Prime Pupil

CLASS 9

ENGLISH FL

Summary

Beehive

Prose & Poetry

Moments

Supplementary Reader



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Class 9 :: English FL :: Summary

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Beehive – Prose

L 1 – The Fun They Had

The Fun They Had is a science-fiction story by **Isaac Asimov**. It is set in the future, in the year **2157**, when children study at home with mechanical teachers instead of going to schools. The story compares this future system of education with the old system of schools where children studied together with human teachers.

One day, **Tommy**, a thirteen-year-old boy, finds a real printed book in his house. He is surprised because, in his time, books are read on screens and are stored electronically. The pages of the book are yellow and crinkly, and the words remain still instead of moving on a screen. Tommy tells **Margie**, an eleven-year-old girl, that the book is about school.

Margie does not like the idea of school because she hates her own school. She studies alone at home with a **mechanical teacher**. The machine gives her lessons, asks her questions and checks her homework. She has been doing badly in geography because the geography section of her mechanical teacher has been set at a level that is too difficult for her.

Margie's mother calls the **County Inspector** to examine the machine. He is a friendly man who checks the mechanical teacher and discovers that the geography section is set too fast for Margie. He adjusts it to suit her level. He tells Margie's mother that there is nothing seriously wrong with Margie and that she is doing well.

Tommy then explains how children studied in the past. They went to a special **school building**, where many children studied together. They had **human teachers** who taught them, gave them homework and asked them questions. Margie finds this strange because she cannot imagine a human being teaching children. She also wonders why children would study together when a mechanical teacher can teach each child separately.

Margie and Tommy continue talking about the old schools. Tommy explains that children of the same age studied together and had fun. Margie begins to imagine how enjoyable it must have been to learn with other children, talk to them and play with them. She thinks that the old schools must have been much more fun than her lonely schoolroom at home.

At the end, Margie's mother calls her because it is time for her lesson. Margie enters her schoolroom, where the mechanical teacher is waiting for her. As she sits down, she keeps thinking about the old schools and the children who **studied and learned together**.

The story makes us think about the importance of **human interaction, friendship and shared learning**. Although technology can make education convenient and personalised, the story suggests that machines cannot completely replace the happiness and companionship of learning together.

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2.1 The Sound of Music: Evelyn Glennie

The Sound of Music is a biographical account of **Evelyn Glennie**, a famous percussionist. It shows how courage, determination and hard work helped her overcome her hearing disability and become a successful musician.

Evelyn Glennie was born in Scotland and began losing her hearing at the age of eight. By the time she was eleven, her hearing had become severely impaired. However, she did not allow her disability to stop her from learning music. She joined the **Royal Academy of Music in London** and worked hard to develop her musical abilities.

Her teacher, **Ron Forbes**, played an important role in her life. He helped her understand that she could sense music through the vibrations produced by different instruments. He asked her to remove her shoes and feel the vibrations through her body. Gradually, Evelyn learned to identify different sounds through different parts of her body. She could feel the higher drum from the waist up and the lower drum from the waist down.

Evelyn practised regularly and became a highly successful percussionist. She performed in many countries and became a famous solo musician. She could play many types of percussion instruments and gave music an important place in her life. She also performed for ordinary audiences and encouraged young musicians.

Evelyn's life is an example of **strong determination and self-confidence**. Though she could not hear music in the usual way, she learned to feel it deeply and expressed it beautifully. Her success proves that physical difficulties cannot stop a person who has a strong will and is ready to work hard.

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2.2 The Sound of Music: Bismillah Khan

The second part of *The Sound of Music* is about **Ustad Bismillah Khan**, one of India's greatest shehnai players. It describes his childhood, his training, his love for the shehnai and his contribution to Indian classical music.

The **shehnai** is a traditional Indian musical instrument. It was earlier played mainly at temples, weddings and other auspicious occasions. Bismillah Khan helped bring this instrument to the stage of classical music and made it famous in India and abroad.

Bismillah Khan was born in **Dumraon, Bihar**, into a family of musicians. His ancestors were court musicians, and his father, **Paigambar Bux**, played the shehnai in the Dumraon palace. As a young boy, Bismillah Khan went to Benaras, where he learned music from his maternal uncle **Ali Bux**, a famous shehnai player at the Vishwanath Temple.

Bismillah Khan practised for many hours every day. He often practised in the temples and on the banks of the **River Ganga**. The peaceful surroundings of Benaras and the Ganga deeply influenced his music. His hard work and dedication helped him become a master of the shehnai.

A major turning point in his career came when he performed the shehnai at the opening of **All India Radio in Lucknow in 1938**. A few years later, on **15 August 1947**, the day India became independent, Bismillah Khan played his shehnai from the **Red Fort in Delhi**. This historic performance became an important moment in his career and connected his music with the birth of independent India. Later, he performed at important national and international events and became widely known for his unique style of music.

Bismillah Khan received many awards and honours, including the **Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan** and finally the **Bharat Ratna**, India's highest civilian award. Although he travelled to many countries and received international fame, he always remained deeply attached to **India, Benaras and the Ganga**. He even refused offers to settle abroad because he could not imagine living away from Benaras and its cultural atmosphere.

His life shows his **deep dedication to music, love for Indian culture and strong attachment to his homeland**. He played a major role in giving the shehnai a respected place in Indian classical music.

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3. The Little Girl

The Little Girl is a story by **Katherine Mansfield** about a young girl named **Kezia** and her relationship with her father. The story shows how a child may misunderstand a strict parent and later discover the love and care hidden behind his strict behaviour.

Kezia was afraid of her father. Whenever he came home from work, she felt nervous and tried to avoid him. He seemed like a large, strict and frightening person to her. She stammered when she spoke to him and was especially afraid of answering his questions. Her grandmother noticed her fear and wanted her to know her father better. She suggested that Kezia make a **pin-cushion** as a birthday gift for him.

Kezia carefully collected pieces of cloth and filled the pin-cushion with **papers that she found on a table in her parents' room**. She did not know that the papers contained an important speech written by her father. When her father discovered what she had done, he became very angry and punished her. This made Kezia even more frightened of him.

One day, Kezia's grandmother told her to go and talk to her neighbours, **Mr and Mrs Macdonald**, who lived next door. Kezia saw Mr Macdonald playing happily with his five children. He laughed and played with them, and the children were not afraid of him. Kezia began to compare him with her own father and wondered why her father could not behave in the same way.

Later, Kezia's opinion of her father changed completely. One night, her mother was away in the hospital, and her grandmother was also not at home. Kezia was sleeping alone when she had a frightening dream. She woke up crying and felt very lonely. Her father came to her room and carried her to his bed. He comforted her and told her to sleep beside him.

As she lay beside her father, Kezia realised that he was not as frightening as she had thought. She understood that he was tired because he worked hard every day. She also realised that he loved and cared for her in his own way. In the end, she thinks of him as a **“giant” with a heart full of love**, showing that her understanding of her father has changed.

The story teaches us that **we should not judge people only by their outward behaviour. Behind a strict or serious personality, there may be deep love and care that children do not immediately understand.**

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4. A Truly Beautiful Mind

A Truly Beautiful Mind is a biographical account of **Albert Einstein**, one of the greatest scientists of the twentieth century. The chapter presents not only his achievements as a scientist but also his human qualities, his concern for peace and his opposition to war.

Albert Einstein was born in **Ulm, Germany, in 1879**. As a child, he did not speak until he was about two and a half years old. His mother thought he was different from other children. When he finally began to speak, he repeated every sentence before saying it properly. At school, he was considered a strange child because he did not enjoy the usual methods of teaching.

Einstein showed a great interest in **science and mathematics** from an early age. At the age of six, he began learning to play the violin. Music remained an important part of his life. He later studied at the **University of Zurich**, where he met **Mileva Maric**, a fellow student who was also interested in science. They married later and had children.

In **1905**, Einstein published several important scientific papers. One of them presented his **Special Theory of Relativity**, which is associated with the famous equation **$E = mc^2$**. His scientific work brought him worldwide recognition. In **1921**, he received the **Nobel Prize in Physics** for his work on the photoelectric effect.

However, Einstein was not interested only in science. He was deeply concerned about **war, violence and human suffering**. The rise of the Nazis in Germany forced him to leave the country because of his Jewish background. He settled in the United States and became a citizen there.

Einstein was particularly worried when scientists developed the possibility of using atomic energy to create powerful weapons. During the Second World War, he wrote a letter to **President Franklin D. Roosevelt**, warning him about the possibility of Germany developing an atomic bomb. Later, however, Einstein became a strong supporter of peace and disarmament. He believed that scientists should work for the welfare of humanity rather than for destruction.

The chapter presents Einstein as a person with a **beautiful mind as well as a beautiful heart**. His scientific genius changed our understanding of the universe, while his concern for peace and humanity showed his deep sense of responsibility towards the world.

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5. The Snake and the Mirror

The Snake and the Mirror is a humorous story by **Vaikom Muhammad Basheer**. It is about a young doctor who has a frightening experience with a snake one night. The story also shows how a person's pride and self-confidence can disappear in a moment of danger.

The narrator is a **young doctor** who has recently started his medical practice. He lives alone in a small rented room that has very little furniture. One hot night, after returning from his work, he sits in front of a mirror and begins to admire his appearance. He looks at his face, his hair and his smile and thinks about his future. He decides that he will marry a rich doctor with a good medical practice.

While he is lost in these thoughts, he suddenly hears a **sound of something falling**. Before he can understand what has happened, a snake falls from the roof and lands on his shoulder. The snake quickly moves around his arm and then coils itself around his body. The doctor becomes completely still because he is terrified that the snake may bite him.

The doctor sees his reflection in the mirror and realises that the snake is looking at the mirror. The snake slowly moves towards the mirror and becomes interested in its own reflection. Taking advantage of this moment, the doctor quietly gets up and runs out of the room.

He reaches the home of a friend and tells others about his frightening experience. When he returns the next day, he discovers that the snake has disappeared. However, the thief who had entered his room has stolen almost everything he owned. Only a few things are left, including his **dirty vest**.

The experience changes the doctor's attitude. Before the incident, he was proud of his appearance and imagined a comfortable future for himself. When the snake appeared, however, all his pride disappeared and his only thought was to save his life.

The story is humorous because of the contrast between the doctor's **self-admiration before the incident and his helplessness when faced with the snake**. It also reminds us that pride and vanity can disappear quickly when we face a real danger.

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6. My Childhood

My Childhood is an autobiographical extract from **A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's** autobiography *Wings of Fire*. It describes his childhood in **Rameswaram**, the people around him, and the experiences that shaped his values of simplicity, equality, friendship and communal harmony.

Abdul Kalam was born in **Rameswaram** in 1931. His father, **Jainulabdeen**, was a simple and wise man who owned a boat and helped ferry Hindu pilgrims between Rameswaram and Dhanushkodi. His mother, **Ashiamma**, was a kind and generous woman who regularly fed many people. Kalam grew up in a loving family and learned the values of honesty, discipline and kindness from his parents.

Kalam had several close friends at school, including **Ramanadha Sastry**, **Aravindan** and **Sivaprakasan**. Ramanadha Sastry was the son of the high priest of the Rameswaram temple. Their friendship showed that children of different religions could live and study together peacefully.

However, one day a new teacher came to Kalam's class. He saw Kalam, a Muslim boy, sitting in the front row beside Ramanadha Sastry, a Hindu boy wearing the sacred thread. The teacher did not like this and asked Kalam to sit on the **back bench**. Kalam felt very sad, and Ramanadha Sastry was also deeply upset. When Ramanadha's father, **Lakshmana Sastry**, heard about the incident, he strongly criticised the teacher and asked him to correct his behaviour. The teacher eventually realised his mistake.

Kalam also describes another important incident involving his science teacher, **Sivasubramania Iyer**. Iyer was a Brahmin, but he wanted Kalam to break social and religious barriers. He invited Kalam to his home for a meal. His wife, however, refused to serve Kalam because he was a Muslim. Iyer served Kalam himself and later convinced his wife to change her attitude. The following week, she served Kalam food herself.

These experiences had a deep influence on Kalam. They taught him that **religion should never become a reason for discrimination**. His childhood also taught him the importance of hard work, friendship, equality and respect for all people. The story shows how the values learned during childhood can shape a person's character and future life.

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7. Reach for the Top

Reach for the Top is a biographical lesson about **two successful women, Santosh Yadav and Maria Sharapova**. Though they came from different backgrounds and chose different fields, both achieved great success through determination, hard work and a strong desire to reach the top.

7.1 Santosh Yadav

Santosh Yadav was born in **Joniyawas village in Rewari district, Haryana**, in a traditional family. At a time when girls in her village were expected to live according to old customs, Santosh wanted to make her own choices. She refused to accept the traditional restrictions placed on girls.

Unlike other girls of her age, Santosh did not want to marry early. She wanted to continue her education. When she was sixteen, she left home and went to **Delhi** to study. She joined a school and later went to **Jaipur**, where she completed her education. She also worked part-time to pay her school fees.

While studying in Jaipur, Santosh became interested in **mountaineering** after watching some mountaineers climbing the Aravalli Hills. She decided to learn the skill and joined a mountaineering institute. Her strong determination and physical fitness helped her become an excellent climber.

In **1992**, at the age of about twenty, Santosh Yadav became the **youngest woman in the world to climb Mount Everest**. She later climbed Everest for a second time and became the **only woman in the world to have scaled Mount Everest twice** at that time. She also showed concern for others when she helped save the life of a fellow climber and brought back the body of another climber.

Santosh's life shows that a person should have the courage to follow the **right and rational path** even when others oppose it. Her determination helped her overcome social barriers and achieve something extraordinary.

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7.2 Maria Sharapova

Maria Sharapova is a famous Russian tennis player who reached the top of the world through exceptional determination and hard work. She was born in **Siberia, Russia**, and began playing tennis at a very young age.

When Maria was only nine years old, she went to the **United States** with her father, Yuri, to receive professional tennis training. She had to leave her mother behind in Russia because her mother could not travel with them. Maria found the separation from her mother very painful and often felt lonely.

Life in the United States was not easy for her. Her father worked hard to support her tennis training, while Maria had to become independent at a very young age. Instead of allowing loneliness and difficulties to weaken her, she became mentally stronger and more determined to succeed.

Maria worked extremely hard and gradually established herself as a world-class tennis player. At the age of **seventeen**, she won the **Wimbledon women's singles title in 2004**, which brought her international fame. She later achieved the top position in women's tennis.

Despite living and training in the United States, Maria remained proud of her Russian identity. She said that she had Russian citizenship and that she would represent **Russia at the Olympics** if given the opportunity.

Both Santosh Yadav and Maria Sharapova prove that **success does not come easily**. Their achievements were the result of determination, sacrifice, discipline, courage and continuous hard work.

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8. Kathmandu

Kathmandu is a travel account by **Vikram Seth**. In this chapter, the writer describes his visit to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, and his experiences at two important religious places, **Pashupatinath Temple** and **Baudhnath Stupa**. He also describes the busy streets, shops, people and sounds of Kathmandu.

The writer visits the **Pashupatinath Temple**, one of the most important temples for Hindus. A large crowd of devotees has gathered there. There is a great deal of noise and confusion as people push their way towards the temple. Only Hindus are allowed to enter the main temple. The writer sees priests, devotees, tourists, monkeys, cows and pigeons moving around the temple area.

The atmosphere becomes more crowded and chaotic when a **royal Nepalese princess** arrives with her mother. The people make way for them. The writer also notices a small shrine dedicated to a god who is believed to have a serpent around his neck. Nearby, a corpse is being cremated on the banks of the **Bagmati River**. The scene presents both religious activity and the reality of death.

The writer then visits the **Baudhnath Stupa**, an important Buddhist shrine. Unlike Pashupatinath, the atmosphere here is peaceful and quiet. There are small shops around the stupa, selling Tibetan goods, clothes, jewellery and other items. The writer notices Tibetan refugees and shopkeepers going about their daily activities.

While walking through Kathmandu, the writer observes its busy streets filled with **vendors, rickshaw drivers, tourists, fruit sellers and people**. He sees shops selling postcards, Western music, books and other goods. The city appears colourful, noisy and crowded.

Later, the writer decides to return home. He goes to a **Marwari music shop** and buys a flute. He is attracted by the simple and beautiful sound of the flute. As he listens to the flute seller playing different flutes, he reflects on the nature of music. Unlike the many sounds of the busy city, the sound of the flute seems simple, universal and peaceful.

The chapter gives us a vivid picture of **Kathmandu's religious life, culture, people and everyday atmosphere**. It also shows the contrast between the noisy, crowded city and the peaceful sound of the flute that finally captures the writer's attention.

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9. If I Were You

If I Were You is a humorous and suspenseful play by **Douglas James**. It is about **Gerrard**, a clever playwright, and an intruder who wants to kill him and take his identity. The play shows how intelligence and presence of mind can help a person escape from a dangerous situation.

Gerrard lives alone in a small cottage in the countryside. One evening, when he is preparing to leave for a meeting, an **intruder** enters his cottage with a gun. The intruder looks similar to Gerrard and has already collected information about him. He plans to kill Gerrard and use his identity to escape from the police.

The intruder tells Gerrard that he is wanted for murder. He believes that by killing Gerrard, he can take Gerrard's identity because they look somewhat alike. He asks Gerrard several questions about his life, his car and the people who visit him. Gerrard remains calm and does not show fear.

Instead of fighting the intruder, Gerrard begins to **talk intelligently**. He tells the intruder a false story about himself. He says that he is also a criminal and that he has been involved in a murder. He explains that he is planning to escape because the police are looking for him. He further tells the intruder that if the police see him, they may mistake him for Gerrard.

The intruder becomes confused and starts believing Gerrard's story. Gerrard then tells him that taking his identity would be dangerous because the police would soon catch him. He cleverly convinces the intruder that he must leave the cottage immediately.

Gerrard finally manages to **outsmart the intruder**. He tricks him into moving towards a cupboard and then pushes him inside. Gerrard locks the cupboard and takes control of the situation. He then plans to hand the intruder over to the police.

The play is interesting because Gerrard never loses his **calmness and presence of mind** even though he is facing a man with a gun. Instead of using physical strength, he uses intelligence, quick thinking and clever conversation to save himself.

The play shows that **presence of mind and intelligence can be more powerful than physical force**. Gerrard's ability to remain calm and think quickly helps him defeat a dangerous criminal.

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Beehive – Poetry

Poem 1: The Road Not Taken

"The Road Not Taken" is a famous poem by **Robert Frost**. The poem is about the choices we make in life and how those choices shape our future. The two roads in the poem represent the different choices or paths that a person may have in life.

The poet is walking through a **yellow wood** when he comes to a place where two roads divide in different directions. He wishes he could travel on both roads, but he is only one traveller and has to choose one. He looks carefully at one road and tries to see where it leads, but the road disappears into the trees.

The poet then chooses the **other road**, which appears to be just as good as the first one. It seems to be grassy and less used, although he later admits that both roads were actually almost equally worn. This shows that the two choices were not very different from each other.

The poet keeps the first road for another day, but he knows that he may never get the chance to come back and take it. In life, once we make an important choice, it may lead us in a different direction and make it difficult to return to the earlier choice.

In the final stanza, the poet imagines himself in the future telling the story of his choice. He says that he took the road **"less travelled by"** and that this choice made a difference in his life. The ending makes us think about how we look back at our past decisions and give meaning to the choices we have made.

The poem does not simply say that one should always choose the unusual path. Instead, it shows the **importance and difficulty of making choices**. Every person has to make decisions in life, and those decisions can influence the course of the future.

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Poem 2: Wind

"Wind" is a poem by **Subramania Bharati**. In the poem, the poet talks to the wind and describes its destructive power. The wind becomes a symbol of the difficulties and challenges that people face in life.

At the beginning of the poem, the poet asks the wind to **blow gently**. He asks it not to break the shutters of the windows, scatter papers or throw down books from the shelf. However, the wind does not listen. It blows strongly and causes damage to weak houses, doors and roofs.

The poet then describes how the wind **crushes weak things**. It makes fun of weak fires by blowing them out, while strong fires become stronger and burn brightly. Through this, the poet compares weak people with weak fires and strong people with strong fires.

The poet advises people to make themselves **strong and firm**. They should build strong houses, strong bodies and strong hearts so that they can face the powerful wind. In the same way, people should develop courage, strength and determination to face the difficulties of life.

The wind therefore becomes a symbol of **problems and challenges**. It destroys weak things but helps strong things become stronger. The poet's message is that we should not complain about difficulties. Instead, we should make ourselves strong enough to face them.

The poem teaches us that **difficulties are a part of life, and a strong and determined person can face them successfully**.

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Poem 3: Rain on the Roof

"Rain on the Roof" is a poem by **Coates Kinney**. In the poem, the poet describes the peaceful sound of rain falling on the roof of his cottage and explains how it brings back sweet memories from the past.

The poet is lying in his room on a **dark and rainy night**. The sky is covered with dark clouds, and rain is falling on the roof. The sound of the raindrops creates a soft and pleasant music. The poet calls this sound the **"patter" of the rain** and feels happy while listening to it.

As the poet listens to the rain, many **dreamy thoughts and memories** come into his mind. The sound of the raindrops seems to awaken old memories that are hidden in his mind. He feels a sense of peace and happiness while listening to the rain.

Among these memories, the poet especially remembers his **mother**. He imagines his mother looking lovingly at her children as they sleep. This memory makes the poet feel emotional and reminds him of the love and care he received from her during his childhood.

The poet finds a special connection between the sound of rain and his memories. Every raindrop seems to bring back a different thought or memory. The simple sound of rain therefore becomes a source of **comfort, happiness and nostalgia** for him.

The poem shows how ordinary experiences in nature can awaken deep emotions and memories. The poet enjoys the rain not only because of its soothing sound but also because it connects him with his childhood and the loving memory of his mother.

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Poem 4: The Lake Isle of Innisfree

"The Lake Isle of Innisfree" is a poem by **W. B. Yeats**. In the poem, the poet expresses his strong desire to leave the noisy city and live a peaceful life close to nature on the beautiful island of Innisfree.

The poet says that he will **arise and go to Innisfree**, a small island in a lake. He wants to build a small cabin there using simple materials. He plans to grow **nine bean-rows** and keep a hive of honeybees. He imagines living alone in the natural surroundings and enjoying the peaceful life of the island.

The poet believes that he will find **peace** at Innisfree. He imagines the morning, afternoon and evening filled with the beauty and sounds of nature. The sounds of the bees, birds and lake water will make his life calm and pleasant. He feels that peace will come to him slowly and naturally.

The poet also describes the beautiful sights and sounds of the island. At midnight, he imagines a soft glow in the sky. At noon, the island shines with a purple light. In the evening, the sound of the linnet's wings creates a peaceful atmosphere. These images show how deeply the poet loves nature.

Although the poet is physically standing in the **city**, his heart is always thinking about Innisfree. He hears the sound of the lake water in his imagination, even when he is standing on a city road. This shows that his desire for peace and nature is very strong.

The poem expresses the poet's **love for nature and his longing for peace and simplicity**. Innisfree is not just a physical place for him; it represents an ideal life away from the noise, stress and artificiality of the modern city.

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5. A Legend of the Northland

"A Legend of the Northland" is a narrative poem by **Phoebe Cary**. It tells the story of an old woman who is punished for her selfishness and lack of generosity. The poem teaches us the importance of **kindness, sharing and helping those in need**.

The poem is set in the **Northland**, a very cold region where winter nights are long and the snow remains for a long time. The poet says that the story is an old legend from this region.

One day, **Saint Peter** was travelling through the Northland. He was tired and hungry because he had been fasting for a long time. He came to a small cottage where an old woman was baking **cakes** on the hearth.

Saint Peter asked the woman for a small cake because he was hungry. The woman made a cake, but when she looked at it, she thought it was too large to give away. So, she made a smaller one. Even then, she felt that the cake was too big to give to the saint.

She continued making smaller cakes, but every time she found a reason not to give one away. Finally, she made a very tiny cake, but even that seemed too large to her. She put it back on the shelf and **refused to give Saint Peter anything**.

Saint Peter was angry at her selfishness. He felt that a person who had enough food but refused to share even a small piece with a hungry person was **not fit to live in a human way**.

As a punishment, Saint Peter **changed the woman into a woodpecker**. He ordered her to live in the woods and search for food by boring into trees.

The old woman therefore had to spend her life searching for food in the trees. The poet explains that this is why woodpeckers can still be seen **boring into trees with their beaks**.

The poet says that she does not know whether the story is completely true, but she has heard it from the people of the Northland. The story reminds us that **selfishness and greed can bring punishment, while kindness and generosity are important qualities**.

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Poem 6: No Men Are Foreign

"No Men Are Foreign" is a poem by **James Kirkup**. The poem gives a strong message of **universal brotherhood, peace and human unity**. The poet reminds us that people may belong to different countries and wear different uniforms, but they are all human beings with the same basic needs and feelings.

The poet begins by saying that **no men are foreign and no countries are strange**. Although people live in different parts of the world and may speak different languages or follow different customs, they are essentially the same. Beneath their different uniforms, every human being has the same body and the same basic needs.

The poet asks us to remember that people in other countries also live on the same earth. They work on the land, grow crops, eat food and experience **sunlight, air, water, hunger and tiredness**, just as we do. Their hands and bodies are like ours, and they also have feelings of love, happiness and sadness.

The poet then speaks against **war and hatred**. When we fight against people from another country, we are actually harming our own fellow human beings. The people we call enemies also work for peace and live ordinary lives. They suffer when wars take away their homes, families and lives.

The poet warns us that hatred and violence can destroy the whole of humanity. When we take part in war or encourage hatred, we **defile the human earth** and destroy the innocence of life. Therefore, we must not allow differences of nationality, religion or appearance to create hatred among people.

The poem ends with a repeated reminder that **no men are foreign and no countries are strange**. The poet wants us to understand that all human beings are connected. We should promote peace, friendship and understanding instead of hatred and war.

The poem teaches us that **humanity is greater than national boundaries** and that we should respect every human being as our fellow member of one global family.

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Poem 7: On Killing a Tree

"On Killing a Tree" is a poem by **Gieve Patel**. The poem describes how difficult it is to completely destroy a tree and presents the process of killing it in a detailed and almost scientific manner. At a deeper level, the poem makes us think about the **strength of nature and the cruelty of destroying it**.

The poet begins by saying that a simple cut with a knife is **not enough to kill a tree**. The tree has grown slowly over many years by taking nourishment from the earth. Its roots have gone deep into the soil, and its trunk has become strong.

If someone cuts the tree, it does not die immediately. The **bark heals** and new leaves and branches begin to grow again. The tree continues to live because its roots remain safely hidden inside the earth. This shows the great strength and ability of a tree to recover.

To kill the tree completely, its roots must be **pulled out of the earth**. The poet describes the roots as the most important part of the tree because they hold it firmly in the soil and provide it with nourishment. The roots have to be pulled out and exposed to the sun and air.

Once the roots are exposed, they begin to dry, harden, twist and wither. Slowly, the tree loses its strength and finally dies. The poet describes this process step by step to show that killing a tree is not a simple act.

The poem also has a deeper meaning. The detailed description of destroying the tree makes us realise how **strong and resilient nature is**. At the same time, the poem indirectly makes us aware of the violence involved in cutting down trees. The tree is presented almost like a living being that struggles to survive.

The poem therefore highlights the **power and resilience of nature** and encourages us to understand the importance of trees and the need to protect them.

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Poem 8: A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal

"A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" is a short poem by **William Wordsworth**. The poem expresses the poet's feelings after the death of a loved one. It describes how the death of the girl has changed her from a living person into a lifeless part of nature.

At the beginning of the poem, the poet says that a **"slumber"** had sealed his spirit. This means that he had been protected from the fear of death. He did not think that the girl he loved could ever die. He felt that she was beyond the ordinary fears and changes of human life.

In the second stanza, the poet accepts the reality of her death. She can no longer hear or see, and she has no movement or strength. She is no longer affected by the passing of time or the ordinary changes of human life.

The poet then describes her as being a part of the natural world. She has become connected with the **earth, rocks, stones and trees**. She now moves along with the earth as it travels through its daily cycle. Her individual human life has ended, and she has become a part of nature.

The poem is very short, but it expresses deep feelings of **loss, grief and acceptance of death**. The poet does not describe his sorrow directly. Instead, he uses simple and quiet images to show how death has separated the woman from the world of human life.

The poem suggests that although human beings are mortal, they eventually become a part of the natural world. It presents death as a natural part of life and shows the poet's quiet acceptance of the finality of death.

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Moments – Supplementary Reader

1. The Lost Child

"The Lost Child" is a touching story by **Mulk Raj Anand**. It is about a small child who goes to a village fair with his parents. The story shows the child's attraction towards colourful things at the fair and, later, his deep love and dependence on his parents.

The story begins with a little boy going to a **spring festival** with his parents. He is excited to see the beautiful sights around him. The path to the fair is surrounded by fields, flowers, insects and trees. The child walks happily with his parents and enjoys everything he sees.

When they reach the fair, the child becomes attracted to many things. He wants to buy **toys**, but his parents do not stop. He then sees a **sweet shop** selling different kinds of sweets. He particularly wants a sweet called *burfi*, but he knows that his father will probably refuse to buy it. His mother understands his desire and buys it for him.

The child then sees a **garland of gulmohur flowers**. He wants the flowers, but again he hesitates because he knows his parents may not agree. He is also attracted by the colourful **balloons** and wants to have them, but he knows that his father will not buy them.

Soon, the child hears the music of a **snake-charmer** playing his flute. He wants to stop and listen, but his parents continue walking. Then he sees a **roundabout** where children are enjoying themselves. He asks his parents to let him ride on it.

However, when the child turns around, he suddenly discovers that **his parents are no longer beside him**. He becomes frightened and begins to cry. He runs here and there, calling for his mother and father. The things that had attracted him earlier no longer matter to him. He does not want toys, sweets, flowers, balloons or a ride on the roundabout. He only wants his parents.

A kind man finds the crying child and tries to comfort him. He offers him the things that he had wanted earlier, such as sweets, flowers, balloons and a ride on the roundabout. But the child refuses everything. He only cries, **"I want my mother, I want my father!"**

The story shows an important change in the child's feelings. At first, the fair is full of attractive things, and he wants almost everything he sees. But after getting separated from his parents, **their presence becomes more valuable to him than all the attractions of the fair**.

The story beautifully shows that **a child's greatest need is the love, security and presence of his or her parents**. It also reminds us that things which seem very important to us may lose all their value when we are separated from the people we love.

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2. The Adventures of Toto

"The Adventures of Toto" is a humorous story by **Ruskin Bond**. It is about a mischievous monkey named Toto and the trouble and amusement he causes after he is brought home by the narrator's grandfather. The story shows Toto's intelligence, curiosity and playful nature.

Grandfather bought Toto from a **tonga-driver** who kept the monkey tied to a feeding-trough. Toto was a pretty monkey with bright eyes, white teeth, quick fingers and a long tail. Grandfather liked animals and thought Toto would make a good addition to his collection of pets.

Grandfather kept Toto secretly in a little closet in the narrator's bedroom because Grandmother did not like the idea of bringing another animal into the house. Toto soon showed how **mischievous** he was. He tore off the wallpaper, pulled out the peg from the wall and damaged the narrator's clothes. Grandfather realised that Toto could not be left alone.

To keep him safe, Grandfather later moved Toto to the **stable**, where he was kept with a donkey named Nana. Toto and Nana did not become good friends. Toto would tease Nana by pulling her long ears and then quickly move away before she could react.

One day, Grandfather took Toto with him on a **train journey to Saharanpur**. He put Toto inside a large black canvas bag. The monkey did not remain quiet. He kept moving inside the bag and made it difficult for Grandfather to carry him. When the ticket collector saw Toto, he treated him as a passenger and charged Grandfather **three rupees as a fare for the monkey**.

Toto also created trouble at home during **bath time**. He loved warm water and enjoyed bathing in a large bowl. He would test the water with his hand and then sit in it comfortably. Once, he almost boiled himself when he climbed into a kettle of warm water and remained there until the water became too hot.

Another amusing incident happened when Toto stole **pulao** from a large dish at dinner. He took the dish to a branch of a tree and began eating the rice. When Grandfather tried to take the dish away, Toto threw it down and broke it.

Although Toto was intelligent and entertaining, his mischievous behaviour caused too much damage. He destroyed things, frightened other animals and created trouble wherever he went. Grandfather finally realised that **Toto was too destructive to be kept as a pet**. He eventually sold Toto back to the tonga-driver for the same amount he had paid for him.

The story is humorous because of Toto's unusual behaviour and clever tricks. It also shows that **wild animals may be fascinating and intelligent, but they are not always suitable as household pets**.

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3. Iswaran the Storyteller

"Iswaran the Storyteller" is a humorous and interesting story by **R. K. Laxman**. It is about **Mahendra**, a junior supervisor, and his cook, **Iswaran**, who has a wonderful imagination and a special talent for telling dramatic stories.

Mahendra worked as a **junior supervisor** for a firm that supplied supervisors to construction sites. His job required him to move from one place to another. He lived alone in different places, but he was never worried because his cook, Iswaran, always accompanied him. Iswaran cooked his meals, washed his clothes and took care of his daily needs.

Iswaran was an excellent **storyteller**. He could create exciting stories out of ordinary events. He used dramatic expressions, gestures and sound effects while telling his stories. Mahendra enjoyed listening to him, even though many of Iswaran's stories were exaggerated.

One day, Iswaran told Mahendra about a **mad elephant** that had entered the town. He described how the elephant had created great fear and confusion. According to Iswaran, everyone was too frightened to control it. He then claimed that he had bravely confronted the elephant and knocked it unconscious by striking it on the toenail with a cane. Mahendra knew that the story was probably exaggerated, but he enjoyed listening to it.

Another night, Iswaran told Mahendra a frightening story about a **ghost**. He said that he had seen the ghost of a woman near their house. The ghost, according to him, was carrying a fetus in her arms and appeared only on moonless nights. Mahendra laughed at the story and did not take it seriously.

However, after Iswaran's story, Mahendra began to feel uncomfortable. One night, he thought he saw a **dark, ghost-like figure** outside his window. He became frightened and could not sleep properly. The next morning, Iswaran confirmed that it was the same ghost he had described.

Mahendra became deeply disturbed by the incident. He decided that he could no longer stay in the place. He informed his office that he wanted to leave the job. Iswaran was surprised but did not understand the real reason behind Mahendra's decision.

The story is humorous because of the contrast between **Iswaran's dramatic imagination and Mahendra's growing fear**. It also shows how a powerful storyteller can make even an ordinary or imaginary event seem real through vivid description and confidence.

The story reminds us that **our imagination can strongly influence our thoughts and feelings**. Iswaran's stories are entertaining, but they also show how easily fear can grow when we begin to believe what our imagination tells us.

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4. In the Kingdom of Fools

"In the Kingdom of Fools" is a humorous folktale that teaches an important lesson about **wisdom, foolishness and the dangers of blindly following strange rules**. The story is about a foolish king and his equally foolish minister, whose decisions create a completely absurd kingdom.

Once there lived a **guru and his disciple** who travelled to different places. They reached a strange kingdom where everything was different. The king and his minister had made a rule that people should **work during the night and sleep during the day**. Everyone in the kingdom followed this unusual rule.

The guru immediately understood that the kingdom was ruled by foolish people and decided to leave. However, the disciple was attracted by the cheap food available there. Everything cost the same, whether it was rice, vegetables or sweets. The disciple decided to stay because he could eat a large amount of food for very little money. The guru warned him about the foolishness of the kingdom but left without him.

One day, a thief entered a merchant's house but was killed when a wall collapsed on him. The thief's brother went to the king and demanded justice. The king ordered the merchant to be punished because the wall had collapsed and caused the thief's death.

The merchant blamed the bricklayer who had built the wall. The bricklayer blamed the dancing girl because she had distracted him while he was working. The dancing girl blamed the goldsmith, who had delayed making her jewellery. The goldsmith then blamed the merchant because the merchant had demanded the jewellery urgently.

The king eventually decided that the merchant should be executed. However, when the executioners found that the merchant was too thin for the noose, they looked for a fat person who could fit it. They found the disciple, who had become fat because of the cheap food.

The disciple was terrified and remembered his guru's warning. He secretly prayed for help. The guru returned and came up with a clever plan. He whispered to the disciple that **the person who was executed first would become the next king in heaven**. The disciple loudly announced that he wanted to be executed first.

The guru then said that he also wanted to be executed first. The foolish king and minister became confused. They thought that the two men knew something special about the noose. The king decided that he and his minister should be executed instead so that they could be reborn as the next king and minister.

Thus, the king and minister were executed, while the guru and disciple escaped danger. The people then asked the guru and disciple to become their new king and minister. The guru agreed on the condition that the old foolish laws would be changed.

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5. The Happy Prince

"The Happy Prince" is a touching story by **Oscar Wilde** about a beautiful statue called the Happy Prince and a little swallow. The story highlights **love, kindness, sacrifice and concern for the poor and suffering**.

The Happy Prince was a statue covered with **gold leaves**. His eyes were made of precious **sapphires**, and a large red **ruby** was fixed on the handle of his sword. When he was alive, he had lived happily in a palace and had never known sadness or suffering. Therefore, he was called the Happy Prince.

After his death, his statue was placed high above the city. From there, he could see the poverty and suffering of the people. He became sad because he could now see the misery that he had never noticed when he was alive.

One day, a **little swallow** stopped at the statue while travelling to Egypt. The Prince asked him to stay for one night and help a poor woman whose little boy was sick. The Prince had a ruby in his sword, so he asked the swallow to take it to the woman. The swallow agreed and placed the ruby beside her.

The next day, the Prince saw another poor man who was hungry and cold. He asked the swallow to take one of his **sapphire eyes** to the man. Although the swallow wanted to continue his journey to Egypt, he agreed to help the Prince.

The Prince then asked the swallow to take his other sapphire eye to a poor girl who had dropped her matches into the gutter. The swallow did what the Prince asked. Now the Prince had become **blind**.

The Prince asked the swallow to stay with him and help the poor people of the city. He told the swallow to remove the **gold leaves** covering his body and distribute them among the poor. The swallow stayed with the Prince instead of going to Egypt and carried out his wishes.

As winter arrived, the swallow became weaker and weaker. Finally, he died at the feet of the Prince after telling him that he would stay with him forever. At that moment, the Prince's **lead heart broke** into two.

The next morning, the Mayor and the city officials noticed that the statue had lost its beauty. They decided that it was no longer useful and ordered it to be pulled down. The statue was melted, but the broken lead heart did not melt.

In the end, God asked an angel to bring the **two most precious things in the city**. The angel brought the dead swallow and the broken heart of the Happy Prince. God considered them precious because they represented **selfless love and sacrifice**.

The story teaches us that **true beauty does not lie in outward appearance or wealth. Real greatness lies in kindness, compassion and the willingness to sacrifice for others.**

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6. The Last Leaf

"The Last Leaf" is a touching story by **O. Henry** about friendship, hope and sacrifice. It shows how a person's love and selfless act can give another person the strength to live.

The story is set in **Greenwich Village**, where many artists lived. Two young women, **Sue and Johnsy**, were artists and close friends. They lived together in a small flat. One winter, Johnsy became seriously ill with **pneumonia**.

Johnsy became very weak and lost the desire to live. She lay in bed looking through the window at an **ivy creeper** growing on the wall of the building opposite. The leaves of the creeper were falling one by one because of the cold weather.

Johnsy developed a strange belief. She counted the falling leaves and decided that **when the last leaf fell, she would die**. Sue tried to convince her that her idea was foolish, but Johnsy refused to change her mind.

Sue was deeply worried about her friend. She told **Behrman**, an old painter who lived downstairs, about Johnsy's condition. Behrman was a poor artist who had always dreamed of painting a great masterpiece but had never achieved it.

One stormy night, the last real leaf on the ivy creeper fell. However, the next morning Johnsy saw **one leaf still hanging on the wall**. She watched it throughout the day, but it did not fall.

The leaf continued to remain there even during the cold rain and strong wind. Slowly, Johnsy began to realise that she had been wrong. If the leaf could survive such terrible weather, she also decided that she should try to live. Her desire to live returned, and her health gradually improved.

Later, Sue told Johnsy the truth. **Behrman had painted the last leaf on the wall** during the stormy night. He had gone outside in the terrible weather to paint it because the real last leaf had fallen. He caught pneumonia as a result and died two days later.

The painted leaf had become **Behrman's masterpiece** because it had saved Johnsy's life. His painting gave her hope when she had lost the will to live.

The story teaches us that **hope can give people the strength to overcome difficult situations. It also shows the power of friendship, love and selfless sacrifice. Behrman's final act proves that true art can touch and even save a human life.**

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7. A House Is Not a Home

"A House Is Not a Home" is a touching story by **Zan Gaudioso**. It is about a young boy who feels lonely and unhappy after moving to a new school. The story shows that a **house becomes a home when it is filled with love, friendship and a sense of belonging**.

The narrator was a **high-school student** who had recently moved to a new school. He found it difficult to adjust to the new environment. He missed his old school and friends and felt lonely among the unfamiliar students. He was also embarrassed because his clothes and appearance were different from those of his new classmates.

One Sunday afternoon, while the narrator was doing his homework, a **fire broke out in his house**. He and his mother managed to escape, but almost everything they owned was destroyed. The narrator was especially upset because he had lost his books, school uniform, photographs and other personal belongings.

The situation became even worse when he realised that his **pet cat was missing**. He loved the cat deeply and was heartbroken because he believed that it might have died in the fire.

After the fire, the narrator had to stay with his grandparents while his mother arranged for a new place to live. He felt completely lost. He had already been unhappy at his new school, and now he had lost his home and his beloved pet as well.

When he returned to school, he was surprised by the kindness of his classmates. Earlier, he had thought that they did not like him, but now they showed genuine concern for him. They collected **clothes, school supplies and other useful things** for him. Their kindness made him realise that he was not alone.

One day, while the narrator was outside school, a girl came running towards him. She was carrying a **cat**. To his great joy, he realised that it was his missing pet. The cat had survived the fire and had been found and cared for by others.

The narrator was overwhelmed with happiness. He finally understood that his new classmates had become his friends and that he had found a sense of belonging in his new school.

The story shows that **a house is only a physical building, while a home is created by love, relationships, friendship and emotional security**. The narrator loses his house in the fire but eventually discovers something more important: a community of people who care about him.

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8. The Beggar

"The Beggar" is a touching story by **Anton Chekhov** about a poor man named **Lushkoff** who begs for money by telling lies about his life. The story shows how **kindness, honest work and human sympathy can help a person change his life**.

Lushkoff was a beggar who often approached people and told them false stories to get money. Sometimes he claimed that he was a teacher who had lost his job, and at other times he said that he had been a student or a choir singer. He was actually a **drunkard** who had lost his ability to work properly.

One day, Lushkoff approached **Sergei**, a lawyer, and asked him for money. Sergei recognised him and reminded him that he had told different stories on earlier occasions. Sergei became angry with him for lying.

Instead of simply giving him money, Sergei offered him **work**. He asked Lushkoff to chop wood. Lushkoff agreed, but he was too weak and intoxicated to do the work properly.

Sergei noticed his condition but still decided to help him. He asked his servant to give Lushkoff work whenever he came. Lushkoff was given different small jobs, such as chopping wood, sweeping the yard and carrying things.

Although Lushkoff was initially unable to work properly, these opportunities gradually changed him. More importantly, he began to feel **ashamed of his dishonest and useless life**. Sergei's kindness and insistence on honest work made him realise that he could change.

After some time, Lushkoff stopped drinking and became a respectable person. He found a job as a **notary's assistant** and began earning an honest living.

Later, Sergei met Lushkoff and was surprised to see how much he had changed. Lushkoff then revealed something important. Sergei had given him the opportunity to work, but **Olga**, Sergei's cook, had actually done most of the work for him in the beginning.

Whenever Lushkoff was sent to chop wood, Olga understood that he was too weak to do it. She would chop the wood herself and then give him the money. She often scolded him and cried because she felt sorry for him. Her **kindness and compassion** deeply affected Lushkoff.

Lushkoff said that Olga's actions had helped him change. Her kindness had touched his heart and made him give up drinking and begin a better life.

The story teaches us that **true kindness can transform a person's life**. Giving money to a person may provide temporary help, but giving someone an opportunity to work, along with sympathy and encouragement, can help them become independent and respectable. It also shows that **even small acts of compassion can have a lasting impact on another person's life**.

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