

Grade VIII - English

Lesson 6. The Fight

Supplementary Reader

Soul of the Chapter

Ranji Discovers a Pool in the Forest

It has been less than a month living in Rajpur when Ranji discovers a pool. The summer was at its extreme and Ranji's school hadn't opened yet. He didn't have any friends either. While wandering all by himself in the weather, he discovered the pool in the forest. On the day when Ranji discovered the pool, it was extremely hot and Ranji's brown feet turned chalky with dust.

The water had a gentle transparency on that day. In monsoon, however, the water used to be gushing down the hills. But, during the summer the water was merely a trickle. Unlike in the plains, here the rocks held the water and therefore, the water did not dry up.

Ranji Takes a Plunge into the Pool

Ranji had never seen a pool like this. Pools in Rajputana were sticky and muddy. Only buffaloes wallowed in those pools. This pool was clean and cold and therefore, inviting. Ranji had often gone for swimming with his friends and even alone. He didn't, therefore, hesitate and took a plunge into the pool. His dark body shined as patches of sunlight water touched it.

The Fighter Meets the Warrior

The next day when Ranji came to the pool, he noticed another boy, who was little older than him, staring at him. Ranji was taken aback by the hostility of this stranger. The boy told Ranji that the pool belonged to him and he liked to swim alone and he didn't appreciate uninvited visitors. The boy also informed Ranji that he was a warrior and didn't like speaking to villagers. Hearing this, Ranji told him that he was not a villager, but a fighter. Both stood staring at each other with deadlock silence.

When none of them said anything and Ranji didn't make any move to leave, the stranger slapped Ranji across the face with all his force. There were red finger marks on Ranji's cheek. Ranji staggered and felt quite dizzy, but then he mustered courage and hit back at the stranger. Soon they were rolling over and over in dust, in mud, even in the water, hurling one after the other their violent blows.

The Boys were Exhausted with the Fight

The boys fought with each other, but nobody emerged victorious. Their bodies were having with exhaustion and they needed to put effort to be able to speak. Each, after reiterating their status as a warrior and a fighter, decided that they were reluctant to submit before the other. The warrior asked Ranji if he would leave the pool. Ranji continued to answer in the negative. They resolved the matter for the time being by deciding to continue with the fight the next day.

As Ranji got back home, he found it difficult to explain to his mother the cause of his wounds and bruises. He thought of going to the market and finding solace in a bottle of lemonade. In the market he saw the stranger, his adversary. He wanted to throw the bottle of lemonade on him or to look in another direction. But, Ranji choose to angrily stare at him. The warrior too merely stared back at Ranji.

The Next Day

The next day, Ranji felt weak and lazy. He was not at all eager for a fight. However, he did not wish to acknowledge his defeat by not showing up at the pool and refusing a challenge. He dragged himself to the pool thinking that he had the right to the pool till he fought. He also hoped that the warrior should have forgotten the challenge by now. On reaching the pool, however, these hopes got dashed as he saw his opponent onto other side of the rock. No sooner did the warrior call out a challenge, they started fighting over the sides on which the challenge would be fought. Each kept calling the other to his side.

The warrior challenged Ranji to swim to his side if he knew how to swim. Ranji was pretty good at swimming; he dived into the pool and came swimming to the other side. Seeing this, the warrior's mouth hung open gaping at Ranji in amazement.

The Warrior asked Ranji to Teach him how to Dive

The warrior told Ranji that he was very good at diving, the warrior himself found diving a difficult task. At this, Ranji told the warrior that diving was fairly easy. Ranji demonstrated to the warrior how to dive. The warrior tried doing it, but fell into the water, flat on his belly. Seeing this, Ranji beagn to laugh. Ranji to tach him both the skills. Soon both had forgotten the fight and the challenge. They exchanged their names with each other. The warrior promised ranji that he would teach him how to become a pehelwan if Ranji taught him how to dive. On this

note, both became friends. The warrior told Ranji that now it was their pool and not his alone. Ranji, silently, triumphed over his victory.

NCERT Corner

Comprehension Check - 1

1. In what way is the forest pool different from the one which Ranji knew in the Rajputana desert?

The forest pool was cleaner than the pool in the Rajputana desert. The forest pool also had cold water. The water in the Rajputana desert pool was muddy and sticky.

2. The other boy asked Ranji to 'explain' himself.

(i) What did he expect Ranji to say?

The other boy expected Ranji to apologise for being there.

(ii) Was he in your opinion, right or wrong to ask this question?

He was wrong in putting those questions to Ranji. The pool was not his personal property.

3. Between Ranji and the other boy, who is trying to start a quarrel? Give a reason for your answer.

The other boy was responsible in starting the quarrel. He started at Ranji in a hostile manner and threw questions at him in a threatening way. Ranji, on the other hand, welcomed him to join him and give company.

4. "Then we will have to continue the fight," said the other.

(i) What made him say that?

After having fought for some time, the boys felt exhausted. But none of them had emerged victorious. Also, Ranji refused to leave the pool. Therefore, the other boy said that they will have to continue the fight tomorrow.

(ii) Did the fight continue? If not, why not?

The next day, they met with an intention to continue the fight. The fight didn't continue, however. The warrior was so impressed with the way Ranji dived that he wanted Ranji to teach him the same to teach him the same. This called an end to the fight.

Comprehension Check - 2

1. What is it that Ranji finds difficult to explain at home?

Ranji found it difficult to give an explanation for the wounds and bruises that he incurred during the fight.

2. Ranji sees his adversary in the bazaar.

(i) What does he wish to do?

Ranji wished to look in the other direction or throw the bottle of lemonade on his adversary, when he sees him in the bazaar.

(ii) What does he actually do and why?

Ranj angrily started at his adversary.

3. 'Ranji is not at all eager for a second fight. Why does he go back to the pool', then?

Ranji felt weak for the second fight. He went to the pool because he feared that his absence might be understood as his defeat.

4. Who was the better swimmer? How do you know it?

Ranji was better swimmer. He knew how to dive. The other boy neither knew how to dive nor did he know how to swim under the water.

5. What surprises the warrior?

The warrior was surprised to see Ranji diving into the water.

6. Now that they are at pool, why don't they continue the fight?

He warrior and the fighter discontinued fighting as they had become friends. Suraj asked Ranji to teach him to swim. In return, he told Ranji that he would help him become a 'pehelwan'.

7. Ranji's superiority over the other boy is obvious in the following:

Physical strength, good diving, his being a fighter, sense of humor, swimming under water, making a good point, willingness to help underline the relevant phrases.

Ans: Physical strength, good diving, his being a fighter, sense of humour, swimming under water, making a good point, willingness to help.

8. What, according to you, makes the two adversaries turn into good friends in a matter of minutes? Explain it as you have understood it.

The two adversaries turn into good friends because they wished to learn something from each other. Also, Ranji had come to fight merely for the sake of self respect. He, otherwise, had no intention to fight.

Exercise

Discuss the following topics in small groups.

1. Is fighting the only way of resolving differences of opinion? What else can be done to reach a mutually acceptable settlement?

No. Fighting is not the only way of resolving difference of opinion. Rather, differences of opinions could be resolve in much better ways. For instance, having a dialogue is a much better way to reach a mutually acceptable settlement.

2. Have you ever been in a serious fight only to realise later that it was unnecessary and futile? Share your experience/views with others frankly and honestly.

Yes. I have been in a serious fight. Later I realised that it was unnecessary and futile. I could have easily controlled the situation had I been a little more calm and patient.

I nstead of pointing out the mistakes in others, had I concentrated on my own faults, the fight could have been avoided.

3. Why do some of us find it necessary to prove that we are better than others? Will you be amuse d or annoyed to read the following sign at the back of the car in front of you?

I may be going slow but I am ahead of you.

I will be amused to read such a sign behind a car, .

I t is a pity that some people attach a lot of significance with self worth and therefore every step that they take is well crafted to prove themselves to be better.

Chapter Practice

Very Short Answer Type Questions

1. In which city Ranji discovered the pool?

Ranji discovered the pool in Rajpur.

2. Describe the appearance of Ranji when we meet him for the first time.

Ranji was wearing vest and shorts and his brown feet had become chalky with dust because of walking in extreme heat.

3. Describe the pool water that Ranji saw in the pool at Rajpur.

The pool water had a gentle translucency and smooth round pebbles could be seen at the bottom of the pool.

4. How did Ranji and the stranger introduce themselves to each other?

The stranger introduces himself as a Warrior. Ranji, on the other hand, introduces himself as a Fighter.

5. What instructions were given by Ranji to the stranger to make a good dive?

Ranji asked the stranger to stand on the rock, stretch out his arms and allow his head to displace his feet.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Describe the physical appearances of Suraj and Ranji.

Suraj was tall and solidly built. He had a broad nose and thick red lips. He was older than Ranji, and stronger too. Ranji, on the other hand, was thin and bony. Though Ranji was strong, too, his limbs were supple and free from any fat.

2. Why did Ranji go to the pool the next day, despite feeling weak for the fight?

Despite feeling weak for the fight, Ranji goes to the pool the next day because he didn't wish to refuse the challenge. Refusing the challenge would mean cowardice or acceptance of defeat. Ranji didn't wish to accept defeat or let go off the pool without fighting or it.

3. What was the atmosphere of Ranji when Ranji visits the place?

It was extremely hot in Rajpur when Ranji visits the place. The Earth parched and the grass was brown. The trees had become listless and were hardly stirring, as if waiting for a cool wind or a refreshing shower of rain.

4. What happened when Ranji went to the bazaar?

Ranji went to the bazaar to find solace in a bottle of lemonade and hot and sweet jalebis. When he had just finished his lemonade, he saw Suraj coming down to the bazaar. Ranji wanted to ignore him or through his bottle of lemonade on him. He merely stared at his opponent, though.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. Give details of the fight that took place between Ranji and Suraj.

When Ranji refused to leave the pool, Suraj took on a violent expression. He made hissing sounds and both Ranji and Suraj kept staring at each other. Then, Suraj slapped Ranji with great force. Gathering himself, Ranji swung his arm up and pushed a hard bony fist into Suraj's face. Soon, both were at each other's throats and were rolling over and over in the dust.

Their fight continued for sometime in which both were groping for each other's head and throat.

2. What does 'pehelwan' mean? In what ways could Suraj help Ranji become one?

A 'pehelwan' means somebody whose body is strongly built and has physical prowess. It could also mean a wrestler. Seeing that Ranji was strong, but had a thin and bony body, Suraj suggests to Ranji that he would help him become a pehelwan if Ranji helped him with swimming. He also tells Ranji that he must drink water and have proper food.

Value Based Questions

What virtue does Ranji display towards the end of the story? How does it make him better than Suraj?

Towards the end of the story, Ranji understood that even without fighting, he had won the match and claim over the pool. Suraj was now willing to address the pool as 'our pool' Ranji displays calm and composed self by not imposing his triumph or victory on Suraj and thereby maintaining peace truce that had happened between the two of them. Ranji doesn't display the hostility that Suraj had showed towards him and thus avoids airing any more qualms between the two.