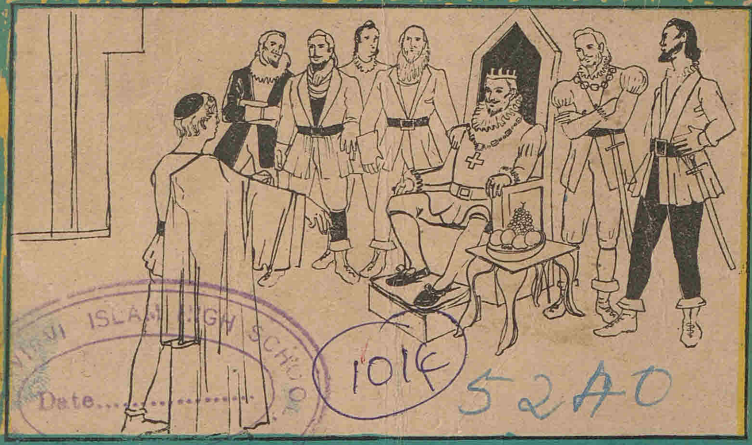
READ AND ACT

BOOK TWO



Date.....
1014
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Orient Longmans

READ AND ACT

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BOOK TWO

1014

MUNAVIRVI ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date.....
ERNAKULAM

by
C. S. Bhandari
J. M. Ure
J. S. Bhandari



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ISLAM HIGH

PREFACE

The READ and ACT series consists of five books each of which contains ten scenes. The scenes have been based upon well-known stories from history, mythology, legend and folk literature. Most of the stories are known to the boys and girls in our schools and so they have been presented without any introduction; those that are not so widely known have, however, been prefaced with short introductory notes. These introductory notes describe the setting of the scenes and are a help in the right understanding and appreciation of what is said and done by the characters.

The scenes included in this series of books are, however, not meant merely to be read, understood and appreciated. They are also meant to be acted. This can be done on certain days and special occasions as part of an institution's extra-curricular activities; and this can also form a part of the regular English teaching programme of a progressive school or college. To act these scenes in the classroom it will not be necessary to make any special preparations. Their purpose will be served if the pupils are able to read out the parts of the different characters in them with appropriate gestures and feeling.

The books have been graded both in respect of grammatical structure and content vocabulary, and all care has been taken to avoid the use of out-of-the-way words. A few of the words in these books may at first appear to be difficult but they will be understood easily when they are read in the contexts in which they are presented. It will, however, be useful to explain such words in similar other contexts before the pupils are asked to act a particular scene. Sometimes it may also be necessary to acquaint the pupils with the story of the scene before they act it.

In order that the pupils may read out their parts correctly and effectively, they *must* first read the whole scene silently and get their language difficulties, both of meaning and pronunciation, removed. Then the teacher should read out the different parts to set a model before the pupils. This, it may be stressed, puts a heavy responsibility on the teacher, for the pupils will always try to imitate him.

The themes of most of the scenes in these books are inspirational, and they should have an uplifting effect on the minds of young students. It may, however, be mentioned that the books do not aim at preaching any moral lessons. They only present some noble deeds or some admirable qualities of character and the young readers are left alone to 'receive' what they will. The humorous scenes provide a lot of laughter but the laughter is not born of any malice or ill-will. It is simple and innocent.

The READ and ACT series can be profitably used as supplementary readers both in the English medium and non-English medium Secondary Schools. In those schools where the teaching of English starts in class VI, Book I can be used in class VIII and Books II, III, IV and V in classes IX, X, XI and XII respectively; but in those schools where English is taught from an earlier stage, the first two books can be used in the Junior High School classes. In English medium schools the first book can be introduced in the third or fourth year when the pupils are 8—9 years old.

Activity methods have proved a great success everywhere in teaching all schools subjects including languages, and it is hoped that the READ and ACT series will make some small contribution to the effective teaching of English in our schools.

Twelve of the scenes included in the last two books of the series have been translated and adapted from late Sri Dwijendra Lal Rai's plays, and the debt is gratefully acknowledged.

5240
MUNAVIRVI ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date.....
ERNAKULAM

CONTENTS

		Page
1.	The Last Journey	1
2.	The Swan and the Princes ..	8
3.	A Broken Promise	13
4.	Towards Haldighati !	20
5.	A Worthy Son of A Worthy Father	26
6.	A Gem Among Men	32
7.	I See Death !	39
8.	The Holy Water	45
9.	An Event in the Forest	50
10.	King John and the Abbot of Canterbury	55

MUNAVIRVI ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date.....
ERNAKULAM.

5240

ISLAM HIGH
Date.....

1. THE LAST JOURNEY



Characters

YUDHISHTHIR: the King of Hastinapur and Emperor of Bharat

BHIM, ARJUN, NAKUL, SAHADEV } Yudhishthir's brothers

DRAUPADI : the queen of the five Pandav brothers

INDRA : the king of the gods

DHARMA : a god

King Yudhishthir's dog

[*King Yudhishthir and his four brothers and their queen*

Draupadi are slowly going up Mount Meru in the Himalayas. Yudhishthir's dog is following him.]

DRAUPADI : My Lord, I can't go any further. My heart is beating fast and my legs are trembling. My end has come.

YUDHISHTHIR: Cheer up, queen. There is still a long way to go.

DRAUPADI : I can't. I can't. (*Falls on the ground and dies.*)

(*The four other Pandavs look at Draupadi's dead body and are very sad.*)

BHIM : O King, why has our beloved Draupadi died before reaching the end of the journey? What was her fault?

YUDHISHTHIR: I can answer your question, Bhim. Listen. Draupadi was the queen of all five of us but she loved Arjun most. This was her fault and that's why she has died before the end of the journey. Let us continue our journey.

ARJUN : We are not far from our goal, are we?

NAKUL : I can't say, brother. I've never climbed this mountain before. Have you, Bhim?

BHIM : No, never. This mountain is new to me.

ARJUN : Sahadev seems to be very tired.

SAHADEV : Not tired but dying. (*Falls down and dies.*)

BHIM : Alas, our beloved brother Sahadev is gone too. O King, why has he died so soon? Did he not serve you faithfully?

YUDHISHTHIR: (*without turning his head*) Sahadev served me most faithfully and he was good to everybody, but he thought he was wiser than all men. That was his sin and he has been punished for it. Let us go.

ARJUN : We saw the end of the Kauravs in the battle of Mahabharat and now we see our own end.

YUDHISHTHIR: Everything in this world has a beginning and an end. Have you forgotten what Krishna taught you on the battle-field of Mahabharat?

ARJUN : I haven't, brother; but I feel very sad.

BHIM : Look at Nakul, Arjun. His legs are trembling.
(*to Nakul*) Nakul, my dearest brother, are you tired?
(*Nakul does not answer but falls down and dies.*)

ARJUN : Alas! Nakul is gone too.

BHIM : (*to Yudhishthir*) O King, why has Nakul died before the end of the journey? We loved him and he loved us. He was a just man and a noble

prince. What was his fault for which he has been punished?

YUDHISHTHIR: Let us go on, Bhim. Our brother was a worthy prince of the great Bharat family. He was a brave warrior and a just and truthful man. But he had one great fault. He thought himself to be the most handsome man in the world. That was his sin for which he has been punished.

ARJUN : It seems to me that one by one all of us are going to be punished.

BHIM : There are only three of us left now. Let us see which of us leaves the other two behind.

ARJUN : (*to Yudhishthir*) O King, I don't want to leave you and dear Bhim behind, but I can't go on. I have no strength to go on. I think my end has come. (*Falls down dead.*)

(*Yudhishthir does not speak but goes on.*)

BHIM : O King, why do you not stop and look at Arjun's face? It has become pale. Alas, the tall, handsome Arjun is dead! The greatest archer in the world is dead! The father of the brave Abhimanyu is dead! The conqueror of Bhism, Karn and Jaidrath is dead!

What was the fault of this great warrior?

YUDHISHTHIR: What you say about Arjun is right, but he was very proud of his skill as an archer. Once he promised me that he would destroy Duryodhan and all his army in no time, but he could not keep his promise. That's why he has been punished.

(*They continue climbing the mountain for some time and then Bhim's legs begin to tremble.*)

BHIM : O King, I feel very tired. My legs are trembling. There is no strength left in me to go on. (*Falls on the ground.*) O King, before I die please tell me what sin I've committed.

(*There are tears in Yudhishthir's eyes but he does not turn his head towards Bhim.*)

YUDHISHTHIR: (*in a broken voice*) You were the strongest and the bravest among us, but you were very proud of your strength. That was your sin and you have been punished for it.

(*Yudhishthir continues climbing the mountain and his dog follows him. Suddenly he sees Indra, the Lord of Heaven, coming towards him.*)

INDRA : O noble King, I've come to receive you. I've left my car a few paces away from here and have come on foot. I'll take you in my car to heaven.

YUDHISHTHIR: (*bowing*) You've done me a great honour, sir, but I can't go to heaven without Draupadi and my brothers.

INDRA : Oh, don't worry about them. They've already arrived there.

YUDHISHTHIR: I thank you for this good news, my Lord; but what do you say about this dog of mine? Can I take him with me to heaven?

INDRA : I'm afraid you can't. A dog is not allowed to enter the gates of heaven.

YUDHISHTHIR: Then I'm sorry, sir, I won't enter those gates either.

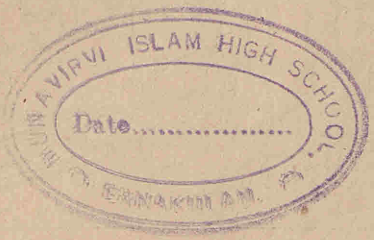
INDRA : Be wise, King. Do not reject heaven for the sake of a dog.

YUDHISHTHIR: I must, my Lord. I cannot leave my dog behind. This dog looks up to me for protection and help. He has come to live with me. I am a Bharat king; I cannot leave him behind. (*Goes ahead.*)

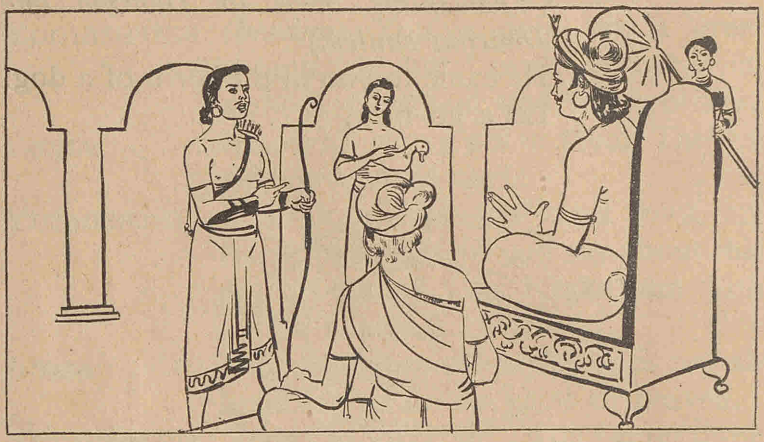
INDRA : Stop, King.

(*Yudhishthir turns back but does not see his dog following him. He sees the god Dharma instead.*)

INDRA : O King, I was testing you. You have passed the test. Do you see Lord Dharma standing before you?
(*Yudhishthir bows to Dharma and Dharma smiles.*)
He came to you in the form of a dog. Let's go now.



2. THE SWAN AND THE PRINCES



Characters

SUDDODHANA : the King of Kapilvastu
SIDHARTHA : the Prince of Kapilvastu
DEV DATT : Sidhartha's cousin
The Chief Minister and four other Ministers of the King
The Door-keeper

[*King Suddodhana is sitting on his throne. His Ministers are sitting around him. The Chief Minister is saying something to him. Just then the door-keeper enters and bows to the King.*]

DOOR-KEEPER: Long live the King! Sir, Prince Dev Datt wants to come in.

KING : Bring him in.
(*The door-keeper bows and goes out.*)

CHIEF MINISTER : I wonder why Prince Dev Datt wants to see the King at this time.

SECOND MINISTER : Perhaps he wants to complain against someone.
(*The door-keeper enters with Dev Datt. Both of them bow to the King.*)

KING : What is it, Dev Datt? Why have you come to me at this time?

DEV DATT : Sir, the Prince will not give me my swan. I want justice from you.

KING : (*smiling*) Be calm, Dev Datt. Has Sidhartha taken your swan from you?

DEV DATT : Yes, sir, he has. I shot it and it fell on the ground near the Prince. He picked it up and said he wouldn't give it to me.

KING : That's very naughty of Sidhartha. (*to the door-keeper*) Go and call Sidhartha.
(*The door-keeper bows and goes out.*)

THIRD MINISTER : (*softly to the Fourth Minister*) The Prince is a good lad. He can't do a thing that's wrong.

FOURTH MINISTER : I agree with you.

(*The door-keeper enters with Prince Sidhartha who has a white swan in his arms. Sidhartha bows to the King.*)

KING : Sidhartha, Dev Datt says that you've taken his swan. Is that the swan which you took from him?

SIDHARTHA : Your Highness, Dev Datt has complained about this swan, but it isn't his swan. It's mine.

DEV DATT : No, Your Highness, it is not his. It is mine. I shot it with an arrow. Sidhartha is telling a lie.

KING : Be calm, Dev Datt. You say that the swan is yours because you shot it. Is that right?

DEV DATT : Yes, sir, that's quite right.

KING : What do you say, Sidhartha? Why do you say that the swan is yours?

SIDHARTHA : Your Highness, Dev Datt shot this swan but I saved its life. That's why it's mine.

MINISTERS : Hear! Hear!

KING : Listen, Sidhartha. A Kshatriya can't give up what he has shot. Do you agree with me?

SIDHARTHA : I agree, sir; but a Kshatriya can't give up a suppliant either. This swan

came to me for protection. I can't give it up.

DEV DATT : Your Highness, this is injustice. I shot the swan, so it's mine.

KING : Well, boys, I'm puzzled. It's a strange case. I don't know how to decide it. (*to the Chief Minister*) Can you help me?

CHIEF MINISTER : I'll try, Your Highness.

KING : Very well, then. Please decide it.

CHIEF MINISTER : Prince Sidhartha and Prince Dev Datt, please listen to me. Prince Dev Datt says that the swan is his because he shot it, and Prince Sidhartha says that it is his because he saved its life. Am I right?

SIDHARTHA and DEV DATT: Quite right.

CHIEF MINISTER : Good. Now, Prince Sidhartha, please put the swan on this stool. (*Sidhartha puts the swan on the stool and goes back to his place. The swan is frightened and keeps looking at Sidhartha.*)

CHIEF MINISTER : Prince Dev Datt, please come forward and ask the swan to come to you.

DEV DATT : (*coming forward*) O swan, come to me! Come! Come! Come!
(*The swan trembles and cries with fear.*)

CHIEF MINISTER : That will do, Prince Dev Datt. Now it's your turn to call the swan, Prince Sidhartha.
(*Dev Datt goes back and Sidhartha comes forward.*)

SIDHARTHA : (*going near the swan*) Dear swan, don't be afraid. I've come to you. Come and sit in my arms.
(*The swan at once flies to Sidhartha's arms.*)

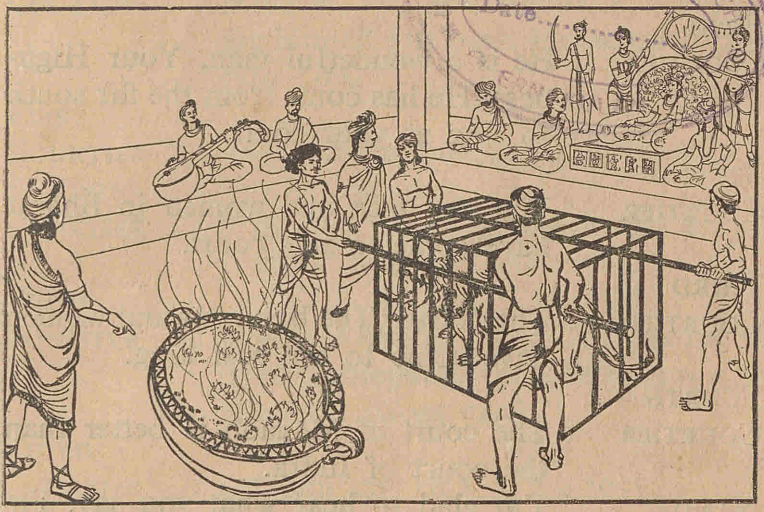
CHIEF MINISTER : (*to the King*) Your Highness, the swan has decided the case.

KING : It has, indeed; and we accept the decision. The swan belongs to Prince Sidhartha.

ALL : Long live Prince Sidhartha!

3. A BROKEN PROMISE

NAVIRVI ISLAM HIGH SC
Date



Characters

KING NANDA of Magadh
A young boy named CHANDRAGUPTA
Half a dozen courtiers
A messenger from Singhal
A door-keeper

[*King Nanda of Magadh is sitting in a big room in his palace. He is surrounded by half a dozen courtiers*

who flatter him. They are listening to the songs of of a musician. A young boy named Chandragupta is sitting alone in a corner.]

NANDA : This fellow sings very well.

FIRST COURTIER : He is a wonderful man, Your Highness. He has come from the far south to sing at your court.

SECOND COURTIER : The best men and women in Bharat have come to this court.

THIRD COURTIER : That's true. The best men and women have come to the best king.

FOURTH COURTIER : The court of Magadh is better than the court of Indra.

NANDA : I'm glad to hear what you say. I'm proud of you, my friends.

All COURTIERS: We're proud of our king. We're proud of Maharaj Ghana Nanda, the greatest of the Nandas.

(*The Chief Minister enters.*)

CHIEF MINISTER : Your Highness, I've come with an urgent matter.

NANDA : Everything is urgent for you. I can't give any time now to your urgent matter.

FIFTH COURTIER : His Highness must have some rest.

SIXTH COURTIER : Minister, sir, His Highness is enjoying himself just now. Please don't disturb him.

FIRST COURTIER : Yes, and you mustn't disturb us either.

SECOND COURTIER : Why don't you sit down and enjoy yourself with us?

CHIEF MINISTER : (*softly to himself*) The King has fallen in bad company. God help him and Magadh! (*Goes out.*)

THIRD COURTIER : Let him go. He's a big fool.

NANDA : Let's have one more song.

ALL : Yes, yes, let's have one more song.
(*The door-keeper enters and bows.*)

FOURTH COURTIER : Here is another fool!

DOOR-KEEPER : Your Highness, a messenger from Singhal is waiting outside.

NANDA : Bring him in.
(*The messenger enters with a big cage and bows.*)

NANDA : What news have you brought from Singhal?

MESSENGER : I haven't brought any news, Your Highness; but my King has sent you this cage. There is a lion in the cage. It has to be taken out without breaking the cage.

NANDA : (*looking at the cage and the lion inside it*) The cage hasn't a door. How can such a huge lion be taken out of the cage without breaking it? (*to the courtiers*) Can you do it?

COURTIERS : We can't.

NANDA : You're all wise men. Think about it. (*The courtiers close their eyes and pretend to think.*)

FIRST COURTIER : I've thought hard about it.

ALL OTHERS: We've thought hard too.

NANDA : What's the result of your thinking?

SECOND COURTIER : It's impossible to take the lion out without breaking the cage.

ALL OTHERS: That's right.

NANDA : It seems to me that our friend, the King of Singhal, has played a joke on us.

FIFTH COURTIER : It's very rude of him, sir.

(*Chandragupta steps forward and bows to Nanda.*)

CHANDRAGUPTA: Your Highness, the King of Singhal hasn't played a joke on us. He has sent this cage with a lion in it to test the wisdom of your court. We must take the lion out of the cage without breaking it.

NANDA : How can we do it?

COURTIERS : We can't. Your Highness, the boy is a fool.

CHANDRAGUPTA: I'll take the lion out of the cage.

NANDA : If you do it, I'll give you anything you want.

CHANDRAGUPTA: I want an oven full of red hot coals.

NANDA : (*to the door-keeper*) Go and get a big oven full of red hot coals.

(*The door-keeper bows and goes out.*)

THIRD COURTIER : What is the boy going to do with an oven?

FOURTH COURTIER : He's going to cook food for the lion!

(*The courtiers laugh, and the door-keeper enters with a servant who is carrying a big oven with burning coals in it. The oven is put in front of Chandragupta.*)

CHANDRAGUPTA: (*to the servant*) Put the cage on this oven.

(*The servant puts the cage on the oven.*

In a few minutes the lion, which was made of wax, comes melting out of the cage.)

NANDA : (*surprised*) Boy, I'm pleased with you. What's your name?

CHANDRAGUPTA: Sir, my name is Chandragupta. I'm the son of your commander-in-chief whom you've put in prison. I hope you'll keep your word.

NANDA : Oh! Oh! So you are the son of my former commander-in-chief! You are going to be punished for it.

COURTIERS : Hear! Hear!

FOURTH COURTIER : Your Highness, put him in prison too.

FIFTH COURTIER : Yes, Your Highness, let him stay with his father.

SIXTH COURTIER : No, he should be driven out of Magadh. If he stays in Magadh, he'll make trouble for Your Highness and for all of us.

MESSENGER : Sir, you promised to give the boy what he wants.

NANDA : That's right. What do you want, boy?

CHANDRAGUPTA: I want my father to be set free.

NANDA : No, it can't be done.

COURTIERS : It's impossible.

NANDA : Ask for anything else.

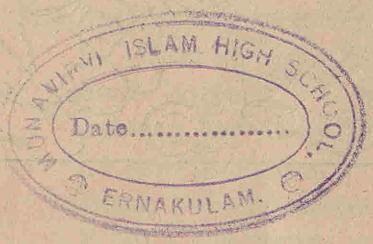
CHANDRAGUPTA: I want nothing else.

FIRST COURTIER : Whip him and he'll be all right.

NANDA : Take as much money as you want and get away from here.

CHANDRAGUPTA: (*in anger*) I will not take any money from you. King Nanda, you've broken your promise! You've lied to me! You've insulted me! You'll have to pay dearly for it!

(*Walks out of the room.*)



4. TOWARDS HALDIGHATI !



Characters

PRATAP SINGH : the Rana of Mewar
AMAR SINGH : Pratap Singh's son
BHAMA SHAH : Pratap Singh's Chief Minister
MAN SINGH : the Raja of Ambar and a general of Akbar
Two soldiers
Some nobles of Mewar and servants

[*Rana Pratap Singh is sitting alone in a part of the*

fort of Kamal Mir. A big dinner has been arranged in honour of Raja Man Singh of Ambar, who is a general and a relation of the Mughal Emperor Akbar. The Rana is not going to dine with Man Singh. He is thinking aloud.]

PRATAP : Man Singh has come to see me, and I've arranged a big dinner in his honour. My son and all my friends will dine with him, but I won't. How will Man Singh feel about it? He'll feel insulted and complain to Akbar. He'll come back with a large army to take revenge on me. There is going to be terrible bloodshed. I can clearly see it. I can see Haldighati covered with dead bodies. Well, let it be. I'll die fighting for Mewar.

(*A soldier enters.*)

SOLDIER : Long live the Rana!

PRATAP : What's the news, young man?

SOLDIER : Sir, dinner is ready. All the guests have come.

PRATAP : They can start eating.

SOLDIER : Sir, the chief guest, Raja Man Singh, is waiting for the host.

PRATAP : But Amar Singh is there, isn't he?

SOLDIER : He is, sir, but the Raja wants you to be there.

PRATAP : Will he not eat if I am not there?

SOLDIER : He says he won't.

PRATAP : (*softly to himself*) I knew it. What shall I do? (*to the soldier*) Go and tell the chief guest that the Rana has a headache and so he won't eat any food tonight.

(*A second soldier enters and bows.*)

SECOND SOLDIER : Raja Man Singh says the food is getting cold.

PRATAP : Tell him and the other guests to start eating. They shouldn't wait for me. I'll see the Raja after he has finished his dinner.

(*Both the soldiers bow and go out.*)

PRATAP : (*to himself*) This nephew of Akbar, this bootlicker of the Mughals wants to dine with Pratap! Can Pratap ever dine with him? No, never. It's impossible.

(*The second soldier enters again and bows.*)

PRATAP : Why have you come back so soon?

SOLDIER : Sir, the Raja of Ambar is biting his lips. He seems to be very angry.

PRATAP : All right, I'm coming. You may go. (*to himself*) Let him do what he can. I will not agree to dine with him.

May Lord Shiva give me the strength to face this situation!

(*Goes towards the dining hall.*)

(*Man Singh and all other guests are sitting on the floor. Food has been served to them in large plates of silver, but they are not eating. Man Singh is very angry. Bhama Shah is talking to him.*)

BHAMA SHAH: Believe me, Raja Saheb, the Rana is not well. These days he often suffers from headaches.

MAN SINGH : Shah ji, I'm not a child. I can understand things. The Rana doesn't want to eat with me.

BHAMA SHAH: Excuse me, Raja Saheb, you are unkind to the Rana. He hasn't said that he doesn't want to eat with you. The Rana is never discourteous to his guests.

MAN SINGH : I've been waiting here for your Rana for more than half an hour now, but he hasn't come yet. Is this courtesy? He has insulted me. I can't stay here any more. I must go now.

BHAMA SHAH: Please listen to me. The Rana will see you as soon as he can.

MAN SINGH : I don't want to see your Rana today. Tell him that I'll come back with the

right medicine for his headache. (*Pratap enters.*)

PRATAP : Bring your Mughal uncle along with you. I'll give you both a warm welcome.

MAN SINGH : Pratap Singh, it was very foolish of you to insult me. You'll have to pay a heavy price for it.

PRATAP : Raja Saheb, we've to pay a price for our foolishness, and we've to pay a price for our wisdom. The price of wisdom is slavery, and the price of foolishness is independence. You've been wise and I've been foolish. That's why you are a slave of the Mughals and I'm an independent ruler. I'm proud of my foolishness as you're proud of your wisdom.

MAN SINGH : I see. Very well, Maharana ji, I'll see you again soon. (*Goes out.*)

PRATAP : (*to the others*) Don't worry. Let the black sheep go. Let him go and complain to his master. We must get ready to fight for our honour, for our religion, for our beloved country.

AMAR : Sir, what shall we do now?

PRATAP : This food has been defiled by the presence of Man Singh here. Don't

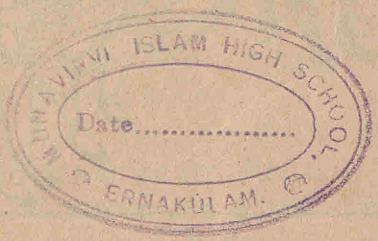
eat it. Give it to the dogs. Wash this place with the holy water of the Ganga. Have a bath and change your sacred threads.

AMAR : (*bowing*) The Maharana's orders will be obeyed.

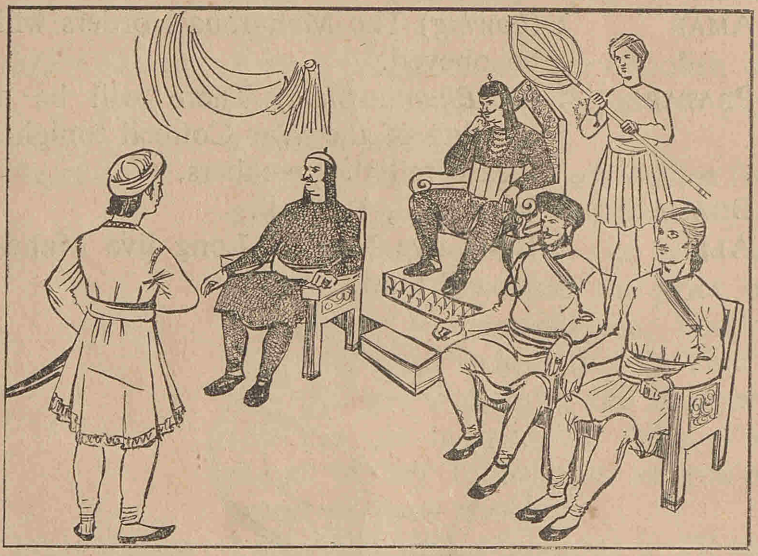
PRATAP : (*to Bhama Shah*) There will be a meeting of the War Council tonight. Please tell the members.

BHAMA SHAH: Very well, Rana ji.

ALL : Long live Mewar! Long live Maharana Pratap!



5. A WORTHY SON OF A WORTHY FATHER



Characters

PRATAP SINGH: the Rana of Mewar
AMAR SINGH : the Prince of Mewar
SHAKT SINGH : Pratap Singh's brother
BHAMA SHAH : Pratap Singh's Chief Minister
CHURAWAT : a noble of Mewar

[*Rana Pratap Singh's palace in Chawand. The Rana is sitting on the dais in the main hall. Bhama Shah,*

Shakt Singh and Churawat are sitting in front of him.]

BHAMA SHAH : Maharana, you don't look well. What's the matter with you?

PRATAP : I'm all right, Shah ji. Don't worry about me.

CHURAWAT : I've heard you talking to yourself, sir. Are you worried about anything?

PRATAP : I'm worried about many things, Churawat. I'm worried about Chittor; I'm worried about Mewar; and I'm most worried about the future Rana of Mewar.

SHAKT SINGH : Sir, you shouldn't worry about Chittor. We'll get it back soon. Let me worry about it.

CHURAWAT : And you shouldn't worry about Mewar either, Rana ji. The Mughal Emperor can never conquer it. We know how to fight for our holy land.

PRATAP : Thank you, Shakt, and thank you, Chura. Your words fill my heart with hope and courage.

BHAMA SHAH : What is your worry about the future Rana of Mewar? Prince Amar Singh is a brave young man. He is a skilful fighter. I've seen him fighting on the battle-field several times. He has never turned his back on the enemy.

He hates the Mughals and he loves Mewar much more than many of us. I don't understand why you are worried.

PRATAP : Shah ji, what you say is true, but Megha ji told me something which is worrying me greatly.

(*Amar Singh enters and bows.*)

PRATAP : We are talking about you, Amar. I'm glad you've come.

AMAR : What can I do for you, sir?

PRATAP : You can't do anything for me. I don't want you to do anything for me.

AMAR : I don't follow you, Maharana.

PRATAP : Amar, are you not the future Rana of Mewar?

AMAR : (*trembling*) I'm your most obedient son, father.

PRATAP : I know that; but do you know your responsibilities? I want you to train yourself for your future duties.

AMAR : Sir, I've done my duties as well as any trusted lieutenant of yours. I don't think I've ever let my country down.

SHAKT SINGH : Sir, Amar is a worthy son of a worthy father.

BHAMA SHAH : He is, indeed.

CHURAWAT : He fought like a tiger in the last battle.

PRATAP : None of you seems to understand me. (*to Amar Singh*) Last time, we had to run away from Chawand. Who was with you at that time?

AMAR : Megha ji and about a dozen of his people.

PRATAP : You stopped in a village of the Bhils, didn't you?

AMAR : Yes, sir, we did.

PRATAP : You were very tired and hungry then, weren't you?

AMAR : Yes, sir, I was.

PRATAP : What did you say to the people around you?

AMAR : Sir, I don't remember what I said then.

PRATAP : You said, "I'm not a prince. A prince lives in a palace and has all the comforts of life." Are such complaints worthy of the son of Pratap Singh? Can such a man be the Rana of Mewar?

AMAR : Sir, I'm ashamed of myself.

PRATAP : That's not enough. You've committed a sin against your Rana and against your country. Megha ji told me about it when he was dying.

There were tears in his eyes and he was very unhappy.

AMAR : Father, I'm guilty. I've committed a sin against my country, my Rana and Megha ji. Please punish me.

BHAMA SHAH : Prince, you're sorry for your mistake. That's enough.

CHURAWAT : The Prince is as noble as he is brave.

PRATAP : Amar, do you promise to suffer for the freedom of Mewar?

AMAR : I promise, sir.

PRATAP : Do you promise that you will never complain about any hardship?

AMAR : (*putting his hand on his sword*) I promise that I'll never complain about anything. I'll face all troubles and hardships cheerfully.

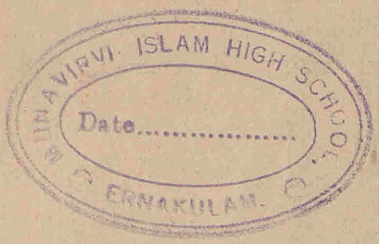
PRATAP : (*embracing Amar Singh.*) May Lord Shiva help you! (*Pauses and turns to Shakt Singh and Churawat.*) Shakt and Chura, do you promise your Rana that you'll always stand by Amar?

SHAKT SINGH and CHURAWAT : (*putting their hands on their swords*) We promise our Rana that we'll always stand by Prince Amar Singh.

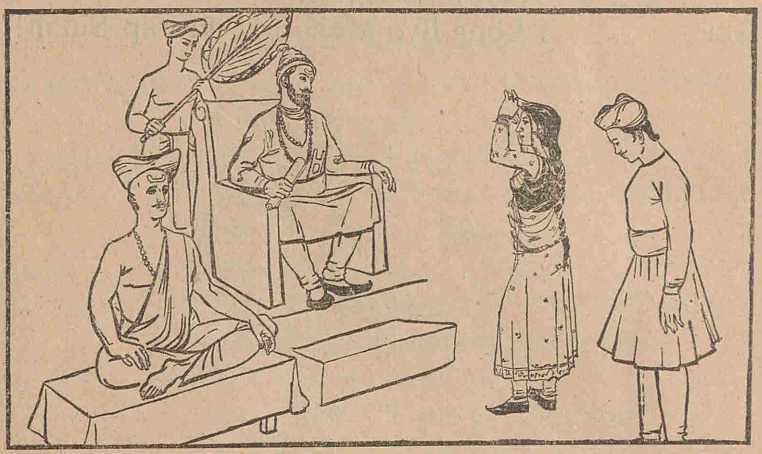
PRATAP : (*cheerfully*) Thank you, noble young

men. A great load is off my mind. I'm a happy man today. Call the bards. Let's listen to their songs and enjoy ourselves.

ALL : Long live Maharana Pratap Singh!



6. A GEM AMONG MEN



Characters

SHIVAJI	: the ruler of Maharashtra
AWAJI SONDEV	: the commander of the Maratha soldiers who attacked the fort of Kalyan
MOROPANT	: Shivaji's Peshwa
GAUHAR BANU	: the daughter-in-law of Mulla Ahmad, the Mughal governor of Kalyan
TANE, SANTA	Maratha soldiers

SCENE I

[*The fort of Kalyan in the Western Ghats. Awaji Sondev, the commander of the Maratha soldiers who attacked the fort, is talking to a soldier named Tane in a part of the fort.*]

AWAJI : It's a great day for us, isn't it?

TANE : It is, sir. We came upon the enemy suddenly. They knew nothing about it. The governor and his friends were drinking and enjoying themselves while we were climbing the walls of the fort.

AWAJI : Well, that's the way to attack the enemy. Mulla Ahmad and his men fought for some time, didn't they?

TANE : They fought for about half an hour and then started running away. They were not able to carry anything with them. Most of them could not even put saddles on the backs of their horses.

AWAJI : I know that. We've taught them a good lesson. Mulla Ahmad and his family have been taken prisoner, haven't they?

TANE : Yes, they are our prisoners.

AWAJI : I must go now and set free all the women except one.

(*A soldier named Santa enters running and bows.*)

SANTA : Sir, the governor has fled from the fort with some members of his family.

AWAJI : Have the women gone with him too?

SANTA : No, sir, the women haven't gone. They are still in the fort.

AWAJI : Where has Mulla Ahmad gone?

SANTA : Towards Bijapur.

AWAJI : Let him go. You go back and tell the guards to let all the women go except Gauhar Banu.

SANTA : Who is this Gauhar Banu, sir?

AWAJI : She's a most precious jewel. Go and tell the guards not to let her go. Be quick.

(*Santa bows and goes out.*)

TANE : Sir, are we doing the right thing?

AWAJI : What do you mean?

TANE : I mean, is it right to keep back this woman?

AWAJI : What's wrong with it?

TANE : Hasn't the Raja ordered that no woman should be made a prisoner?

AWAJI : He has, but Gauhar Banu is not an ordinary woman. The Raja must see her.

TANE : The Raja's orders are that the man who insults a woman will be punished.

AWAJI : I know those orders. We are not insulting any woman. There is nothing to be afraid of.

TANE : I'm not so sure. I still think we are not doing the right thing.

AWAJI : Don't worry, young man. I know what to do and what not to do. Let's go and make a list of what Mulla Ahmad has left behind. The Raja will be here soon. (*Awaji and Tane go out.*)

SCENE II

[*Another part of the fort of Kalyan. Shivaji is sitting on his throne. His Peshwa, Moropant, is sitting on a low chair on his right and Awaji is standing in front of him. Shivaji has in his right hand a list of what Mulla Ahmad has left behind in the fort.*]

SHIVAJI : Awaji, I'm very pleased with you. You planned the attack wisely and your men fought bravely. I'm going to reward all of you.

MOROPANT : They richly deserve it.

SHIVAJI : Yes, they do. We've got from this fort one bagful of precious stones and ten bagfuls of gold and silver

besides guns, horses, cloth, grain and other things. Half of the gold, silver and precious stones will be divided equally among the soldiers. (*to Moropant*) Please see that no one is left out. (*to Awaji*) You are promoted to the next higher rank and you will get one thousand gold muhars and fifty precious stones from me.

AWAJI : (*bowing*) Sir, I thank you for your kindness.

MOROPANT : I'm sure the soldiers will be very happy when they know these orders.

AWAJI : Sir, I've brought a wonderful thing for you to see. May I go and bring it?

SHIVAJI : (*smiling*) What is it? I hope it is not a white elephant.

AWAJI : Sir, it's a rare thing. There isn't another like it in Hindustan.

MOROPANT : Then why don't you go and bring it? (*Awaji goes out and comes back with Gauhar Banu. Gauhar Banu is wearing a veil. She stands at a distance from Shivaji.*)

SHIVAJI : (*seeing Gauhar Banu*) What's this, Awaji? Have you not allowed the women to go?

AWAJI : Sir, I've allowed all the women to go except this one.

SHIVAJI : Who told you to bring a woman here? Don't you know my orders?

AWAJI : I know your orders, sir. But this one is not an ordinary woman. I thought you would.....

SHIVAJI : Stop there. I don't want to hear you. You are not a soldier, but a mean, cowardly fellow. All women are like my mother to me. My orders are that all women should be treated with the greatest respect and no harm should be done to them. You've disobeyed my orders. You'll be punished for it.

(*Gauhar Banu comes forward and stands in front of Shivaji.*)

SHIVAJI : Mother, I'm sorry that one of my men has insulted you. Won't you forgive me?

(*Gauhar Banu removes her veil and Shivaji is able to see her beautiful face.*)

SHIVAJI : (*admiring Gauhar Banu's beauty*) Mother, you are beautiful! I wish my own mother were as beautiful as you are. Then her son would be handsome.

GAUHAR BANU : Sir, her son is a gem among men.

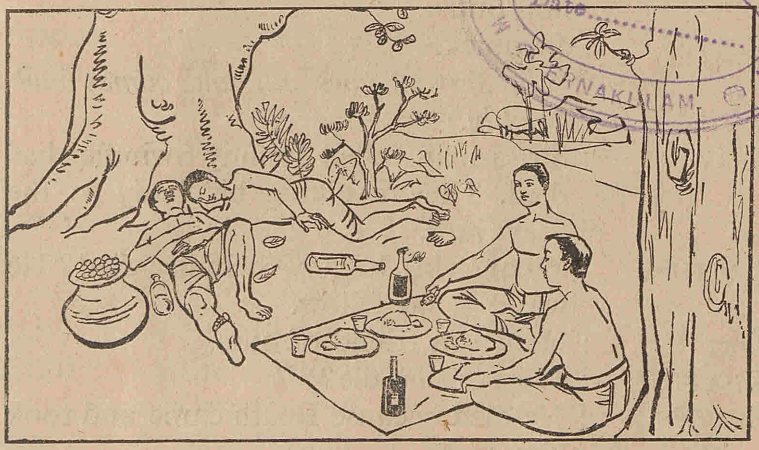
SHIVAJI : Mother, say that you have forgiven me and Awaji. He has been very foolish.

GAUHAR BANU : Sir, Awaji's mistake has been a blessing for me. I've been able to see the bravest, the noblest and the greatest man in Hindustan today. By seeing him I've been uplifted. Shivaji Maharaj, I thank you and I thank Awaji.

ALL : Long live Shivaji Maharaj!

7. I SEE DEATH !

ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date.....



Characters

Four young knaves—DATTU, FATTU, LATTU and BHATTU
A hotel servant
A Brahman named DATA RAM
A man with a beard
A woman
An old man

[*Four young knaves called Dattu, Fattu, Lattu and Bhattu are sitting at a table in a small hotel. They are drinking tea and talking loudly. Suddenly they hear a noise and become quiet.*]

DATTU : (*to the servant*) What's that noise outside?

SERVANT : I don't know, sir. Let me go and find out.

FATTU : Be quick.

(*The servant goes out and comes back quickly.*)

SERVANT : Sir, a man called Johnny Swindler has died. They're taking his body to the graveyard.

LATTU : What? Has Johnny Swindler died? He was a good fellow.

DATTU : He was a friend of ours.

BHATTU : Why did he die?

SERVANT : He died because Death came and took him away.

LATTU : Who is this fellow called Death? Why did he take Johnny Swindler away without our permission?

FATTU : We must find this fellow.

BHATTU : And teach him a lesson.

(*The knaves walk out of the hotel and go in search of Death. They meet people on the road and ask them about Death.*)

DATTU : (*seeing a Brahman*) Who are you?

BRAHMAN : I'm Data Ram. What do you want from me?

DATTU : Nothing. Have you met a fellow called Death?

BRAHMAN : No. I haven't met any man of that name.

FATTU : (*addressing a woman*) Where does Mr Death live?

WOMAN : (*surprised*) Is death a man?

FATTU : Oh yes, he is. He is a very wicked man. He has taken away our friend Johnny Swindler without our permission. We're going to teach him a lesson.

WOMAN : I'm glad I've never met him.

LATTU : (*to a man with a beard*) You are Mr Death, aren't you?

MAN : Behave yourself.

LATTU : I'm sorry. I thought you were Death. Can you tell us where Death lives?

MAN : No, I can't. I know nothing about death.

BHATTU : (*to the other three*) We're tired. Where can we find that fellow? (*seeing an old man*) Perhaps this old man can tell us something about him. (*to the old man*) Old man, where does Death live?

OLD MAN : I can't say, but I'm an old man now and I hope to meet my death soon.

DATTU : Then you know where he lives.

OLD MAN : No, I don't.

FATTU : Don't tell lies, old man. How can you hope to meet Death if you don't know him?

OLD MAN : (*thinking how to get rid of them*) All right. I'll tell you where you'll find Death. Listen. You go straight on till you find a big banyan tree by the roadside. Stop there and sit in the shade of the tree. You'll meet Death there.

ALL FOUR : Thank you, old man.

(*The knaves go straight on, and when they see a big banyan tree by the roadside they stop there and sit in the shade of the tree. There they find a big jar which is full of gold coins and are very pleased.*)

DATTU : Let's wait here till it gets dark. Then we can take this gold home safely. The police won't see us.

THE OTHER THREE: We agree.

FATTU : Two of us should go to the bazaar and get food for all of us. Who will go to the bazaar?

LATTU : I'll go. Who will come with me?

BHATTU : I'll come with you.

(*Lattu and Bhattu go to the bazaar.*)

DATTU : Listen, Fattu, both of us can be very rich.

FATTU : How?

DATTU : By getting rid of those two rascals.

FATTU : I see what you mean, and I agree with you. Listen, I have a deadly poison

with me. Let's put it into those rascals' bottles of wine.

DATTU : Good. Let's do it and lie down to rest. (*They put the poison into the other two knaves' bottles of wine and lie down to rest. When Lattu and Bhattu return to the tree, they find them asleep.*)

LATTU : (*to Bhattu*) These rascals are fast asleep.

BHATTU : (*softly*) Don't wake them. Let me make four equal shares of this food. (*Makes four equal shares of the food.*) Now, listen. Let's poison these rascals' food.

LATTU : Why?

BHATTU : You're a fool. Can't you understand a simple matter? If they die, the gold in the jar will be divided only between you and me.

LATTU : Now I understand. You're a very clever man, indeed. Here is the poison. (*Takes a small bottle of poison out of the inside pocket of his coat and gives it to Bhattu. Bhattu opens it and poisons the food of Dattu and Fattu.*)

BHATTU : (*loudly, shaking Dattu and Fattu*) Get up, you fellows! How long will you sleep? Get up. Food has been served. (*Dattu and Fattu get up and then all four of them sit down to eat. They open their own bottles of wine. When*

they have eaten a few mouthfuls of food and drunk some of their wine, they begin to feel giddy.)

DATTU : (*trembling*) I'm not feeling well.

FATTU : (*staring at the sky*) The sun is coming down on me!

LATTU : Look, the old man is laughing at us!

BHATTU : Look! Look! Death is standing before us!

FATTU : I see Death!

ALL FOUR : I see Death! I see Death! I see...I...

AVIRMI ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date.....
ERNAKULAM.

8. THE HOLY WATER



[*Read 'The King of the Golden River' by John Ruskin.*]

Characters

A young man named GLUCK
An old man
A child
A little dog
The King of the Golden River

[*A young man named Gluck is climbing a hill. He is carrying a bottle of holy water with him. It is a hot day and Gluck is sweating.*]

GLUCK : (*climbing the hill and talking to himself*)

I've been climbing this steep hill for more than four hours now, but I haven't yet seen the Golden River. I've lost my basket of food and I'm tired and hungry. What shall I do? Shall I return home? No, no, I mustn't return home. I must try to get to the bank of the Golden River. The little King was very kind to me. I think he'll help me. He'll take me to the Golden River. He won't turn me into a black stone. But I'm thirsty. I must drink some water.

(*He sits down on the grass, opens his bottle of holy water and raises it to his mouth, but he sees a very weak old man coming towards him and puts the bottle on the ground.*)

OLD MAN : (*leaning on his staff*) My son, I'm very thirsty. Won't you give me a little water to drink?

GLUCK : (*giving his bottle of water to the old man*) Please don't drink all of it.

(*The old man drinks two-thirds of the water and gives the bottle back to Gluck.*)

OLD MAN : You're a good man. You're not like those two rascals who came here some time ago. May God bless you! (*Goes away quickly.*)

GLUCK : (*climbing the hill again*) Poor old man! He was dying of thirst. I'm glad I gave him some water to drink. He said two rascals came here some time ago. Who were they? Perhaps they were my brothers. He seemed to be very angry with them. I hope he didn't curse them. (*after a pause*) Ah! the climb is easier now and I feel stronger than before. But I'm thirsty again! (*Looks at the bottle of water.*) There isn't much water left in it, but I must drink a few drops. (*Sits down to drink some water from his bottle, but sees a child crying for water by the roadside and goes to him.*)

CHILD : (*seeing the bottle of water in Gluck's hand*) Wa --ter!

GLUCK : (*putting the bottle to the child's lips*) Poor child! I won't let you die of thirst. (*The child drinks nearly all the water and then gets up and runs down the hill. Gluck looks at the bottle.*)

GLUCK : He has nearly emptied the bottle. Only a few drops are left. I must save these to throw into the Golden River. (*Begins climbing the hill again.*) The climb is becoming more pleasant now. There are all kinds of flowers growing in this part of the hill. They are beautiful! I've

never seen such flowers before. I feel very happy today. But why do I feel thirsty? Ah! I remember. I haven't drunk a drop of water since I left home. (*Looks at the bottle.*) There isn't more than five or six drops of water left. I must save these precious drops. (*He sees a dog lying by the roadside and dying of thirst, and stops near it. He looks at the dog and then at the Golden River which is not more than five hundred metres above him.*) This poor creature is dying of thirst. If I let him drink these few drops, I'll have nothing left with me to throw into the Golden River. The King of the Golden River will be very angry with me and he will turn me into a black stone. What shall I do? (*after a pause*) Curse the King and curse his gold! Let him turn me into a black stone! I must save the life of this poor dog. (*Opens the bottle and empties it into the dog's mouth. The dog suddenly jumps up and Gluck closes his eyes. When he opens them, he sees the King of the Golden River standing before him.*)

KING : Thank you; don't be frightened. Why didn't you come earlier? Why did you send those wicked brothers of yours?

I had to turn them into black stones.

GLUCK : It was my duty first to ask my elder brothers to bring the holy water to the Golden River. But why have you turned them into black stones?

KING : They threw unholy water into my river.

GLUCK : But, sir, I'm sure they got the water from the fountain in the church.

KING : (*angrily*) Yes, they got it from the fountain in the church, but it wasn't given to those who were dying of thirst and so it became unholy. Your brothers were greedy, selfish, cruel men. (*Plucks a lily and looks at the dew drops on its leaves, and then shakes them into Gluck's bottle.*) Throw these drops of water into the Golden River and then go down the other side of the mountain. You will soon find yourself in the Treasure Valley. It is yours. Good-bye. (*Disappears.*)



9. AN EVENT IN THE FOREST



Characters

The King of England
The Miller of Mansfield
A courtier

[*The forest of Sherwood in England. The time is night. The King is walking slowly along a path which runs through the forest. His gun is in his hand. He is alone and is thinking aloud.*]

KING : This is not a public road. I'm sure I'm lost in the forest. I've lost my horse and I don't know where my men are. There is

no one here to obey me or to flatter me. I can't reward anyone; I can't punish anyone. I am a king without the powers of a king. In this situation there is no difference between me and a common man. (*Hears the report of a gun.*) Oh, some rascal is shooting the King's deer nearby. What shall I do with him? He won't believe I'm the King. All right, I'll talk to him as a common man.

(*The Miller of Mansfield enters.*)

MILLER : Who are you, rascal?

KING : Why do you call me rascal? I'm not a rascal.

MILLER : Are you a gentleman then? Will a gentleman fire a gun in the King's forest without permission?

KING : Believe me, friend, I didn't fire that shot.

MILLER : I'm no friend of yours, and I don't believe you. You're telling a lie. Be honest and tell me what you've shot.

KING : I tell you I didn't fire the gun. How could I shoot anything?

MILLER : Don't think that I am a fool. I won't believe you. You must tell me the truth. What's your name?

KING : My name!

MILLER : Yes, yes, your name. Why are you surprised? Haven't you a name? (*sternly*)

Answer my questions: What's your name? Where do you come from? Why have you come here?

KING : I have never answered these questions before, honest man.

MILLER : You may be right, honest man; but these are questions which no honest man is afraid to answer. If you don't answer them, I'll have to take you along with me.

KING : What right have you to take me along with you? Who has given you that right?

MILLER : The King has given me that right.

KING : (*to himself*) I can't do anything now. (*to the miller*) I'm glad that the King has an officer like you. If you listen to me, I'll tell you all about myself.

MILLER : I don't want to waste any more of my time with you, but if you tell me the truth I'll listen to you.

KING : I'm one of the King's men as you are. I came with him to hunt in the forest and lost my way.

MILLER : Where is your horse?

KING : It fell down while running and broke two of its legs. I had to leave it there.

MILLER : Who will believe your story?

KING : Sir, I do not tell lies.

MILLER : What? You live at the King's court and you don't tell lies! I'm surprised.

KING : If you don't believe me, you may come with me to Nottingham or take me with you to your house. I'll spend the night in your house. (*giving him a purse*) Take this money for your trouble. If it is not enough, I'll give you some more in the morning.

MILLER : I see. A little bribe for today, and a big promise for tomorrow. There is no doubt in my mind now that you are a courtier. But, Mr Courtier, I'm not a courtier. I'm simply John Cockle; and John Cockle neither gives a bribe nor takes a bribe.

KING : You're a wonderful man, Mr Cockle. I'm glad I met you. But will you please tell me what I am to do now?

MILLER : You may do what you like. You may go to Nottingham or you may stay here. Nottingham is a long way from here, and you'll have to go through a thick wood. I can put you on the road. If you want to spend the night here, you are welcome to my cottage. I'll give you food to eat and a clean bed to lie on, and in the morning I'll go with you to Nottingham.

KING : Can't you go with me tonight?

MILLER : I wouldn't go with you tonight even if you were the King.

KING : Very well. If you can't go with me, I'll go with you.
(*A courtier comes running.*)

COURTIER: I'm glad I've found Your Majesty. We've been searching for you the whole day.

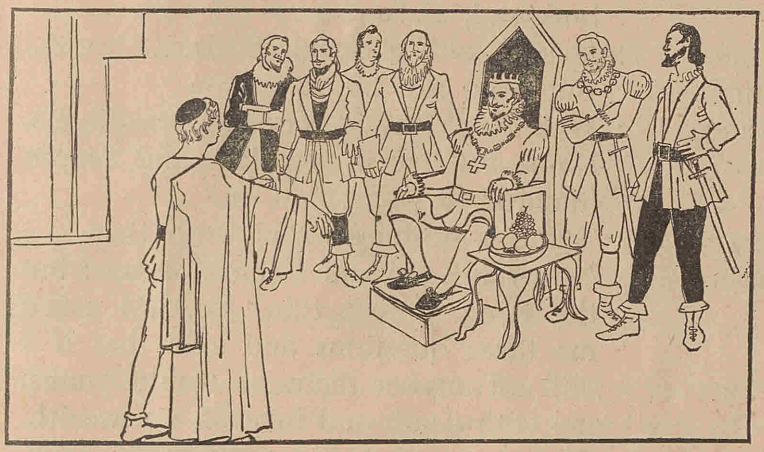
MILLER : Have I been talking to the King? (*Kneels.*) Will Your Majesty forgive me for my rudeness?
(*The King draws his sword and the miller trembles with fear.*)

THE MILLER : (*still kneeling*) I hope Your Majesty will not kill me for doing my duty.

THE KING : I won't. I can never do such a thing. You are one of the most honest men in England. England is proud of you and I am proud of you. Rise and take this sword. (*The miller rises and takes the sword from the King.*) You are a knight now. You are Sir John Cockle. You will get a thousand crowns a year. (*The miller kneels again.*)

[*Adapted from Dudsley*]

10. KING JOHN AND THE ABBOT OF CANTERBURY



Characters

The ABBOT of Canterbury
The Abbot's shepherd—DICKON
King JOHN of England
Six nobles of the King and two servants of the Abbot

SCENE I

[*The Abbot's palace at Canterbury. The Abbot is returning home and meets his shepherd called Dickon outside the palace.*]

SHEPHERD : Good morning, my Lord. I'm glad to see you back home.

ABBOT : Good morning, Dickon. How are you?

SHEPHERD : Very well, my Lord, thank you. You look sad, sir!

ABBOT : I can't look cheerful, Dickon.

SHEPHERD : But why, my Lord?

ABBOT : Well, the King is very angry with me. He says I live in a palace and keep a hundred servants.

SHEPHERD : There is nothing wrong with that.

ABBOT : You think so, and I think so too; but the King doesn't think so. He asked me three questions and said that if I did not answer them he would punish me with death and take all my wealth.

SHEPHERD : Did you answer his questions?

ABBOT : I couldn't.

SHEPHERD : What happened then?

ABBOT : I asked for time and he agreed.

SHEPHERD : That's good. What are the King's questions, my Lord?

ABBOT : The King's questions are: 1. What is it that walks first upon four legs, then upon two, and last of all upon three? 2. How long will it take a man to ride round the world? 3. What was he thinking at that time?

SHEPHERD : (*after a pause*) Sir, I'm not a learned

man; but sometimes a fool can do things which a learned man can't do. If you lend me your clothes and your horse, I'll go to the King and answer his questions for you.

ABBOT : Are you sure you can answer the three questions?

SHEPHERD : I'm quite sure, sir.

ABBOT : Very well, then. You can dress yourself in my clothes and ride to London on my horse.

SCENE II

[*The King's palace in London. The King is sitting on his throne. Six of his nobles are standing round him.*]

KING JOHN: The Abbot hasn't come yet. He is a rascal. I think I should send someone to bring him. I'm sure he can't answer my questions. He's going to die and I'm going to get all his wealth. But here he comes!

(*The shepherd enters. He is dressed as the Abbot and is followed by two servants. He comes and kneels in front of the King's throne.*)

KING JOHN: Welcome, Sir Abbot. You're a little late, but don't worry. I'm told you're working against me. Is that right?

SHEPHERD : No, sir, it isn't right. I can never work against the King.

KING JOHN: All right, if you answer my questions now, I'll believe you and you won't lose your life or your wealth. I'll repeat the questions. Are you ready to answer them?

SHEPHERD : I'm ready, Your Majesty.

KING JOHN: Listen, then. What is it that goes first upon four legs, then upon two legs, and last of all upon three legs?

SHEPHERD : Sir, all men do that. When they are little babies they go about upon their hands and feet; when they grow up they go about upon their legs only; and when they are old they use a stick besides their legs for going about.

KING JOHN: You are right, but it was an easy question. Listen to my second question. How long will it take me to ride round the world?

SHEPHERD : Sir, if you rise with the sun and ride with him all day and night, you will have ridden round the earth by sunrise next morning.

KING JOHN: Good heavens! I never thought I could ride so fast. I'm pleased with your answer, but I don't think you can answer my last question. Listen to it. What am I thinking now?

SHEPHERD : (*looking at the King's face*) Your Majesty, you think that I'm the Abbot of Canterbury, but I'm not. (*Throws off the Abbot's cloak and shows his own dress under it.*) I'm the Abbot's poor shepherd called Dickon. I've come to beg pardon for him and for myself.

KING JOHN: You're a clever man. I'm pleased with you. I'm going to make you the Abbot of Canterbury.

SHEPHERD : No, my King, please don't do that. I'm not a learned man. I can neither read nor write.

KING JOHN: All right, take this bag of gold. I give it to you. (*Gives the shepherd a bag of gold.*) Tell your master that he has my pardon.

[*Adapted*]



MUNAVIRVI ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date.....
ERNAKULAM.


ORIENT LONGMANS