

SUMMARY OF THE LESSON

Ranji had been in Rajpur when he discovered a pool in the forest. It was a hot day. He plunged into it for a swim. He had no friends. So he wandered about a good deal alone. A small stream flowed out from rocks to feed the pool. Ranji's limbs were supple and free of fat.

The next day he came again to the forest pool. While he lay there he noticed another boy looking at him in a hostile manner. The other boy was Suraj, older, taller and stronger than Ranji. He said that it was his pool and he always swam alone. He called himself a warrior. Ranji was unafraid. He said that he was not a villager, but a fighter. He refused to run away. He threw a challenge to his adversary. The warrior slapped Ranji with force. Ranji also hit back with his bony fist into the other's face.

The two started grappling. It was a violent struggle. The fight continued even in the water. Neither emerged victorious. The warrior deferred the fight for the next day. Ranji promised to come, prepared for the fight. He had got cuts on his face, legs and arms.

That evening he went to the bazaar, ate jalebis and drank lemonade. He saw his adversary coming down the road. Both looked angrily at each other. He was feeling weak and lazy after the previous day's fight. But he could not back out of the challenge. He knew he was no match to him, but he refused to accept defeat. He thought that as long as he fought, he had the right to the pool in the forest.

The next day the two stood on either bank of the stream. Ranji challenged him to swim and come to his side. He was superior to Suraj in swimming. He could dive easily. Ranji could swim under water. He guided Suraj how to dive and swim under water. Thus he taught his opponent Ranji acknowledged that

Suraj was a wrestler. Suraj promised to make bony Ranji a *pahalwan*. The two became friends now. In that moment were born love and understanding between them. They owned the pool jointly thereafter.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

COMPREHENSION CHECK

(Page 49)

1. In what way is the forest pool different from the one which Ranji knew in the Rajputana desert?

Ans. In the Rajputana desert, the pools were sticky and muddy where women washed clothes or buffaloes wallowed. But forest pool was clean, cold and inviting. So Ranji leapt into the water for swimming.

2. The other boy asked Ranji to 'explain' himself.

(i) What did he expect Ranji to say?

(ii) Was he, in your opinion, right or wrong to ask this question?

Ans. (i) The other boy, Suraj, expected Ranji to say 'sorry'.

(ii) Suraj was a bully. He was wrong to prevent Ranji from using the pool. The pool was common property.

3. Between Ranji and the other boy, who is trying to start a quarrel? Give a reason for your answer.

Ans. It is Suraj who starts the quarrel. He asks Ranji to run away from the pool. He even threatens to beat him.

4. "Then we will have to continue the fight," said the other.

(i) What made him say that?

(ii) Did the fight continue? If not, why not?

Ans. (i) Suraj spoke the above words because he was tired but he did not want to spare Ranji who refused to accept defeat. So he deferred the fight for the next day.

(ii) No, the fight didn't continue the next day. Both Suraj and Ranji needed each other's help, so they compromised. Suraj asked Ranji to teach him to dive and swim under water. While Ranji agreed to become a wrestler with the help of Suraj.

COMPREHENSION CHECK (Page 53)

1. What is it that Ranji finds difficult to explain at home?

Ans. Ranji had several cuts and bruises on his face and arms. He finds it difficult to explain the injuries at home.

2. Ranji sees his adversary in the bazaar.

(i) What does he wish to do?

(ii) What does he actually do, and why?

Ans. (i) At first Ranji felt like turning away and look the other way. His second thought was to hit his enemy with the lemonade bottle.

(ii) He actually stands his ground and only scowls at Suraj.

3. Ranji is not at all eager for a second fight. Why does he go back to the pool, then?

Ans. Ranji decides to go back to the pool to gain self-respect. If he surrenders now, he will be beaten for all time.

4. Who was the better swimmer? How do you know it?

Ans. Ranji was decidedly the better swimmer. We know it when he swims across the pool as his opponent says. He dived for long into the water.

5. What surprises the warrior?

Ans. Ranji executes another perfect dive. Swimming under water, he circles Suraj and comes upon him from behind. The warrior, Suraj, is surprised to see Ranji's skill.

6. Now that they are at the pool, why don't they continue the fight?

Ans. At the pool, the two contestants forgot to continue the fight. Their interest shifts to swimming and swinging (diving).

7. Ranji's superiority over the other boy is obvious in the following:

Physical strength, good diving, his being a fighter, sense of humour, swimming under water, making a good point, willingness to help.

Underline the relevant phrases.

Ans. Good diving, swimming under water, willingness to help, sense of humour.

8. What, according to you, makes the two adversaries turn into good friends in a matter of minutes? Explain it as you have understood it.

Ans. Ranji and Suraj, two adversaries, turned into good friends in a few minutes for a couple of reasons. Both were tired of fighting. Both needed each other's help, guidance and support. Suraj wanted to learn diving from Ranji. While Ranji liked the idea of becoming a strong wrestler with the help of Suraj.

EXERCISE (Page 54)

Discuss the following topics in small groups.

1. Is fighting the only way of resolving differences of opinion? What else can be done to reach a mutually acceptable settlement?

Ans. Fighting is not the only way to resolve a dispute. The best course is to start a dialogue with a cool head. In case they fail to agree on any point, they can appoint an arbiter or middleman acceptable to both.

2. Have you ever been in a serious fight only to realise later that it was unnecessary and futile? Share your experience/views with others frankly and honestly.

Ans. People usually quarrel over minor issues which can be resolved over a cup of tea. Such violent quarrels harm both the parties. In a war, no party actually wins. Both suffer equally and feel sorry later on. Every person can recall one or two occasions of this type.

3. Why do some of us find it necessary to prove that we are better than others? Will you be amused or annoyed to read the following sign at the back of the car in front of you?

I May be going slow but I am ahead of you.

Ans. It is our common weakness to do better than others or to pull somebody down. Some pretend to be superior to others and try to hurt them. This is, in fact, a symptom of their inferiority complex. We should avoid ego clash.