, nor did he touch them himself.

"How will their parents know they are here?" I asked.

"They will look for them."

We stayed in the garage for a long time. Bodh Raj discussed plans to close the ventilator, so that the kite would not be able to enter the godown again. That evening he talked of nothing else.

When Bodh Raj came the next day, he had neither catapult nor pebbles. He carried a bag of seeds. We fed the myna's young and spent hours watching their antics.

— *Translated from a Hindi story by Bhisham Sahni*

Glossary

assortment	– diverse group or mixture
sharpened	– made or become quick to understand
boxed	– slapped with the hand especially in the ears
embarrassment	– feeling of awkwardness or shame
giggle	– laugh in a suppressed spasms in an affected or silly manner
countenance	– composure
pinched	– gripped tightly especially between finger and thumb
callous	– unfeeling, insensitive

wasp	– stinging insect with black and yellow stripes and a very thin waist
rend	– tear or wrench forcibly
vindictive	– tending to seek revenge, spiteful
hedgehog	– small nocturnal insect eating mammal having a piglike snout and a coat of spines/ porcupine
viciously	– cruelly, wickedly, ferociously
shuddered	– trembled violently especially with horror
fling	– throw or let go off forcefully
clamps	– places or hold firmly to fasten
bristles	– short stiff hair
apprehensive	– uneasily fearful, dreading
menacingly	– threateningly
perched	– settled
scraggy	– thin, bony
panting	– gasping for breath
ravaged	– taken by force, robbed
crescendo	– gradual increase of loudness
alighted	– got down, landed, settled

COMPREHENSION

1. Answer the following questions :

- (i) 'Our class had an odd assortment of boys.'
Describe the different types of boys found in the class.
- (ii) Why was it believed that if a scorpion stung Bodh Raj, the scorpion would fall dead ?
- (iii) What were the strange things that filled up Bodh Rajs pocket ?
- (iv) What is a 'goh' according to Bodh Raj ?
- (v) Why did Bodh Raj come to the Author's bungalow often ?
- (vi) Why did the author take Bodh Rajs to the godown ?
- (vii) 'The Kite has been coming here every day' What made Bodh Raj say these words ?
- (viii) What did Bodh Raj feed the chicks ?

2. EXERCISE IN LANGUAGE

Look at these pairs of words

Pretty - beautiful

end - finish

These pairs have almost similar meanings. They are called Synonyms.

From the box below, pick out the synonyms of the words given

right	assist	begin	banish
false	shout	freedom	haste

wrong correct

help cry

exile commence

liberty..... hurry

3. DISCUSSION

In the beginning of the story, Bodh Raj is described as callous. By the end of the story, he was feeding the small chicks with drops of water. What, do you think, brought a change in the attitude of Bodh Raj ?

Make groups of 5 or 6 students and discuss it. Share it with the class.

LESSON 4

THE OPEN WINDOW

You must have read stories of suspense and elements of surprise. You must have seen movies too. Can you name some of them ? This story is also about a young man, who faces some elements of surprise and suspense. Read the story and experience it yourself !

When Framton Nuttel had a nervous breakdown, his doctors ordered him complete rest in a quiet spot somewhere in the country. “I know just the place,” his sister told him, “the village I stayed in four years ago. It’s a lovely restful place on the edge of the moors. You’ll like it, and it’ll do you a lot of good.”

Framton looked doubtful.

“I met some very nice people when I was there,” his sister went on cheerfully, “and I’ll give you letters of introduction to them. Do go to see them. If you don’t, you’ll be lonely, and that will make you feel worse. Be sure and see Mrs. Sappleton. She’s such a kind person, and she’ll make you feel so much at home.”

So, Framton Nuttel went to stay in the country, in the village that his sister had recommended. And one afternoon he paid a visit to Mrs. Sappleton. The maid showed him into the drawing room where he sat. Feeling rather lost, he saw a young girl of about fifteen come in. “My

aunt will be down very soon,” she said. “In the meantime, I hope that you will try to bear my company.” She spoke in a grown-up manner, and seemed the very opposite of shy.

Framton smiled at her politely but found nothing to say. They sat in silence until she asked, “Do you know many of the people living here ?”

“No, I don’t know anyone, but my sister has given me letters of introduction to quite a number of people whom she met when she was on holiday here, four years ago.”

“Then you don’t know anything about my aunt ?” went on the young lady.

“Only her name and address,” said Framton. His eyes strayed round the room, searching for something that would tell him more about the lady and possibly her husband. He wondered whether the husband was alive or dead.

“Her great sorrow came just three years ago,” said the young lady. “That was after your sister’s holiday here, and so I suppose she never came to hear of it.”

“Her sorrow ?” asked Framton in a tone of surprise, for sorrow seemed to be out of place in this lively, peaceful spot.

“You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon,” said the girl, and she pointed to a long window that opened like a door on to the wide lawn outside.

“The weather’s very mild for this time of the year,” replied Framton, “but has that window anything to do with your aunt’s sorrow ?

“It has,” she told him gravely. “Out through that window, three years ago today, her husband and her two young brothers went off to the moors for a day’s shooting.” Her voice dropped to a low sad tone as she added, “They never came back.”

“They never came back ? What do you mean ?” asked Framton in astonishment and alarm.

“They never came back,” she repeated in a shaking voice. “On their way across the moors, they fell into a bog and were simply swallowed up – all three of them, and their dog as well. There are a lot of bogs on the moors but, most years, they aren’t dangerous. That year they were, because of the terrible amount of rain we’d had that summer. Perhaps you remember ?”

“Well ...er ... yes,” said Framton, who did not remember at all but who was anxious to hear the rest of the sad story.

“Their bodies were never found. That was the worst part of it,” the sad voice went on. “Poor aunt thinks that they’ll come back one day – they and their little brown dog. All the time, she’s expecting them to walk in through that window as they always used to. That is why she leaves the window open even on cold days until it gets dark.”

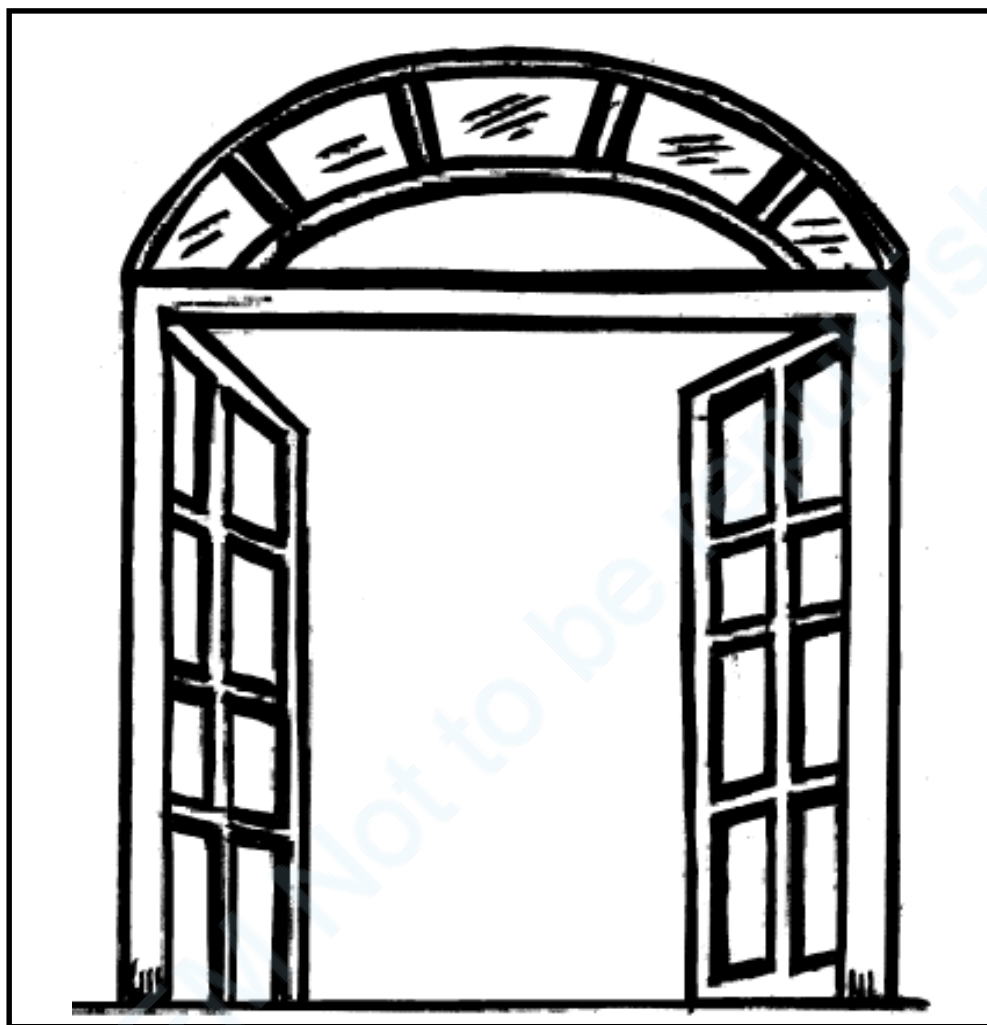
“Oh ...,” said Framton, feeling quite upset but unable to find the words that would express what he felt.

“Poor dear aunt! How often she has told me how they left the house that terrible day! Her husband was carrying his white raincoat over his right shoulder and Ronnie, her youngest brother, was singing a song – to annoy her because his singing always got on her nerves.” Here she paused and Framton was silent, feeling tongue-tied in front of this tragedy.

“Do you know,” she continued, “on quite evenings like this, I can’t help but feel that they will all walk in through that window...” She stopped and Framton saw that she was trembling. It was a relief to him when Mrs. Sappleton came into the room and apologised for keeping him waiting.

“She has been very interesting,” said Framton.

“Please don’t mind the window being open,” said Mrs. Sappleton brightly. “My husband and my two brothers will be home at any time now. They’ve been out all day, shooting on the moors, and they always come in this way. The ground’s very boggy and they are sure to come in all covered with mud. They quite spoil my carpets with their muddy boots. But men never bother about such things, do they?”



She went on talking about shooting and how scarce the birds were that autumn. To Framton it was all quite terrible, and he could hardly bear to listen to the poor lady, who was clearly out of her mind. He made a great effort to turn her thoughts to a more cheerful subject, but he did not succeed in doing so.

All the time that he was talking, the poor lady was only half-listening to him. Her eyes were constantly straying to the open window and the lawn outside. Framton felt very sorry that he had come to visit her on a day that was filled with painful memories for her. If he had known, he would not have come.

“All the doctors who examined me ordered complete rest, no excitement and no physical strain,” he said in an attempt to introduce what he thought was a more interesting subject. Like many sick people, Framton expected everyone to be interested in all the details of his illnesses, and he quite enjoyed talking about them. “As for my diet,” he went on, “all the doctors have different opinions about what is the best for me.” “Do they ?” said Mrs. Sappleton politely. Then suddenly her face brightened, but not at what Framton was saying.



“Here they are at last!” she cried. “Just in time for tea, and all covered in mud!”

Framton trembled and looked across at the niece with eyes that were filled with pity for the poor lady who was – as he thought – seeing things that were not there. The girl was looking out through the open window and there was an expression of horror on her face. Framton turned round and looked in the same direction.

In the growing darkness, three figures were walking over the lawn towards the window. They all carried guns under their arms, and one of them had a white raincoat over his right shoulder. A tired brown dog followed at their heels. Nearer they came, walking in silence. Then suddenly a young voice burst into song.

Framton rushed out of the room. He seized his hat and his stick on his way through the hall. Then out of the house he went, running as if he were escaping from a house on fire. He rushed through the gate at such speed that he nearly knocked a passing cyclist off his bicycle. “Here we are, my dear,” said the man with the white coat as he came in through the window, “rather muddy, I’m afraid, but most of it is dry. Who was that man who ran out as we came up?”

“A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel,” said Mrs. Sappleton. “He could talk of nothing but his illnesses, and he ran off without a word of goodbye or apology when he saw you coming. Anybody would think that he had seen a ghost.”

“I expect it was the dog,” her niece said to her calmly. “Before you came down he was telling me that he had a terrible fear of dogs. When he was in India, a pack of wild dogs chased him into a graveyard and he had to spend the night in a newly-dug grave with those fierce beasts howling right above his head. That was enough to frighten anybody for a lifetime, I should think.”

She was very clever at making up stories on the spur of the moment.

— *Saki (H.H. Munro)*

Glossary

doubtful	– causing doubt
gravely	– seriously
astonishment	– great surprise
moors	– tract of open uncultivated land preserved for shooting.
apology	– expression of regret for a fault
annoy	– to make one angry
tragedy	– tragic event
boggy	– wet like a swamp
excitement	– state of feeling, very pleased or interested

direction	– the point one moves
extraordinary	– very unusual
howling	– long loud crying of a dog or wolf
on the spur	– to do something suddenly without thinking
graveyard	– burial ground

Comprehension

1. Answer the following questions in one or two sentences :

- (i) Why did the doctors advise Framton Nuttel a complete rest ?
- (ii) What made Framton visit Mrs. Sappleton ?
- (iii) What was Mrs. Sappleton's great sorrow ?
- (iv) Why did Framton think that Mrs. Sappleton was mad ?
- (v) Why did Framton rush out of the room ?
- (vi) Describe the significance of the open window in the story.
- (vii) Bring out the element of suspense in the story.

2. **EXERCISE IN LANGUAGE**

Look at the sentences

1. The book is on the table.
2. They are in the room.
3. They went towards the temple.

The underlined words, show a relationship between the Noun and the Pronoun in each sentence. They are called **Prepositions**.

Now, complete the following sentences using appropriate prepositions.

- (i) He came time.
- (ii) The train is running time
- (iii) She came foot.
- (iv) He is going..... school.
- (v) I know him name
- (vi) We live rice.
- (vii) He rose high post.
- (viii) The boat sailed.....the stream.
- (ix) He is the army.
- (x) Bina is interested..... music.

LESSON 5

YUDHISHTHIRA'S PIETY AND WISDOM

The virtue of tolerance, patience and justice are not found in every individual. Can you name some people who has one or some of these virtues ? Epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, have many stories from which we learn of such virtues.



This is a story based on an interesting episode from the Mahabharata. The Pandavas lost in the game of dice to the Kauravas, and had to stay in exile for *thirteen* long and lonely years. During this time they had to move constantly from place to place for safety and

to look for their daily needs. It was a difficult and exhausting time for them. One day, in the twelfth year, the Pandava brothers wandered deep into a forest in pursuit of a deer. Actually the deer was none other than Yama, the god of Death who had taken the form of the animal so that he might test the piety and wisdom of Yudhishtira.

The sun was hot overhead and the five brothers grew very tired and thirsty. The deer had somehow vanished. At last they came to a stop, realising it was a useless chase. Yudhishtira sat down under a tree to rest, and told Nakula to climb up a tree and see if there was any pool or river nearby. Nakula climbed up, looked around and saw water, plants and cranes a little way off. He believed that water was certainly available there. Yudhishtira sent him to fetch some water to drink. Nakula was filled with joy when he got to the place and saw a pool. He was himself very thirsty. So he thought that he would quench his own thirst before returning with water for his brothers. But no sooner did he dip his hand in the cool water than a voice rang out, "Stop, Nakula! Do not drink. That is an enchanted pool and it belongs to me. No one may drink its water without answering my questions."

Nakula looked up in surprise. He could see nobody. He felt too tired and thirsty to heed the warning. So he knelt down and began to drink the water. At once, he felt terribly drowsy, and fell down unconscious.

When Nakula didn't return for a long time Yudhishtira sent Sahadeva to see what the matter was. Sahadeva reached the pool,

though he was upset to see his brother lying on the ground, he rushed to the pool to quench his burning thirst.

Again the voice said, “O Sahadeva, answer my questions before you drink the water.” Like Nakula, Sahadeva also paid no attention to the warning. He drank the water and at once he too fell down. Yudhishtira became very worried when Sahadeva too, didn’t return. He sent Arjuna to see whether the brothers had met with any danger.

Arjuna soon arrived at the spot and found both his brothers lying unconscious near the pool. He was shocked at the sight and felt that they must have been killed by some hidden enemy. Heart-broken with grief, he wanted to avenge their deaths. However, he too was overwhelmed by an uncontrollable thirst, which drove him towards the fatal pool. Again the warning voice was heard, “Answer my questions before you drink the water Arjuna. If you disobey me, you will follow your brothers.”

Arjuna became very angry. He cried, “Who are you ? Show yourself and I will kill you.” He shot sharp arrows in the direction of the voice. The invisible being laughed scornfully, “Your arrows can’t touch me. Answer my questions, and then you can satisfy your thirst. If you drink the water without doing so, you will die.” Arjuna wanted to destroy this unseen foe, but first he had to quench his overpowering thirst. So he drank the water and also fell down dead.

After an anxious wait, Yudhishtira turned to Bhima, “Dear brother, even Arjuna, the great hero, hasn’t returned. Something

terrible must have happened to our brothers. Please find them quickly.” Bhima hurried away without another word.

His grief and rage knew no bounds when he saw his three brothers lying there dead. He thought, “This is certainly the work of the Yakshas. I will hunt them down and kill them. But oh! I am so thirsty. I shall first drink some water so that I can fight them better.” And he knelt down beside the pool.

The voice shouted, “Bhimasena, beware. You may drink the water only after answering my questions. You will die if you ignore my words.” “Who are you to dictate to me ?” cried Bhima, and drank the water eagerly, glaring around in defiance. And instantly, his great strength slipped away and he also fell dead among his brothers.

Yudhishtira became extremely worried when none of his brothers returned. Finally, he decided to go and look for them himself. Following their footsteps, he walked on until he came to that pool of clear, calm water, surrounded by a beautiful green meadow. It was really a sight for tired eyes. Then his gaze fell upon his brothers lying there, cold and still. He was unable to control his grief. Weeping bitterly for them, he cried out, “Is this to be the end of all our struggles ? Just when our exile is about to end, you have been snatched away from me. There’s no reason for me to continue living in this world.”

As he looked at the mighty limbs of his brothers, now so powerless, he wondered who could have been powerful enough to

kill them. The world has no warriors who could overcome his brothers. Besides, there were no wounds on their bodies or any traces of enemy footprints around. There was surely some magic or supernatural power behind this.

For a long time, Yudhishtira wept on the bank. Then feeling his thirst overpowering him, he was drawn to the water. At once, the invisible voice warned as before, “Your brothers died because they did not listen to me. Do not follow them. Answer my questions first and then quench your thirst.

Yudhishtira knew that it must be a Yaksha who spoke and guessed what had happened to his brothers. He saw a possible way of saving the situation. He called out, “Please ask your questions.” Then the Yaksha asked, “What makes the sun shine everyday ?”

“The power of God!” Yudhishtira answered.

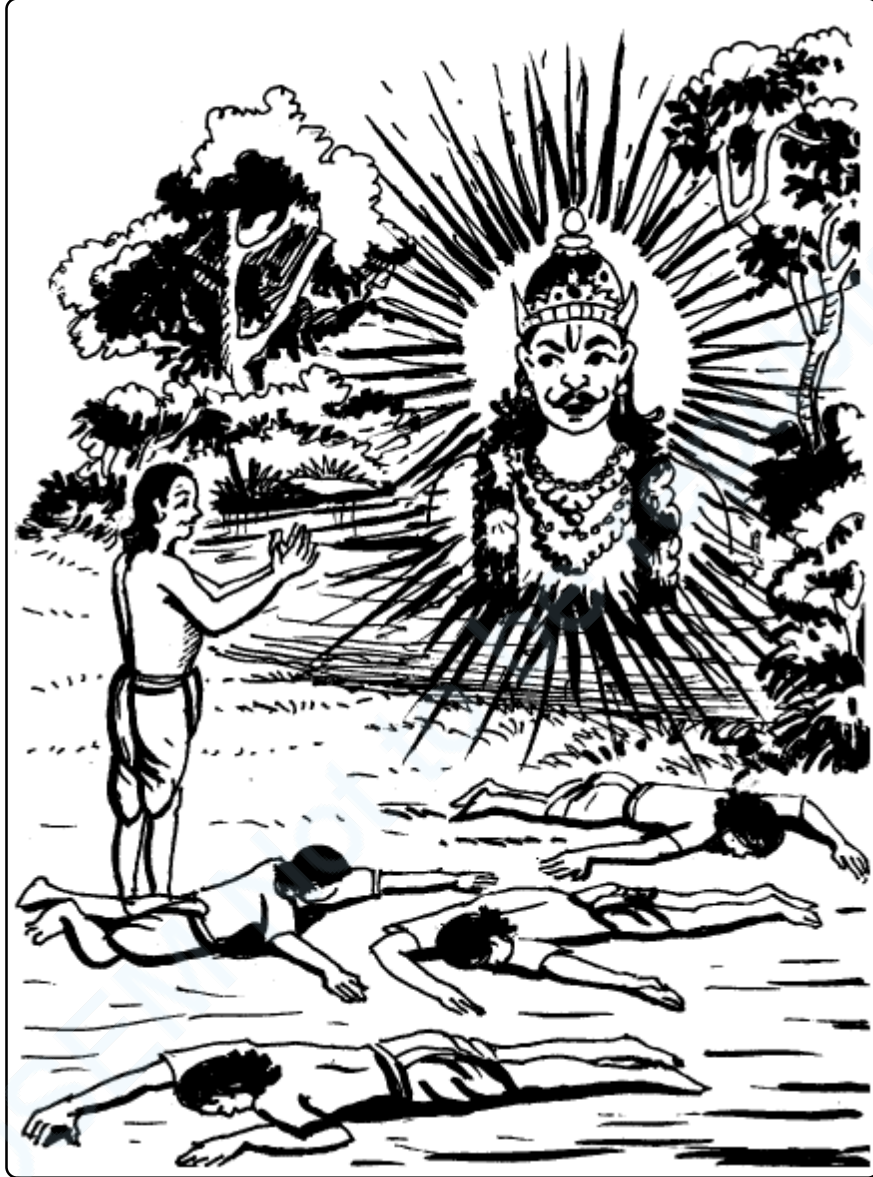
The Yaksha asked again, “What is one’s best weapon in danger?”

Yudhishtira answered quickly, “Courage”.

“What is faster than the wind ?”

“The mind,” Yudhishtira replied.

“By giving up something one becomes loved by all, What is it?”



Yudhishtira answered, “Pride, When one gives up pride, one will be loved by all.”

“The loss of something can bring one joy and not sorrow, what is it ?”

“Anger, for when one gives up anger, one is full of peace,” replied Yudhishtira.

Thus, a series of questions were asked and rapidly answered. At last the Yaksha said, “Yudhishtira, I am well pleased with your answers, and now one of your dead brothers can now be restored to life. Whom do you choose ?”

Yudhishtira thought for a moment and said, “Kind Yaksha, please restore the life of Nakula.”

This answer also pleased the Yaksha, and he asked, “Why did you choose Nakula over Bhima who is so strong ? And why not Arjuna ? Won’t his skill in arms protect you better ? Why didn’t you choose one of them ?

Yudhishtira answered, “Yaksha, righteousness and truth are the only protection one has. The strength of Bhima and the skill of Arjuna would not help if one acted unrighteously. Kunti and Madri were the two wives of my father. Of Kunti’s children, I survive. So, to be fair, I ask that Madri’s son, Nakula, be revived.” The Yaksha was touched by Yudhishtira’s sense of justice and granted that all his brothers be restored to life.

Now, it was Yama, the Lord of Death, who had taken the form of the deer and the Yaksha so that he might test Yudhishtira’s piety. He embraced Yudhishtira, blessed him and then disappeared.

Glossary

piety	– devotion to God, loving dutifulness to parents
episode	– incident
Pandavas	– the five sons of King Pandu in the Mahabharata
Kauravas	– the hundred sons of King Dhristarastra in the Mahabharata
exile	– banishment
exhausting	– tiresome
pursuit	– run after
vanished	– disappeared
a little way off	– at a little distance
quench	– to drink water so that one does not feel thirsty
heed	– pay attention to
drowsy	– sleepy
unconscious	– senseless, in a swoon
bounds	– limits
Yaksha	– a being who is half god and half human
defiance	– challenge
slipped	– fell suddenly
traces	– signs
supernatural	– of or by God, spirits, ghosts, etc.

righteousness – self consciously virtuous
touched – emotionally moved

Comprehension

1. Answer the following questions :

- (i) Who was the first to go to the pool ?
- (ii) Who was the Yaksha ?
- (iii) What happened to the younger Pandava brothers when they went to the pool ?
- (iv) What were the questions of the Yaksha and how did Yudhishtira answer them ?
- (v) Who were the two wives of Yudhishtira's father ?
- (vi) Each of the Pandavas reacted differently to the Yaksha's questions. State how each one responded.
- (vii) Write a note on the piety and wisdom of Yudhishtira in about 50-60 words.
- (viii) The Yaksha asked, "What is one's best weapon in danger?"
How did Yudhishtira answer the question ?

2. **EXERCISE IN LANGUAGE**

Choose the appropriate word from the pair of words given in the brackets and write it in the space provided :

- (i) The story is (interesting / interested)
- (ii) Yudhisthira had a feeling (sinking /sacking)
- (iii) Mr. Mohan is a man (learn/learned)
- (iv) This is my room (live/living)
- (v) This is a scenery (charm/charming)
- (vi) I learn English (spoken/spoke)
- (vii) Please meet the clerk..... (concerning/concerned)
- (viii) Here is a press (printed/printing)
- (ix) Where is the office (booked/booking)
- (x) Please repair the leg of the chair.(breaking/broken)

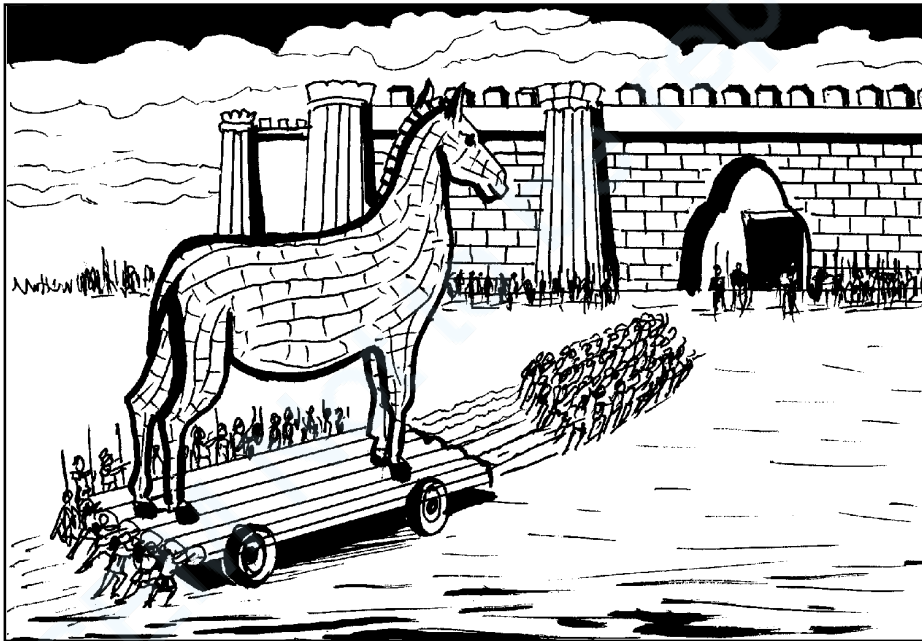
3. **DISCUSSION**

You must have read about people who have similar characteristics with Judhisthira, in terms of justice , patience and wisdom. Discuss in groups about such people and share your thought with the whole class.

LESSON 6

THE WOODEN HORSE OF TROY

You must have read stories about people who are wise and clever. Can you name a few people or kings or Emperors who were very wise and clever? This story is about the cleverness of Odysseus and how he helped King Menelaus of Greece.



King Menelaus of Sparta, in Greece, had a beautiful wife called Helen. In fact, Queen Helen was the most beautiful woman in all the Ancient World. She was stolen from Menelaus by a young man called Paris, who hid her in the city of Troy.

“No one will ever find you here,” said Paris.

Now Menelaus was not only sad at the loss of his beautiful wife, but he was also very angry. When he found out that Helen was at Troy he sent word to the people of Troy that they must send her back to him. When they refused, he made war on them.

For many long years the soldiers of Greece attacked on the people of Troy. There were many fierce battles; but still the city was not taken by the Greeks. At last a man called Odysseus had an idea.

“Let us build a great horse of wood,” he proposed to the King. “It must be as big as a house, but it will be hollow inside the horse. Some of us will go in and hide inside the horse. Then we will pack up our belongings, and burn our tents, and sail away from here.”

“You want us to burn down our tents and sail away ?” said Menelaus. “But why should we do that ? And what about the men in the wooden horse ? You speak in riddles, Odysseus.”

“Then let me make it plain,” said Odysseus. “It is all a trick! For when the ships have gone, the people of Troy will open their city gates. Then they will wheel the wooden horse into the city. When they are all asleep the soldiers inside will climb out of the wooden horse, and attack the soldiers of Troy. The gates will be opened and the rest of our army will come in, for the ships will have come back to Troy under cover of darkness.”

The King saw that this was a wonderful way of getting into the city, if only the people of Troy would take the wooden horse through the city gates.

“I think we can do that,” said Odysseus.

And so the wooden horse was built. Trees were cut down and horses dragged them to the place where Epeios, the master builder, was in charge of the building. When the wooden horse was finished, a band of the bravest Greeks crept inside. It was dark, and the Trojans could not see what they were doing.

Next morning the Greeks packed up their belongings, burned down their tents, and sailed away in their ships. The Trojans were amazed. They watched from the city walls and could hardly believe their eyes. After ten long years during which their city had been surrounded by the Greeks the enemy had gone! They opened the city gates, which had not been opened for so long, and poured out to have a closer look at this strange wooden horse.

“What on earth did the Greeks make it for ?” they asked each other. Now the Greeks had wanted to make sure that the Trojans would take the horse into the city. So they had left behind a man called Sinon, with his hands tied. Sinon was a brave man, for he had agreed to stay and tell the Trojans what the Greeks wanted them to think. The Trojans beat him, but at first he would say nothing. At last they managed to make him say that he would tell them the truth.

“The Greeks are worn out after this long war,” said Sinon. “After ten years of fighting they decided that they wanted to get home again to their families. But before they sailed they built this horse as an offering to the goddess Athene.”

“But why did the Greeks build such a large horse ?” The Trojans demanded.

“Ah, well, it was this way,” said the crafty Sinon. “If they had built a small one, you would have dragged it into your city, and the goddess would have been angry with the Greeks. Then she might wreck their ships on the way home.”

“In that case,” said the Trojans, “let us take the horse into the city! We can break down the walls by the gate to let it through.”

This they did, dragging it over the plain and through the gates. Then the Trojans had a great feast to mark the end of the ten years’ war. The Greeks hidden inside the wooden horse could hear the merry-making, and longed for night to come.

At last it grew dark. The lights all over the city began to go out. The people of the city began to go to bed, tired after their merry-making. In the darkness the Greek ships quietly stole back into the bay and landed soldiers on the beaches. When Sinon felt that it was time he opened the doorside of the



wooden horse. The Greek soldiers crept out and opened the city gates to let in their friends. Then, with a great shout, they attacked their sleeping enemies.

In a very short time the noble city of Troy was in the hands of the Greeks. King Menelaus found the beautiful Helen, and took her back to Sparta to be his queen again.

— *A. Elliot-Cannon*

Glossary

pack up	– bind up; wrap up
make it plain	– make it simple
crept inside	– moved in quickly
amazed	– extremely surprised
beaches	– an area of sand next to the sea or a lake

Comprehension

1. Answer the following questions :

- (i) What did the Greek do when Helen was stolen ?
- (ii) What was the plan of Odysseus for taking Troy ?
- (iii) What did the Trojans do when they found the wooden horse ?
- (iv) How did Sinon explain why the Greeks left the wooden horse ?

- (v) What happened in Troy when darkness came ?
- (vi) How did the Greeks conquer Troy ?
- (vii) What is the part played by Sinon in conquering Troy ?
- (viii) What did the Trojans do with the wooden horse ?
- (ix) How did the Greek soldiers come back to the sea-shore?
- (x) What did king Menelaus do after the war was over ?

EXERCISE IN LANGUAGE

2 . Look at these words

- Right - Sight
- Pine - Line
- Mad - Bad

These pair of words end with the same sound. They are called rhyming words.

Now, give the rhyming words of the following

- Peak
- fever
- Reader
- Musician
- Wise
- Grow
- Feeling
- Dark

LESSON 7

WILLIAM TELL

Do you know that Manipur has been described as the “Switzerland of India” by Lord Irwin ? This little story is about a brave man called William Tell from the original Switzerland ! You will learn about his skill with the bow and arrow. Read on

William Tell was popular with the people of the lakeside town of Aldorf in Switzerland. He could sail faster on Lake Lucerne and shoot an arrow more accurately than anybody else in and around Aldorf.

Duke Gessler, who had been sent by a foreign power to rule over the district, was a cruel man. He treated the people of Aldorf very badly. He made them pay heavy taxes and everyone was afraid of him. Gessler hated William Tell because he was so popular. He was also afraid of him because he was the one man who stood against him.

William Tell had a young son whom he loved more dearly than his own life. He took his son with him into the mountains so that he could keep him out of Gessler’s way and live in peace.

Sometimes, however, William had to go down to the market square in the town to buy food. One day he was surprised to see all

the people bowing down before a tall pole with a hat on top. A woman told him that the Duke had ordered everyone to bow down before his hat each time they passed that way.

Tell was very angry when he heard this.

“I’ll not bow to any man’s hat,” he said.



Then with his head held high he walked across the square, his little son beside him. At once they were arrested by a group of soldiers and taken to the Duke's court.

Gessler was delighted to have got Tell in his power. He told him that he would lock him up for the rest of his life so that he did not have the opportunity to be so arrogant again. William Tell stood straight and looked at Gessler without any sign of fear. Gessler got very angry because he wanted Tell to be afraid and to beg for mercy.

Then Gessler thought of a wicked plan to punish Tell.

"I'll make a bargain with you," he said. "If you can cut an apple in two from a distance of two hundred paces, I'll let you go free."

William agreed to Gessler's bargain for his freedom. The shot would be a difficult one, but he was sure he could do it. They went to the end of a field where a young oak tree stood.

The Duke laughed loudly. He said, "Now tie the boy to the tree and put the apple on his head."

His son meant everything to Tell. How could he take such a chance with his little boy's life ? He felt nervous. He felt his hands shake. How could he be sure that he could aim his arrow straight ? Would it not be better to spend the rest of his life in prison than to risk the life of his son ?

Gessler was smiling with pleasure when he saw Tell's distress. Then a small voice rang out. "You can do it, Father, I know you can. I will stand very still until you have shot the apple off my head."

The soldiers tied the boy to the tree. A small red apple was placed on his head. The child stood very still. Then the arrow was shot and the apple fell in two halves at the boy's feet.

Duke Gessler was very angry and disappointed. But then a second arrow fell on the ground from inside William Tell's coat.

"Why did you take two arrows, Tell?" asked Gessler.

"If I had killed my son with the first," said William Tell, "I would have sent the second into your black heart."

The Duke was very angry. "You shall die for your treason," he cried. "Take him across the lake to Kossandit Castle and throw him to the animals in the cellar."

The soldiers took William on board a boat and set sail for the dreadful castle. Tell called to his son to run home and wait for him there.

As the boat reached deep water, a storm blew up. The boat was caught by large waves and it rocked and rolled. The soldiers were very frightened.

“Only William Tell could sail a boat in this weather,” cried the captain.

William Tell was untied and was asked to take the tiller. He turned the boat into the middle of the large waves. He could just make out the jagged rocks of the shore. A large wave lifted the boat and dropped it onto a sharp rock. The boat broke in two.



Tell grabbed a loaded crossbow from a soldier and leapt out of the sinking boat. He caught hold of the branches of a tree on the shore and scrambled to safety. Behind him, the soldiers were drowned in the lake.

On the far shore stood Gessler watching helplessly as the boat and his best soldiers were lost for ever. William Tell took careful aim and shot an arrow across the stormy lake straight into Gessler's heart.

Then William climbed the rough mountainside towards his home, where his little son was waiting for him.

A few years after this happened, Switzerland broke free from foreign rule and the people were happy and at peace once more.

Glossary

popular	– liked and admired
arrogant	– proud, of superior manner
jagged	– uneven edges
crossbow	– old kind of bow placed across a wooden support used for shooting arrows
scrambled	– climbed

Comprehension

1. Answer the following questions :

- (i) How did Duke Gessler treat the people of Aldorf ?
- (ii) Who was William Tell ? Why did he take his son with him into the mountains ?
- (iii) Why were William Tell and his son arrested by the soldiers ?
- (iv) What was Gessler's wicked plan to punish William Tell?
- (v) Why did the soldiers take William Tell to the castle ?
- (vi) Why did the captain set Tell free on the way to the castle?
- (vii) What happened to Gessler in the end ?

EXERCISE IN LANGUAGE

2. Look at the following words :

See - Sight

Learn - Learning

The first set on the left are **verbs**. The second set on the right are the **noun forms** of the Verbs.

Now, write the noun forms of the following Verbs:

live —

run —

give —

advise —

sing —

receive —

DISCUSSION

3. Imagine yourself as the son of William Tell. Discuss how you may feel felt when you stand with the apple on your head, waiting for you father to shoot the apple. Share your feelings with the whole class.

LESSON 8

IDGAH

Have you ever given alms to the poor ? Have you ever helped your mother in her work ? Have you ever helped an elderly person to cross the street ? How do you feel when you help a person in need or when you offer help to a needy person ? Read this story and feel inspired !

Thirty days of fasting for the month of Ramjan ended and the festival of Id arrived. What a beautiful morning! The trees covered with green leaves, the green fields and the bright blue sky – everything looked beautiful and joyous. The loving and mellow sun seemed to make everyone happy. Many were getting ready. The children were the happiest lot. They were also making hectic last-minute preparations for the festival.

Hamid looked very cheerful. He was a slim boy of four or five years. His father died of cholera last year. After that, his mother became thinner and paler day by day, and one day she also died all of a sudden. Now the orphan had no one to turn to except his old grandmother Amina, who became almost a mother to him and the only shelter for him in the wide world.

Grandmother Amina pondered over the matter with anguish. The children of the village were going to the celebrations with their fathers. Hamid had no one except his grandmother. How could Amina

allow the small boy to go alone to the village fair ? Suppose, he got lost in the crowd! What would be done then ? He is just a child. Trying to cover a distance of six miles to the fair, the tender feet would get blistered. Then, what about the joy and eagerness of her grand-son preparing for it ? Money also was a serious problem.



Collecting all the coins in her possession, she had only three paise for the boy. Hamid came in and said, “Amma, don’t worry. I shall return ahead of my friends. Don’t worry at all.” Saying these words, Hamid left for the fair. He went along with other children. At times, the children ran ahead of the crowd. They also stopped at certain places to wait for their friends to catch up.

Soon, they could see the Idgah. They also saw the tamarind trees and their shade below. They could also see the smooth concrete floor. Here, people gathered to offer prayers. It was so crowded that there was no space left in the front. Here, there was no distinction between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the underprivileged. Thousands knelt and bowed. After the prayers, the multitude stood up together. Then, they knelt down together again for the last time. The sight resembled electric bulbs going off at a single stroke when the current went off. It was a wonderful sight. All the people became united by a single thread of brotherly love and affection.

The men started embracing each other. The young and the old rejoiced. Their happiness knew no bounds. The shops selling sweets and toys were surrounded by groups of people. Varieties of toys were on sale. Among the toys were figures of soldiers, criminals, kings, lawyers and water-carriers. How beautiful the toys looked ! It appeared as if they would start talking immediately. Mahmood bought the soldier. It was dressed in Khaki with a red turban on its head. It had a gun on its shoulder. Mohsin wanted the water-carrier.

It was slightly bent because of the bag of water on its back. Since Nure wanted to become a lawyer, he bought the lawyer. It was dressed in a black robe and a white shirt. There were books

of law in its hands. All these toys cost two paise each. Hamid had just three paise in his pocket. How could he buy such costly toys ?

After the toy-shops came the sweet-shops. One of the children bought a candy, while another bought *gulab jamuns*. They ate the sweets heartily.

After the sweet-shops came shops selling household wares. These shops sold nothing that the children liked. They went ahead hastily. However, Hamid stopped in front of one of these shops. He saw some tongs. He suddenly remembered, “Grandmother does not have a pair of tongs. Her fingers always get burnt while taking out the *rotis* from the pan. How happy she’ll be if I buy a pair of tongs for her ! Her fingers won’t get burnt ! What is the use of buying toys? Toys will make me happy for a short while! Many of the toys bought by my friends will get broken by the time we reach home !”

Hamid’s friends had gone ahead. They stopped to drink fruit juice. Hamid thought, “How selfish they are! They have sweets in their hand but they haven’t shared even one with me! Later on, they will ask me to play with them. Let them have all the sweets to themselves. Their teeth will get rotten; their bodies will be scarred with scabies and their tongues will be blisters! Why should I spoil my tongue eating sweets! I will buy a pair of tongs. My grandmother will be pleased. She will shower blessings on me! Who’ll bless them for the toys that they have bought! Mahmood and Mohsin are proud because I have little money in my pocket. They’ll laugh at me for buying a pair of tongs. Let them laugh at me! I don’t care!”

He asked the shopkeeper, “How much does this pair of tongs cost ?” The shopkeeper replied that it cost six paise. Hearing the price, Hamid felt very disheartened.

“Please tell me the truth,” he spoke softly.

“I’m telling the truth. It will cost five paise. Take it or leave it!” replied the shopkeeper.

Hamid mustered courage and said, “Can you give it for three paise.” Without waiting for a reply, he left the shop immediately. He was afraid that the shopkeeper might scold him. However, the shopkeeper called him back and gave him the pair of tongs for three paise. He felt very proud. He walked upto his friends. Seeing the pair of tongs in his hands, Mohsin laughed at him, “Hamid, you are crazy! Why have you bought it?” Hamid replied slowly, “What have you bought ? Is it this ordinary toy made of clay ? The moment it slips from your hands, it will break into pieces! On our way back, if a tiger appears your water-carrier will run away because of sheer fright. The soldier will also hide inside the robe. However, my tong will fight the tiger. Like a strong wrestler, it will hold its neck and pierce its eyes!”

The children did not have a reply to Hamid’s clever answer. They had spent their money on these useless things. They felt sad. Hamid had opened their eyes. They realised the truth in his words. However, they showed their toys to him. He praised their toys while they praised his tongs.

Around eleven in the morning there was a lot of noise in the whole village. The people who had gone to see the fair were coming back home. As soon as Mohsin reached his house, his little sister came out and snatched the toy. As she jumped with joy, the water-carrier fell on the ground and broke into pieces. Nure managed to fix a small plank on the walls with nails. He placed his toy on the plank. Then, he started fanning it. Whether it was the wind from the fan or the fan itself, the toy lawyer fell down and broke into pieces.

The last toy remaining intact was Mahmood's toy-soldier. In a small basket, he had put some clothes and laid the toy. His brother ran up to him shouting, "Wake up! Soldier! Wake-up!" Mahmood stumbled and fell. The toy popped out of the basket and fell on the ground. It broke into pieces.

Let's hear about Hamid now. Hearing her grandson coming back, Amina came out and took the child lovingly on her lap. Suddenly, she saw the pair of tongs in his hands. She was surprised.

"Where did you get it?" She asked.

"I bought it," replied Hamid.

"How much money did it cost?" asked Amina.

"Three paise," replied the boy meekly.

Amina was angry – "It's almost evening and you haven't eaten anything. I gave you three paise for the fair. Instead of buying something to eat, you have bought this pair of tongs!"



Like a guilty person, Hamid replied slowly, “Yes, grandmother! when you make *rotis*, your fingers often get burnt while taking out the *rotis* from the pan. I bought it so that your fingers won’t get burnt anymore !”

Hearing these words, Amina’s anger melted. She thought to herself, “How selfless and considerate my grandson is! His friends bought sweets and snacks to eat. They bought toys also! But he kept thinking of me even at the fair.” She could no longer hold herself back. Tears rolled down her cheeks. Spreading her *chadar*, she showered blessings on her grandson. Hiding his face, Hamid lay blissfully on the lap of his grandmother.

— *Munshi Premchand’s short story abridged
and rendered into English*

Glossary

mellow	– soft
hectic	– busy and excited
pondered	– thought deeply
anguish	– severe mental pain
blistered	– swollen

multitude	– great number
tongs	– implement consisting of two limbs used for grasping and lifting things
<i>chadar</i>	– scarf-like piece of cloth used by woman in India

Comprehension

1. Answer the following questions :

- (i) When did the festival of Id arrive ?
- (ii) Who were the happiest lot ?
- (iii) Why was Amina worried ?
- (iv) What happened at the Idgah ?
- (v) What were the toys bought by Hamid's friends ?
- (vi) What did Hamid buy ?
- (vii) Why didn't Hamid buy a toy ?
- (viii) What happened to the toys bought by Hamid's friends ?
- (ix) Describe Amina's reaction when she realised Hamid's act.

EXERCISE IN LANGUAGE

2. Choose the correct words from the pairs given in the brackets to fill in the blanks in the following sentences :

- (i) She was happy that I help her. (can/could)
- (ii) The teacher said that the earth round. (is/was)
- (iii) Hamid..... his grandmother more than himself.
(love/loves)
- (iv) He told me that he help me. (will/would)
- (v) Tom says that he not guilty. (is/ was)
- (vi) Mohan said that the sun in the east. (rose/rises)
- (vii) We start early, lest wemiss the train.
(would/should).
- (viii) When I called at his house he gone away.
(have/had)
- (ix) The bus started before we reached the station.
(had/has)
- (x) Amina thought that Hamid come in time.
(will/would)

