

An Alien Chapter - 6
I Want Something in a Cage

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Comprehension Check

1. Write 'True' or 'False' against each of following statements.

- (i) Mr Purcell sold birds, cats, dogs and monkeys.**
- (ii) He was very concerned about the well-being of the birds and animals in his shop.**
- (iii) He was impressed by the customer who bought the two doves.**
- (iv) He was a successful shopowner, though insensitive and cold as a person.**

Ans: (i) True

(ii) False

(iii) False

(iv) False

2. Why is Mr Purcell compared to an owl?

Ans: Mr Purcell compared to an owl because large glasses magnified his eyes which gives him the appearance of a wise and genial owl.

3. From the third paragraph pick out

- (i) words associated with cries of birds,**
- (ii) words associated with noise,**
- (iii) words suggestive of confusion and fear.**

Ans: (i) whispered twitters, cheeps, squeaks

(ii) Rustling, squeals, squeaks

(iii) frantic, frightened, bewildered, blindly seeking.

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4. "...Mr Purcell heard it no more than he would have heard the monotonous ticking of a familiar clock." (Read para beginning with "It was a rough day...")

(i) What does 'it' refer to?

(ii) Why does Mr Purcell not hear 'it' clearly?

Ans: (i) 'It' refers to the chirping, squeaking and mewing of the birds and animals in the shop of Mr Purcell.

(ii) Mr Purcell does not hear 'it' clearly because he heard it no more than he would have heard the monotonous ticking of a familiar clock, and paid no attention to it as it was a daily routine.

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Comprehension Check

1. Do you think the atmosphere of Mr Purcell's shop was cheerful or depressing? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans: The atmosphere of Mr Purcell's shop was depressing because a constant stir of movement that pervaded his shop and the animals and birds were making a lot of noise as if they were restless. It seemed as though they were not happy in their cages.

2. Describe the stranger who came to the pet shop. What did he want?

Ans: The stranger was a peculiar man who was wearing shiny shoes and a cheap, ill-fitted but a new suit. He had a shuttling glance and close-cropped hair. He wanted something small in a cage with wings.

3. (i) The man insisted on buying the doves because he was fond of birds. Do you agree?

(ii) How had he earned the five dollars he had?

Ans: (i) No, the man did not insist on buying the doves just because he was fond of birds. He did not ask for the birds directly, instead he said that he wanted a creature with wings in a cage. This tells us that he had sympathy for the birds and wanted to see them flying.

(ii) He had earned those five dollars by doing hard labour in jail in his ten years of imprisonment and deliberately spent that hard-earned money to set free living creatures from being imprisoned.

4. Was the customer interested in the care and feeding of the doves he had bought? If not, why not?

Ans: The stranger was not interested in the care and feeding of the doves because he wanted to set them free.

Exercises

Discuss the following topics in groups.

1. Why, in your opinion, did the man set the doves free?

Ans: In my opinion, I think that the man must have set the doves free because he himself had been in jail for ten years. He had sympathy for the birds and knew the pain of being imprisoned against their wishes. He wanted to see them flying and enjoy their freedom that is why he bought something with the wings. He wanted to smell the happiness of freedom from cages by setting the doves free.

2. Why did it make Mr Purcell feel “vaguely insulted”?

Ans: Mr Purcell felt “vaguely insulted” as the man bought the doves from Purcell's shop for five dollars and then went outside to set them free. It was Mr. Purcell who had kept these birds in cage and restricted their freedom and the man spent his ten years income only to give the doves freedom, so he felt all themore insulted.

An Alien Chapter - 7
Chandni

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Comprehension Check

1. Why did Abbu Khan's goats want to run away? What happened to them in the hills?

Ans: Abbu Khan's goats wanted to run away because goats in hilly regions hate being tied to trees or poles. They loved their freedom and his goats were of the best hill breed. They got killed by an old wolf who lived in the hills.

2. Abbu Khan said, "No more goats in my house ever again." Then he changed his mind. Why?

Ans: Abbu Khan changed his mind because he was terribly lonely and simply couldn't live without his pets. He needed company.

3. Why did he buy a young goat?

Ans: He thought that a young goat would stay with him much longer. She would soon begin to love him as well as the food served by him and would never want to go to the hills.

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Comprehension Check

1. Why did Chandni hate the rope round her neck?

Ans: Chandni hated the rope round her neck because whenever she ran towards the hills, the rope round her neck wouldn't let her go any further and stopped her with a jerk. She wanted to run across the green fields and the hills and enjoy her freedom.

2. "Now Abbu Khan understood Chandni's problem..." What was Chandni's problem?

Ans: Chandni's problem was that she was a mountain goat and loved her freedom. She wanted to go to the hills and hated to live with the rope around her neck.

3. Abbu Khan pushed Chandni into a small hut. This shows that he

(i) was cruel.

(ii) loved her and wanted to save her life.

(iii) was selfish.

Ans: This shows that he (ii) loved her and wanted to save her life.

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Comprehension Check

1. Why did Chandni refuse to join the group of wild goats?

Ans: Chandni refused to join the group of wild goats because she wanted to enjoy her new freedom all by herself.

2. Chandni fought the wolf because she

(i) was stronger than the wolf.

(ii) hated the wolf.

(iii) had to retain her freedom at all costs.

Ans: Chandni fought the wolf because she (iii) had to retain her freedom at all costs.

Exercises

Discuss the following topics in groups.

1. Why did the wise old bird say, "Chandni is the winner"?

Ans: The wise old bird said that Chandni was the winner because even though she was weak and small in front of the wolf, she did not give up. She gathered all her courage and put up a brave fight. She did not leave the battlefield like a coward and fought for her freedom. She said to herself that - 'death in an open field is far better than life in a small hut.' She stood firm on her legs, head slightly bent and horns jutting out. She was a picture of courage. She looked like a brave soldier ready to fight a treacherous enemy. She died fighting her life bravely in the morning she was found dead completely soaked in blood.

2. "Death in an open field is better than life in a small hut," Chandni said to herself. Was it the right decision? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans: I think it was the right decision because no one can imagine life in someone's captivity. Freedom is more valuable thing than life. Chandni could have gone back to her small hut of Abbu and saved her life but she chose to fight with the wolf instead, to attain her freedom. She did not die like a coward. She fought with courage and bravery to get what she

wanted in her life. She might have lived longer in the captivity but she died everyday and hated imprisonment. She fought with the wolf and told herself that "success or failure is a matter of luck or chance." So, she took the right decision after all.

3. Freedom is life. Discuss this with reference to 'Chandni' and 'I Want Something in a Cage'.

Ans: In both cases Freedom is the right to decide one's routine or course of life. The lesson "Chandni" educates us to live a life of non-conformity and exalt ourselves from a state of bondedness.

Similarly, the lesson "I want something in a cage", also sends us a message that true life can be discovered only in freedom, even if it entails struggle, trials and even death.