

9

A Tiger in the House

Ruskin Bond

SUMMARY OF THE LESSON

Timothy, the tiger cub, was discovered by Grandfather in the Terai jungle. One day he was going with the hunting party. He noticed a little tiger hiding under a banyan tree. He brought it home.

At first the cub was brought up only on milk. But it couldn't digest it. So it was given a diet of meat, pigeons and rabbits.

Timothy had two companions in the house. Toto, the monkey, and a puppy, who was mischievous. It pulled the cub's tail. Timothy was at first quite afraid of the puppy. Finally it allowed the dog to sit on its back. One of its favourite sport was to move silently and closer towards the narrator. It soon grew to the size of a hunting dog. People on the road kept a safe distance from it. It had clean habits like a cat. It slept at night in the cook's quarters.

As Timothy grew up, it became less friendly and rather dangerous. Grandmother declared that one day it would kill the cook, Mahmoud. It started going after a cat or a pet dog. It had to be chained up more often. Grandfather decided it was time to transfer it to the zoo at Lucknow. The zoo authorities received the gift of a well-fed tiger gladly.

Six months passed. Grandparents went to Lucknow to meet some relatives. Grandfather decided to see Timothy. He made straight for the cage in which it had been kept. He said 'hello' to the beast and even put his both hands around its head. He patted it and tickled its ears. He hit it lightly whenever it growled. But the leopard in the next cage growled at it and terrified it.

A keeper asked grandfather what he was doing. Grandfather told him that he had gifted that tiger to the zoo six months ago.

Now it was time to say good bye to it. He had been striking and slapping it lovingly. Another keeper watched this with alarm. He remembered that Grandfather had brought a tiger to the zoo some time back. But he told him that Timothy had died two months ago of pneumonia. The tiger in that cage was very dangerous and had been trapped only the previous month.

The tiger was still licking Grandfather's arm with relish. Grandfather withdrew his hand slowly from the cage and left the zoo silently.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

COMPREHENSION CHECK

(Page 60)

1. "He had the distinction of being the only member of the party to have bagged any game..."

The phrase in italics means

- (i) Grandfather was the most distinguished member of the party.
- (ii) Grandfather was the only sportsperson in the party.
- (iii) Grandfather was the only successful member of the hunting party.

Mark the right answer.

- Ans. (iii) Grandfather was the only successful member of the hunting party.

2. Complete the following sentences.

- (i) Toto climbed up the curtains when _____
- (ii) _____, I became one of the tiger's favourites.
- (iii) Timothy had clean habits, _____

- Ans. (i) Timothy lost his temper.
- (ii) When I came to live with my Grandfather.
- (iii) he would scrub his face with his paws exactly like a cat.

COMPREHENSION CHECK

(Page 64)

1. Grandmother's prophecy was that the tiger

- (i) would prefer Mahmoud's bed to sleep in.
- (ii) and the cook would disappear together from the house.
- (iii) would one day make a meal of Mahmoud.

Mark the right answer.

Ans. (iii) would one day make a meal of Mahmoud.

2. When Timothy was about six months old, a change came over him.

The phrase in italics means that

- (i) Timothy had grown to his full size.
- (ii) Timothy grew more friendly.
- (iii) Timothy grew less friendly, in fact more dangerous.

Ans. (iii) Timothy grew less friendly, in fact more dangerous.

3. Write 'True' or 'False' against each of the following statements:

- (i) Timothy and Grandfather went to Lucknow in a special compartment. _____
- (ii) The compartment in which Grandfather and Timothy travelled had no other passenger. _____
- (iii) Timothy and Grandfather travelled in a first class compartment. _____
- (iv) All passengers in the compartment thought that Timothy was a well-fed and civilised tiger. _____

Ans. (i) False (ii) True (iii) True (iv) False

4. Grandfather suggested that Timothy should be put in another cage. The reason was that

- (i) the tiger had become very bad tempered.
- (ii) a leopard in the next cage would constantly rush at Timothy.
- (iii) the cage was too small for a full grown tiger.

Ans. (ii) a leopard in the next cage would constantly rush at Timothy.

5. The tiger was still licking his arm, with increasing relish. The phrase in italics suggests that Timothy

- (i) was good natured.
- (ii) recognised an old friend.
- (iii) smelt fresh food.

Ans. (iii) smelt fresh food.

EXERCISE

(Page 65)

Answers the following questions:

1. Where was the tiger cub hiding when Grandfather found him?

Ans. The tiger cub was hiding among the intricate roots of a banyan tree in the Terai jungle near Dehra.

2. (i) What did Toto do to entertain Timothy?

(ii) What did he do when Timothy lost his temper?

Ans. (i) Toto used to pull Timothy by the tail.

(ii) Toto climbed up the curtain if Timothy lost his temper.

3. "I became one of the tiger's favourites." Who is 'I' in the statement? Why did he think so?

Ans. 'I' stands for the narrator, Ruskin Bond. He thought so because Timothy would come closer to him, roll over on his feet and pretended to bite his ankles.

4. Where was Timothy most comfortable during the day? Where was he during the night?

Ans. During the day, Timothy was most comfortable on the long sofa in the drawing room. He slept at night in the cook's quarters.

5. What was Grandmother's prophecy about the cook? Did it come true?

Ans. Grandmother's prophecy was that Timothy would one day kill the cook Mahmoud, and make a meal of him. No, it did not come true.

6. What made Grandfather decide to transfer Timothy to the zoo?

Ans. When Timothy was about six months old, he grew less friendly and more dangerous. He chased the cats and ate up hens. He also followed Mahmoud with evil intentions. So Grandfather decided to shift him away to Lucknow zoo.

7. Why did Grandfather want Timothy to be put in another enclosure?

Ans. Grandfather saw the leopard in the next cage rushing at and frightening Timothy every now and then. So he suggested the keeper to shift Timothy to some other cage.

8. What shocked Grandfather in the end?

Ans. Grandfather was shocked to learn from the keeper that Timothy had died two months ago, and the tiger in the cage was very dangerous.

Discuss the following topics in groups.

1. Shoot animals with a camera, not with a gun.

Ans. It is true that you cannot befriend all sorts of wild beasts. But that does not give you a licence to hunt them all for your pleasure. Animals and human beings have been sharing the earth for ages. They share our joys and sorrows. They play a very important part in our existence. But sometimes for our greed we kill them. This attitude destroys nature. Had there been no animals, our life would have been worthless. Here we should not shoot them with gun. We should shoot them with camera to preserve their beauty and charm.

2. Keeping pets helps us become more loving and tolerant. It also helps us respect life in any form. Do you agree?

Ans. Yes, man and his pets are our best friends. We often play with pets, and they lick our hands with affection. Keeping pets changes our fear of animals into tolerance. We learn to respect life in every form. We learn the great lesson – Live and let live.

3. Have you heard of the society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)? What do they do?

Ans. Yes, this organisation SPCA is animal friendly. It aims at protecting the animals—even tigers and cobras, from needless cruelty and killing.