

Comprehension Passages

Passage 1

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

From the day, perhaps a hundred years ago when he sun had hatched him in a sandbank, and he had broken his shell, and got his head out and looked around, ready to snap at anything, before he was even fully hatched—from that day, when he had at once made for the water, ready to fend for himself immediately, he had lived by his brainless craft and ferocity. Escaping the birds of prey and the great carnivorous fishes that eat baby crocodiles, he has prospered, catching all the food he needed, and storing it till putrid in holes in the bank. Tepid water to live in and plenty of rotted food grew him to his great length. Now nothing could pierce the inch-thick armoured hide. Not even rifle bullets,

which would bounce off. Only the eyes and the soft underarms offered a place. He lived well in the river, sunning himself sometimes with other crocodiles-muggers, as well as the long-snouted fish-eating gharials—on warm rocks and sandbanks where the sun dried the clay on them quite white, and where they could plop off into the water in a moment if alarmed. The big crocodile fed mostly on fish, but also on deer and monkeys come to drink, perhaps a duck or two.

Question 1.

How old was the crocodile? How big?

Answer:

The crocodile was probably a hundred years old. He was twice the size of a tall man.

Question 2.

How did he survive as a baby crocodile from the day he was hatched.

Answer:

From the day he was hatched he was ready to snap at anything and he had survived with the help of his brainless craft and ferocity.

Question 3.

What posed a danger to him when he was young?

Answer:

The birds of prey and the great carnivorous fishes that eat baby crocodiles posed a danger to his survival when he was a baby crocodile.

Question 4.

What helped him grow to his present size?

Answer:

Tepid water to live in and plenty of rotted food grew him to his great length.

Question 5.

What protected him now? How?

Answer:

Now nothing could pierce the inch-thick armoured hide. Not even rifle bullets, which would bounce off. Only the eyes and the soft underarms offered a place of vulnerability.

Question 6.

What did the big crocodile feed on?

Answer:

He fed on fish, but also on deer and monkeys who came to drink, perhaps a duck or two, corpses, dogs etc.

Passage 2

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Beside him in the shoals as he lay waiting glimmered a blue gem. It was not a gem, though: it was sand—?worn glass that had been rolling about in the river for a long time. By chance, it was perforated right through—the neck of a bottle perhaps?—a blue bead. In the shrill noisy village above the ford, out of a mud house the same colour as the ground came a little girl, a thin starveling child dressed in an earth—?coloured rag. She had torn the rag in two to make skirt and sari. Sibia was eating the last of her meal, chupatti wrapped round a smear of green chilli and rancid butter; and she divided this also, to make

it seem more, and bit it, showing straight white teeth. With her ebony hair and great eyes, and her skin of oiled brown cream, she was a happy immature child—?woman about twelve years old. Bare foot, of course, and often goosey—?cold on a winter morning, and born to toil. In all her life, she had never owned anything but a rag. She had never owned even one anna—not a pice.

Why does the writer mention the blue bead at the same time that the crocodile is introduced?

Ans. The author mentions the blue bead at the same time that the crocodile is introduced to create suspense and a foreshadowing of the events to happen.

Question 1.

Describe the blue bead.

Answer:

The blue bead glimmered in the water. It was not a gem, though: it was sand—?worn glass that had been rolling about in the river for a long time. By chance, it was perforated right through—the neck of a bottle perhaps.

Question 2.

Describe Sibia's home.

Answer:

Sibia lived in a mud house which was the same colour as the ground.

Question 3.

Describe Sibia.

Answer:

Sibia was a little girl, a thin starving child dressed in an earth—?coloured rag, straight white teeth. With her ebony hair and great eyes, and her skin of oiled brown cream, she was a happy immature child—?woman about twelve years old. Bare foot, of course, and often goosey—?cold on a winter morning, and born to toil. In all her life, she had never owned anything but a rag. She had never owned even one anna—not a pice.

Question 4.

What was Sibia's life like?

Answer:

Sibia was born to toil and had always lived in poverty. She had been working since childhood. In all her life, she had never owned any thing but a rag. She had never owned even one anna—not a pice.

Passage 3

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

The women came out on the shore, and made for the stepping—stones. They had plenty to laugh and bicker about, as they approached the river in a noisy crowd. They girded up their skirts, so as to jump from stone to stone, and they clanked their sickles and forks together over their shoulders to have ease of movement. They shouted their quarrels above the gush of the river. Noise frightens crocodiles. The big mugger did not move, and all the women crossed in safety to the other bank. Here they had to climb a steep hillside to get at the grass, but all fell to with a will, and sliced away at it wherever there was foothold to be had. Down below them ran the broad river, pouring powerfully out from its deep narrow pools among the cold cliffs and shadows, spreading into warm shallows, lit by kingfishers. Great turtles lived there, and mahseer weighing more than a hundred pounds. Crocodiles too. Sometimes you could see them lying out on those slabs of clay over there, but there were none to be seen at the moment.

Question 1.

Why did the women rolled their skirts up?

Answer:

The women girded their skirts so as to jump from stone to stone and this gave them ease of movement.

Question 2.

What did the women carry?

Answer:

They carried sickles and hay forks to cut and gather the dried grass.

Question 3.

Why did they shout louder than the sound of the water?

Answer:

They shouted louder than the sound of the water because noise frightens crocodiles.

Question 4.

What were they doing on the hill?

Answer:

The women climbed the hill to reach the grass there and cut it with their sickles and then gather with their hay forks so that they could take it and sell in the market.

Question 5.

What all lived in the river below the hill?

Answer:

In the river below the hill lived great turtles, and mahseer weighing more than a hundred pounds. Crocodiles too.

Passage 4

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Sibia sprang.

From boulder to boulder she came leaping like a rock goat. Sometimes it had seemed difficult to cross these stones, especially the big gap in the middle where the river coursed through like a bulge of glass. But now she came on wings, choosing her footing in midair without even thinking about it, and in one moment she was beside the shrieking woman. In the boiling bloody water, the

face of the crocodile, fastened round her leg, was tugging to and fro, and smiling. His eyes rolled on to Sibia. One slap of the tail could kill her. He struck. Up shot the water, twenty feet, and fell like a silver chain. Again! The rock jumped under the blow. But in the daily heroism of the jungle, as common as a thorn tree, Sibia did not hesitate. She aimed at the reptile's eyes. With all the force of her little body, she drove the hayfork at the eyes, and one prong went in—right in— while its pair scratched past on the horny cheek. The crocodile reared up in convulsion, till half his lizard body was out of the river, the tail and nose nearly meeting over his stony back. Then he crashed back, exploding the water, and in an uproar of bloody foam he disappeared. He would die. Not yet, but presently, though his death would not be known for days; not till his stomach, blown with gas, floated him. Then perhaps he would be found upside down among the logs at the timber boom, with pus in his eye. Sibia got arms round the fainting woman, and somehow dragged her from the water.

Question 1.

Why does Sibia think of the two brass vessels when the Gujar woman is attacked?

Answer:

Sibia thought of the two brass vessels when the Gujar woman was attacked because she was poor enough to understand the value of two brass vessels.

Question 2.

Describe how Sibia flew to save the woman.

Answer:

Sibia leapt forward from boulder to boulder. She came leaping with the agility of a rock goat. Sometimes it had seemed difficult to cross these stones, especially the big gap in the middle where the river coursed through like a bulge of glass. But now she came on wings, choosing her footing in midair without even thinking about it, and in one moment she was beside the shrieking woman.

Question 3.

What was the reaction of the crocodile when he saw Sibia?

Answer:

When the crocodile saw Sibia his eyes rolled on to Sibia. One slap of the tail could kill her. He struck. Up shot the water, twenty feet, and fell like a silver chain. He again tried to strike with his tail. The rock jumped under the blow.

Question 4.

How does Sibia save the woman?

Answer:

Sibia displayed great courage and fearlessness in saving the woman from being devoured by the crocodile. Sibia did not hesitate. She aimed at the reptile's eyes. With all the force of her little body, she drove the hay fork at the eyes, and one prong went in—right in— while its pair scratched past on the horny cheek.

Question 5.

What would happen to the crocodile?

Answer:

He would die. Not yet, but presently, though his death would not be known for days; not till his stomach, blown with gas, floated him. Then perhaps he would be found upside down among the logs at the timber boom, with pus in his eye.

Passage 5

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Then there it lay in her wet palm, perfect, even pierced ready for use, with the sunset shuffled about inside it like gold—?dust. All her heart went up in flames of joy. After a bit she twisted it into the top of her skirt against her tummy so she would know if it burst through the poor cloth and fell. Then she picked up her fork and sickle and the heavy grass and set off home. Ai! Ai! What a day! Her barefeet smudged out the wriggle— ?mark of snakes in the dust; there was the thin singing of malaria mosquitoes among the trees now; and this track was much used at night by a morose old makna elephant—the Tuskless One; but Sibia was not thinking of any of them. The stars came out: she did not notice. On the way back she met her mother, out of breath, come to look for her, and scolding. “I did not see till I was home, that you were not there. I thought something must have happened to you.” And Sibia, bursting with her story, cried “Something did). I found a blue bead for my necklace, look!”

Question 1.

Why did Sibia feel overjoyed?

Answer:

Sibia felt overjoyed when she saw the blue bead lying on the ground next to her hay fork. It was perfect for her necklace. Even pierced ready for use, with the sunset shuffled about inside it like gold—?dust.

Question 2.

Where did she keep it?

Answer:

Sibia twisted it into the top of her skirt against her tummy so she would know if it burst through the poor cloth and fell.

Question 3.

What all did Sibia not notice as she went home?

Answer:

Sibia was so full of joy at finding the blue bead that she did not notice the thin singing of malaria mosquitoes among the trees, nor was she worried that she might come across the dangerous old makna elephant—the Tuskless One or that the stars had come out in the sky and night was falling.

Question 4.

Why did Sibia not tell her mother about her fight with the crocodile or how she saved the woman?

Answer:

Sibia was so excited and happy that she had found the blue bead and now she could make a necklace that all other things were insignificant. The only thing of importance for her was that now she also could have jewellery which she had always wanted but was too poor to get.

Question 5.

Is the Ending Appropriate?

Answer:

Yes, the ending was appropriate because it not only shows Sibia is a brave young woman who put her own life in danger for the safety of the older woman but it is also evident, at the end of the story that how humble Sibia. She told her mom about the blue bead she came across, but did not mention her heroic act.

Assignment

Question 1.

Show how the story shows a conflict between humans and nature.

Answer:

The Blue bead is a story about conflicts. It is the story of Sibia, story of a twelve year old Indian girl who saved a gujar woman from being devoured by a crocodile. There was a mugger crocodile laying in the water, A little 12-year-old girl name Sibia lived in a small village and she was marked

for work from a very young age. She had never owned anything in her life. In the village the woman would get paper grass from above the river. When they had enough they would take it to the bullock and sell it for money. One day when they were crossing the river on their way home, Sibia decided to rest. One of the Gujar women went down to fill her two gurrals with water. Things took a turn for the worst and all of a sudden a crocodile attacked the woman, biting on the woman's leg. At that moment Sibia got up, sprinted, grabbed the hayfork and stabbed the crocodile in the eye with all her power. Immediately the crocodile let go and went away. Sibia saw a small blue bead lying by the river, she grabbed it. Since she was poor she didn't have a necklace. She'd always wanted one like the other women, now she could make one with the blue bead. After that she went home and told her mother all about it.

There are various conflicts in the story. Sibia wants jewellery but cannot afford it. Has to work much harder than any child should and struggles to survive. Everyday Sibia has to cross the Indian River which is full of crocodiles. The grown Gujar woman is attacked by the crocodile and the twelve year old Sibia kills the crocodile and saves the woman.

Then there is the conflict of lack of wealth in Sibia's family. The author states in the beginning of the story: "She was a happy immature child woman, about 12 years old. Bare foot, of course, and often goosey cold on a winter morning, and born to toil. In all her life, she had owned anything but a rag."

Another major conflict highlighted in the story is Human versus Nature. The conflict was that a woman was attacked by a crocodile and Sibia was there to save the woman. This conflict served the purpose of telling us how brave and courageous Sibia was and how she found the blue bead. Crocodiles often attack humans in India and surrounding countries. It's very unlikely that one would survive an attack, but luckily, Sibia was there to save that woman.

Question 2.

Can we say that it is a story about heroism and a true soldier?

Answer:

In the short story A Blue Bead the author has given an account about how inherent courage can make even a child fight the greatest odds. It is comparable to the story from the Bible of David and Goliath.

Sibia is only twelve years old but is ready to help others even at the cost of endangering her own life. When she lunges at the crocodile, not for a moment does she think of saving herself and running. Infact she behaves like a true soldier thinking of others before self. Yes, the woman would be dead if Sibia didn't rescue her. In the end also she did not give importance to her act of bravery.

She was fearless and quick footed . When she saw the woman being attacked, Sibia leapt forward from boulder to boulder. She came leaping with the agility of a rock goat. Sometimes it had seemed difficult to cross these stones, especially the big gap in the middle where the river coursed through like a bulge of glass. But now she came on wings, choosing her footing in midair without even thinking about it, and in one moment she was beside the shrieking woman. She was adventurous and courageous. 'With all the force in (Sibia's) little body, she drove the hayfork at the eyes, and one prong went right in.' Sibia shows that she is capable of disabling the crocodile, she demonstrates courage in an overwhelming, impressive manner Even after rescuing the woman from the crocodile she helped her and tended her wounds. "Sibia got her arms around the fainting woman...she stopped her wounds with sand, and bound them with a rag." Sibia represents herself as a hero in this portion of the story, as she successfully defeated the crocodile in order to save a woman. Sibia is only 12 years old, but without hesitation or a second thought, she kills a crocodile. "With all the force in her little body, she drove the hayfork at the eyes, and with one prong went in - right in- while it's pair scratched past on the horny cheek... He would die." Therefore, inspite of with Sibia's young age, she simply attains courage to execute a vicious crocodile.

Question 3.

Show how the story demonstrates that a good deed begets good.

Answer:

Sibia was a little 12-year-old girl name who lived in a small village and was marked for work from a very young age. She had never owned anything in her life. In the village the woman would get paper grass from above the river. When they had enough they would take it and sell it for money. One day when they were crossing the river on their way home, Sibia decided to rest. One of the Gujjar women went down to fill her two gurrahs with water. Things took a turn for the worst and all of a sudden a crocodile attacked the woman, biting on the woman's leg. At that moment Sibia got up, sprinted, grabbed the hay fork and stabbed the crocodile in the eye with all her power. Immediately the crocodile let go and went away. Sibia saw a small blue bead lying by the river, she grabbed it. Since she was poor she didn't have a necklace. She'd always wanted one like the other women, now she could make one with the blue bead.

Sibia wants jewellery but cannot afford it. Has to work much harder than any child should and struggles to survive. Everyday Sibia has to cross the Indian River which is full of crocodiles. The grown Gujjar women is attacked by the crocodile and the twelve year old Sibia kills the crocodile and saves the woman.

The blue bead symbolizes that even the little things can make Sibia happy. We take many things for granted and don't realize the little things that make us happy. The blue bead represents Sibia's happiness because she grew up in poverty. The blue bead is used as a symbol, it represents the riches and luxuries that she could never afford, and all she fought for in order to achieve it. It is also a symbol and reminder of her bravery and heroism on that day. So she could never hope to buy jewellery but her good deed gets her a reward in the form of the bead which she could use to make a necklace for herself.

Question 4.

Describe the picture of India given by the author.

Answer:

The Blue Bead is the story of an Indian girl who lives in a mud house the same colour as the ground. Most of the people in India in the villages belonging to poor class live in such houses. Sibia like most Indian labourers is dressed 'in a rag torn in two to make skirt and sari. Sibia was eating the last of her meal, chupatti wrapped round a smear of green chilli and rancid butter; and she divided this also, to make it seem more. She was bare foot, and often goosey—?cold on a winter morning, and born to toil. In all her life, she had never owned anything but a rag. She had never owned even one anna—not a pice.' This could be the description of any poor beggar or labourer in India. The author also describes the animals that abound in the jungles of India. The huge crocodile which was twice the size of a tall man and was a danger to all who tried to cross the great Indian river. There is a mention of the great turtles who lived in the waters of the river and the mahseer weighing more than a hundred pounds. The author casually writes that you could see the crocodiles 'lying out on those slabs of clay over there.' Another Indian menace which is there is the 'singing of malaria mosquitoes among the Malaria and some waterborne diseases kill infect and kill many Indians in the villages. Then the author also mentions the elephants to be found in the jungles, 'morose old makna elephant—the Tuskless One.'