Chapter 1

Kali and the Rat Snake

By-Zai Whitaker

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

➢ Read the lesson carefully, underline the difficult words and refer to the dictionary to comprehend difficult words.

About author:

Zai Whitaker (Zahida Futehali) was born in 1954 in Mumbai, Maharashtra, did her schooling and college education there, and then moved to Chennai where she worked at the Chennai Snake Park and Crocodile Bank for many years. Zai's interests are natural history, writing, and teaching. Her books Andaman's Boy and Kali and the Rat Snake have been published by Tulika.

HW

Read and learn difficult words meanings, page 9-10

FIND OUT

1. Animal Wrangler

2.Veterinarian

3. Apiarist

4. Dairy Farmer

5. Conservationist

6. Khthyologist

7.Zoologist

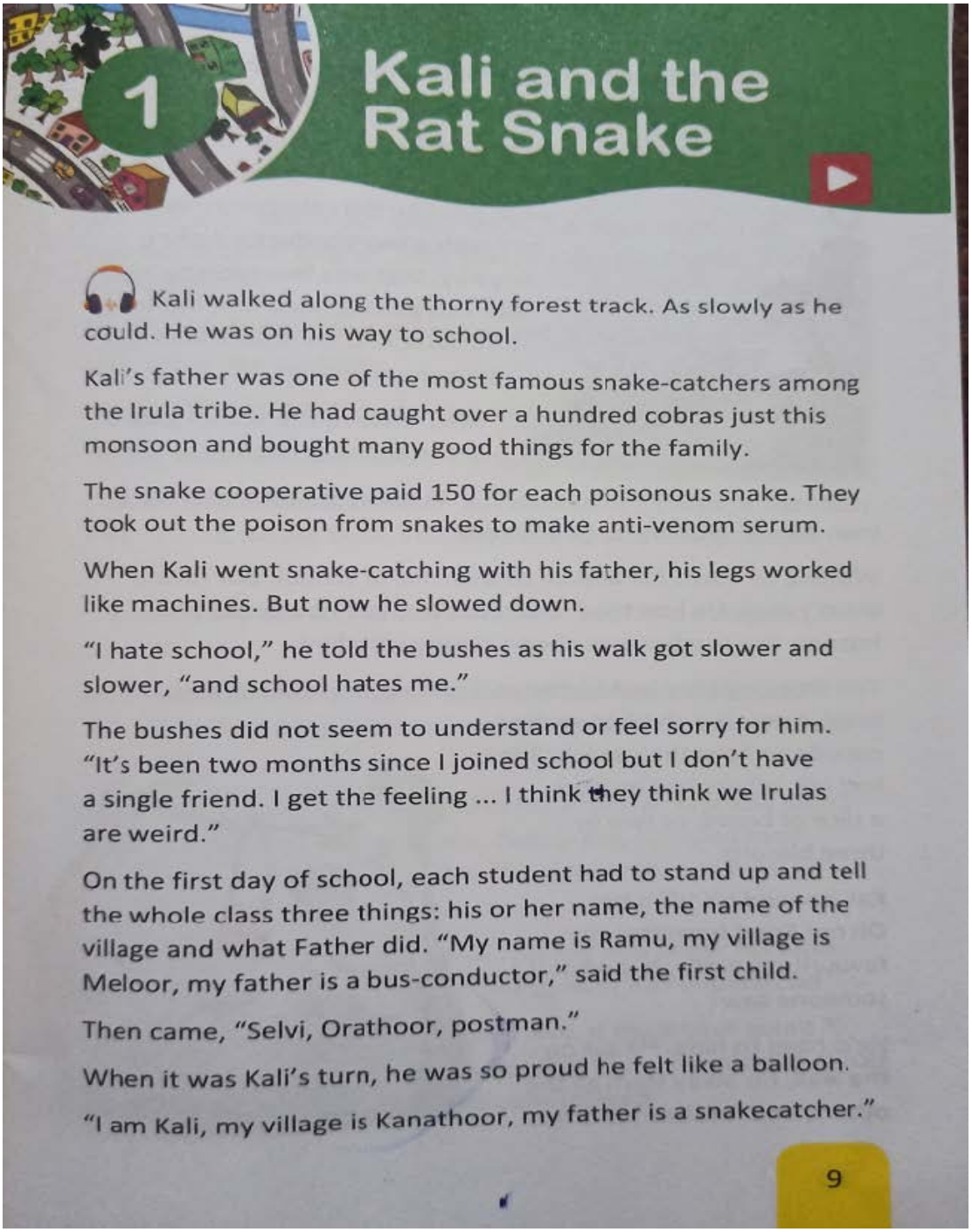
8. Farrier

CHAPTER 1

Kali and the Rat Snake

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About the author (see e-content)



1

Kali and the Rat Snake

Kali walked along the thorny forest track. As slowly as he could. He was on his way to school.

Kali's father was one of the most famous snake-catchers among the Irula tribe. He had caught over a hundred cobras just this monsoon and bought many good things for the family.

The snake cooperative paid 150 for each poisonous snake. They took out the poison from snakes to make anti-venom serum.

When Kali went snake-catching with his father, his legs worked like machines. But now he slowed down.

"I hate school," he told the bushes as his walk got slower and slower, "and school hates me."

The bushes did not seem to understand or feel sorry for him. "It's been two months since I joined school but I don't have a single friend. I get the feeling ... I think they think we Irulas are weird."

On the first day of school, each student had to stand up and tell the whole class three things: his or her name, the name of the village and what Father did. "My name is Ramu, my village is Meloor, my father is a bus-conductor," said the first child.

Then came, "Selvi, Orathoor, postman."

When it was Kali's turn, he was so proud he felt like a balloon.

"I am Kali, my village is Kanathoor, my father is a snakecatcher."

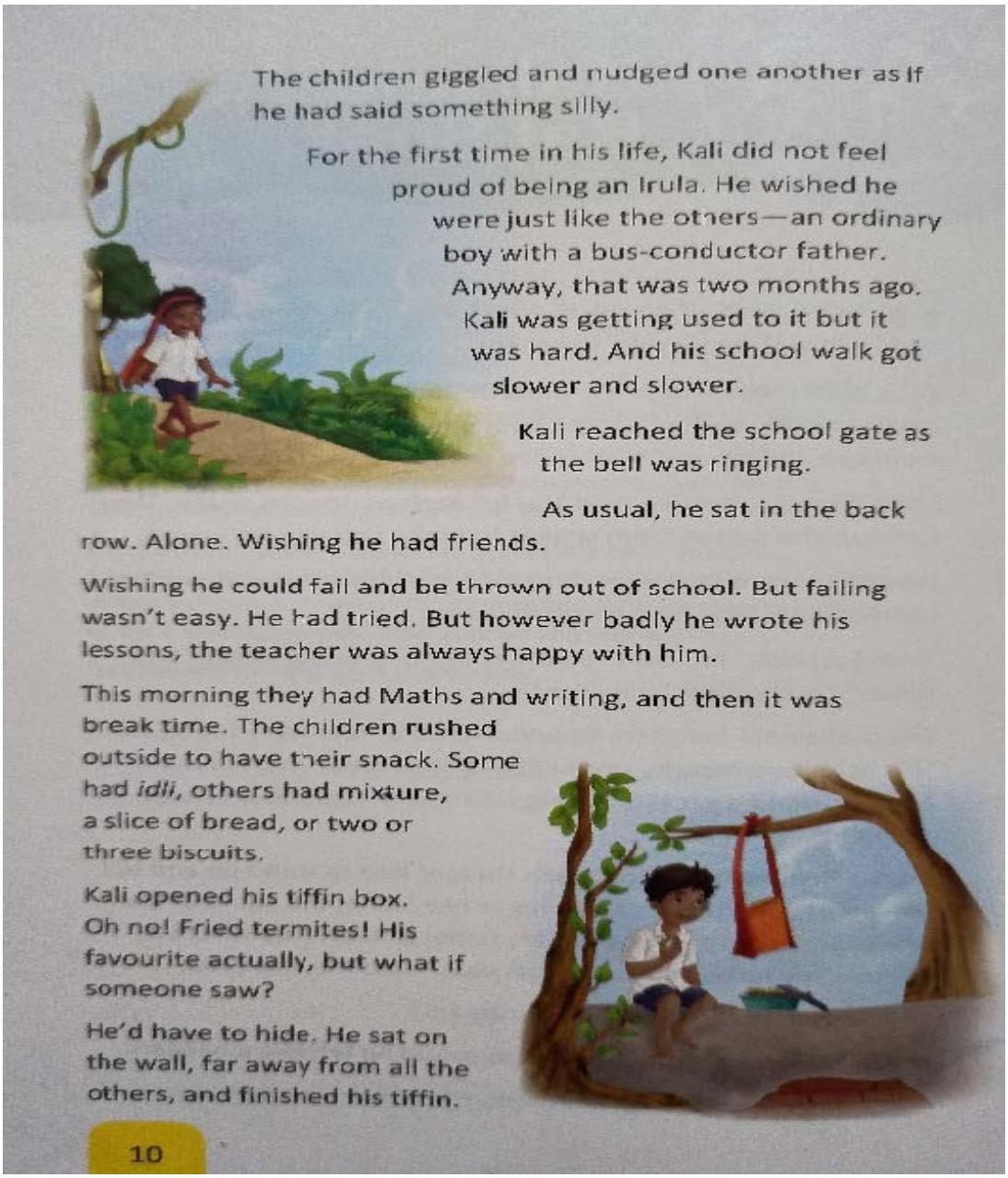
9

The narrator is telling that as Kali was going to schoo passing from the wild forest, he remembered all the happy moments that he had spend with his father while catching snakes in the forest, and sold them to the cooperative for the livelihood. He was not feeling happy to go to school that day as it passed two months but had no friends

while whoever goes to school for first day had to introduce about itself. He was feeling shy to introduce about himself as his father was a snake catcher and belong from the Irula tribe.

HW

Read the chapter and learn the difficult word meanings.



The children giggled and nudged one another as if he had said something silly.

For the first time in his life, Kali did not feel proud of being an Irula. He wished he were just like the others—an ordinary boy with a bus-conductor father. Anyway, that was two months ago. Kali was getting used to it but it was hard. And his school walk got slower and slower.

Kali reached the school gate as the bell was ringing.

As usual, he sat in the back row. Alone. Wishing he had friends.

Wishing he could fail and be thrown out of school. But failing wasn't easy. He had tried. But however badly he wrote his lessons, the teacher was always happy with him.

This morning they had Maths and writing, and then it was break time. The children rushed outside to have their snack. Some had *idli*, others had mixture, a slice of bread, or two or three biscuits.

Kali opened his tiffin box. Oh no! Fried termites! His favourite actually, but what if someone saw?

He'd have to hide. He sat on the wall, far away from all the others, and finished his tiffin.

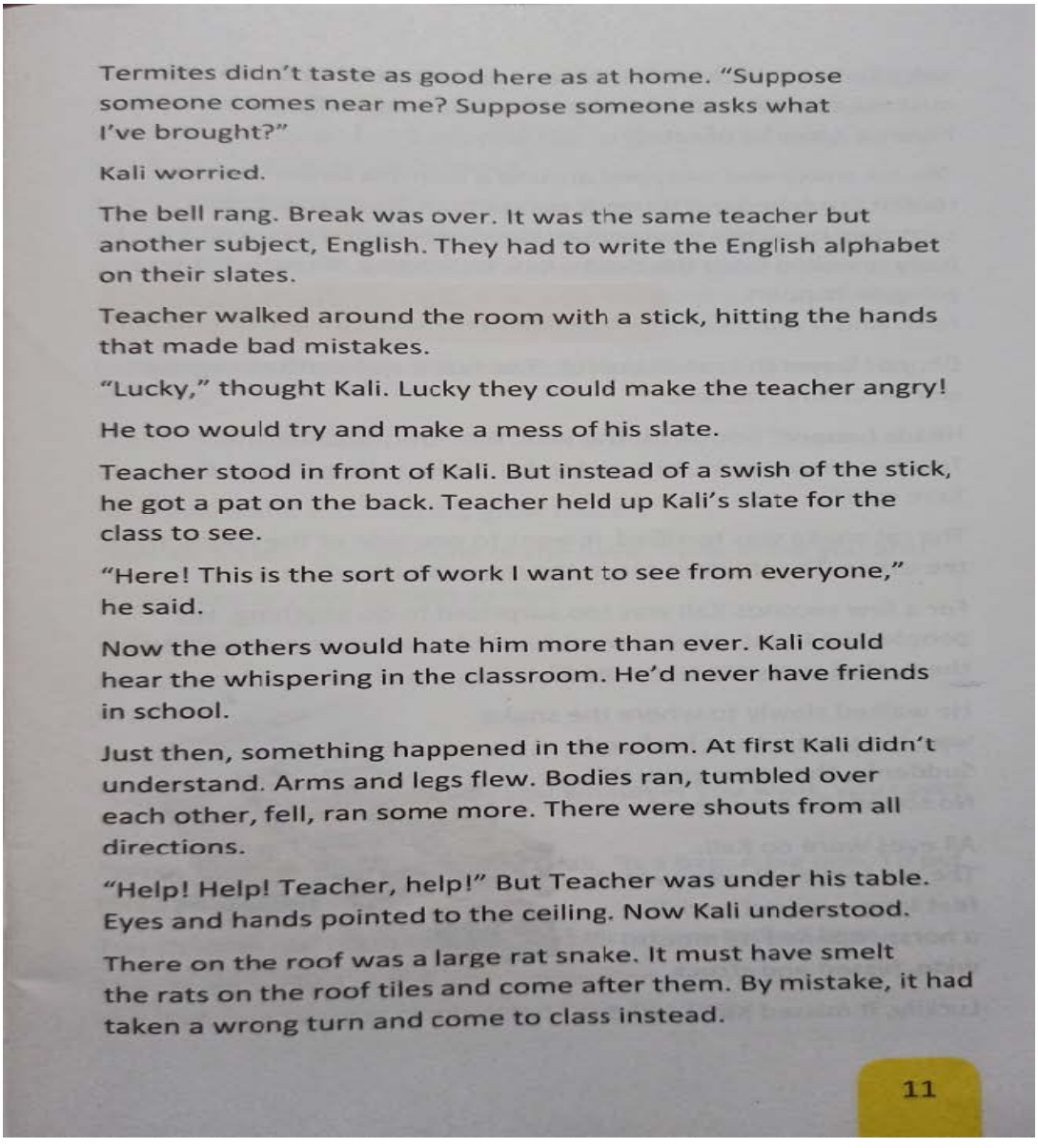
10

He was still walking towards the school as he remembered what happen once when Kali's turn came for introducing about himself in the classroom as the teacher had asked, all the students started laughing at him and he felt an insult for the first time and had wished to have parents of other boys rather than belonging from the Irula

tribe. He had reached School late and wished that she should also had at least a friend and the bell rang so that morning maths and writing was taught by the teacher and then they had their break ok so all the children rushed out for having their own lunch while Kali was finding separate place where no one could disturb him for the lunch as he had brought termites for the lunch.

HW

Read the chapter and learn the difficult word meanings.



Termites didn't taste as good here as at home. "Suppose someone comes near me? Suppose someone asks what I've brought?"

Kali worried.

The bell rang. Break was over. It was the same teacher but another subject, English. They had to write the English alphabet on their slates.

Teacher walked around the room with a stick, hitting the hands that made bad mistakes.

"Lucky," thought Kali. Lucky they could make the teacher angry!

He too would try and make a mess of his slate.

Teacher stood in front of Kali. But instead of a swish of the stick, he got a pat on the back. Teacher held up Kali's slate for the class to see.

"Here! This is the sort of work I want to see from everyone," he said.

Now the others would hate him more than ever. Kali could hear the whispering in the classroom. He'd never have friends in school.

Just then, something happened in the room. At first Kali didn't understand. Arms and legs flew. Bodies ran, tumbled over each other, fell, ran some more. There were shouts from all directions.

"Help! Help! Teacher, help!" But Teacher was under his table. Eyes and hands pointed to the ceiling. Now Kali understood.

There on the roof was a large rat snake. It must have smelt the rats on the roof tiles and come after them. By mistake, it had taken a wrong turn and come to class instead.

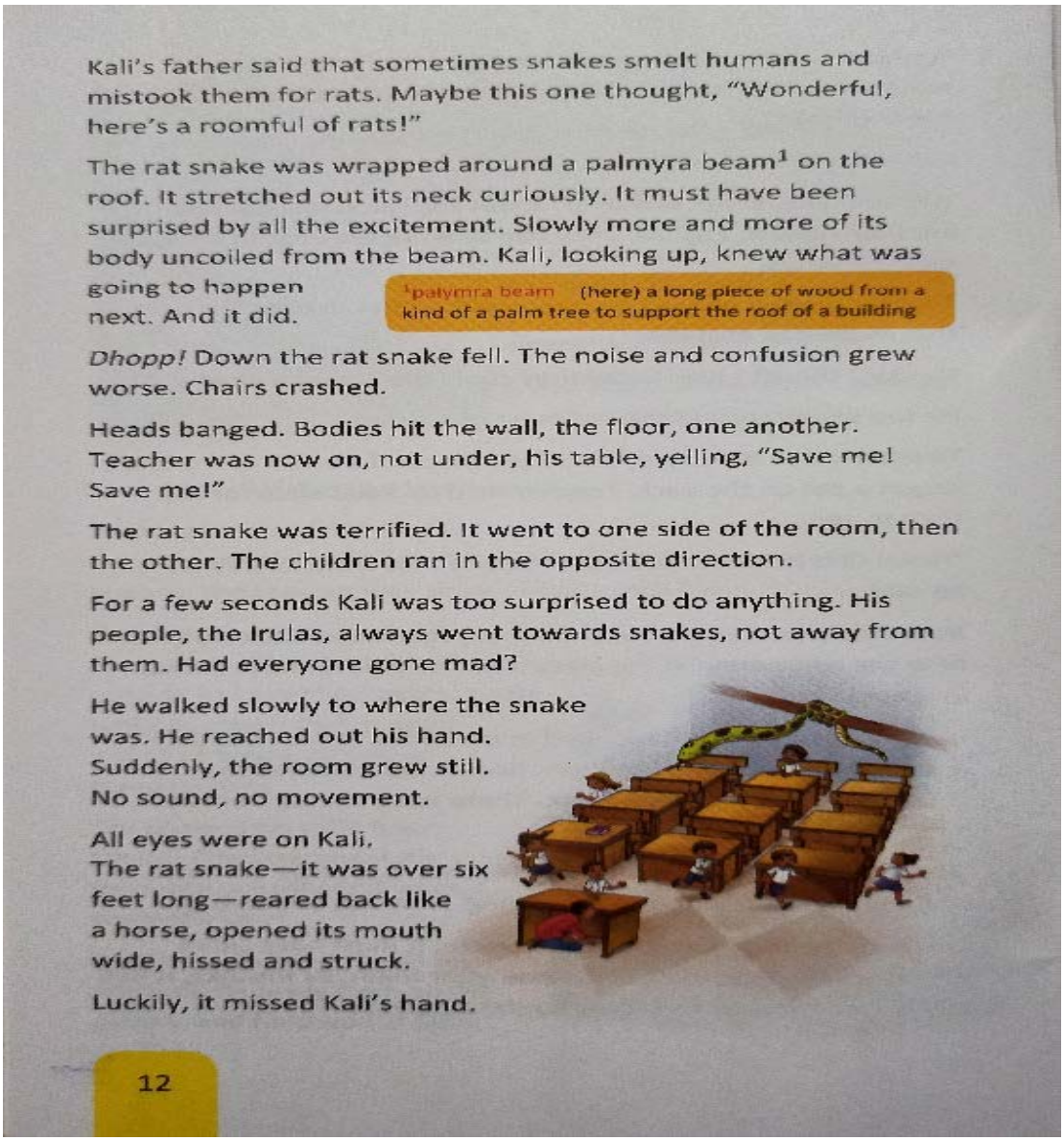
11

After lunch the class resumed again and the teacher asked the students to write English alphabet on their slates and Kali was appreciated amongst all the student for having a good handwriting

and showing to the class as an example suddenly everybody he started making noise and stumbled over each other . Shouts came from all directions of the classroom and the teacher himself hid under the table pointing at the ceiling for help while Kali I was in confusion what was happening so we finally understood about the rat snake.

HW

Read the chapter and learn the difficult word meanings.



Kali's father said that sometimes snakes smelt humans and mistook them for rats. Maybe this one thought, "Wonderful, here's a roomful of rats!"

The rat snake was wrapped around a palmyra beam[1] on the roof. It stretched out its neck curiously. It must have been surprised by all the excitement. Slowly more and more of its body uncoiled from the beam. Kali, looking up, knew what was going to happen next. And it did.

[1]palymra beam (here) a long piece of wood from a kind of a palm tree to support the roof of a building

Dhopp! Down the rat snake fell. The noise and confusion grew worse. Chairs crashed.

Heads banged. Bodies hit the wall, the floor, one another. Teacher was now on, not under, his table, yelling, "Save me! Save me!"

The rat snake was terrified. It went to one side of the room, then the other. The children ran in the opposite direction.

For a few seconds Kali was too surprised to do anything. His people, the Irulas, always went towards snakes, not away from them. Had everyone gone mad?

He walked slowly to where the snake was. He reached out his hand. Suddenly, the room grew still. No sound, no movement.

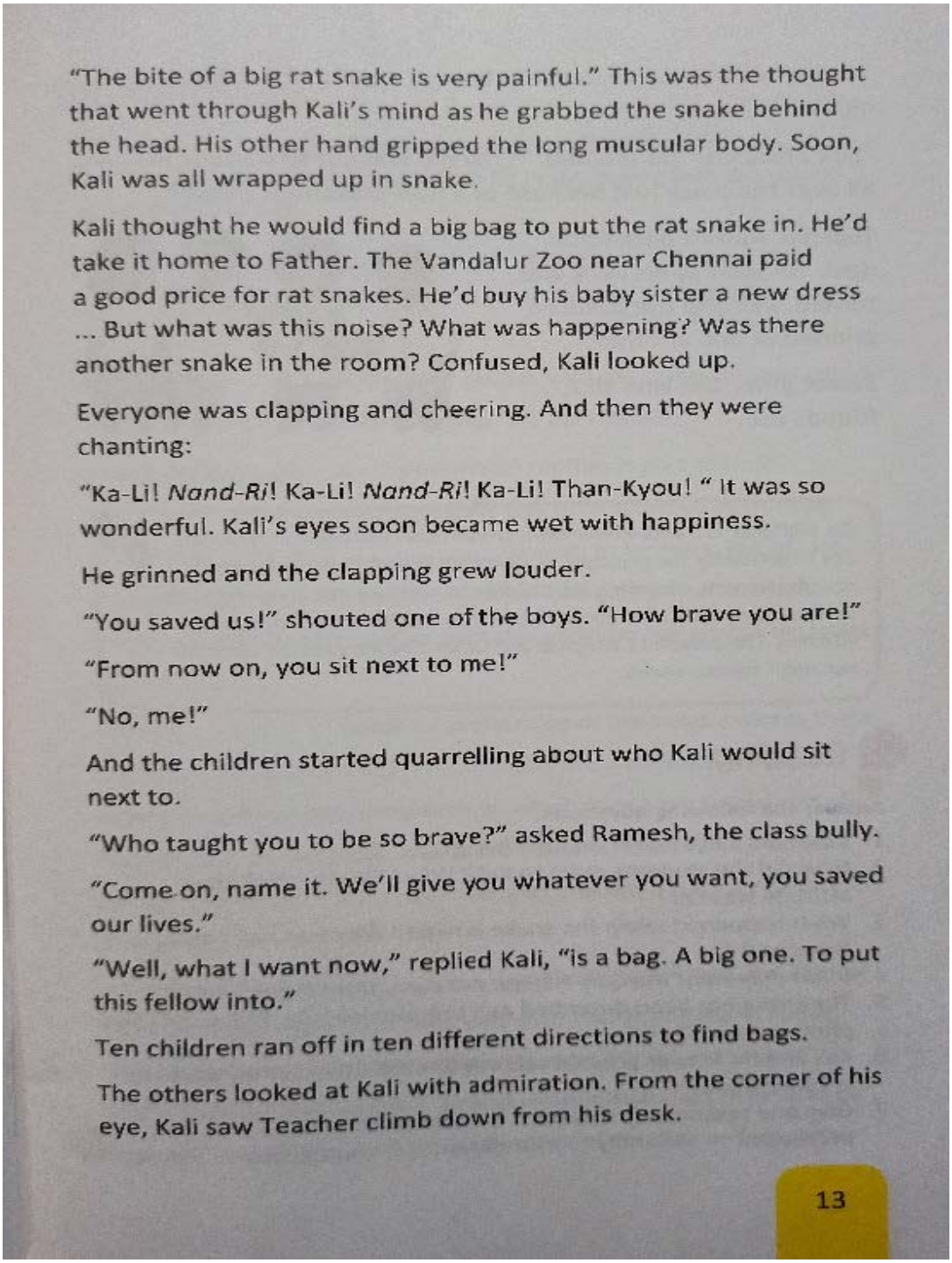
All eyes were on Kali. The rat snake—it was over six feet long—reared back like a horse, opened its mouth wide, hissed and struck.

Luckily, it missed Kali's hand.

12

Kali remembered what his father had told him about the rat snake and so he looked on the roof and seen the rat snake which was entering inside the classroom and suddenly uncoiled itself and fallen in the classroom. Everybody gone mad and pindrop silence prevailed

in the classroom while everybody was looking what Kali was doing and this time the teacher was on the desk. Finally Kali caught the snake.



"The bite of a big rat snake is very painful." This was the thought that went through Kali's mind as he grabbed the snake behind the head. His other hand gripped the long muscular body. Soon, Kali was all wrapped up in snake.

Kali thought he would find a big bag to put the rat snake in. He'd take it home to Father. The Vandalur Zoo near Chennai paid a good price for rat snakes. He'd buy his baby sister a new dress ... But what was this noise? What was happening? Was there another snake in the room? Confused, Kali looked up.

Everyone was clapping and cheering. And then they were chanting:

"Ka-Li! *Nand-Ri*! Ka-Li! *Nand-Ri*! Ka-Li! Than-Kyou! " It was so wonderful. Kali's eyes soon became wet with happiness.

He grinned and the clapping grew louder.

"You saved us!" shouted one of the boys. "How brave you are!"

"From now on, you sit next to me!"

"No, me!"

And the children started quarrelling about who Kali would sit next to.

"Who taught you to be so brave?" asked Ramesh, the class bully.

"Come on, name it. We'll give you whatever you want, you saved our lives."

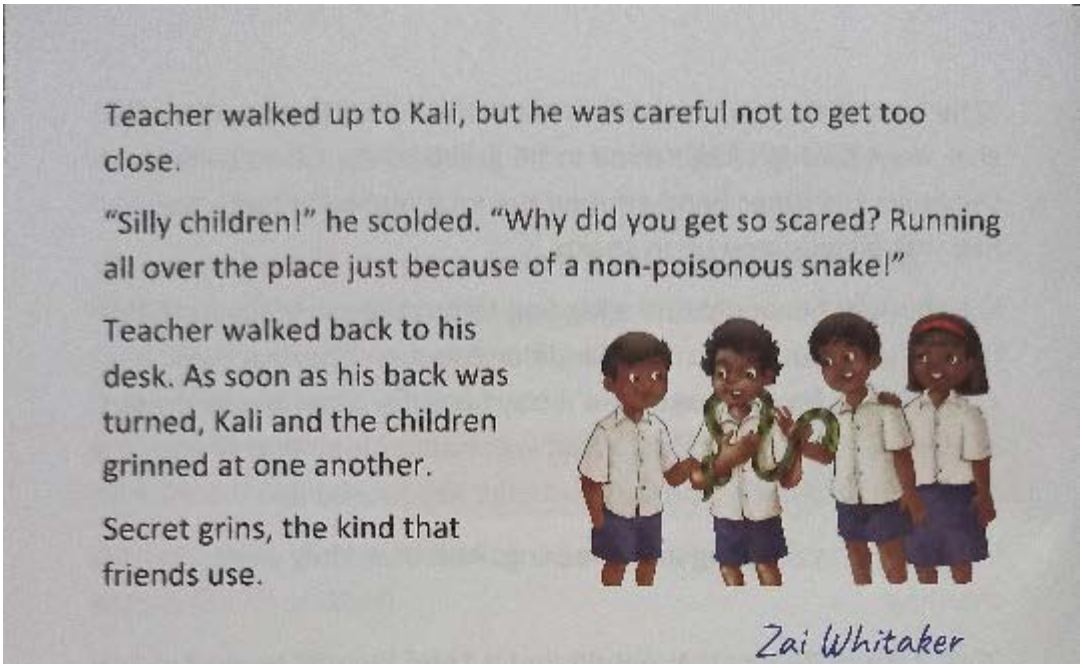
"Well, what I want now," replied Kali, "is a bag. A big one. To put this fellow into."

Ten children ran off in ten different directions to find bags.

The others looked at Kali with admiration. From the corner of his eye, Kali saw Teacher climb down from his desk.

13

After catching the snake Khali was looking for a big back so that he could give his father to sell in the Vandalur Zoo. But to his surprise he heard another noise as everybody appreciated him for his bravery and all the the students now offered him for their friendship and admired him a lot while the teacher came down from the desk.



The teacher came near Kali and boosting himself and telling the students not to get fear of the non poisonous snake. As soon as the teacher walked back to his desk turning his back the children started green at one another and then after Kali had many friends in the school.

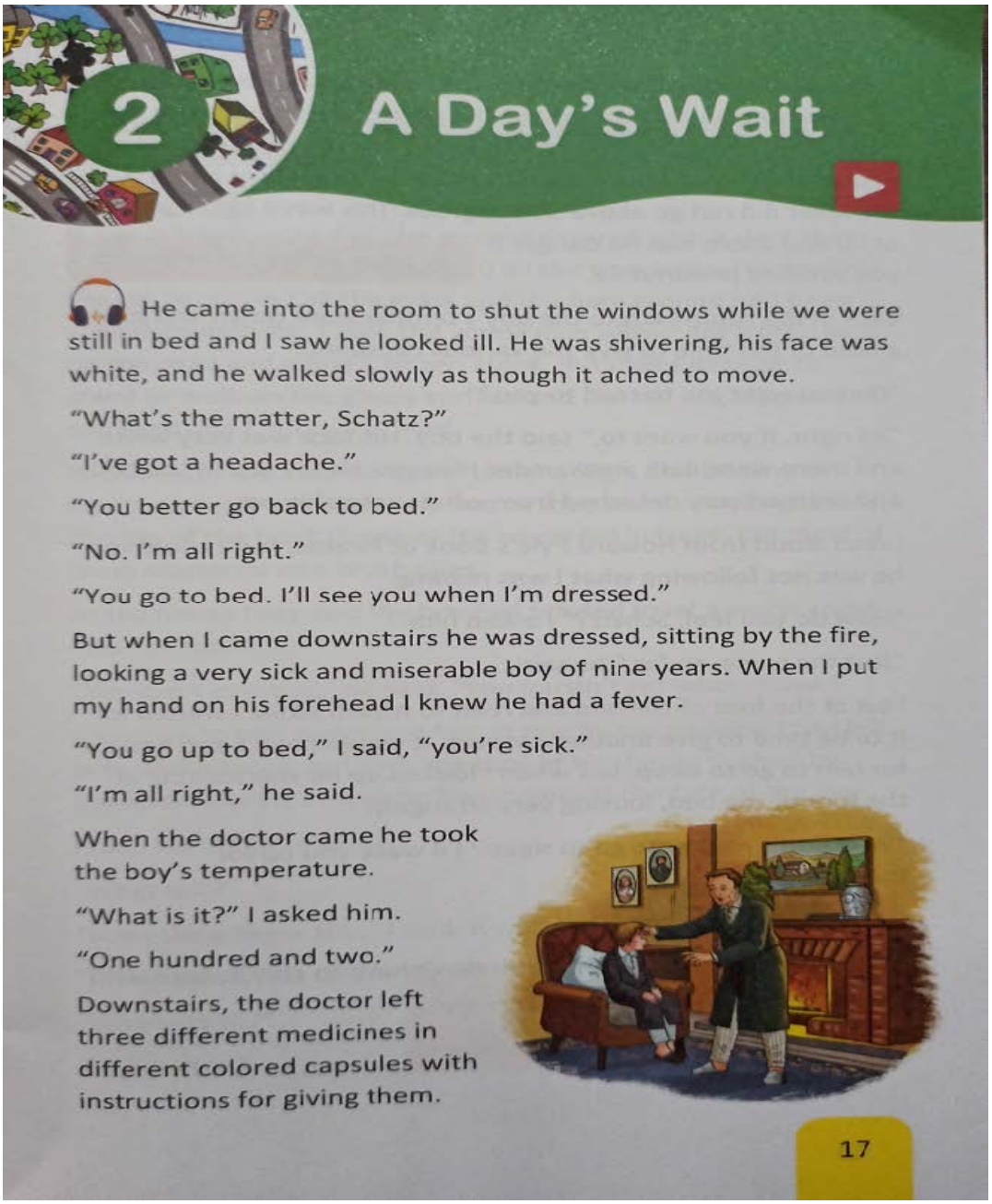
Model: Never discriminate anybody.

HW

Read the whole chapter and complete all the questions and answers.

CHAPTER 2
A Day's wait
By Ernest Hemingway

About the author (see e-content)



2

A Day's Wait

He came into the room to shut the windows while we were still in bed and I saw he looked ill. He was shivering, his face was white, and he walked slowly as though it ached to move.

"What's the matter, Schatz?"

"I've got a headache."

"You better go back to bed."

"No. I'm all right."

"You go to bed. I'll see you when I'm dressed."

But when I came downstairs he was dressed, sitting by the fire, looking a very sick and miserable boy of nine years. When I put my hand on his forehead I knew he had a fever.

"You go up to bed," I said, "you're sick."

"I'm all right," he said.

When the doctor came he took the boy's temperature.

"What is it?" I asked him.

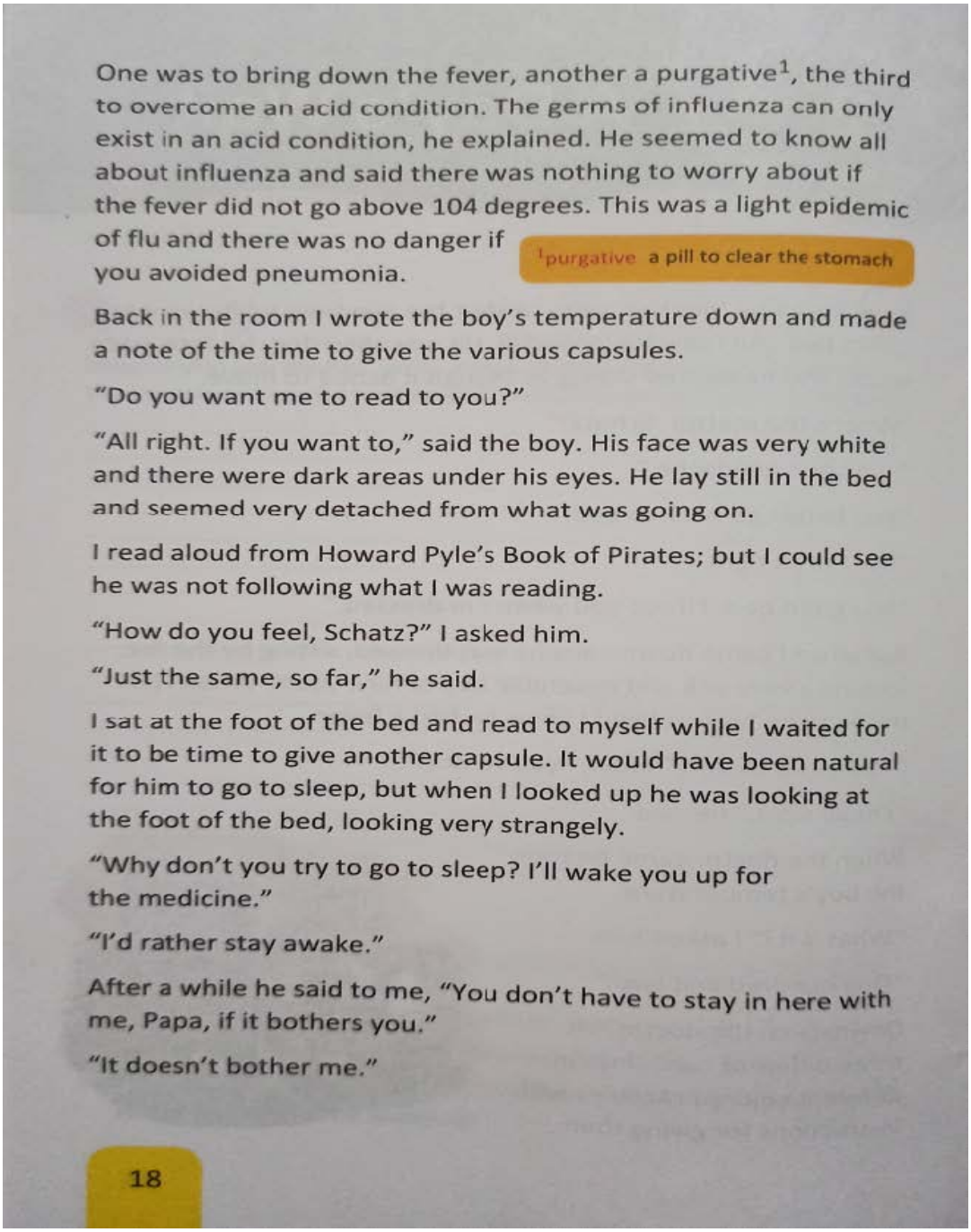
"One hundred and two."

Downstairs, the doctor left three different medicines in different colored capsules with instructions for giving them.

17

The narrator is telling that the boy came to his father's room for closing the window as they were still laying on the bed. He found his son looked ill and was shivering and his face became white and walk very slowly. The boy replied that he was having a headache so the father told him to go to bed meanwhile when he will get dressed then you would see him. When father came downstair he had seen the boy was sitting by the fire looking very sick and miserable so he asked him to to go to bed and have a rest meanwhile he would call the doctor. When doctor came and examine to him and found that his

temperature was 102 degree temperature so he had prescribed three medicines .



One was to bring down the fever, another a purgative[1], the third to overcome an acid condition. The germs of influenza can only exist in an acid condition, he explained. He seemed to know all about influenza and said there was nothing to worry about if the fever did not go above 104 degrees. This was a light epidemic of flu and there was no danger if you avoided pneumonia.

[1]purgative a pill to clear the stomach

Back in the room I wrote the boy's temperature down and made a note of the time to give the various capsules.

"Do you want me to read to you?"

"All right. If you want to," said the boy. His face was very white and there were dark areas under his eyes. He lay still in the bed and seemed very detached from what was going on.

I read aloud from Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates; but I could see he was not following what I was reading.

"How do you feel, Schatz?" I asked him.

"Just the same, so far," he said.

I sat at the foot of the bed and read to myself while I waited for it to be time to give another capsule. It would have been natural for him to go to sleep, but when I looked up he was looking at the foot of the bed, looking very strangely.

"Why don't you try to go to sleep? I'll wake you up for the medicine."

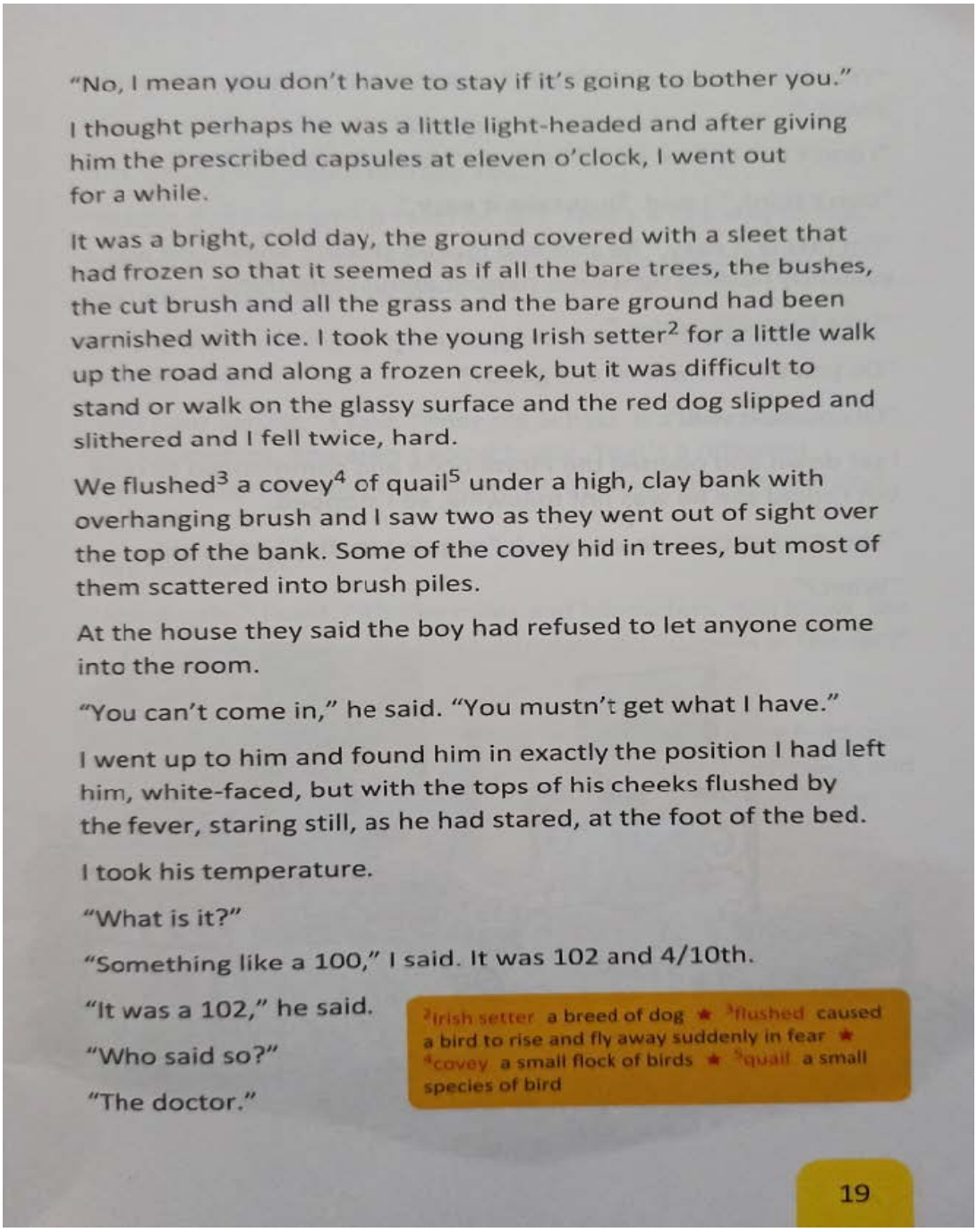
"I'd rather stay awake."

After a while he said to me, "You don't have to stay in here with me, Papa, if it bothers you."

"It doesn't bother me."

18

The father came back in the room to note down the temperature can I ask the boy should he read for him. Bad boy I was simply lying on the bed and seemed very detached from what was happening to him and was not following his father what he was reading while the father sat near him and asked him to go to sleep. After a while the boy replied that he should not stay in his room if it bothered him.



"No, I mean you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you."

I thought perhaps he was a little light-headed and after giving him the prescribed capsules at eleven o'clock, I went out for a while.

It was a bright, cold day, the ground covered with a sleet that had frozen so that it seemed as if all the bare trees, the bushes, the cut brush and all the grass and the bare ground had been varnished with ice. I took the young Irish setter[2] for a little walk up the road and along a frozen creek, but it was difficult to stand or walk on the glassy surface and the red dog slipped and slithered and I fell twice, hard.

We flushed[3] a covey[4] of quail[5] under a high, clay bank with overhanging brush and I saw two as they went out of sight over the top of the bank. Some of the covey hid in trees, but most of them scattered into brush piles.

At the house they said the boy had refused to let anyone come into the room.

"You can't come in," he said. "You mustn't get what I have."

I went up to him and found him in exactly the position I had left him, white-faced, but with the tops of his cheeks flushed by the fever, staring still, as he had stared, at the foot of the bed.

I took his temperature.

"What is it?"

"Something like a 100," I said. It was 102 and 4/10th.

"It was a 102," he said.

"Who said so?"

"The doctor."

[2]Irish setter a breed of dog ★ [3]flushed caused a bird to rise and fly away suddenly in fear ★ [4]covey a small flock of birds ★ [5]quail a small species of bird

19

After giving the prescribed medicines to the boy , father went out for morning walk along with his doggy and the day was very cold and the ground was covered with frozen sleet of ice. He had fallen twice and the young doggy was walking without any difficulty. When he came back to home and checked the boys temperature he found something like a hundred degree but the boy had misunderstood that it was 102 degrees and above and so was in depression.

"Your temperature is all right," I said. "It's nothing to worry about."

"I don't worry," he said, "but I can't keep from thinking."

"Don't think," I said. "Just take it easy."

"I'm taking it easy," he said and looked straight ahead. He was evidently holding tight onto himself about something.

"Take this with water."

"Do you think it will do any good?"

"Of course it will."

I sat down and opened the Pirate book and commenced to read, but I could see he was not following, so I stopped.

"About what time do you think I'm going to die?" he asked.

"What?"



As the boy was going under depression the father made him realised that there was nothing to worry about and everything was alright and he was going to get well soon. Father started reading book for him but he was not following him rather he ask the question about when he was going to die. The father was surprised why his son was asking like that.

"About how long will it be before I die?"

"You aren't going to die. What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, yes, I am. I heard him say 102."

"People don't die with a fever of 102. That's a silly way to talk."

"I know they do. At school in France the boys told me you can't live with 44 degrees. I've got a 102."

He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o'clock in the morning.

"You poor Schatz," I said. "Poor old Schatz. It's like miles and kilometres. You aren't going to die. That's a different thermometer. On that thermometer, 37 is normal. On this kind, it's 98."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely," I said. "It's like mi es and kilometers. You know, like how many kilometers we make when we do 70 miles in the car?"

"Oh," he said.

But his gaze at the foot of the bed relaxed slowly. The hold over himself relaxed too, finally, and the next day it was very slack and he cried very easily at little things that were of no importance.

Ernest Hemingway

So finally the father made him understood that she was not going to die with a mild fever and headache as he had miss understood about what he had heard from his classmate about the temperatures as there are different thermometers for measuring different temperatures. The boy slowly got relieved from the wrong belief and and started doing all his work from the following day.

Moral: Don't believe on tell tales.

HW

Read the chapter and learn the word meanings and also complete questions and answers.

Ernest Hemingway



- Another “Lost Generation” writer
- very critical of American capitalism
- expatriate
- Served in Ambulance Corps in WWI

So who was Hemingway??



- Born in Oak Park, Illinois, 1899
- He was the son of Dr. Ed Hemingway and the
- second of six children.
- He, unlike most the authors we have talked about had two loving parents.
- Attended high school at The Oak Park and River Forest Township High School.
- His mother taught her children music and creativity.
- His father taught them the love of nature.
- Having been forbidden to join up for the First World War by his father, Ernest applied for a job as a journalist and by October 1917 Hemingway was employed by the Kansas City Star.
- He wanted to become involved in the First World War
- After only six months employment as a journalist, Ernest left the Star newspaper to the join the ambulance corps in Italy



Drawing closer to his destiny

- On July 8th 1918 Hemingway was hit by Austrian artillery, six days before his nineteenth birthday
- By December 1918 he had left the service , after serving just over 6 months, and by January 1919 he was back in America with 227 scars on his wounded leg.

After the War



- Hemingway went back to Michigan after leaving the ambulance service.
- He eventually found a job as a reporter for the Co-operative Commonwealth, a slick paper monthly magazine put out by the Co-operative Society of America.
- He gave up on his job for the Co operative Commonwealth, although he still submitted articles to the Toronto star.

Hemingway's Marriages

- Ernest Married Elizabeth Hadley Richardson on Sept. 30, 1920.
- They separated when Elizabeth found out he was having an affair with Pauline Pheifer.
- Shortly after, Hemingway married again… to Pauline Pheifer.
- Martha Gellhorn replaced Pauline at his side in 1940.
- Again his marriage failed, but this didn't discourage Ernest, he remarried again in 1946 to Mary Walsh.

Ernest and his hobbies...



An avid big-game hunter and deep sea fisherman, Hemingway was known for epitomizing the notion of being a “Man’s Man!!”

Literary Work

- Hemingway's writing style seemed simple and childlike.
- He provided descriptions of action to capture scenes.
- He made the reading of the text as close to the actual experience as possible.
- His stylistic influence on American writers has been enormous.

His Most Popular Works

- 1926- The Sun Also Rises. Ernest's first Novel.
- 1929- A Farewell to Arms. His second Novel.
- During the 1930's and early 1940's Ernest wrote mostly about two themes.
  - Politics
  - Celebrity and Wealth
- 1939- For Whom the Bell Tolls. Sold 500,000 Copies.
- 1952- Old Man and the Sea was written. Considered the pinnacle of his writing.

Nearing the End

- The Snows of Kilimanjaro 1938
- In 1953, Hemingway won the Pulitzer
- Prize in fiction for “The Old Man and the Sea”.
- In 1954, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature.
- Video link to Nobel Prize acceptance speech
  - http://town.hall.org/radio/HarperAudi
- Hemingway committed suicide in 1961

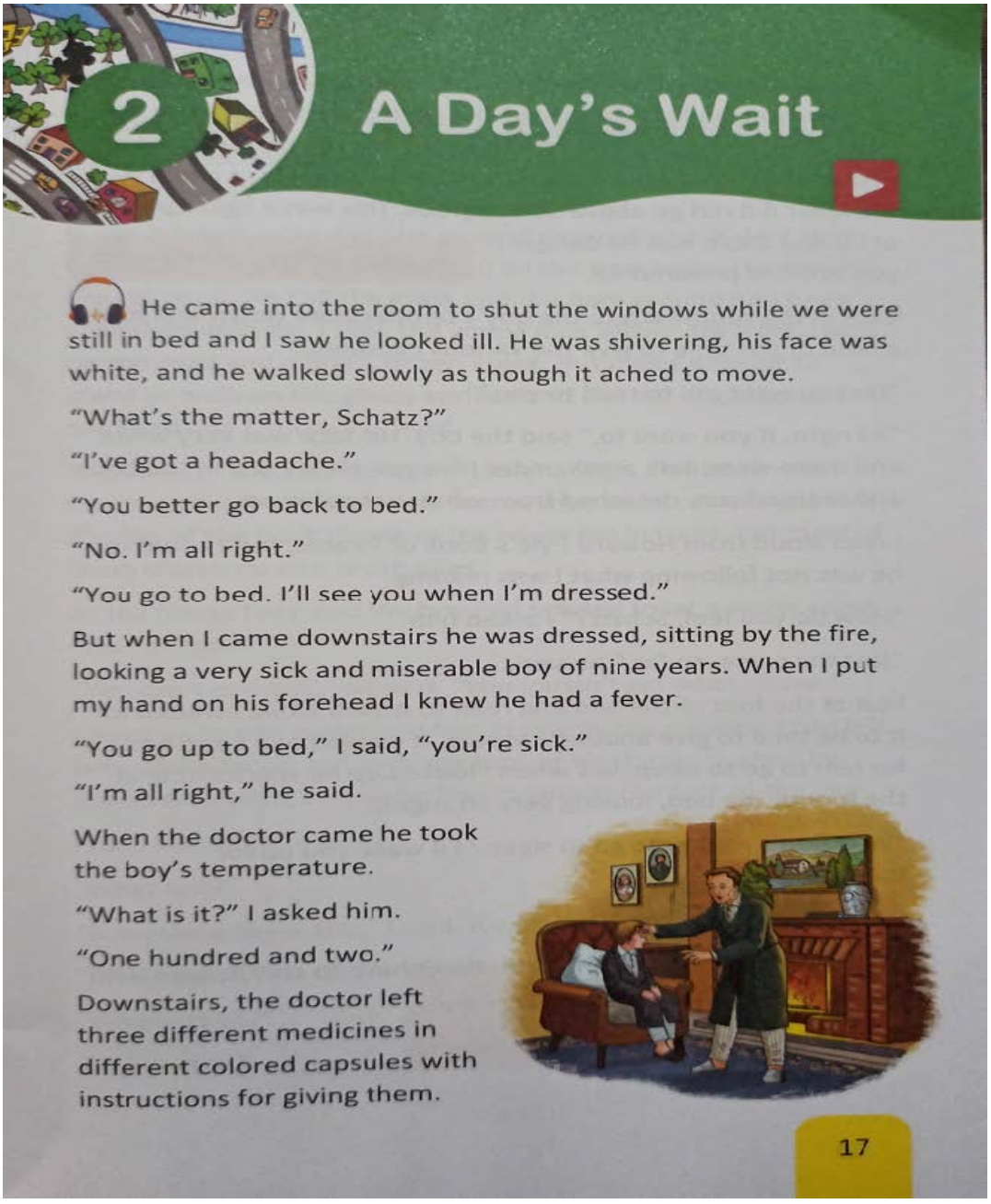


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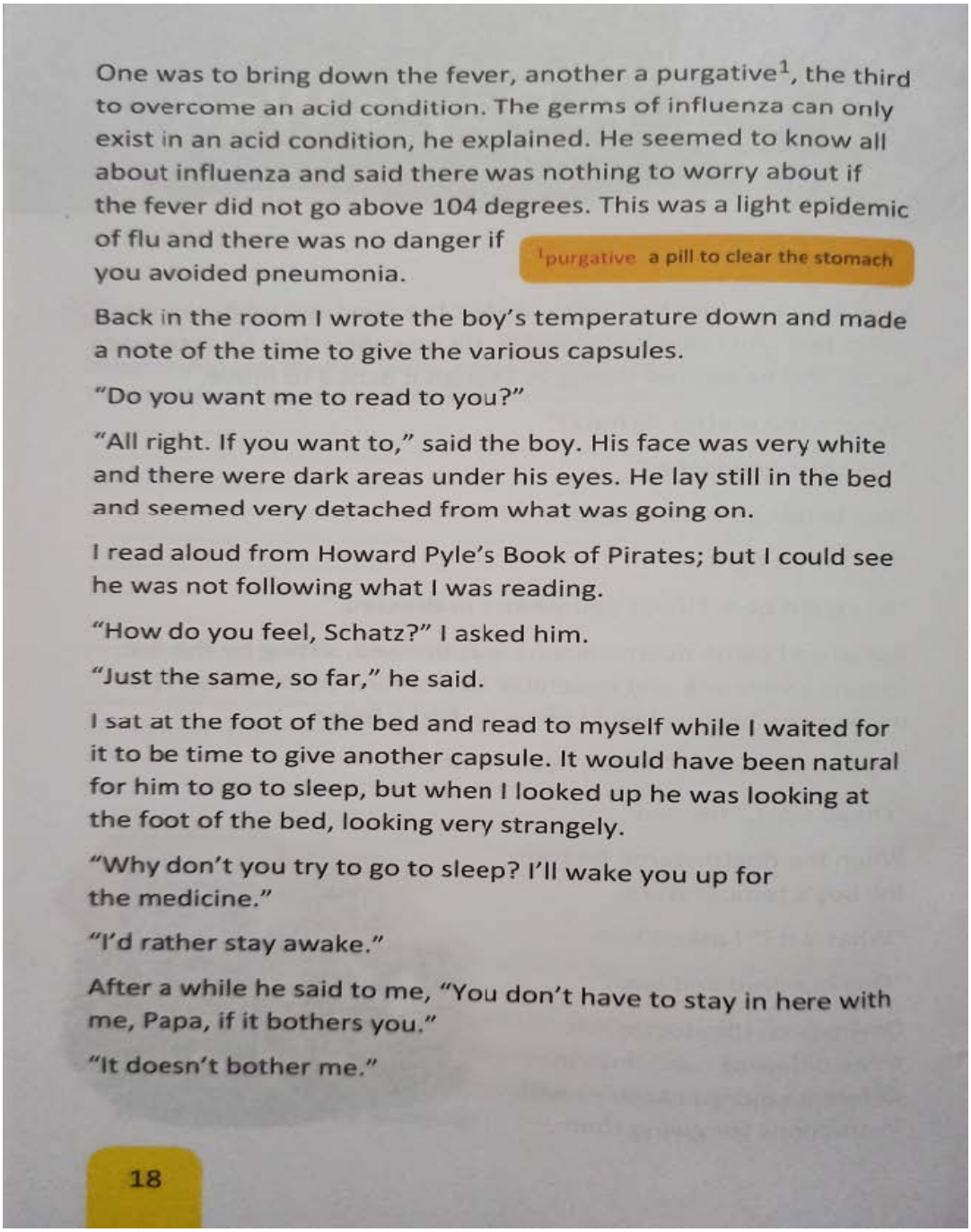
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"Why don't you try to go to sleep? I'll wake you up for the medicine."

"I'd rather stay awake."

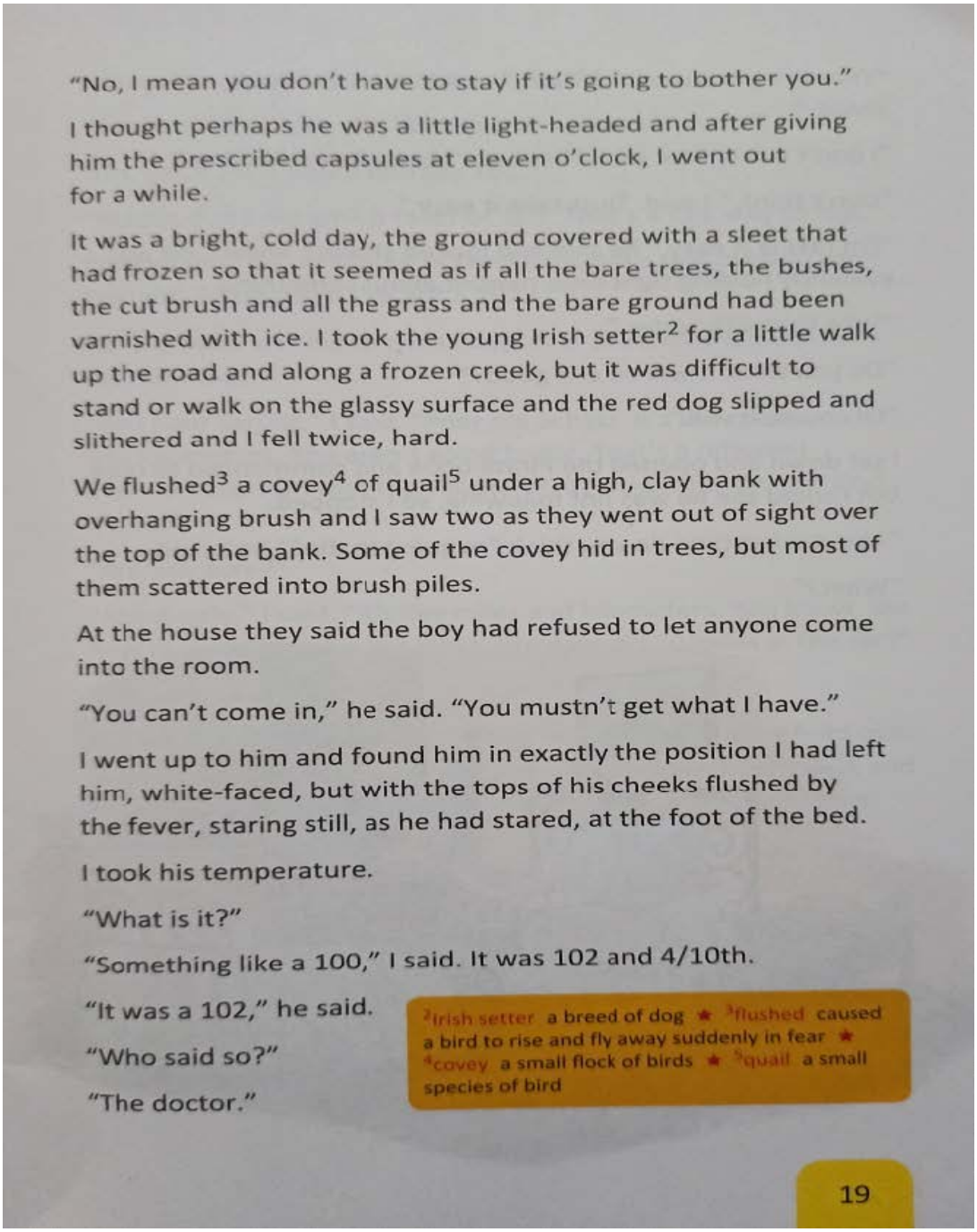
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"No, I mean you don't have to stay if it's going to bother you."

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"Who said so?"

"The doctor."

[2]Irish setter a breed of dog ★ [3]flushed caused a bird to rise and fly away suddenly in fear ★ [4]covey a small flock of birds ★ [5]quail a small species of bird

19

After giving the prescribed medicines to the boy , father went out for morning walk along with his doggy and the day was very cold and the ground was covered with frozen sleet of ice. He had fallen twice and the young doggy was walking without any difficulty. When he came back to home and checked the boys temperature he found something like a hundred degree but the boy had misunderstood that it was 102 degrees and above and so was in depression.

"Your temperature is all right," I said. "It's nothing to worry about."

"I don't worry," he said, "but I can't keep from thinking."

"Don't think," I said. "Just take it easy."

"I'm taking it easy," he said and looked straight ahead. He was evidently holding tight onto himself about something.

"Take this with water."

"Do you think it will do any good?"

"Of course it will."

I sat down and opened the Pirate book and commenced to read, but I could see he was not following, so I stopped.

"About what time do you think I'm going to die?" he asked.

"What?"



As the boy was going under depression the father made him realised that there was nothing to worry about and everything was alright and he was going to get well soon. Father started reading book for him but he was not following him rather he ask the question about when he was going to die. The father was surprised why his son was asking like that.

"About how long will it be before I die?"

"You aren't going to die. What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, yes, I am. I heard him say 102."

"People don't die with a fever of 102. That's a silly way to talk."

"I know they do. At school in France the boys told me you can't live with 44 degrees. I've got a 102."

He had been waiting to die all day, ever since nine o'clock in the morning.

"You poor Schatz," I said. "Poor old Schatz. It's like miles and kilometres. You aren't going to die. That's a different thermometer. On that thermometer, 37 is normal. On this kind, it's 98."

"Are you sure?"

"Absolutely," I said. "It's like mi es and kilometers. You know, like how many kilometers we make when we do 70 miles in the car?"

"Oh," he said.

But his gaze at the foot of the bed relaxed slowly. The hold over himself relaxed too, finally, and the next day it was very slack and he cried very easily at little things that were of no importance.

Ernest Hemingway

So finally the father made him understood that she was not going to die with a mild fever and headache as he had miss understood about what he had heard from his classmate about the temperatures as there are different thermometers for measuring different temperatures. The boy slowly got relieved from the wrong belief and and started doing all his work from the following day.

Moral: Don't believe on tell tales.

HW

Read the chapter and learn the word meanings and also complete questions and answers.

Katharine Pyle (November 23, 1863 – February 19, 1938) was an American artist, poet, and children's writer.

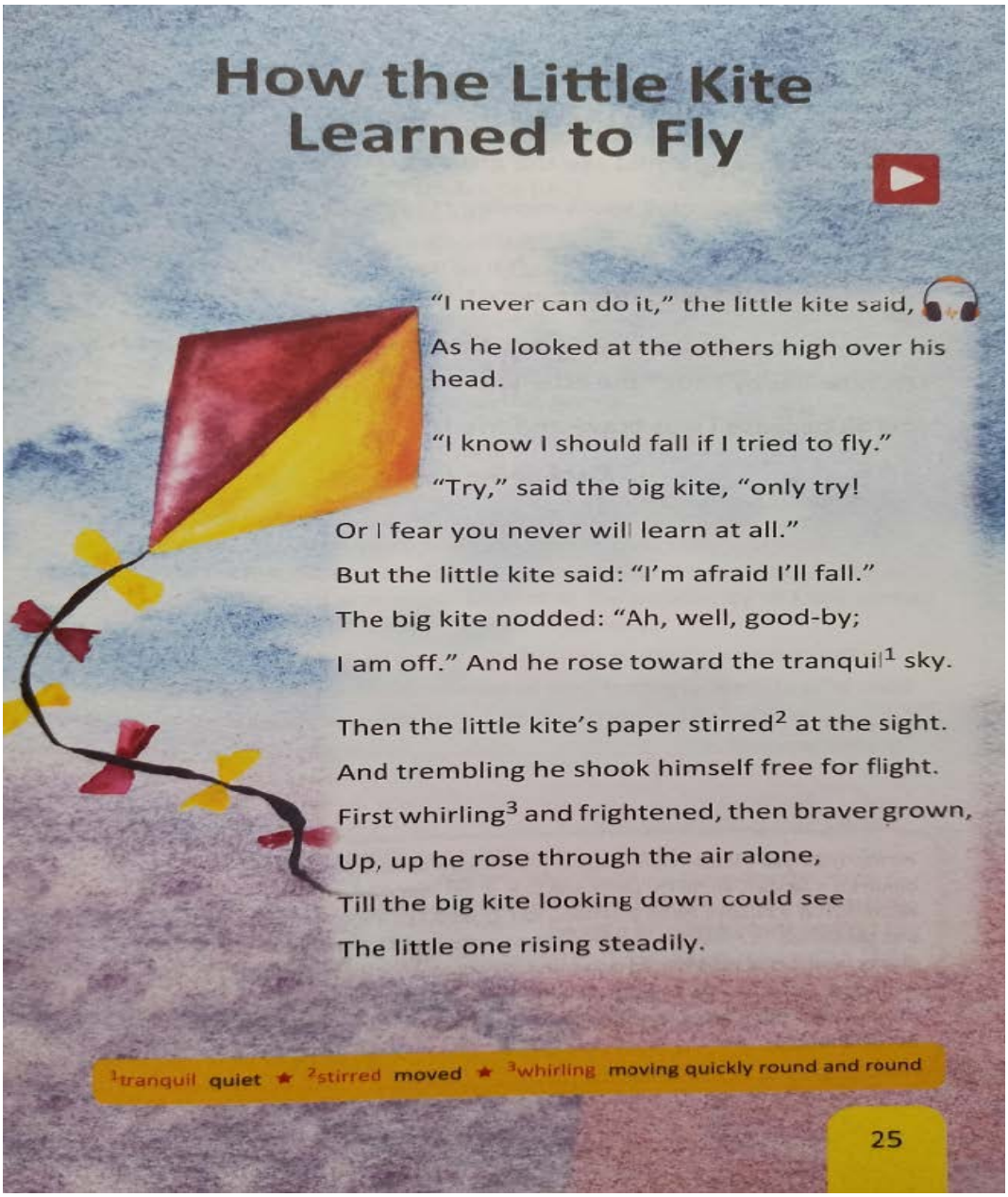
Born in Wilmington, Delaware, the youngest offspring of William Pyle and Margaret (Painter), she was the sister of author and artist Howard Pyle. She was educated at the Women's Industrial School and the Drexel Institute, then studied at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women and the New York Art Students' League. She lived in Wilmington her whole life, except four years in New York during the 1890s.

Her art was exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893.She found work as an illustrator no later than 1895, but her first major success occurred in 1898 with The Counterpane Fairy. Over the course of her career she wrote over 30 books and illustrated the works of others. Her works appeared in the Ladies' Home Journal and Harper's Bazaar. The Delaware Art Museum now has a substantial collection of her manuscripts. She co-authored a collection of 24 whimsical stories entitled The Wonder Clock (1888), with her brother Howard.

How the Little kite Learned to Fly

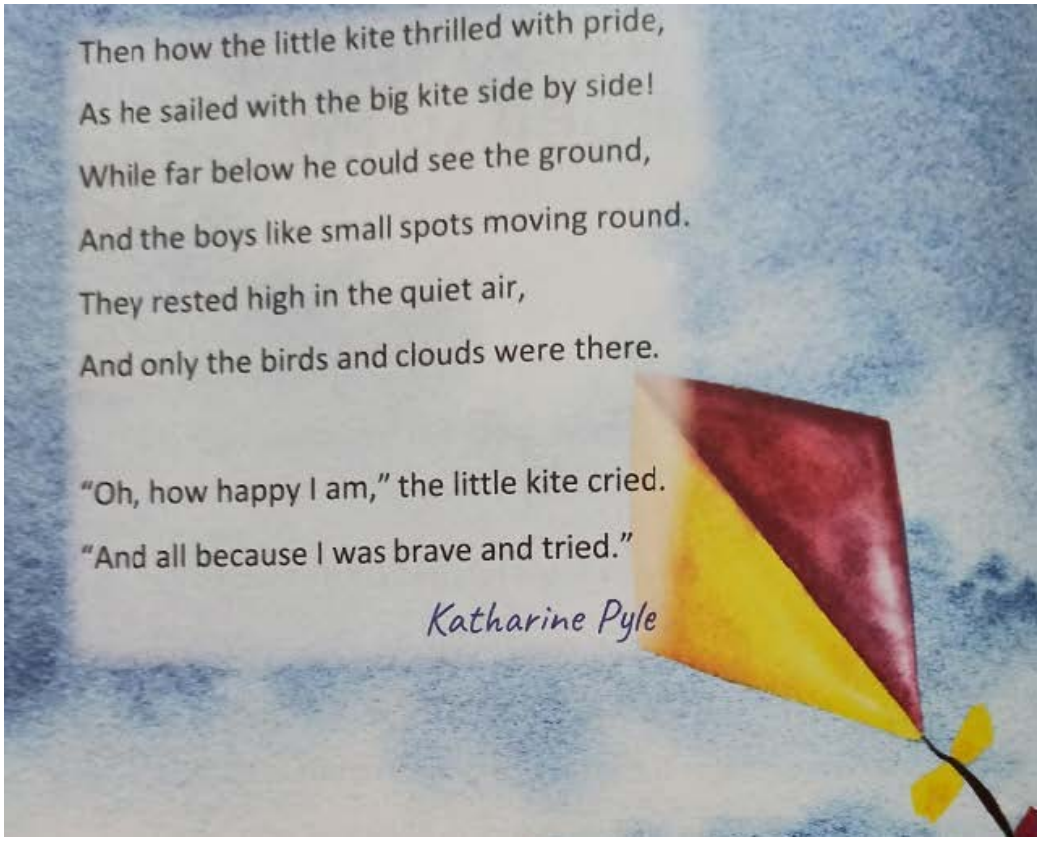
By Katharine Pyle

About the poet (see e-content)



In this poem the poetest describes about the flight of the small kite.The poem expresses the fearful nature of a little kite which wants to fly high in the sky. Initially the little kite was afraid to fly high into the sky and was highly scared. But later on with the motivating words of the big kite, it gathers courage and learns to fly slowly. Finally, it successfully learns to fly high in the whirling sky. It makes the little kite feel proud and happy ultimately. In this poem the poet addresses the small children and emphasizes that one can do any task in life

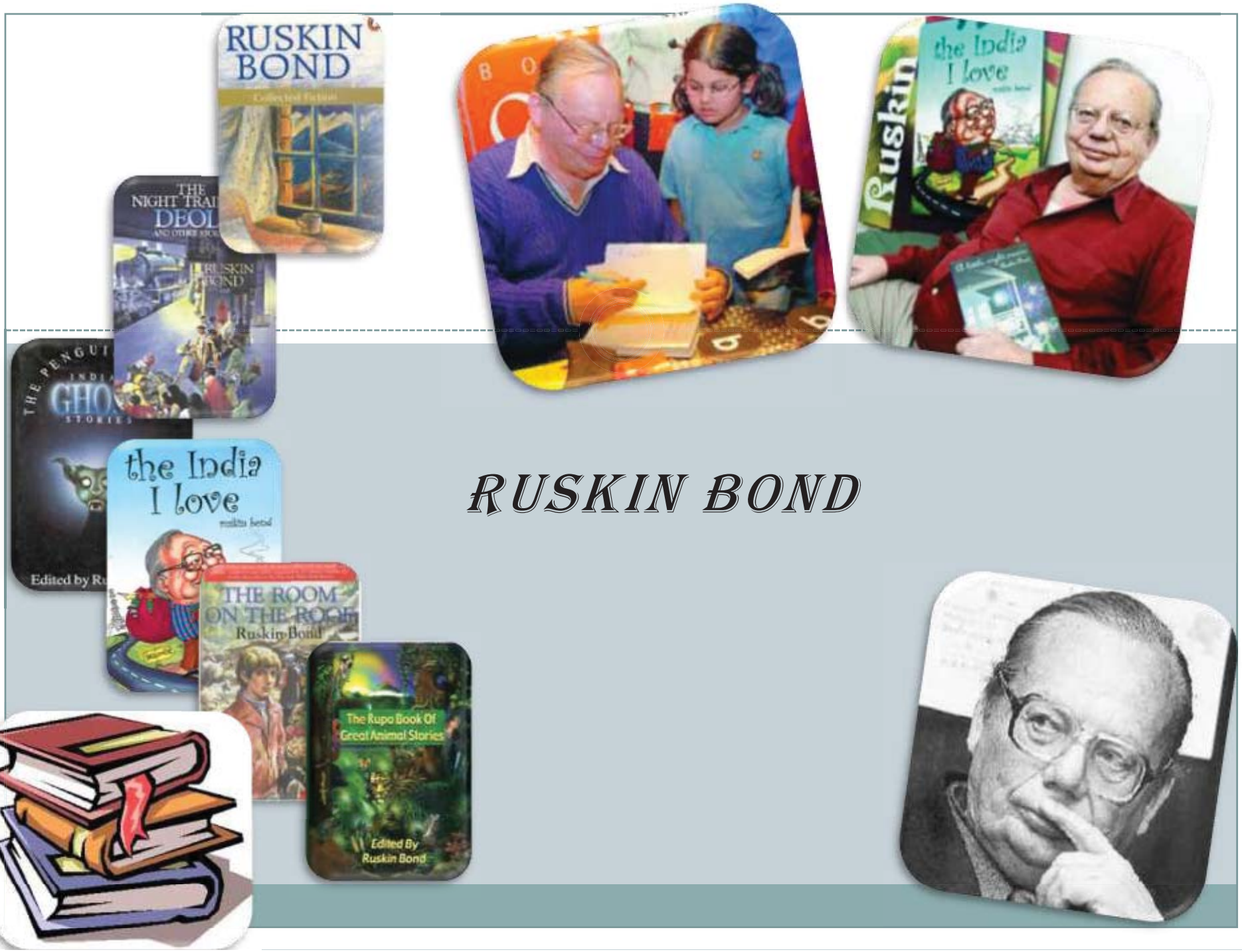
with determination, self confidence , boldness and never stopped by failures .



Moral: Never stop trying till we achieve our goals.

HW

Read the poem and complete the exercises


RUSKIN BOND
the India I love
Ruskin
THE ROOM ON THE ROOF
Ruskin Bond
The Rupa Book Of Great Animal Stories
Edited By Ruskin Bond

RUSKIN BOND

Ruskin Bond - Biography





Born

- 19th May, 1934
- Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh
- Now lives in Landour, Mussoorie

Famous Novel

- *The Room on the Roof*
- *The Night Train at Deoli*
- *Time Stops at Shamli*
- *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*
- *The Flight of Pigeons*
- *The Blue Umbrella*

Awards

- 1999 : Padma Shri : Children's Literature
- 1992 : Sahitya Akademi Award : *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*
- 1957 : John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize : *The Room on the Roof*

List of Works

Novels

- The Room on the Roof
- Vagrants in the Valley
- Delhi is not Far
- A Flight of Pigeons
- The Sensualist
- The India I Love
- The Lamp is Lit
- Funny Side Up

Travel Writings

- Ganga descends
- Beautiful Mandakini
- On the road to Badrinath
- Flowers on the Ganga
- Roads to Mussoorie
- Anmol is the best
- The Road To Bazaar

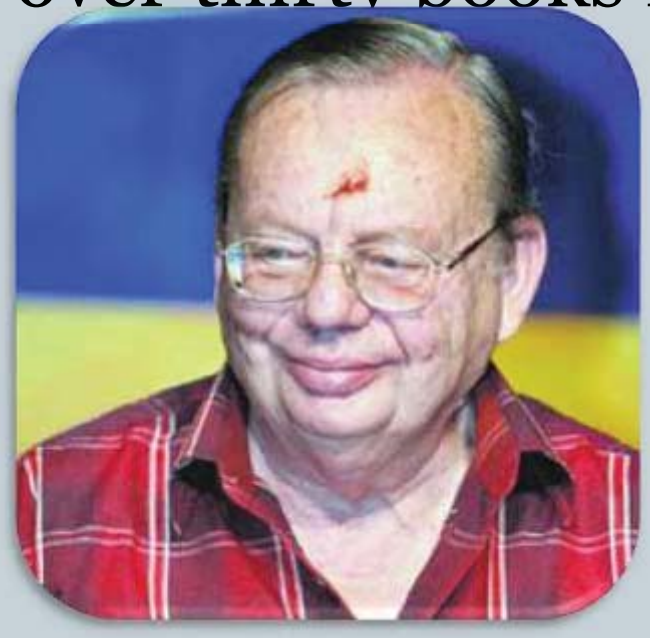
List of Works

Short stories

- The Woman on Platform 8
- Cricket for the Crocodile
- The Blue Umbrella
- Angry River
- Dust on the Mountain
- A Guardian Angel
- The Window
- The Monkeys
- The Girl on the Train
- The Prospect of Flowers
- Love is a Sad Song
- When You Can't Climb Trees Anymore
- A Life in the Dark
- The Girl from Copenhagen
- Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra

Occupation

- He has been writing stories for more than forty years. He has written short stories, essays, novels and over thirty books for children.



Style of Writing

- He has stressed more on the local elements of Himalayas in his writings. His writing style is distinct in a way that it tries to make reader understand the landscape and character through carefully mastered words. Replete with unassuming humour and quiet wisdom, his stories manifest a deep love for nature and children.





Ruskin Bond is an Indian author of British descent.
The Indian Council for Child Education recognised his pioneering role in the growth of children's literature in India, and awarded him the *Sahitya Academy Award* in 1992 for *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*, given by the *Sahitya Akademi*, India's National Academy of Literature. He was awarded the *Padma Shri* in 1999 and *Padma Bhushan* in 2014. He now lives with his adopted family in Landour, in Mussoorie.

Life and career

Better perceived as the Indian 'William Wordsworth', Ruskin Bond was born in Kasauli in the then Punjab Province in the year 1934. Born to a first generation British migrant. Bond was born to Edith Clerke and Aubrey Bond. Edith Clerke was working with the Royal Air Force at that time. When Bond was four years old, his mother separated from his father and married a Punjabi-Hindu, Mr. Hari, who himself had been married once. Bond went to live with his new father, spending his childhood in Vijayanagar (Gujarat), Jamnagar and Shimla.



At the age of ten Ruskin went to live at his grandmother's house in Dehradun after his father's sudden death in 1944 from malaria. Ruskin was raised by his grandmother. He completed his schooling at Bishop Cotton School in Shimla, from where he graduated in 1952 after winning several writing competitions in the school like the Irwin Divinity Prize and the Hailey Literature Prize. He wrote his first short story, ‘Untouchable’, at the age of sixteen in 1950.

Following his high school education he went to his aunt's house in Channel Islands in England and stayed there for four years. In London he started writing his first novel, *The Room on the Roof*, the semi-autobiographical story of the orphaned Anglo-Indian boy Rusty. It won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize,1957 awarded to a British Commonwealth writer under 30. Bond used the advance money from the book to pay the sea passage to Bombay. He worked for a few years as a journalist in Delhi and Dehradun.



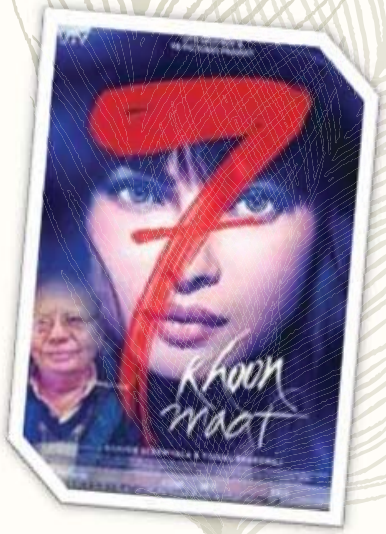


Since 1963 he has lived as a freelance writer in Mussoorie, a town in the Himalayan foothills. He wrote *Vagrants in the Valley*, as a sequel to *The Room on the Roof*. These two novels were published in one volume by Penguin India in 1993. The following year a collection of his non-fiction writings, *The Best Of Ruskin Bond* was published by Penguin India. His interest in the paranormal led him to write popular titles such as *Ghost Stories from the Raj*, *A Season of Ghosts*, and *A Face in the Dark and other Haunting*.

He currently lives with his adoptive family in Landour, Mussoorie's Ivy Cottage, which has been his house since 1964.



Filmography



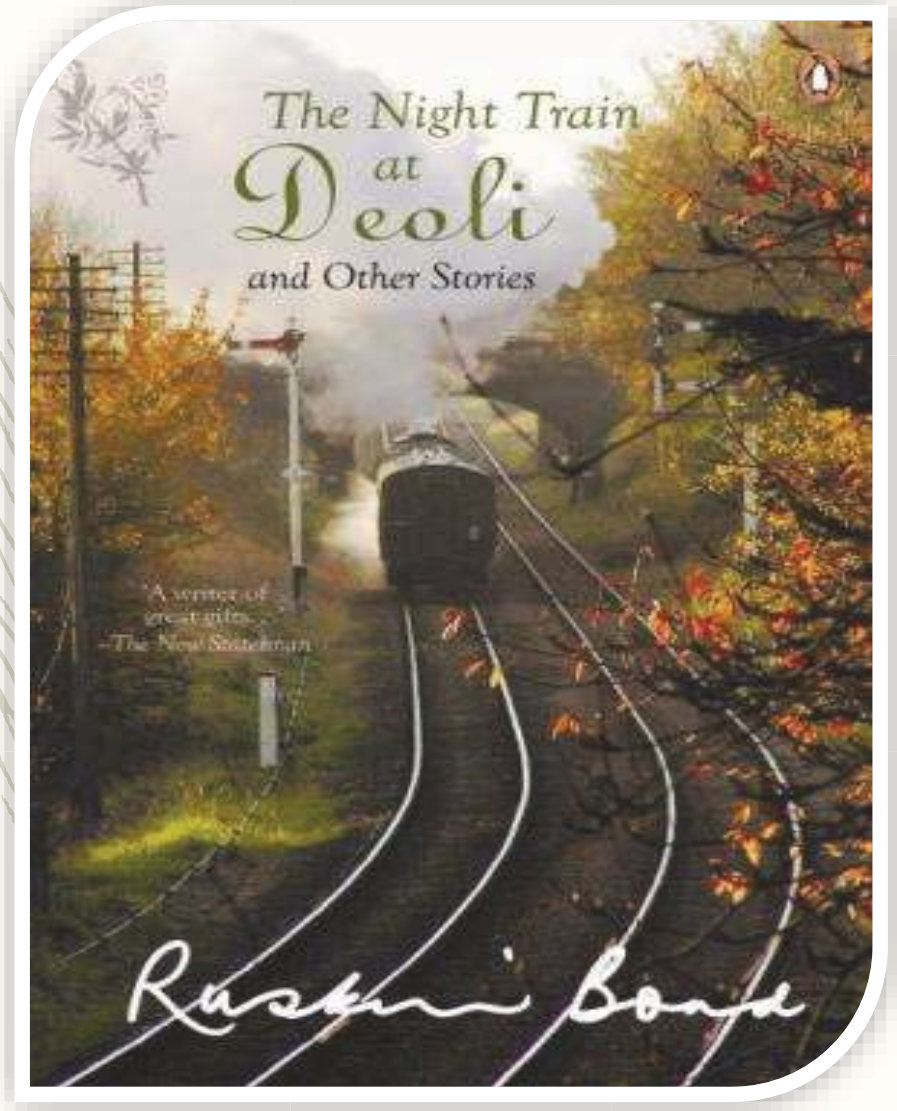
- The Hindi film *Junoon* is based on Bond's historical novella *A Flight of Pigeons* (about an episode during the Indian Rebellion of 1857). It was produced by Shashi Kapoor and directed by Shyam Benegal.
- Ruskin Bond made his maiden big screen appearance with a cameo in Vishal Bhardwaj 's film *7 Khoon Maaf,* based on his short story *Susanna's Seven Husbands*. Bond appears as a Bishop in the movie with Priyanka Chopra playing the title role. Bond had earlier collaborated with him in the *The Blue Umbrella* which was also based on his story.

Literary style

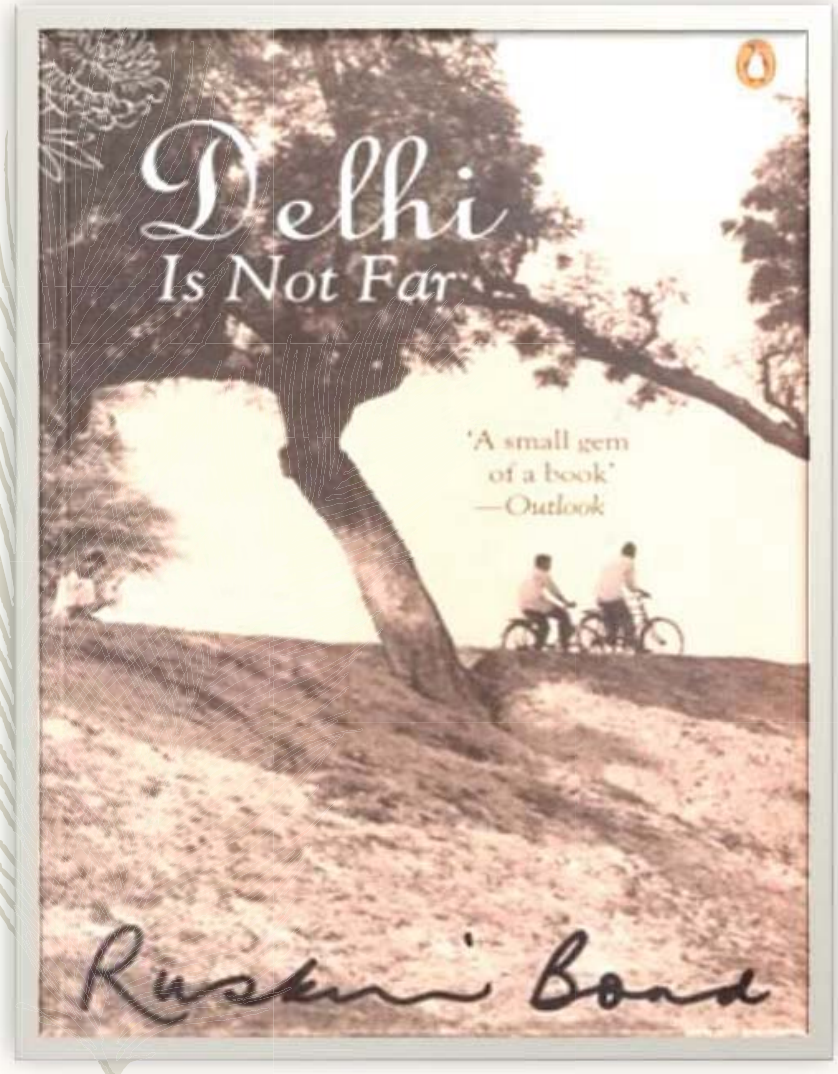
Most of his works are influenced by life in the hill stations at the foothills of the Himalayas, where he spent his childhood. His first novel, *The Room On the Roof*, was written when he was 17 and published when he was 21. It was partly based on his experiences at Dehradun, in his small rented room on the roof, and his friends. Since then he has written over three hundred short stories, essays and novels, including *Vagrants in The Valley*, *The Blue Umbrella*, *Funny Side Up*, *A Flight of Pigeons* and more than 30 books for children. He has also published two volumes of autobiography. *Scenes from a Writer's Life* describes his formative years growing up in Anglo-India; *The Lamp is Lit* is a collection of essays and episodes from his journal.

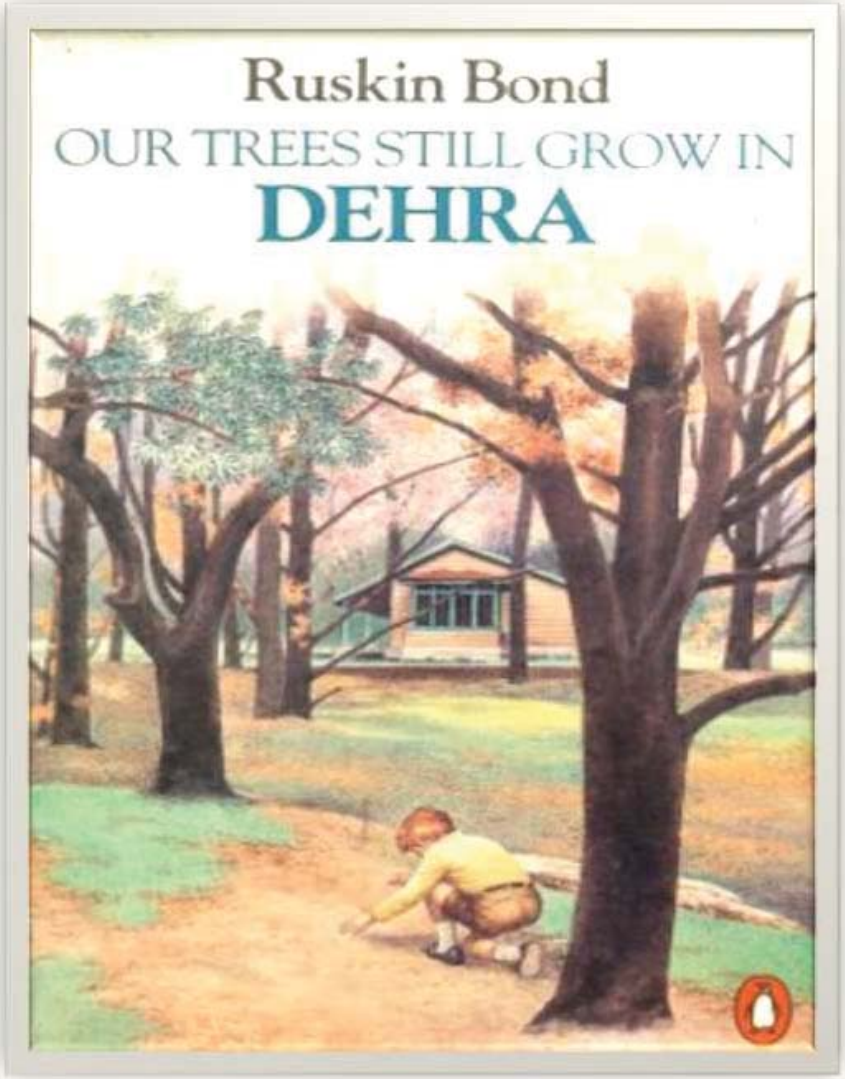
Bond said that while his autobiographical work, *Rain in the Mountains*, was about his years spent in Mussoorie, *Scenes from a Writer's Life* described his first 21 years. *Scenes from a Writer's Life* focuses on Bond's trip to England, his struggle to find a publisher for his first book *The Room on the Roof* and his yearning to come back to India, particularly to Doon. "It also tells a lot about my parents", said Bond. "The book ends with the publication of my first novel and my decision to make writing my livelihood", Bond said, adding: "Basically, it describes how I became a writer".

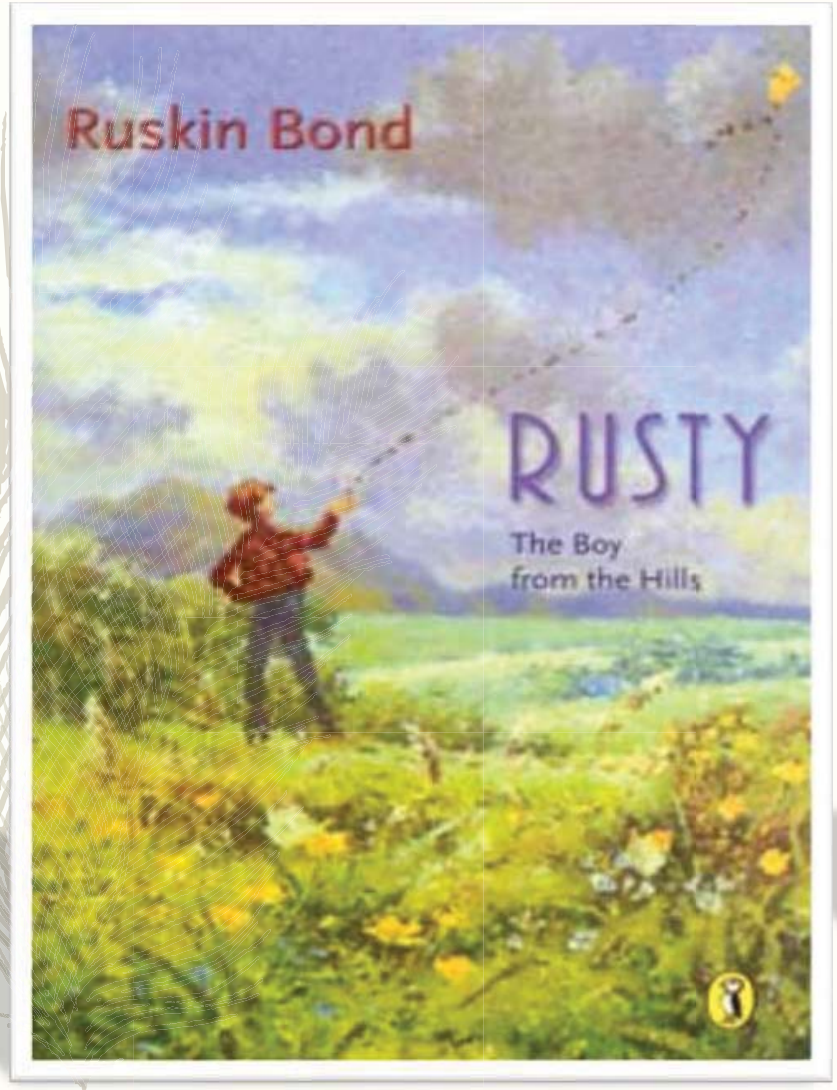
His novel, *The Flight of Pigeons*, has been adapted into the film *Junoon*. *The Room on the Roof* has been adapted into a BBC-produced TV series. Several stories have been incorporated in the school curriculum in India, including "The Night Train at Deoli", "Time Stops at Shamli" and *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*. In 2007, the Bollywood director Vishal Bhardwaj made a film based on his popular novel for children, *The Blue Umbrella*. The movie won the National Award for Best Children's film.

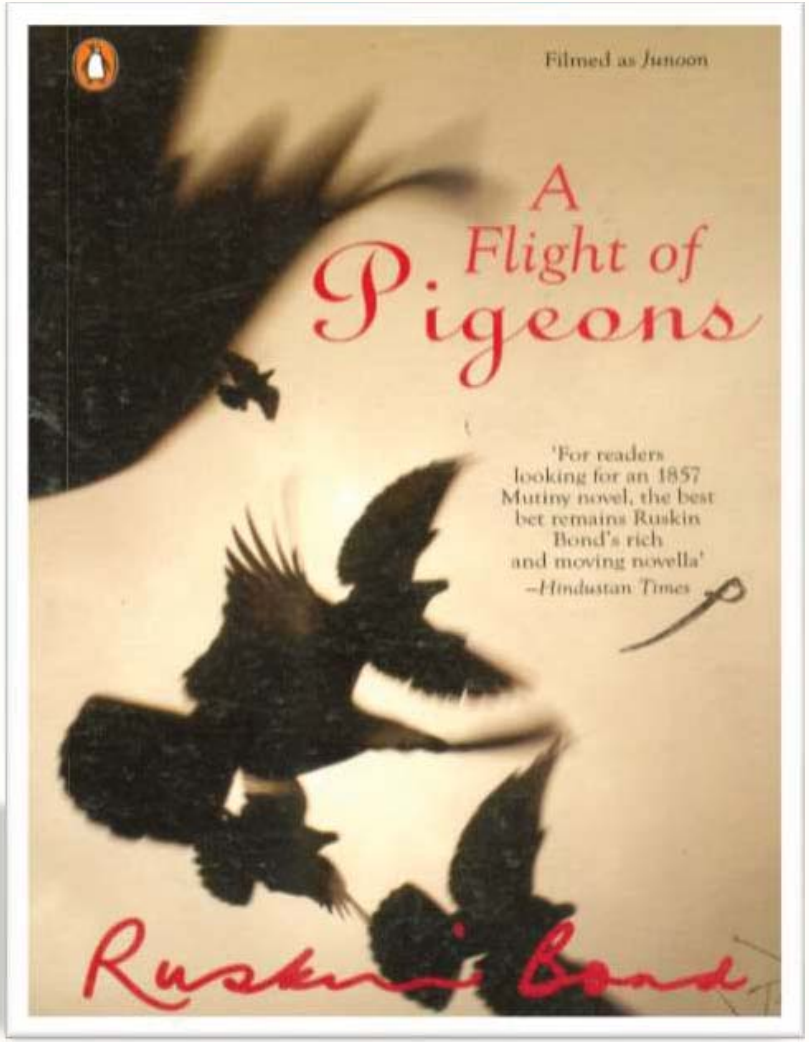

The Night Train at Deoli
and Other Stories
Ruskin Bond


AMAR CHITRA KATHA
THE BLUE UMBRELLA
STORIES BY RUSKIN BOND
Vol.837|Rs 50


Delhi
Is Not Far
'A small gem
of a book'
—Outlook
Ruskin Bond


Ruskin Bond
OUR TREES STILL GROW IN
DEHRA


Ruskin Bond
RUSTY
The Boy from the Hills

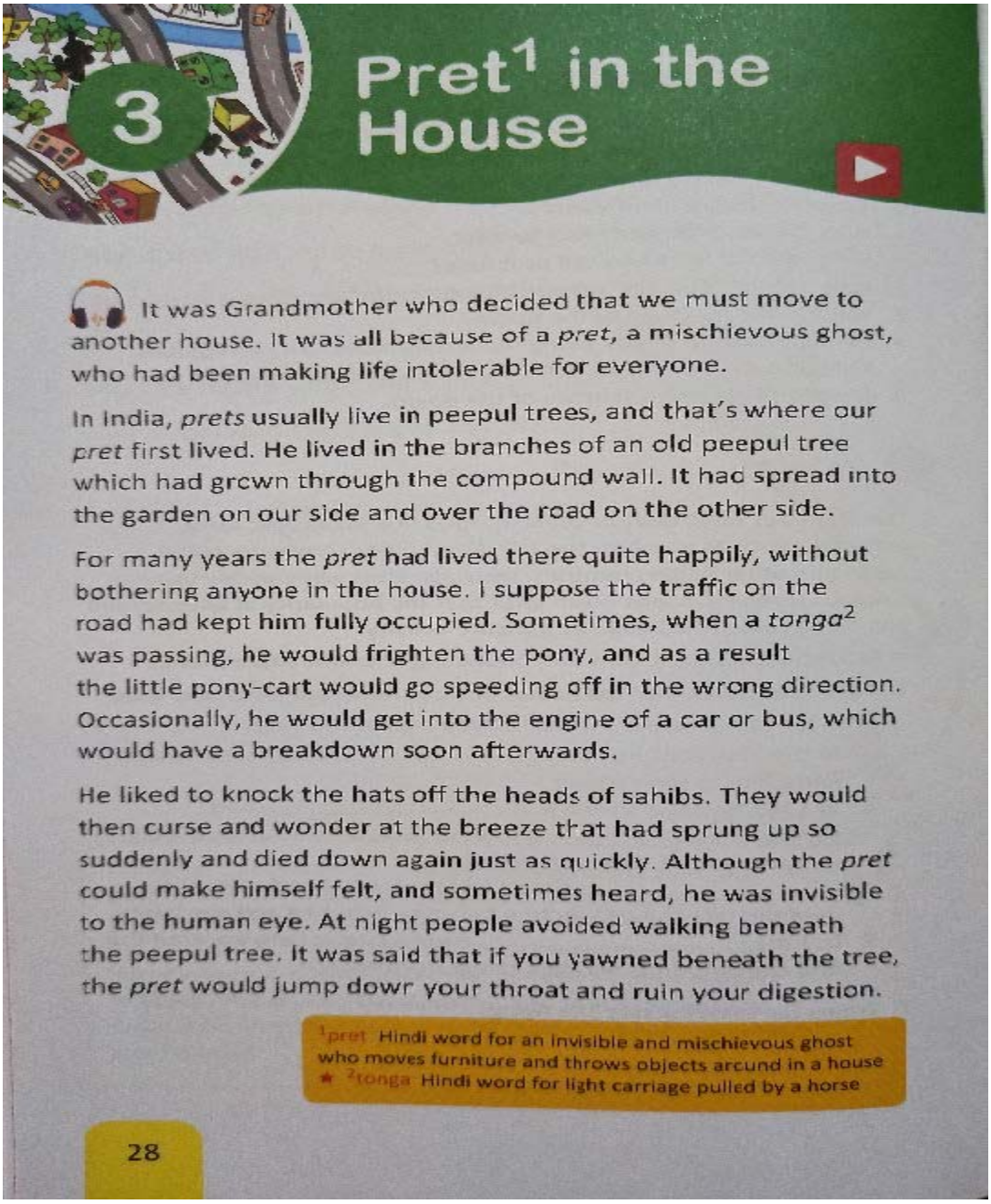

Filmed as Junoon
A Flight of Pigeons
'For readers looking for an 1857 Mutiny novel, the best bet remains Ruskin Bond's rich and moving novella'
–Hindustan Times
Ruskin Bond

CHAPTER 3

Pret in the House

By Ruskin Bond

About the author (see e-content)



3

Pret[1] in the House

It was Grandmother who decided that we must move to another house. It was all because of a *pret*, a mischievous ghost, who had been making life intolerable for everyone.

In India, *prets* usually live in peepul trees, and that's where our *pret* first lived. He lived in the branches of an old peepul tree which had grown through the compound wall. It had spread into the garden on our side and over the road on the other side.

For many years the *pret* had lived there quite happily, without bothering anyone in the house. I suppose the traffic on the road had kept him fully occupied. Sometimes, when a *tonga*[2] was passing, he would frighten the pony, and as a result the little pony-cart would go speeding off in the wrong direction. Occasionally, he would get into the engine of a car or bus, which would have a breakdown soon afterwards.

He liked to knock the hats off the heads of sahibs. They would then curse and wonder at the breeze that had sprung up so suddenly and died down again just as quickly. Although the *pret* could make himself felt, and sometimes heard, he was invisible to the human eye. At night people avoided walking beneath the peepul tree. It was said that if you yawned beneath the tree, the *pret* would jump down your throat and ruin your digestion.

[1]pret Hindi word for an invisible and mischievous ghost who moves furniture and throws objects around in a house

[2]tonga Hindi word for light carriage pulled by a horse

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The narrator is telling that grandmother finally made up her decision to change their house as the ghost was doing mysterious things that was intolerable for everyone. Moreover the narrator is saying that in

India there is a belief that would usually live in the peepal trees and this ghost also so lived on one amongst the peepal tree. For many years the ghost it was quite happily living without disturbing anyone in the nearby houses but disturbing the traffic on the roads and sometimes knocked the hats of sahibs and they would curse the ghost. It was said that people should not walk beneath the people tree nor the yawn beneath the tree else the ghost would harm.

Grandmother's tailor, Jaspal, who never had anything ready on time, blamed the *pret* for all his troubles. Once, whi e yawning, Jaspal had forgotten to snap his fingers in front of h s mouth—always mandatory when yawning beneath peepul trees—and the *pret* had got in without any difficulty. Since then, Jaspal had always been suffering from tummy upsets.

But it had left our family alone, until, one day, the peepul tree had been cut down. It was nobody's fault except, of course, that Grandfather had given the Public Works Department permission to cut the tree. It had been on our land and they wanted to widen the road. The tree and a bit of the wall were in the way, so both had to go. In any case, not even a ghost can prevail against the PWD.

Hardly had a day passed before we discovered that the *pret*, deprived of his tree, had decided to take up residence in our bungalow. Since a good *pret* must be bad in order to justify his existence, he was soon up to all sorts of mischief in the house.

He began by hiding Grandmother's spectacles whenever she took them off.

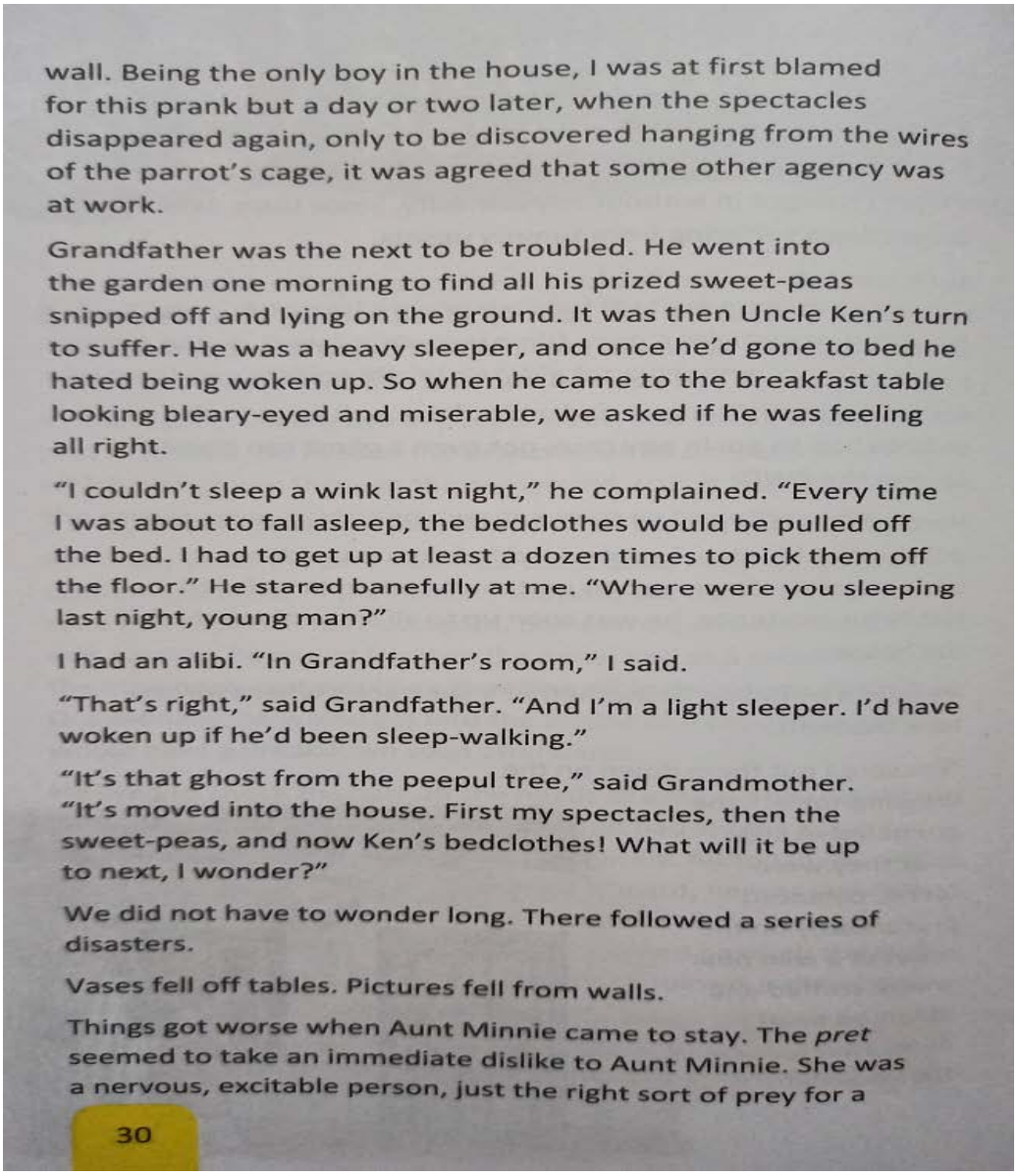
"I'm sure I put them down on the dressing-table," she grumbled. A little later they were found, balanced precariously on the snout of a wild boar whose stuffed and mounted head decorated the verandah



29

Grandmother's tailor jaspal you never had done anything on time as he blamed for the ghost for the troubles. Once it was so happened

that he had forgotten to cover his mouth beneath the peepal tree and the ghost entered inside his stomach and his tummy was upset. The time came when the road needed to be widened so the grandmother had given the permission to the PWD and the peepal tree was cut down and the ghost had to take residence in there Bungalow. Show the ghost wanted to prove its existence as a bad ghost started doing mischievous things in the house like hiding grandmother's spectacles.



wall. Being the only boy in the house, I was at first blamed for this prank but a day or two later, when the spectacles disappeared again, only to be discovered hanging from the wires of the parrot's cage, it was agreed that some other agency was at work.

Grandfather was the next to be troubled. He went into the garden one morning to find all his prized sweet-peas snipped off and lying on the ground. It was then Uncle Ken's turn to suffer. He was a heavy sleeper, and once he'd gone to bed he hated being woken up. So when he came to the breakfast table looking bleary-eyed and miserable, we asked if he was feeling all right.

"I couldn't sleep a wink last night," he complained. "Every time I was about to fall asleep, the bedclothes would be pulled off the bed. I had to get up at least a dozen times to pick them off the floor." He stared banefully at me. "Where were you sleeping last night, young man?"

I had an alibi. "In Grandfather's room," I said.

"That's right," said Grandfather. "And I'm a light sleeper. I'd have woken up if he'd been sleep-walking."

"It's that ghost from the peepul tree," said Grandmother. "It's moved into the house. First my spectacles, then the sweet-peas, and now Ken's bedclothes! What will it be up to next, I wonder?"

We did not have to wonder long. There followed a series of disasters.

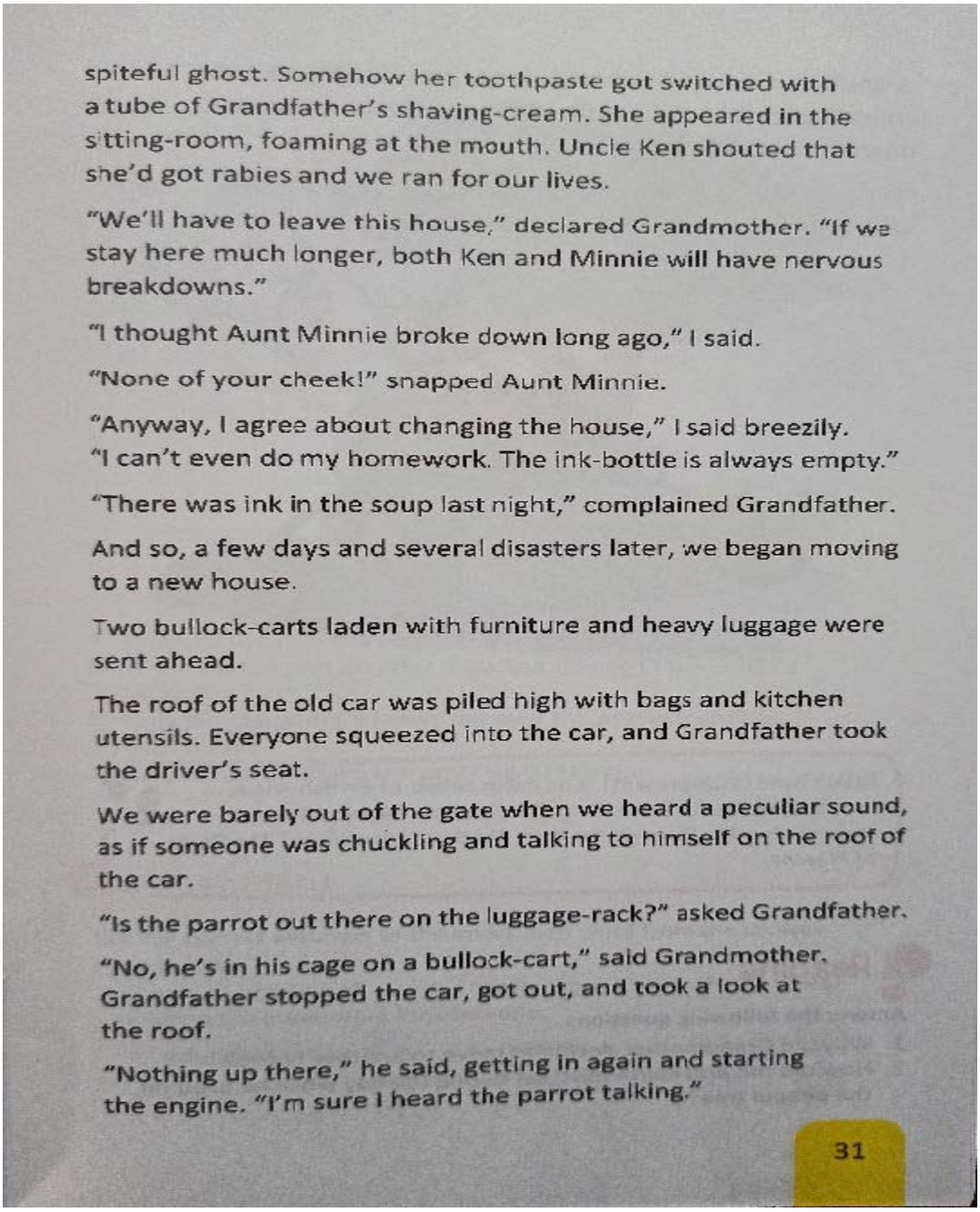
Vases fell off tables. Pictures fell from walls.

Things got worse when Aunt Minnie came to stay. The *pret* seemed to take an immediate dislike to Aunt Minnie. She was a nervous, excitable person, just the right sort of prey for a

30

The mischievous activities of the ghost continued and the narrator was blamed often. The ghost troubled narrator's grandmother specially and also so to uncle Ken while sleeping as the ghost would remove the bedclothes many times. Show the grandmother started suspecting about the ghost involvement in all the activities that had

happened to them and was wondering what it would follow next. As David still thinking the ghost started throwing vessels, pictures and the situation became worst when aunt Minnie came to stay.



spiteful ghost. Somehow her toothpaste got switched with a tube of Grandfather's shaving-cream. She appeared in the sitting-room, foaming at the mouth. Uncle Ken shouted that she'd got rabies and we ran for our lives.

"We'll have to leave this house," declared Grandmother. "If we stay here much longer, both Ken and Minnie will have nervous breakdowns."

"I thought Aunt Minnie broke down long ago," I said.

"None of your cheek!" snapped Aunt Minnie.

"Anyway, I agree about changing the house," I said breezily. "I can't even do my homework. The ink-bottle is always empty."

"There was ink in the soup last night," complained Grandfather.

And so, a few days and several disasters later, we began moving to a new house.

Two bullock-carts laden with furniture and heavy luggage were sent ahead.

The roof of the old car was piled high with bags and kitchen utensils. Everyone squeezed into the car, and Grandfather took the driver's seat.

We were barely out of the gate when we heard a peculiar sound, as if someone was chuckling and talking to himself on the roof of the car.

"Is the parrot out there on the luggage-rack?" asked Grandfather.

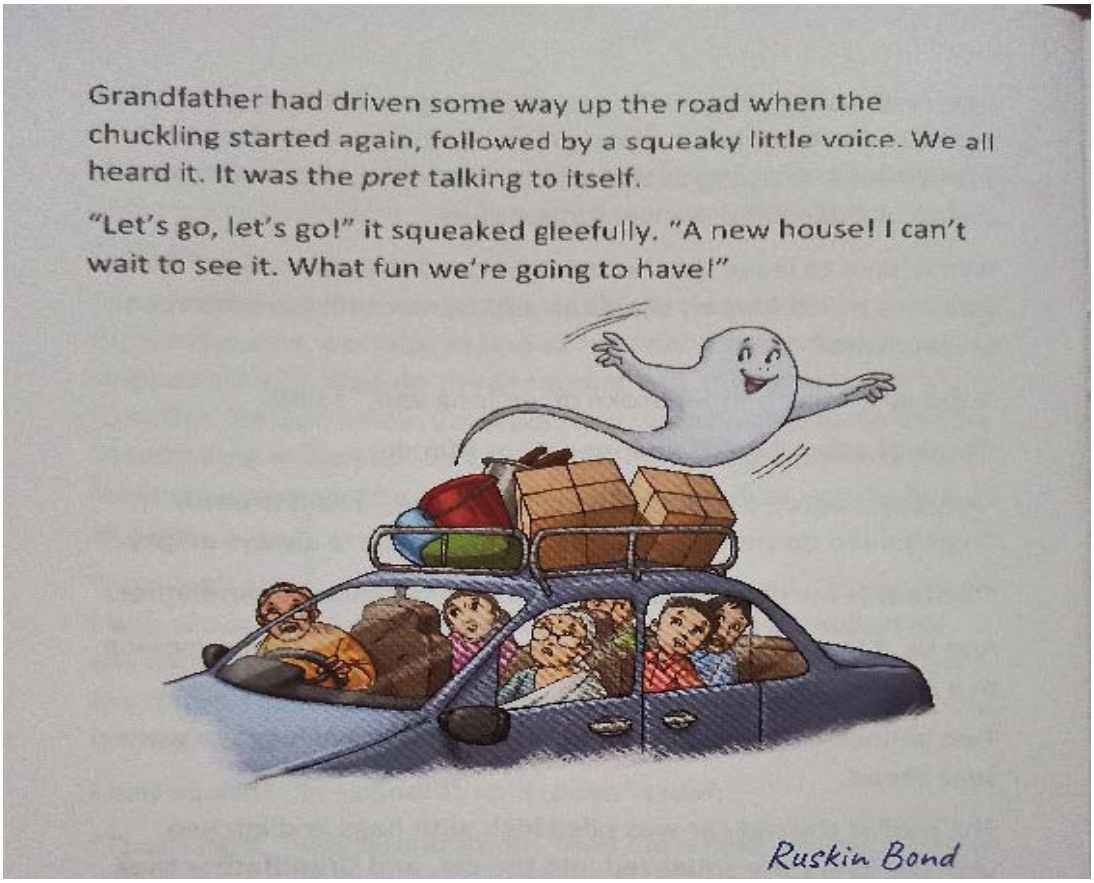
"No, he's in his cage on a bullock-cart," said Grandmother. Grandfather stopped the car, got out, and took a look at the roof.

"Nothing up there," he said, getting in again and starting the engine. "I'm sure I heard the parrot talking."

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One morning somehow Minnie's toothpaste got switched and mixed with the tube of grandfather's shaving cream that made everybody in trouble as uncle Ken shouted loudly telling about rabies she was suffering from. All the family member decided to leave the Bangalore as soon as possible because the ghost was putting everybody in troubles. After several disasters they began moving to a new house,

laden all their things into two block carts and the roof of the old car was piled high up with bags and kitchen utensils as the car was about to move badly out of the gate when they heard a sound as if some one was struggling and talking to oneself on the roof of the car. So grandfather made the car stopped and took a look at the roof of the car but nothing he could see. As he had driven some way up the road when the chuckling started again and the ghost was excited to see the new house.



Moral: Be brave and find solution for the problem.

Chapter 4

Pandora and the Mysterious Box

About the author:

Myths are stories about heroes who are the sons and daughters of the gods according to ancient Greek mythology. Pandora was the first woman created on the order of Zeus – the most powerful of all Greek gods. Pandora was meant to be a punishment for humankind. Her box contained many evil things, such as toil, illness and despair, but it also contained hope. When the box was opened, these evils, as well as hope were released into the world.

EXPLANATION:

The story happened thousands of years ago in Greece. According to myths, people were very happy. There was no suffering, no pain, and no struggles. Children did not grow up. They remained young all the time. There was no bad news, no bad people, no illness, and no death. There were no schools so children had a lot of time to play. Epimetheus were an orphan boy who lived at this time and Pandora was his friend. One day Pandora saw a large box in Epimetheus's cottage. It was a wonderful wooden box with figures of children on its lid. Pandora asked Epimetheus about the contents of the box but he himself did not know what was inside. Pandora was so curious about the box that she kept on asking Epimetheus about the box but he asked her not to think of the box.

One evening, when Epimetheus was out playing with his friends, Pandora tried to open the box. It did not have a lock but it was fastened with a long gold knot. After trying for long, finally Pandora opened the lid of the box. She lifted the lid and peep into the box. Suddenly, a large number of small creatures (like bats) came out from the box. They had wings and long tails. At the end of their tails, they had stings with which they stung diseases, pain, suffering, jealousy and all the other evil (bad) things.

When Epimetheus came back from playing, he saw Pandora opening the box and the creatures emerging and filling the room. One of the creatures stung Epimetheus and for the first time he experienced pain. Another ugly creature was about sting Pandora but Epimetheus het it and brushed it off her face. When Epimetheus and Pandora opened the windows, the creatures flew out of the room. They stung the boys and girls who were playing outside. Pain and sufferings spread in the world. Besides, ageing started – children grew up and became men and women and then old. Epimetheus blamed Pandora for opening the box and they began to shout at each other. While the two were arguing and shouting, they heard a whisper from the box. A voice so sweet and soft was heard from the box. The voice was asking Pandora to open the lid once again. The voice promised that it was not bad. Finally, Pandora opened the lid and a new, good creature came out. It had no sting in its tail. It was HOPE! Hope said that it would bring peace to the earth and people would forget the pain caused by other creatures.