

SUMMARY OF THE LESSON

The King and Queen of Siam had many daughters. In order to avoid confusion, the King called the princesses by the name of the months like January, February, March etc. The last daughter was named September.

The King of Siam had a peculiar habit. Instead of accepting birthday gifts, he used to give everyone gifts. One year on his birthday, he gave each one of the princesses a green parrot in a golden cage. The princesses taught the bird to say; 'God save the king; some of the parrots would say, 'Pretty polly' in seven oriental languages.

One day Princess September found her parrot lying dead. She burst into tears. The Queen called her crying nonsense and put her to bed without any supper. Princess September was woken up by the song of a little bird. He (bird) flew into her room and sang beautifully. Princess September forgot crying. She agreed to have it in place of her dead parrot.

When the princess awoke the next day, the little song bird was still there and he said 'Good morning!' He ate rice out of her hand. Everybody was surprised to see that. Princess September decided to show her bird to her eight sisters. For each of them the bird sang a different song. The parrots could only say 'God Save the King'. The King and the queen were also surprised and delighted to hear the bird's song.

The King had got tired of hearing those parrots say 'Pretty Polly'.

All the eight princesses were worried now. The parrots also looked sad. Only Princess September ran in the palace singing like a lark.

The jealous sisters took a nasty decision. They pointed out to their youngest sister that she should put her bird into a cage lest he should fly away for good.

The little bird came late that evening. September's worry was about his safety from hawks and the hunter's traps. So as he came, she pushed him into a cage and shut the door. The bird was taken aback. He hoped that he would be set free in the morning. But he cried in vain for liberty. As a result, he lost his singing talent. He refused to eat anything.

The next day September found the bird lying with his eyes closed. He looked as if he were dead. Seeing his condition, she agreed to let him leave the golden cage. And the bird promised to return to her every day and sing to her. Her sisters made fun of her. They said he would never return. But he did, at last. And he sat on September's shoulder and ate out of his hand and sang her the beautiful songs he had learned.

September kept her window open all day and night for the bird to fly in and out. Fresh air from the open window made the princess extremely beautiful. She was married to the king of Cambodia. But her sisters who kept the windows shut, grew ugly as well as unpleasant. So they were married away with the King's ministers.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

COMPREHENSION CHECK

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1. How many daughters did the royal couple have?

Ans. The Royal couple had nine daughters.

2. Why were they named after the months of the year?

Ans. They were named after the months of the year because the queen could not recall their names easily.

3. The King had a peculiar habit. What was it? Why is it called peculiar?

Ans. The peculiar habit of the king was to give gifts on his birthday rather than receive them. Usually people get gifts on their birthdays.

4. (i) What was Princess September's reaction to the loss of her parrot?

(ii) What was her Mother's reaction to it?

(iii) What do the reactions indicate about the nature and temperament of each?

Ans. (i) Princess September took the loss of her parrot to heart. She wept continuously. She was put to sleep without supper.

(ii) Her Mother said that Princess September's weeping was simply nonsense. She asked the maids to put the child to sleep without supper.

(iii) The princess was very simple-hearted and sensitive. She was stricken with grief when her parrot died. But the Queen mother was not moved at all. She had nothing to console the child.

5. What pulled the Princess out of her gloom?

Ans. The coming of a little song bird into her room comforted Princess September. She was so enchanted that she forgot about her loss.

6. How did the Maids of Honour come to know that the Princess and the bird had become intimate friends?

Ans. The Maids of Honour brought in the princess's breakfast. The song bird ate rice out of the princess's hand and then sang sweetly. The Maids were surprised to find September so much happy. They were convinced that the two had become good friends.

7. The new bird was full of new songs but the old parrots always repeated themselves. What did they say?

Ans. The old parrots only repeated what they had been taught. They could only say 'God save the King' and 'Pretty Polly'.

8. What is the king's opinion about his Councillors? Why did he form that opinion?

Ans. The King had a low opinion about his Councillors because like parrots, they too repeated the same thing differently.

9. (i) The eight Princesses made an offer to Princess September. What was it?

(ii) Why, in your view, did they do it?

Ans. (i) They offered their pocket money to Princess September to buy another parrot.

(ii) They did that because they felt jealous of the song bird's friendship with Princess September.

10. What did the sisters advise the Princess to do about her bird?

Ans. The sisters advised the Princess to put the little bird into the cage lest it should fly away for ever.

COMPREHENSION CHECK

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1. In the following sentence elaborate the parts given in bold. *Under the circumstances it was a very unfortunate remark for the bird to make.*

Ans. The circumstance was that the bird hadn't come back because of the party at his father-in-law's house. The princess was naturally worried. The remark of the sisters added to her worry.

2. (i) **What did Princess September do to ensure the safety of her pet?**

(ii) **How did the bird react to it?**

Ans. (i) Princess September put the bird into a cage to ensure his safety.

(ii) The bird disliked his imprisonment. He stopped singing.

3. **Why did the bird refuse to be taken out in her cage?**

Ans. The bird said that he won't be really happy and normal if he was taken out in her cage. The rice-fields and the lake looked quite different and dull when seen through the cage bars.

4. (i) **What persuaded Princess September to give the bird his freedom again?**

(ii) **How did the bird react to it?**

Ans. (i) The Princess freed the bird lest he should die in captivity.

(ii) The Princess kept the window open so that the bird might fly in and out making fresh air charming. Freedom helped the bird to sing and enjoy himself.

5. Princess September kept her window open day and night.

(i) **How did it help the bird?**

(ii) **How did it help the Princess herself?**

Ans. (i) The bird opened his wings and flew away.

(ii) It helped the Princess herself by providing her fresh wind and natural light. It helped her make her beautiful.

6. **The eight sisters kept their windows shut. How did it affect them?**

Ans. The eight sisters who kept their window shut all night became extremely ugly and disagreeable. They were married to the councillors.

EXERCISE

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Discuss the following questions in small groups. Write their answers later.

1. **Are the sisters unkind and cruel? Find evidence in the text to support your idea.**

Ans. Yes, the eight sisters of the princess were unkind and cruel. They were jealous too. They advised her to encage the bird. This suggestion might have killed the bird.

2. **Which, to you, is the most important idea in this story, and why?**

(i) importance of music

(ii) value of freedom

(iii) beauty of nature

Ans. (i) value of freedom.

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