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Class-X

English

Footprints without Feet

Chapter-2

The Thief's Story

Part - 2



Ruskin Bond

Neha Rajvanshi

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When I was on the road, I began to run. I had the notes at my waist, held there by the string of my pyjamas. I slowed down to a walk and counted the notes: 600 rupees in fifties! I could live like an oil-rich Arab for a week or two.

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Dashed : तेजी से भागना

When I reached the station I did not stop at the ticket office (I had never bought a ticket in my life) but dashed straight to the platform. The Lucknow Express was just moving out. The train had still to pick up speed and I should have been able to jump into one of the carriages,

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Deserted : खाली

but I hesitated — for some reason I can't explain — and I lost the chance to get away. When the train had gone, I found myself standing alone on the deserted platform. I had no idea where to spend the night. I had no friends,

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Curious : जिज्ञासु

believing that friends were more trouble than help. And I did not want to make anyone curious by staying at one of the small hotels near the station. The only person I knew really well was the man I had robbed. Leaving the station, I walked slowly through the bazaar.

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In my short career as a thief, I had made a study of men's faces when they had lost their goods. The greedy man showed fear; the rich man showed anger; the poor man showed acceptance. But I knew that Anil's face, when he discovered the theft, would show only a touch of sadness.

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Chilly : अत्यधिक ठण्ड़

Drizzle : बूँदाबाँदी

Not for the loss of money, but for the loss of trust.

I found myself in the maidan and sat down on a bench. The night was chilly — it was early November — and a light drizzle added to my discomfort. Soon it was raining quite heavily.

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Stuck : चिपक जाना

Damp : गीला होना



My shirt and pyjamas stuck to my skin, and a cold wind blew the rain across my face.

I went back to the bazaar and sat down in the shelter of the clock tower. The clock showed midnight. I felt for the notes. They were damp from the rain. Anil's money.

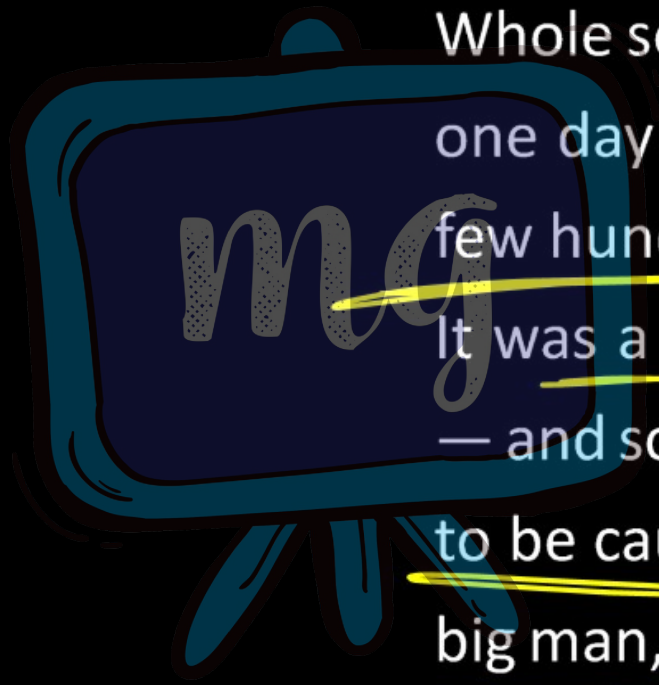
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In the morning he would probably have given me two or three rupees to go to the cinema, but now I had it all. I couldn't cook his meals, run to the bazaar or learn to write whole sentences any more. I had forgotten about them in the excitement of the theft.

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Whole sentences, I knew, could one day bring me more than a few hundred rupees. It was a simple matter to steal — and sometimes just as simple to be caught. But to be a really big man, a clever and respected man, was something else.

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Undetected : बिना पता लगे

I should go back to Anil, I told myself, if only to learn to read and write.

I hurried back to the room feeling very nervous, for it is much easier to steal something than to return it undetected. I opened the door quietly, then stood in the doorway,

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in clouded moonlight. Anil was still asleep. I crept to the head of the bed, and my hand came up with the notes. I felt his breath on my hand. I remained still for a minute. Then my hand found the edge of the mattress, and slipped under it with the notes.

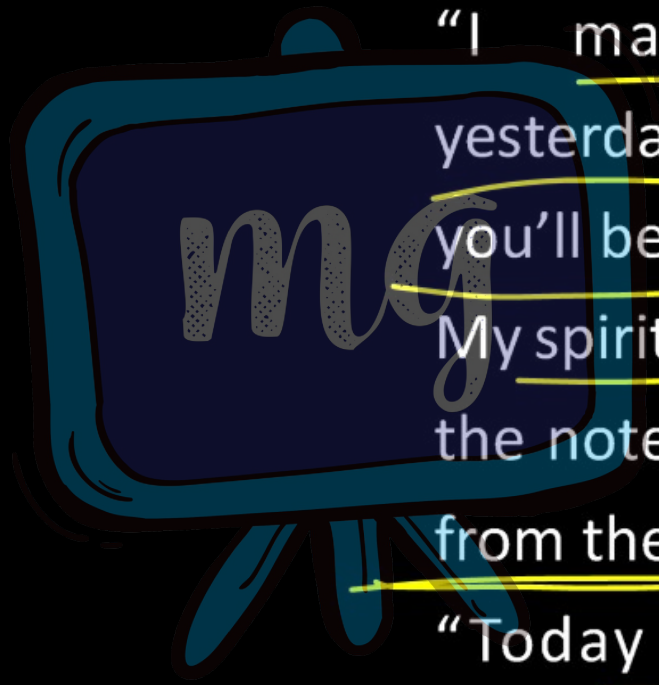
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I awoke late next morning to find that Anil had already made the tea. He stretched out his hand towards me. There was a fifty-rupee note between his fingers. My heart sank. I thought I had been discovered.

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"I made some money yesterday," he explained. "Now you'll be paid regularly."

My spirits rose. But when I took the note, I saw it was still wet from the night's rain.

"Today we'll start writing sentences," he said.

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He knew. But neither his lips nor his eyes showed anything. I smiled at Anil in my most appealing way. And the smile came by itself, without any effort.

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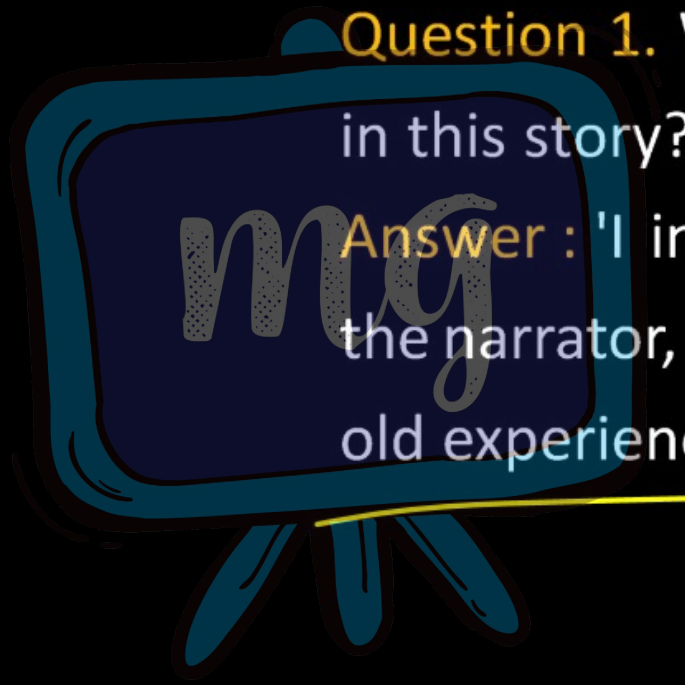
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Comprehension

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Question 1. Who does 'I' refer to in this story?

Answer : 'I in this story refers to the narrator, who is a fifteen years old experienced thief.

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Question 2. What is he "a fairly successful hand" at?

Answer : He is a 'a fairly successful hand' at stealing things because he is a thief.

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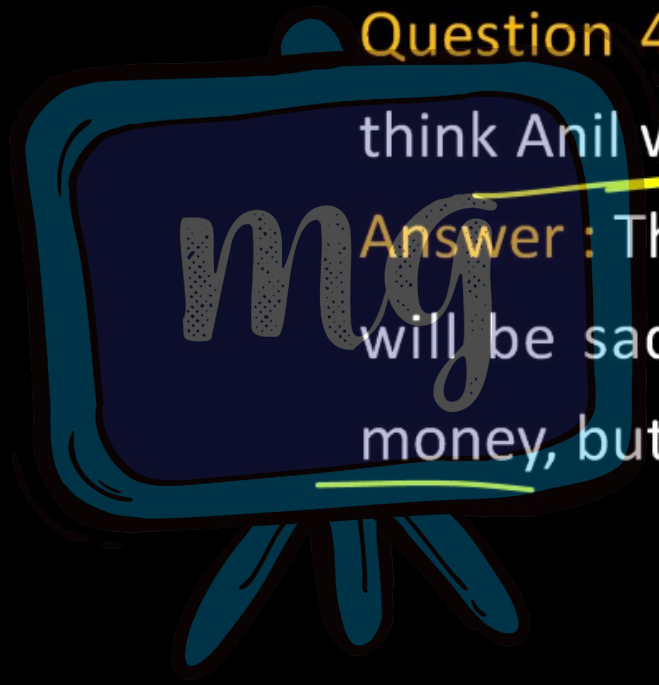
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Question 3. What does he get from Anil in return for his work?

Answer : He gets from Anil in return for his work, a place for sleeping and food to eat.

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Question 4. How does the thief think Anil will react to the theft?

Answer : The thief thinks that Anil will be sad. Not for the loss of money, but for the loss of trust.

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Question 5. What does he say about the different reactions of people when they are robbed?

Answer : He says that a greedy man shows fear. A rich man shows anger. A poor man shows acceptance. There are different reactions of people when they are robbed.

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Question 6. Does Anil realise that he has been robbed?

Answer : I think Anil does realise that he has been robbed. Because the notes were wet and he knew it was raining yesterday night. But he does not show it. Persons like Anil have a large heart. They do not attach importance to money.

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Anil reviews the situation.

Then be decides to overlook Hari Singh's theft.

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Question 7. What are Hari Singh's reactions to the prospect of receiving an education? Do they change over time? What makes him return to Anil?

Answer : Hari Singh's reactions to the possibility of receiving an education do not undergo a change. In the beginning,

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he thinks one things. It is that if he wrote like an educated man he could achieve success for money. Later, he feels that if he wrote whole sentences, he would get more than a few hundred rupees. He feels that he can earn much more money if he gets education, and he can be a big,

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respected and clever man.

He returns to Anil because Anil trusts him, feeds him and teaches him. He can learn to read and write properly staying with Anil.