

Value: 'We should care for and protect animals, because every living being has a right to live freely and happily in nature.'

1. Where was Harold born?

Ans: Harold was born in a weatherbeaten hollow, high in the tree trunk, where generation upon generation of hornbills had been raised.

2. What was Harold fed as a baby?

Ans: As a baby, Harold was fed pieces of jackfruit and berries from the banyan tree by his parents. Despite their best efforts, Harold's insatiable stomach could never be filled, emphasising the challenges of providing sustenance in the wild.

3. How did Harold reach the narrator's house?

Ans: Harold reached the narrator's house after falling out of his nest during an encounter with a civet cat. Grandfather rescued him and brought him to the sanctuary of the veranda, where an enclosure was initially created. The narrator and Grandfather then took over the duties of Harold's parents.

4. What was Harold's reaction to human beings?

Ans: Harold exhibited a positive and welcoming reaction to human beings. He associated the arrival of people, particularly the narrator and Grandfather, with the prospect of food. His response included craning his neck, quivering his open bill and emitting a loud, croaking sound, 'Kakakaee!'. Over time, he developed a friendly demeanour, showcasing his willingness to engage with and share his space with humans.

5. What parental duties did the narrator and his grandfather perform for Harold?

Ans: The narrator and his grandfather assumed parental responsibilities, nurturing and caring for Harold after he fell from his nest. They created an enclosure on the veranda, initially designed for his protection and recovery. This enclosure symbolised a safe haven, mirroring the natural environment Harold lost. They provided food, shelter and attention, fostering Harold's well-being. Beyond the physical care, the narrator and his grandfather engaged in the emotional aspects of parenting, building a connection with Harold and adapting to his unique needs.

6. Harold loved eating. Justify with examples from the text.

Ans: Harold's love for eating is evident through various instances in the text. For instance, he eagerly accepted offerings of beetles and delicacies from the narrator. Despite the narrator occasionally declining such offerings, Harold's enthusiasm for sharing a banana highlighted his fondness for food. His serious approach to mealtime, demonstrated by summoning the narrator with raucous barks and vigorous bill bangs, further emphasised his love for eating. Harold's diverse preferences, including a liking for bananas, dates and balls of boiled rice, showcased his joy for various food items.

7. What did Harold do to improve his appearance?

Ans: Harold improved his appearance by using a rouge pot, a small gland above the roots of his tail feathers, producing a rich yellow fluid. He skillfully applied this rouge to his feathers and the back of his neck, depicting his attention to personal grooming and unique, endearing habits. This act not only reflects Harold's physical care but also adds a touch of individuality to his character.

8. Harold was a playful bird. How did he play?

Ans: Harold displayed his playful nature by engaging in various activities. He enjoyed catching rice balls in his beak, tossing them in the air and skillfully letting them drop into his open mouth. Additionally, the narrator taught him to catch a tennis ball thrown with force from a distance, showcasing Harold's ability to adapt and participate in interactive games. These playful actions depict Harold's joyful nature and his willingness to connect with others through shared activities.

9. What habit of Harold was not appreciated by Aunt Ruby?

Ans: Aunt Ruby was irritated by Harold's habit of chuckling about an hour before the first raindrops fell. This behaviour, indicative of Harold's anticipation of rain, amused and pleased him but annoyed Aunt Ruby, especially when she ended up getting caught in the rain. The contrast in reactions adds humour to the narrative, depicting the diverse interactions between characters and their environment.

10. What is the narrator's wish for Harold?

Ans: The narrator expresses a heartfelt wish for Harold, hoping that if there's a heaven for good hornbills, Harold is receiving all the summer showers he could wish for, along with plenty of tennis balls to catch. This sentiment reflects the narrator's fondness for Harold and a desire for his continued happiness, emphasising the emotional connection developed between the narrator and the bird throughout the story.

11. What was the turning point in Harold's life? How did his life change after that?

Ans: The turning point in Harold's life occurred when a civet cat threatened him in his nest. His parents fought off the cat, but in the ensuing melee, Harold fell out of his nest. Grandfather rescued him and took him to the veranda, leading to the creation of an enclosure. After this incident, Harold's life changed as he lost some wing feathers and was unable to survive on his own. The narrator and his grandfather took on the parental duties, creating an enclosure on the veranda and providing care and attention to Harold's well-being. This turning point marks a shift in Harold's circumstances and establishes a deeper emotional connection between him and his caregivers.

12. The story explores the theme of (a) bond between humans and animals, (b) the importance of nature and (c) the circle of life. Give examples from the story to justify these themes.

Ans: Bond between humans and animals: This is evident in the narrator and his grandfather assuming parental duties for Harold, creating a connection that goes beyond mere care. They provided a haven on the veranda, engaged emotionally with Harold and adapted to his unique needs, reflecting a deep and meaningful relationship. (b) The importance of nature: Harold's excitement during storms, his joyful response to rain and his connection to the natural environment highlight the significance of nature in the story. (c) The circle of life: This is depicted through the natural life cycle of hornbills and Harold's assimilation into the household. Eventually, he passes away, and the narrator fondly remembers him, expressing a hope that Harold is experiencing a similar sense of joy in heaven as he did during his time on earth.

13. Do you think Harold was happy with the narrator's family? Give two reasons to justify your answer.

Ans: Yes, Harold was happy with the narrator's family. Firstly, he exhibited contentment in his behaviour, as seen in his joyful reactions to rain and his playful antics. Secondly, he developed a bond with the narrator's family, particularly with the narrator and his grandfather, showcasing a sense of comfort and belonging in their presence. This happiness is evident through Harold's actions and interactions with the family members, emphasising a positive and fulfilling connection.

