Chapter 4: Chandni

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Exercise 4.1 — Comprehension Check I

Q1 Why did Abbu Khan's goats want to run away? What happened to them in the hills?

SOLUTION

Goats in hilly regions love their freedom and hate being tied. Abbu Khan's goats were of the best hill breed, so they too longed for freedom.
Whenever they got the chance, they would break loose and run into the hills — only to be killed by an old wolf who lived there.

Answer: Abbu Khan's goats were of the best hill breed and loved freedom; they hated being tied. Whenever they escaped to the hills, they were killed by an old wolf who lived there.

Q2 Abbu Khan said, "No more goats in my house ever again." Then he changed his mind. Why?

SOLUTION

After all his goats had left and been killed, Abbu Khan swore off keeping goats. However, he was terribly lonely without his pets and simply couldn't do without them.
So he soon changed his mind and bought a new young goat.

Answer: Abbu Khan was terribly lonely without his pets and simply could not do without them, so he changed his mind and bought a young goat.

Q3 Why did he buy a young goat?

SOLUTION

Abbu Khan believed that a young goat would stay with him much longer. He thought she would grow to love him and the food he gave her every day, and would never want to go to the hills.

Answer: He bought a young goat because he believed she would stay with him longer, grow to love him and the food he provided, and never want to run away to the hills.

Exercise 4.2 — Comprehension Check II

Q1 Why did Chandni hate the rope round her neck?

SOLUTION

Every morning Chandni watched the sunlit hilltops and longed to run across the green fields. But whenever she moved towards the hills, the rope jerked her back.

The rope was a symbol of captivity that prevented her from reaching the freedom she craved.

Answer: Chandni hated the rope because it stopped her from going to the hills she longed for. Every time she ran towards them, the rope jerked her back, keeping her captive.

Q2 "Now Abbu Khan understood Chandni's problem..." What was Chandni's problem?

SOLUTION

Chandni had stopped eating and grew thin, staring moodily at the hilltops. She finally told Abbu Khan directly: she longed for the hills and freedom, and if she stayed in the compound she would die.

Her problem was an overpowering desire for freedom — life in captivity was unbearable for her.

Answer: Chandni's problem was her overwhelming longing for freedom. She told Abbu Khan that if she stayed tied in his compound she would die; she needed the open hills to live.

Q3 Abbu Khan pushed Chandni into a small hut. This shows that he
(i) was cruel.
(ii) loved her and wanted to save her life.
(iii) was selfish.

SOLUTION

Abbu Khan pushed Chandni into a small hut even though she wanted to be free. He warned her of the dangerous wolf and acted out of concern for her safety, not cruelty or selfishness.

The text says he pushed her in so she could be 'saved from the wolf', even calling himself ungrateful — showing it was an act of love.

Answer: (ii) loved her and wanted to save her life.

Exercise 4.3 — Comprehension Check III

Q1 Why did Chandni refuse to join the group of wild goats?

SOLUTION

Chandni had just won her freedom after a long struggle. She wanted to enjoy it fully on her own terms.

She politely refused the wild goats' invitation because she wished to savour her new freedom all by herself.

Answer: Chandni refused because she wanted to enjoy her newly won freedom all by herself, without joining any group.

Q2 Chandni fought the wolf because she
(i) was stronger than the wolf.
(ii) hated the wolf.
(iii) had to retain her freedom at all costs.

SOLUTION

Chandni was smaller and weaker than the wolf, and she did not fight out of hatred. She fought because she had chosen freedom over safety, and going back to Abbu Khan's hut was not an option.

She told herself: 'death in an open field is far better than life in a small hut.'

Answer: (iii) had to retain her freedom at all costs.

Exercise 4.4 — Discuss

Q1 Why did the wise old bird say, "Chandni is the winner"?

SOLUTION

Though the wolf was about to devour Chandni, she had fought bravely through the entire night — far longer than anyone expected a small goat to last.

The wise old bird understood that Chandni had won in spirit: she had chosen freedom over safety, fought with courage, and died on her own terms rather than live as a prisoner. That moral victory made her the true winner.

Answer: The wise old bird recognised that Chandni won in spirit. She chose freedom, fought bravely all night, and faced death in an open field rather than return to captivity. That courage and dignity made her the true winner, even in defeat.

Q2 "Death in an open field is better than life in a small hut," Chandni said to herself. Was it the right decision? Give reasons for your answer.

SOLUTION

Chandni was slowly dying in Abbu Khan's compound — she stopped eating, grew thin and miserable. For her, a confined life was already a kind of death.

By choosing the hills, she lived the happiest day of her life, played freely, and fought with courage. Her decision gave her dignity and a meaningful, if short, existence.

Whether it was 'right' depends on one's values: for those who believe freedom is essential to life, her choice was absolutely right; for those who prioritise safety, it was reckless.

Answer: Yes, it was the right decision for Chandni. Captivity was killing her slowly — she had stopped eating and grown miserable. Her one day of freedom was the happiest of her life. She valued a life of freedom over a long life in a cage, and fought with courage to the end. Freedom gave her life meaning.

Q3 Freedom is life. Discuss this with reference to 'Chandni' and 'I Want Something in a Cage'.

SOLUTION

In 'Chandni', the goat is provided food, shelter and love, yet she wastes away in captivity. The moment she reaches the hills, she blossoms — the hills 'welcome' her, the grass 'embraces' her. Freedom is what makes her truly alive.

In 'I Want Something in a Cage', the man buys caged doves and sets them free, recognising that caging living creatures denies them their natural life.

Both stories show that a creature deprived of freedom loses the will to live — it may exist, but it does not truly live. Freedom, therefore, is not merely desirable; it is as essential as life itself.

Answer: Both stories show that freedom is inseparable from life. Chandni fades in captivity but flourishes the moment she reaches the hills. Similarly, in 'I Want Something in a Cage', the freed doves regain their natural vitality. A life without freedom is mere existence — not living. True life requires the freedom to be what one naturally is.