

Chapter 6: The Fight

Comprehension Check

Page 49

Question 1: In what way is the forest pool different from the one which Ranji knew in the Rajputana desert ?

Answer: Ranji was aware of only sticky, muddy pools in the Rajputana desert. Buffaloes would swallow in them and women washed clothes. But he found the forest pool to be quite different. Its water was clean and transparent. One could see the smooth, round pebbles at its bottom. A small stream emerged from a cluster of rocks to feed the pool.

Question 2: The other boy asked Ranji to 'explain' himself.

(i) What did he expect Ranji to say ?

(ii) Was he, in your opinion, right or wrong to ask this question?

Answer:

(i) He expected Ranji to explain what he was doing there.

(ii) In my opinion, he was not right in asking this question. That was a public place and anybody could go there.

Question 3: Between Ranji and the other boy, who is trying to start a quarrel ? Give a reason for your answer.

Answer: Ranji, from the very beginning, tries to be quite friendly. But the other boy is trying to start a quarrel. He became hostile and said, "This is my pool and I always swim alone." He also strode up to Ranji to settle the matter. When Ranji did not run away, he said, "I will have to beat you." Thus, it is obvious that the other boy is trying to start a quarrel by provoking Ranji.

Question 4: "Then we will have to continue the fight," said the other.

(i) What made him say that ?

(ii) Did the fight continue ? If not, why not ?

Answer:

(i) He said this when Ranji told him that he would not leave the pool.

(ii) No, the fight did not continue. The other boy made Ranji his friend, when he assured him (the other boy) to teach him to dive and swim in the pool.

Page 53

Question 1: What is it that Ranji finds difficult to explain at home?

Answer: Because of the fight with the other boy Ranji had cuts and bruises that showed on his face, legs and arms. Ranji finds it difficult to explain at how he got these cuts and bruises.

Question 2: Ranji sees his adversary in the bazaar.

(i) What does he wish to do ?

(ii) What does he actually do, and why ?

Answer:

(i) Ranji wished to turn away and look elsewhere after seeing his opponent in the hazaar. He also wished to throw away the lemonade bottle at his enemy.

(ii) But actually Ranji "stood his ground" and looked angrily at the other boy. He did so because the other boy was his opponent or enemy.

Question 3: Ranji is not at all eager for a second fight. Why does he go back to the pool, then ?

Answer: After the first fight, Ranji felt weak and lazy. So, he was not eager for a second fight. His body was stiff and sore. However, he goes back to the pool. He thinks that if he did not turn up at the pool, it would be acceptance of the defeat. If he surrendered he would be defeated forever. Though he would be beaten many times yet it would secure his right to the pool for a long time.

Question 4: Who was the better swimmer? How do you know it?

Answer: Ranji was definitely the better swimmer out of them. He could swim the length of the pool a dozen times without being tired. He could also dive nicely, which the other boy could not do.

Question 5: What surprises the warrior ?

Answer: Ranji's exceptional swimming skill surprises the warrior. Ranji could dive straight into the water, cuts through it and surfaces with hardly a splash.

Question 6: Now that they are at the pool, why don't they continue the fight ?

Answer: Ranji and the other boy had come to the pool to have another fight. But being surprised and influenced by Ranji's swimming and diving skill, he befriends him. That is why they did not continue the fight.

Question 7: Ranji's superiority over the other boy is obvious in the following : physical strength, good diving, his being a fighter, sense of humour, swimming under water, making a good point, willingness to help. Underline the relevant phrases.

Answer: Good diving, swimming under water, making a good point and willingness to help are the relevant phrases which show Ranji's superiority over the other boy.

Question 8: What, according to you, makes the two adversaries turn into good friends in a matter of minutes ? Explain it as you have understood it.

Answer: It was Ranji's extraordinary skill in swimming and diving that greatly impressed the other boy. Ranji dived straight into the water and showed his superiority to the other boy, Suraj. That made the two adversaries turn into good friends in a matter of minutes.

Exercise

Discuss the following topics in small groups.

Question 1: Is fighting the only way of resolving differences of opinion? What else can be done to reach a mutually acceptable settlement ?

Answer: For discussion at class level. However, a brief answer is given below :

It is quite natural amongst human beings to have differences of opinions amongst themselves. But I think fighting should be the last resort to settle the differences of opinions. There are so many ways to resolve the differences, for instance, these can be done by mutual negotiations and discussions. This is also true about the different nations who have differences. Instead of resorting to war, they should go for amicable negotiations. War can prove too destructive in modern times.

Question 2: Have you ever been in a serious fight only to realise later that it was unnecessary and futile ? Share your experiences/views with others frankly and honestly.

Answer: Yes, many a times, I have got agitated over small matters and had a serious fight with my dear friends. It is mostly caused by some sort of misunderstanding. For some time we remain annoyed with each other or even stop talking also. But later on, I always realise that I have been wrong. I feel so when the misunderstanding is removed. I get agitated first, but I am also the first to resolve the matter and apologise, if necessary. I think, when I grow up, I will be more mature to control myself and won't indulge in fights.

Question 3: Why do some of us find it necessary to prove that we are better than others ? Will you be amused or annoyed to read the following sign at the back of the

car in front of you? I may be going slow but I am ahead of you.

Answer: A lot of people have the tendency, like the warrior in the story, to prove themselves superior to others. But one may be superior in one aspect and the other may be superior in some other things. For instance, the warrior may have claimed to be more powerful, but Ranji was better than him in swimming and diving. I don't like people like the owner of the car who had put the sign: 'I may be going slow but I am ahead of you'. It does not reflect good taste. I don't get amused at such things. I don't like people who show off and try to prove themselves better.

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