

SUMMARY OF THE LESSON

Once an old man, Abbu Khan lived in Almora. He was alone. His only companions were a few goats which he always kept as pets. He gave them funny names. He took them out for grazing in day time. He talked to them as one talks to one's own children. At night he put a string round the neck of each goat.

But poor Abbu was unlucky. One by one his goats broke the string, freed themselves and disappeared in the hills. They loved their freedom. So whenever they got the chance, they would run away only to be killed by an old wolf who lived in the hills. Abbu was sad and puzzled. He wondered why his goats in spite of all the good food and affection, ran straight into the jaws of death. Freedom for them meant struggle, hardships and even death.

When all the goats had left Abbu, he decided not to keep any goat as a pet any more. But he felt very lonely. So he brought a young goat. He hoped that it would begin to love him and never want to go to the hills.

The new goat was white as snow and was very friendly. Abbu called her Chandni. He would narrate to her stories of all his friends. Several years passed. Chandni was still with Abbu. Abbu believed that Chandni would never leave him. But her plan was something else. She watched the hilltops which appeared so charming. She hated the rope that wouldn't let her go. She stopped eating the green grass. She refused to listen to Abbu's stories. She lost her appetite. She only looked at the hills madly. One day she opened her heart to him. She said she would die if she was not allowed to go to the hills. Abbu warned her of the risk. The dangerous wolf would eat her up. But she was ready to face and fight the wolf.

Abbu got very angry. He pushed her into a small hut and shut the door. But the same night Chandni made her escape through the small window.

She reached the hills which welcomed her. The tall grass, the flowers, the wind—all amused her. It was the happiest day in Chandni's life. She refused to join the group of wild goats. She wanted to enjoy her freedom alone.

The sun set behind the hills. She heard a strange sound coming from the bushes. It was the grunt of the dangerous wolf. She was afraid but decided to put up good fight.

She was ready to fight the enemy like a brave soldier. The wolf came near Chandni and began to stare greedily at her. Now the fight began which went on through the night. At day break she lay bathed in blood, ready to be eaten up by the wolf.

A bird on top of the tree thought that the wolf had won the battle. But a wise old bird declared firmly that Chandni was the winner.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

COMPREHENSION CHECK (Page 45)

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 in order to enjoy freedom of movement and eat green grass. But they were killed and eaten up by a wolf in the hills.

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

Ans. Abbu Khan had a sad experience with his several pet goats. They all ran away to enjoy freedom. So he decided not to take any more pet. But he changed his mind because he felt very lonely.

3. Why did he buy a young goat?

Ans. Abbu Khan bought a young goat thinking that it would stay with him much longer.

COMPREHENSION CHECK (Page 49)

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

Ans. Like other goats Chandni too missed the hills and longed for freedom. She was not afraid of the wolf. Abbu then put a rope round her neck and shut her in a small hut. Chandni could not help running towards the lovely hills. The rope pulled her back. So she hated it.

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

Ans. Chandni's problem was that she hated imprisonment. The hills called her. She was not frightened of the wild wolf. Abbu understood her problem, and her love for freedom.

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

COMPREHENSION CHECK (Page 51)

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

Ans. Chandni rejected the offer 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. (iii) had to retain her freedom at all costs.

EXERCISE (Page 51)

Discuss the following topics in groups:

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

Ans. The wise old bird declared Chandni the winner because she struggled to her last breath to retain her freedom.

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. Chandni's decision to enjoy free movement in the open fields rather than life in a small hut was right. No sacrifice is too great for winning freedom.

3. **Freedom is life. Discuss this with reference to “Chandni” and “I want something in a Cage.”**

Ans. It is indeed very much true that slavery is a virtual death. Chandni, the goat, expressed her love for freedom by sacrificing her life. She fought a wolf boldly.

In the story *I want something in a cage*, this love for freedom is expressed through a prisoner who spends all he had in order to buy freedom for a pair of birds. Both stories glorify freedom.