

Chapter 4: Bepin Choudhury's Lapse of Memory

Comprehension Check

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Question 1: Why did the man stare at Bepin Babu in disbelief?

Answer: The man stared at Bepin Babu in disbelief because Bepin Babu did not recognise him even though he was sure that he knew him and had met him in Ranchi.

Question 2: Where did Bepin Babu say he went in October '58?

Answer: Bepin Babu said that he spent the Puja holidays in '58 with a friend in Kanpur.

Question 3: Mention any three (or more) things that Parimal Ghose knew about Bepin Babu.

Answer: Parimal Ghose knew the following about Bepin Babu:

He had no children.

He had lost his wife ten years ago.

His only brother had died insane, which was why he did not want to visit the mental hospital in Ranchi.

Comprehension Check

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Question 1: Why did Bepin Babu worry about what Parimal Ghose had said?

Answer: Bepin Babu continuously worried about what Parimal Ghose had said because he had shown that he knew many intimate facts about him. He knew about the bag of books, his wife's death and his brother's insanity. Considering that Parimal Ghose knew so much about him, Bepin Babu couldn't say with conviction that he was making a mistake about the Ranchi trip.

Question 2: How did he try to decide who was right — his memory or Parimal Ghose?

Answer: He tried to decide whether his memory was right or Parimal Ghose by looking at his right knee where Parimal had claimed that there would be a cut. There was certainly a mark of an old cut. However, he could not decide if the cut was the result of his fall in Ranchi or due to some incident in his childhood. Then, he decided to ask Dinesh Mukherjee, who according to Parimal Ghose was with him in Ranchi. He felt that asking him would put an end to his confusion.

Question 3: Why did Bepin Babu hesitate to visit Mr Mukerji? Why did he finally decide to phone him?

Answer: Bepin Babu hesitated to visit Mr Dinesh Mukerji because he was afraid of the ruthless sarcasm he would have to face. He felt that if the whole story about Ranchi was false, then Mr Mukerji would think that he had gone insane. Being constantly troubled by the incident at the bookshop and having no other means for verifying the claims of Parimal Ghose, Bepin Babu finally decided to ask Mr Mukerji. However, he decided to phone him because that way his embarrassment wouldn't be visible to the latter.

Question 4: What did Mr Mukerji say? Did it comfort Bepin Babu, or add to his worries?

Answer: Mr Mukerji said that they had indeed gone to Ranchi in '58. This added to Bepin Babu's worries as he could not figure out how he could possibly have forgotten about the trip.

Comprehension Check

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Question 1: Who was Chunilal? What did he want from Bepin Babu?

Answer: Chunilal was an old schoolmate of Bepin Babu. He had been having a rough time lately and had been coming to see Bepin Babu for a job.

Question 2: Why was Dr Chanda puzzled? What was unusual about Bepin Babu's loss of memory?

Answer: Dr Chanda was puzzled because he had never dealt with a case such as Bepin Babu's. It was outside his field of experience. The unusual thing about Bepin Babu's case was that he remembered everything in his past except for one particular incident. Dr Chanda said that Bepin Babu must have been to Ranchi. However, due to some unknown reason, the entire episode had slipped out of his mind.

Comprehension Check

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Question 1: Had Bepin Babu really lost his memory and forgotten all about a trip to Ranchi?

Answer: No, Bepin Babu had not really lost his memory and forgotten all about a trip to Ranchi. It was a trick played by Chunilal.

Question 2: Why do you think Chunilal did what he did? Chunilal says he has no money; what is it that he does have?

Answer: Chunilal did what he did because Bepin Babu did not help him at a time when he had no money and required a job. However, Bepin Babu did not do anything for him. Chunilal said that he did not have money. However, he had imagination.

Working with Text

Question 1: The author describes Bepin Babu as a serious and hardworking man. What evidence can you find in the story to support this?

Answer: The author has described Bepin Babu as a serious and hardworking man. He worked daily in his office. It was a big firm and he was doing a responsible job. He had been with the firm for twenty-five years. He had a reputation for being a tireless, conscientious worker.

Question 2: Why did Bepin Babu change his mind about meeting Chunilal? What was the result of this meeting?

Answer: Bepin Babu changed his mind about meeting Chunilal because he thought that it might be possible that the latter remembered something about the Ranchi trip. When Chunilal confirmed that Bepin Babu had been to Ranchi, Bepin Babu decided to see a specialist doctor.

Question 3: Bepin Babu lost consciousness at Hudroo Falls. What do you think was the reason for this?

Answer: Bepin Babu lost consciousness at Hudroo Falls because he had a fall. He had broken his hip.

Question 4: How do you think Bepin Babu reacted when he found out that Chunilal had tricked him?

Answer: After finding out that Chunilal had tricked him, Bepin Babu must have been filled with remorse for his 'unfeeling behaviour' towards an 'old friend down on his luck'. He would have realised that he had indeed been a victim of forgetfulness as he had forgotten the meaning of friendship in a time of 'affluence'.

Working with Language

Question 1: Fill in the blanks below using 'had to' / 'have to' / 'has to'.

- (i) I _____ cut my hair every month.
- (ii) We _____ go for swimming lessons last year.
- (iii) She _____ tell the principal the truth.
- (iv) They _____ take the baby to the doctor.
- (v) We _____ complain to the police about the noise.
- (vi) Romit _____ finish his homework before he could come out to play.
- (vii) I _____ repair my cycle yesterday.

Answer:

- (i) I have to cut my hair every month.
- (ii) We had to go for swimming lessons last year.
- (iii) She has to tell the principal the truth.
- (iv) They had to take the baby to the doctor.
- (v) We have to complain to the police about the noise.
- (vi) Romit had to finish his homework before he could come out to play.
- (vii) I had to repair my cycle yesterday.

Question 2: Here are a few idioms that you will find in the story. Look for them in the dictionary in the following way.

First, arrange them in the order in which you would find them in a dictionary.

(*Clue:* An idiom is usually listed under the first noun, verb, adjective or adverb in it. Ignore articles or prepositions in the idiom).

To help you, we have put in bold the word under which you must look for the idiom in the dictionary.)

(i) at/from close quarters	(close : adjective)
(ii) break into a smile	(break : verb; look under 'break into something')
(iii) carry on	carry : verb
(iv) have a clean record	you may find related meanings under both these words
(v) beat about the bush	(verb)

Now refer to your dictionary and find out what they mean.

Answer:

(i) at/from close quarters	from nearby
(ii) break into a smile	smile/laugh suddenly
(iii) carry on	continue
(iv) have a clean record	having no bad views or records at one's workplace or in the society
(v) beat about the bush	to observe/encounter closely

Question 3: Study the sentences in the columns below.

A	B
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I saw this movie yesterday.	I have seen this movie already.
Bepin Babu worked here for a week last year.	Bepin Babu has worked here since 2003.
Chunilal wrote to a publisher last week.	Chunilal has written to a publisher.
I visited Ranchi once, long ago.	I have visited Ranchi once before.

Compare the sentences in the two columns, especially the verb forms. Answer the following questions about each pair of sentences.

- (i) Which column tells us the Bepin Babu is still working at the same the place?
- (ii) Which column suggests that Chunilal is now waiting for a reply from the publisher?
- (iii) Which column suggests that the person still remembers the movie he saw?
- (iv) Which column suggests that the experience of visiting Ranchi is still fresh in the speaker's mind?

Answer:

- (i) Column B
- (ii) Column A
- (iii) Column B
- (iv) Column B

Question 4: Given below are jumbled sentences. Working in groups, rearrange the words in each sentence to form correct sentences.

You will find that each sentence contains an idiomatic expression that you have come across in the lesson. Underline the idiom and write down its meaning. Then use you dictionary to check the meaning.

(i) Stop/and tell me/beating about/what you want/the bush

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

(ii) don't pay/if you/attention/you might/the wrong train/to the announcement/board

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

(iii) The village/tried/the crime/on the young woman/to pin

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

(iv) Bepin Babu/orders to/telling people/under/loved/doctor's/eat early/that he was

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

(v) the student/The teacher/his eyebrows/when/said that/all their lessons/raised/they had revised

Ans: _____

Idiom: _____

Answer:

(i) Ans. Stop beating about the bush and tell me what you want.

Idiom: beating about the bush – avoiding the main topic, not coming straight to the point.

(ii) Ans. If you don't pay attention to the announcement, you might board the wrong train.

Idiom: pay attention – listen carefully.

(iii) Ans. The villagers tried to pin the crime on the young woman.

Idiom: pin the crime – place the responsibility of the crime.

(iv) Ans. Bepin Babu loved telling people that he was under doctor's orders to eat early.

Idiom: under doctor's orders – in complete necessity.

(v) Ans. The teacher raised his eyebrows when the students said that they had revised all their lessons.

Idiom: raised his eyebrows – expressed doubt/surprise.

Champpstreet