

The Thief's Story

Read and Find Out (Page 8)

Q1. Who does 'I' refers to in this story?

Ans: In the story, 'I' refers to the narrator of the story Hari Singh, who was a fifteen-year-old experienced thief.

Q2. What is he "a fairly successful hand" at?

Ans: He was "a fairly successful hand" at stealing and robbing people.

Q3. What does he get from Anil in return for his work?

Ans: When Hari asked Anil if he could work for him, Anil said that he could not pay him. Finally, the agreement was that if he would cook, then Anil would feed him. However, Anil soon found out that he did not know how to cook. Therefore, he taught him how to cook and later, how to write his name. He promised he would teach him how to write whole sentences and how to add numbers. Apart from this, when Hari went out to buy the day's supplies, he would make a profit of a rupee a day.

Read and Find Out (Page 10)

Q1. How does the thief think Anil will react to the theft?

Ans: The thief thought that on discovering the theft, Anil's face would show a touch of sadness. The sadness would not be for the loss of money, but for the loss of trust.

Q2. What does he say about the different reactions of people when they are robbed?

Ans: In his short career as a thief, he had made a study of men's faces when they lost their goods. He said that the greedy men showed fear; the rich men showed anger and the poor men showed acceptance.

Q3. Does Anil realize that he has been robbed?

Ans: Yes, Anil had realized that he had been robbed. He knew this probably because all the notes were wet and damp from the rain. However, he did not say anything to the thief and behaved normally.

Think about It (Page 13)

Q1. What are Hari Singh's reactions to the prospect of receiving an education? Do they change over time? What makes him return to Anil?

Ans: Hari Singh's reactions to the prospect of receiving an education change over time. When he started living with Anil he wanted to be literate so that he could become a more cunning cheat. Later on, there is a change in his heart. He wants to earn respect in life. Probably he is influenced by the calm in Anil's life. Although, both of them depend on irregular sources of income, but Anil seems to be more satisfied. Hari Singh develops a desire to be part of the civilized society.

Q2. Why does not Anil hand the thief over to the police? Do you think most people would have done so? In what ways is Anil different from such employers?

Ans. Anil does not hand the thief over to the police because he has put the money back in its place. It shows that he realized his fault. He wants to make amends for his ways. He must have felt guilty for himself. Anil wants to give him one more chance and therefore forgives him.

No, In today's world most people would not have done so. Although it must be done but such sort of patience and compassion are rarely found nowadays in this human world.

Talk about It

Q1. Do you think people like Anil and Hari Singh are found only in fiction, or are there such people in real life?

Ans: No, I don't think that people like Anil and Hari Singh are found only in fiction. There are such people in real life also. Although such people are rare in today's society. If one is caught stealing, people will first beat him

severely. Then he will be handed over to the police. It should be realized that a human being is bound to commit errors. One chance for reforming oneself must be given. This is the only way to bring anyone to the right path. Punishing severely is not the only solution. Strictness can make them absolute criminals.

Q2. Do you think it is a significant detail in the story that Anil is a struggling writer? Does this explain his behaviour in any way?

Ans: Hari Singh's observation about Anil getting an irregular income and Anil's statement about his sale of a book to a publisher indicates that he is a struggling writer. He lives life according to the flow of money he gets at a given time. When he gets the money he enjoys eating out with his friends. When he is having less money then he even doesn't accept paying salary to Hari Singh.

Q3. Have you met anyone like Hari Singh? Can you think and imagine the circumstances that can turn a fifteen-year-old boy into a thief?

Ans: No, I haven't met anyone like Hari Singh but such kind of people do exist in the world. Many a time, a fifteen-year-old boy may be forced under unavoidable circumstances to become a robber. Most people commit a crime to feed themselves or their families, or sometimes to satisfy their urge or addiction, to maintain health or to fulfil their demands to lead a luxurious life and so on and so forth.

Q4. Where is the story set? (You can get clues from the names of the persons and places mentioned in it.) Which language or languages are spoken in these places? Do you think the characters in the story spoke to each other in English?

Ans: The story is set near Lucknow somewhere in Uttar Pradesh. We understand this from the story when a railway station for Express train to Lucknow is mentioned. The presence of sweet shops, mandis and bazaars also indicate it to be a small and decent town. We can assume that the characters in the story were not speaking to each other in English but probably in the Hindi language.