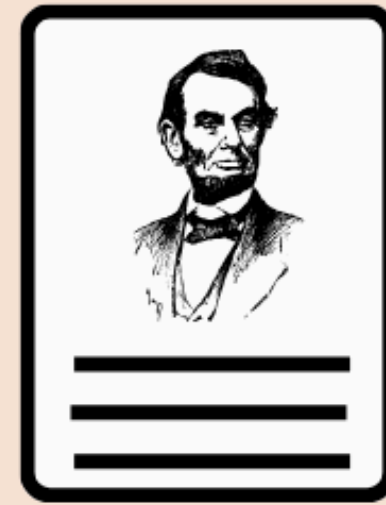


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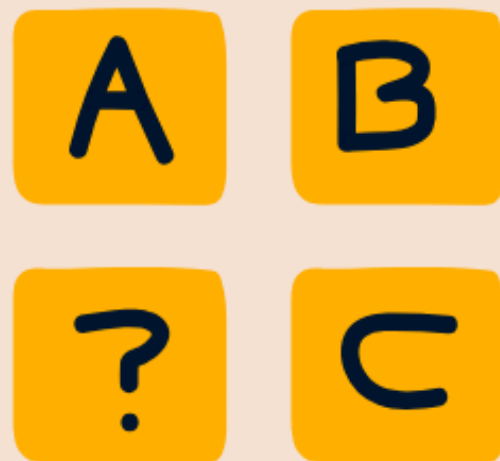
English Notes



**Full
Explanations**



**Character
Sketch**



**Word
Meanings**



**Tone, Central
idea, devices....**

Footprints without Feet

2. The Thief's Story

Full Explanation

The Thief's Story is told by Hari Singh, a fifteen-year-old thief who considers himself **"an experienced and fairly successful hand"** in stealing. When he comes across Anil at a wrestling match, Hari at once observes him as a potential target. Anil seems **"easy-going, kind and simple,"** which not only shows Anil's trusting personality but also reveals Hari's habit of judging others for his own benefit. Hari uses **flattery** by saying Anil looks like a wrestler, which clearly shows how he cleverly gains people's trust. He gives a fake name, suggesting his unstable lifestyle and criminal tendency of frequently changing identities to avoid police and past employers.

Anil, a **tall and lean** young man around twenty-five, does not earn much, yet he agrees to give Hari food and shelter if he can cook. This begins an unusual relationship between them. Hari again lies about his cooking ability, but his first meal turns out so bad that Anil feeds it to a stray dog. This incident adds humour and also reflects Anil's forgiving and light-hearted nature. Instead of removing Hari, Anil laughs and allows him to stay in the room above the **Jumna Sweet Shop**, even offering to teach him **cooking, writing, and arithmetic**. Education here acts as a quiet symbol of **reform and dignity**. Hari begins to realise that if he learns to write "whole sentences," his life might improve beyond theft.

As Hari continues living with Anil, he settles into a routine. He prepares tea, buys groceries, and secretly keeps about one rupee daily from the money. Anil likely knows this, yet he ignores it, showing his deep understanding of human weakness. Anil earns money "by fits and starts," borrowing sometimes and lending at other times, and celebrates when a cheque arrives. This shows his **careless attitude** towards money but **generous** nature. One evening, Hari notices Anil placing **six hundred rupees** under the mattress after selling a book. This moment becomes the turning point. Hari had not stolen anything serious for nearly a month, and Anil's trust makes stealing emotionally difficult. The narrator uses irony here: while Anil is easy to rob materially, he becomes **difficult to rob emotionally** because of his trust. At night, in a scene rich with imagery, "a beam of moonlight stepped over the balcony and fell on the bed," creating a tense atmosphere. Hari steals the money and escapes. He imagines living "like an **oil-rich Arab**," which is a hyperbolic comparison showing his excitement and childish thinking. He goes to the station to catch the **10.30 Express to Lucknow** but hesitates and misses it. This hesitation shows his conscience beginning to awaken.

Walking alone through the bazaar, Hari reflects deeply. He thinks that **greedy people show fear, rich people anger, and poor people acceptance** when robbed. But Anil, he feels, will only feel **sadness for losing trust**. This insight reveals both characters deeply.

The rainy night adds sensory imagery – cold air, drizzle, wet clothes – **mirroring his inner conflict**.

Sitting under the clock tower, Hari realises that money gives only temporary comfort, but education offers a permanent future. He recalls Anil's promise of teaching him writing. The phrase "**a really big man, a clever and respected man**" shows his changing ambition. This becomes the moral peak. He decides to return, not from fear, but due to **Anil's goodness and the value of education**.

Hari quietly returns and places the wet notes back. Next morning, Anil gives him a fifty-rupee note and says he will **pay him regularly**. Hari notices the note is still wet, realising Anil knows everything. Yet Anil says nothing. Instead, he says, "Today we'll start writing sentences." This ending contains dramatic irony, as both understand the truth silently. It highlights Anil's **compassion**. Hari's smile "**came by itself**," showing genuine change. The story ends on a hopeful note, showing how **trust, kindness, and education can transform a person**.

Character Sketches

Hari Singh:

Hari Singh is a **smart and observant** young thief of fifteen years. In beginning, he is **dishonest** and **practical**, using lies and flattery for survival. Calling himself "**a fairly successful hand**" shows his confidence in crime. However, he is not completely insensitive. He **understands human emotions deeply**, as seen when he predicts Anil's reaction. He is also **ambitious**, recognising the importance of education. By the end, he changes significantly, returning the money and choosing honesty. Thus, he is a **dynamic character** moving from crime to self-realisation.

Anil:

Anil is a **kind, simple, and generous man** of about twenty-five. He is **trusting** and patient. Despite his financial struggles, he offers Hari shelter and education. **His forgiving nature** is seen when he laughs at Hari's cooking and ignores his dishonesty. Most importantly, he shows wisdom by not punishing Hari after the theft. Instead, he gives him another chance. Anil represents kindness, trust, and belief in human reform.

Central Message

The central message of The Thief's Story is that **trust, kindness, and education can reform a person** more effectively than punishment. It shows even a thief can change when treated with **compassion**. Education is shown as more valuable than money, giving dignity and respect. Hari's transformation proves that goodness can awaken conscience.

Narrator's Tone

The tone is **confessional, reflective, and ironic**. Hari's narration feels personal and honest as he admits his actions. The irony is seen especially in the ending where truth is understood but not spoken. The reflective tone grows as Hari realises the value of trust and education.

Word Meanings

1. Flattery – insincere praise.
2. Modestly – in a humble way.
3. Grunting – making low sounds.
4. Appealing – attractive.
5. Unlined – showing no worry.
6. Confidence – trust.
7. Casually – in a relaxed manner.
8. Stray – homeless.
9. Profit – financial gain.
10. Fits and starts – irregularly.
11. Queer – strange.
12. Mattress – bed pad.
13. Crept – moved slowly and quietly. (Board-ready correction: standard form is "crept.")
14. Startled – suddenly frightened.
15. Deserted – empty.
16. Bazaar – market.
17. Maidan – open field.
18. Drizzle – light rain.
19. Damp – slightly wet.
20. Detected – noticed.
21. Scars – marks after wounds.
22. Hesitated – paused in doubt.
23. Trust – belief in honesty.
24. Conscience – sense of right and wrong.
25. Respectable – worthy of respect.

Reference Information:

1. **Narrator of the story:** The story is narrated in first person by Hari Singh, a fifteen-year-old thief using **fake identities**.
2. **Place of first meeting:** Hari meets Anil at a wrestling match and approaches him using flattery.

3. **Age and appearance of Anil:** About twenty-five years old, **tall, lean, and easy-going**, making him appear trusting.
4. **False identity of Hari:** "Hari Singh" is not his real name; he changes names frequently.
5. **Living arrangement:** Hari stays in Anil's room over the Jumna Sweet Shop and sleeps on the balcony.
6. **Hari's poor cooking:** His first meal is terrible and is fed to a stray dog.
7. **What Hari receives in return:** Food, shelter, and education in cooking, writing, and arithmetic.
8. **Small daily cheating:** Hari keeps about one rupee daily while buying supplies; Anil ignores it.
9. **Anil's profession and habits:** Writes for magazines, earns irregularly, spends freely.
10. **Amount stolen:** Six hundred rupees in fifty-rupee notes.
11. **Planned escape:** Intended to board the 10.30 Express to Lucknow but misses it.
12. **Trouble:** He did not want to make anyone suspicious by lodging. He did not have any friend to help as he considered friends more trouble than help.
13. **Time and weather details:** Early November, cold and rainy night reflecting guilt.
14. **Hari's understanding of human reactions:** **Greedy show fear, rich show anger, poor show acceptance.**
15. **Reason for returning:** **Values education over stolen money.**
16. **Ending significance:** Wet note proves Anil knew everything but chooses kindness.
17. **Major conflict:** Internal conflict between theft and desire for reform.
18. **Important literary devices:** Imagery, irony, hyperbole/comparison, and symbolism (education).

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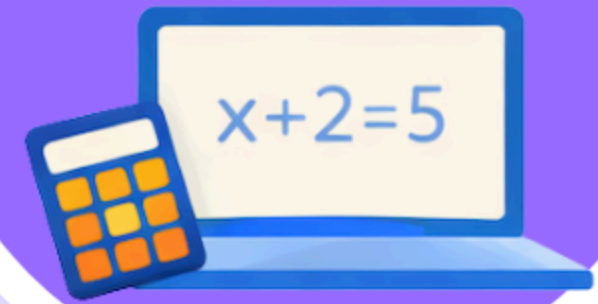
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