
CBSE Class 10 English Language and Literature
NCERT Solutions
Footprints Chapter 2
The Thiefs Story

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1. Who does 'I' refer to in this story?

Ans: In this story, 'I' refers to the thief.

2. What is he "a fairly successful hand" at?

Ans: He is "a fairly successful hand" at stealing and robbing people.

3. What does he get from Anil in return for his work?

Ans: When Hari asks Anil if he could work for him, Anil replies that he could not pay him. Finally, they reach an agreement that if he would cook, then Anil would feed him. However, Anil soon found out that he did not know how to cook. So, he taught him how to cook and later, how to write his name. He promised he would teach him how to write whole sentences and also how to add numbers. Apart from this, when Hari went out to buy the day's supplies, he would make a profit of a rupee a day.

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1. How does the thief think Anil will react to the theft?

Ans: The thief thinks that on discovering the theft, Anil's face would show a touch of sadness. The sadness would not be for the loss of money, but for the loss of trust.

2. What does he say about the different reactions of people when they are robbed?

Ans: In his short career as a thief, he has studied reactions of so many people when they are robbed off their belongings. He has observed that the greedy people showed fear; the rich showed anger and the poor people showed acceptance.

3. Does Anil realize that he has been robbed?

Ans: Yes, Anil has realized that he has been robbed. He knew this probably because all the notes were wet and damp because of rain. However, he did not say anything to the thief and behaved normally.

Page No: 13 : Think about It

1. What are Hari Singh's reactions to the prospect of receiving an education? Do they change over time? (Hint: compare, for example, the thought: "I knew that once I could write like an educated man there would be no limit to what I could achieve" with these later thoughts: 'Whole sentences, I knew, could one day bring me more than a few hundred rupees. It was a simple matter to steal – and sometimes just as simple to be caught. But to be a really big man, a clever and respected man, was something else.')
What makes him return to Anil?

Ans: When Anil offered to educate him, Hari thought of it as a bright career prospect for him. Hari knew that once he learns to read and write, he would achieve more because the motivation behind it was robbing people and becoming a more cunning cheat. But soon Hari Singh's reaction to the prospect of receiving education changed and there is a change in his heart. Probably because he gets influenced by the calm in Anil's life. Now he also wants to earn respect and develops a desire to be part of the civilized society. Although, both of them depend on irregular sources of income, but Anil seems to be more satisfied. This motivation is enough for him to return to Anil.

2. Why does not Anil hand the thief over to the police? Do you think most people would have done so? In what ways is Anil different from such employers?

Ans: Anil does not hand the thief over to the police because he realized that Hari has already learnt a lesson and he has changed for better now. Otherwise he would have never put the money back in its place. Though Anil knew how Hari cheated him of a rupee while buying the daily supplies but he never made it obvious in front of him. Anil wants to give Hari one more chance to mend his ways and thus forgives him. Hari's case is such that nobody would have forgiven him and straightaway handed him over to the police. But Anil is a little different from such employers because he is modest in nature and does not want another person to suffer without giving him a chance to become a better person.

Talk about It

1. Do you think people like Anil and Hari Singh are found only in fiction, or are there such people in real life?

Ans: I don't think that people like Anil and Hari Singh are found only in fiction. There are such people in real life also. Although they are rare in today's society but yes, they do exist. The first reaction of people, If someone is caught stealing, is that they will try to punish him and then hand him over to the police. But it should be realized that humans are bound to make errors but that doesn't let them lose a chance to rectify their mistake and change for good. At least a chance to reform should be given to that person. This is the only way to bring anyone to right path rather than punishing severely and thus making him a criminal forever.

2. Do you think there is a significant detail in the story that Anil is a struggling writer? Does this explain his behavior in any way?

Ans: Hari Singh's observation about Anil having irregular income and Anil's statement about his sale of a book to a publisher indicates that he is a struggling writer. He lives life according to the amount of money he gets at a given time. When he has the money he enjoys eating out with his friends. When he is having less money then he even doesn't pay salary to Hari Singh. This shows that he easily makes adjustments in his life without letting anything disturb him.
