Chapter 2: Bringing Up Kari

Exercise 2.1 — Comprehension Check

Q1 The enclosure in which Kari lived had a thatched roof that lay on thick tree stumps. Why was it built that way?

SOLUTION

Kari's pavilion had a thatched roof resting on thick tree stumps so that it would not fall in when Kari bumped against the poles as he moved about.

The sturdy stumps could withstand the weight and impact of a growing elephant, keeping the structure stable and safe.

Answer: It was built that way so the roof would not collapse when Kari bumped against the poles as he moved around inside. The thick tree stumps provided the strength needed to bear the impact of a growing elephant.

Q2 Did Kari enjoy his morning bath in the river? Give a reason for your answer.

SOLUTION

Yes, Kari enjoyed his morning bath. After coming out of the water, his skin would shine like ebony, and he would squeal with pleasure as the narrator rubbed water down his back.

The squealing indicates delight and enjoyment, showing that the bath was a happy routine for Kari.

Answer: Yes, Kari enjoyed his morning bath. After the bath his skin shone like ebony, and he squealed with pleasure as the narrator rubbed water down his back — the squealing shows he was happy and enjoyed it.

Q3 Finding good twigs for Kari took a long time. Why?

SOLUTION

Two reasons made it time-consuming: first, the narrator had to climb all kinds of trees to get the most delicate and tender twigs, which required skill and effort.

Second, the hatchet used to cut twigs had to be very sharp — it took half an hour to sharpen it — because if a twig was mutilated or torn awkwardly, Kari would not eat it.

Answer: Finding good twigs took a long time because the narrator had to climb various trees to gather the most delicate and tender twigs, and the hatchet had to be very sharp (taking half an hour to sharpen) since Kari would not touch a mutilated twig.

Q4 Why did Kari push his friend into the stream?

SOLUTION

Kari had gone into the river to rescue a drowning boy. When he came ashore, he wanted the narrator to help save the boy.

By pushing the narrator into the water, Kari was directing him to dive in and pull the drowning boy to safety. It was Kari's way of signalling that someone needed help underwater.

Answer: Kari pushed his friend into the stream because there was a boy drowning at the bottom of the river. Kari wanted the narrator to dive in and rescue the boy — it was his way of asking for help to save the drowning child.

Q5 Kari was like a baby. What are the main points of comparison?

SOLUTION

Like a baby, Kari needed training to behave well. If he was not corrected when he did something naughty, he became even more mischievous.

He also developed a fondness for sweet food (ripe bananas) and resorted to sneaking — like a child who steals sweets.

When scolded, his pride was hurt and he understood the displeasure of those around him, just as a child feels shame when reprimanded.

Answer: Like a baby, Kari needed to be trained and corrected. Without discipline he grew more mischievous. He developed a craving for ripe bananas (like a baby's sweet tooth), stole them secretly, and when scolded, understood he had done wrong and felt ashamed — all typical baby-like behaviour.

Q6 Kari helped himself to all the bananas in the house without anyone noticing it. How did he do it?

SOLUTION

The dining-room had a table near a window. Kari would stretch his trunk through the window from outside and grab the bananas from the plate, pulling them out quietly.

Because his trunk looked like a black snake slipping through the window, no one suspected the elephant. The family blamed the servants and then the narrator before the truth was discovered.

Answer: Kari stood outside the dining-room window and stretched his trunk through it to reach the banana plate on the table. His trunk looked like a black snake, so no one suspected an elephant. He took all the bananas this way for several weeks without being caught.

Q7 Kari learnt the commands to sit and to walk. What were the instructions for each command?

SOLUTION

To teach Kari to sit down: the trainer says 'Dhat' and pulls the elephant by the ear. Gradually Kari learnt to sit down on hearing this command.

To teach Kari to walk: the trainer says 'Mali' and pulls the trunk forward. Kari learnt this signal to walk.

Answer: For sitting: say 'Dhat' and pull the elephant by the ear. For walking: say 'Mali' and pull the trunk forward. Kari learned 'Mali' after three lessons but took three weeks to learn 'Dhat'.

Q8 What is 'the master call'? Why is it the most important signal for an elephant to learn?

SOLUTION

The master call is a strange hissing, howling sound — as if a snake and a tiger were fighting — made in the elephant's ear.

It is the most important signal because it is used in emergencies: if the keeper is lost in a dark jungle with no way out, giving the master call causes the elephant to pull down trees in front of him, clearing a path and frightening away all wild animals, ultimately making a road straight to the keeper's house.

It takes an elephant about five years to learn it properly.

Answer: The master call is a strange hissing, howling sound (like a snake and tiger fighting) made in the elephant's ear. It is the most important signal because when given in a dangerous jungle, the elephant pulls down trees to clear a path and scare away wild animals, guiding the keeper safely home. It takes five years to learn.