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# CLASS – 10

## ENGLISH

## Footprints without Feet

## CH-2 : The Thief's Story

### Part – 1

### An Unlikely Friendship

ARPITA SHARMA

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# OVERVIEW

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1. An Unlikely Friendship
2. The Dilemma and Test of Character



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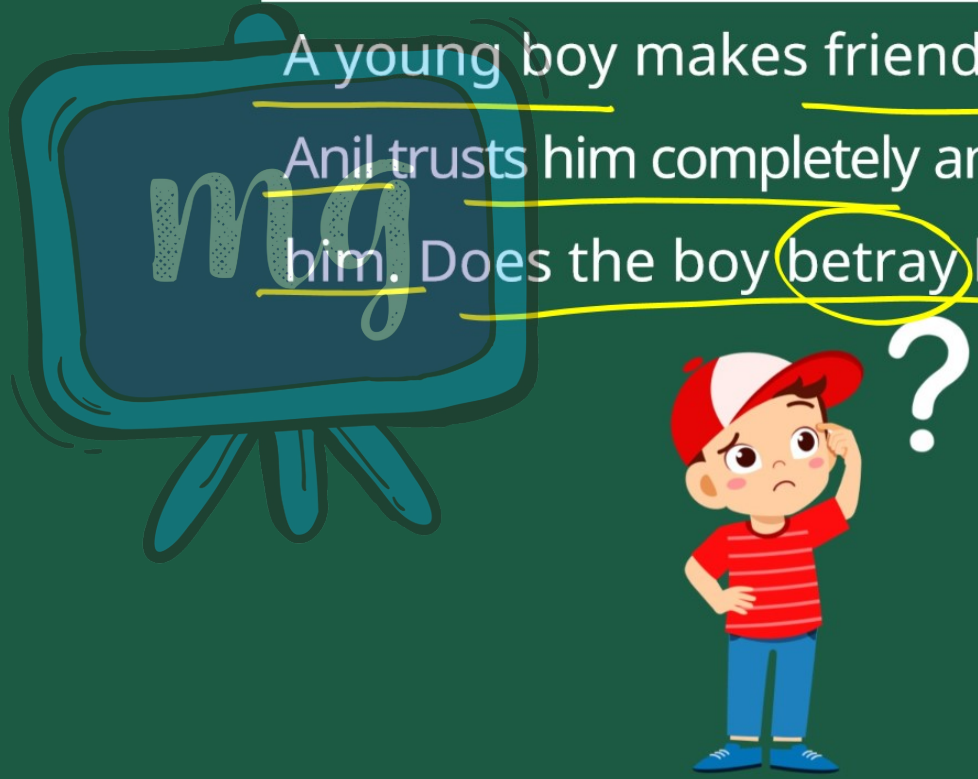
Ruskin Bond (born 19, May 1934) is an Indian author. His first novel, The Room on the Roof, published in 1956, received the 'John Llewellyn Rhys Prize' (literary award). Bond has authored more than 500 short stories, essays, and novels which includes 69 books for children.

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# BEFORE YOU READ

A young boy makes friends with Anil. Anil trusts him completely and employs him. Does the boy betray his trust?



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Narrator

I was still a thief when I met Anil. And though only 15, I was an experienced and fairly successful hand.

Anil was watching a wrestling match when I approached him. He was about 25 – a tall, lean fellow – and he looked easy-going, kind and simple

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Approached | : | निकट जाना |
| Lean | : | पतला |

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enough for my purpose. I hadn't had much luck of late and thought I might be able to get into the young man's confidence.

"You look a bit of a wrestler yourself," I said. A little flattery helps in making friends.

Flattery : चापलूसी

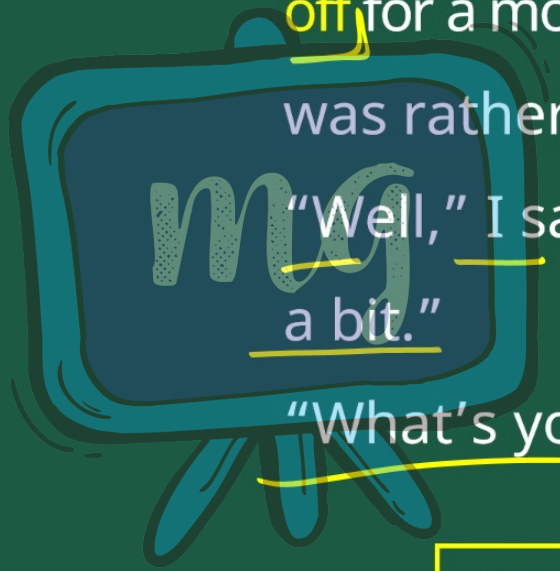
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"So do you," he replied, which put me off for a moment because at that time I was rather thin.

"Well," I said modestly, "I do wrestle a bit."

"What's your name?"



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Put me off | : | रूचि खो देना |
| Modestly | : | विनम्रता से |

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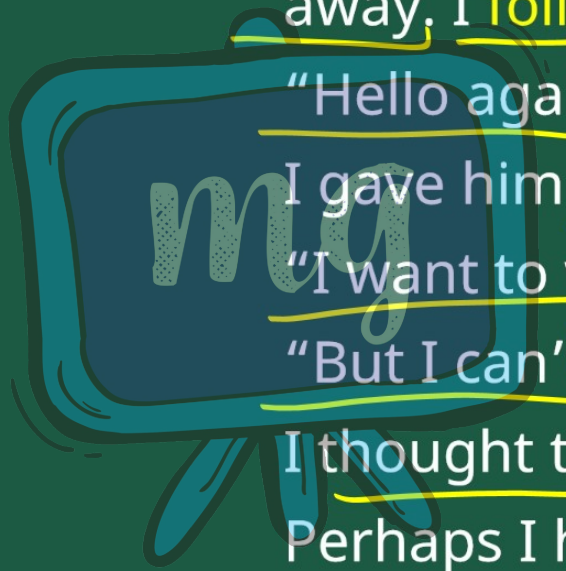
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"Hari Singh," I lied. I took a new name every month. That kept me ahead of the police and my former employers. After this introduction, Anil talked about the well-oiled wrestlers who were grunting, lifting and throwing each other about.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Former | : | पूर्वकाल का/के |
| Introduction | : | परिचय |
| Well-oiled | : | आसानी से काम करना |
| Grunting | : | दर्द/गुस्से से धीरे बोलना |

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I didn't have much to say. Anil walked away. I followed casually.
"Hello again," he said.
I gave him my most appealing smile.
"I want to work for you," I said.
"But I can't pay you."
I thought that over for a minute.
Perhaps I had misjudged my man.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Follow(ed) | : | पीछे जाना |
| Appealing | : | आकर्षक |

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I asked, “Can you feed me?”

“Can you cook?”

“I can cook,” I lied again.

“If you can cook, then may be I can feed you.”

He took me to his room over the Jumna Sweet Shop and told me I could sleep on the balcony.

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But the meal I cooked that night must have been terrible because Anil gave it to a stray dog and told me to be off. But I just hung around, smiling in my most appealing way, and he couldn't help laughing.

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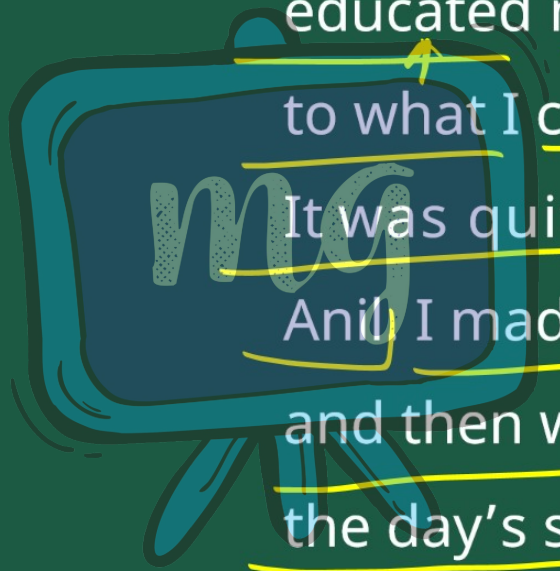


Later, he patted me on the head and said never mind, he'd teach me to cook. He also taught me to write my name and said he would soon teach me to write whole sentences and to add numbers. I was grateful.

Patted : थपथपाना

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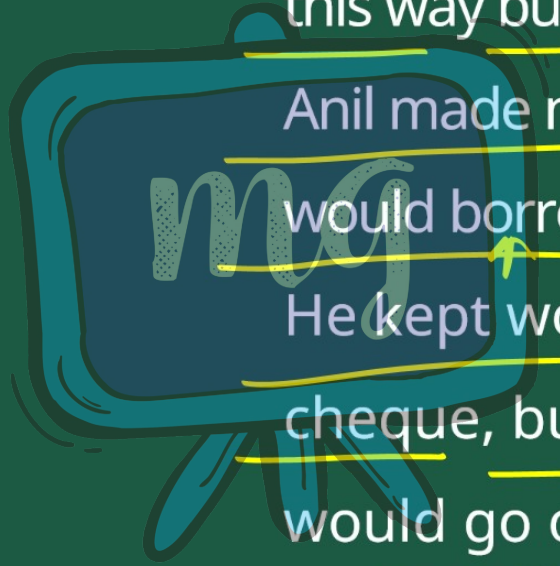
I knew that once I could write like an educated man there would be no limit to what I could achieve.

It was quite pleasant working for Anil. I made the tea in the morning and then would take my time buying the day's supplies, usually making a profit of about a rupee a day.

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I think he knew I made a little money this way but he did not seem to mind. Anil made money by fits and starts. He would borrow one week, lend the next. He kept worrying about his next cheque, but as soon as it arrived he would go out and celebrate.

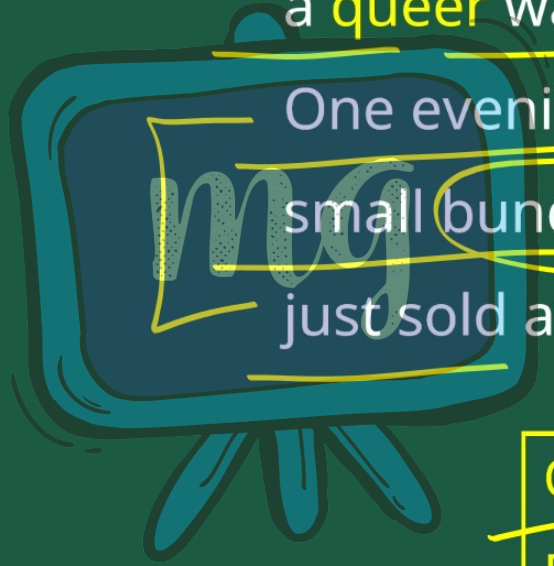


Fits and starts : अनियमित

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It seems he wrote for magazines —
a queer way to make a living!
One evening he came home with a
small bundle of notes, saying he had
just sold a book to a publisher.



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Queer | : | अजीब |
| Publisher | : | प्रकाशक |

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At night, I saw him tuck the money under the mattress.

I had been working for Anil for almost a month and, apart from cheating on the shopping, had not done anything in my line of work. I had every opportunity for doing so.

Tuck : छिपाकर रखना

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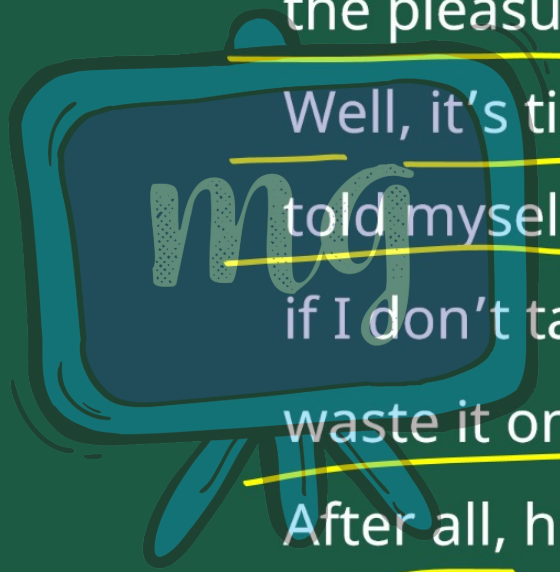
Anil had given me a key to the door, and I could come and go as I pleased. He was the most trusting person I had ever met.

And that is why it was so difficult to rob him. It's easy to rob a greedy man, because he can afford to be robbed; but it's difficult to rob a careless man sometimes he doesn't even notice

Rob : चोरी करना

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he's been robbed and that takes all the pleasure out of the work.

Well, it's time I did some real work, I told myself; I'm out of practice. And if I don't take the money, he'll only waste it on his friends.

After all, he doesn't even pay me.

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# LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Complexities of Human Relationship
2. Power of Empathy

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# ASSESSMENT

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**1** What was the narrator's primary motive for approaching Anil?

A To learn a new skill.

B To find a genuine friendship.

C To exploit Anil's trusting nature.

D To escape his past life of crime.

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# ASSESSMENT

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**2** What significant change did Anil bring about in the narrator's life?

A. He taught the narrator to be a skilled thief.

B. He helped the narrator develop a sense of honesty.

C. He provided the narrator with a stable job.

D. He encouraged the narrator to pursue education.

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# ASSESSMENT

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**3** How did Hari Singh earn a little extra money?

A By working elsewhere in the evening.

B By stealing from Anil's friends.

C By making a profit while buying supplies.

D By writing for magazines.