

Grade VIII - English

Lesson 9. The Great Stone Face I

Prose

Soul of the Chapter

A Mother and Her Son Ernest

The Great Stone Face was a work of nature, formed by several rocks piled one upon another. From a distance, however, it looked like a human face. If the onlooker came too near, he would lose sight of the outline of the face. Whereas from a distance the face was very clear. Many people of the valley owed the prosperity of the valley to the Great Stone Face. To a mother and her son, who sat talking at the door of their cottage, the Great Stone Face was easily visible. The son, Ernest, hoped that some day he would be able to talk to the Great Stone Face. Ernest was eager to hear it speak. The features of the Great Stone Face were so pleasant that Ernest thought its voice to be gentle too.

Hearing her son speak so, the mother was reminded of an old prophecy; a story that her mother had told her. She chooses to tell Ernest that story. She tells Ernest that according to an old prophecy, it is believed that at some future day a child would be born, who in his manhood would bear an exact resemblance to the Great Stone Face. Also, this child would grow up to be the most noble person the valley had ever known. For many this prophecy was idle talk, but for many others the prophecy was yet to come true.

Ernest Had a Lot of Faith in the Prophecy

For Ernest his happiness lay in the fulfilment of this story. He hoped to be alive when the prophecy would come true and be able to meet and talk to the likeness of the Great Stone Face. Ernest had no teacher and he did not go to a proper school. He had taken the Great Stone Face to be his teacher. After work, he would keep gazing at the face of the Great Stone Face for hours and derived encouragement and kindness from the gentle features of his face.



Gathergold

Around this time, a strong rumour got spread in the valley that the prophecy had finally come true. An old native man of the valley, Gathergold, who had gone away on business was returning to the valley to spend his remaining days in his native town. The immense wealth that Gathergold had earned soon became the talk of the town and Gathergold, too, returned with great pomp and show. People of the valley began to see in Gathergold the likeness of the Great Stone Face. When Gathergold finally arrived, however, Ernest was disappointed to see no resemblance between the two. Greatly confused, he looked up to the Great Stone Face and felt as if the Great Stone Face was asking him to wait patiently for the prophecy to come true.

Ernest Continued to look Fondly at the Great Stone Face

As years passed by, Ernest grew to be a young man, who attracted little notice from the inhabitants of the land. He silently kept gazing at the Great Stone Face after the day's work was over and continued for the prophecy to come true. The gentle sentiments reflected in the face of the Great Stone Face were imbibed in Ernest's character. He was laborious and hard working; he was also wise and full of sympathy for others. By now Mr Gathergold was dead. But long before his death, his wealth had vanished into nothingness. Soon, it was agreed that the people of the valley had been mistaken in assuming a likeness between the Great Stone Face and Gathergold. The prophecy, therefore, was yet to be fulfilled.

General Blood- and- Thunder

By this time, another great son of the valley, who had left the valley to be a great soldier, was returning to his native land during his old age. General Blood- and-Thunder was a renowned soldier and immediately attracted the attention of the people, who in him began to see the likeness of the Great Stone Face. As in the case of Gathergold, Ernest failed to comprehend the likeness of the Great Stone Face in the general, too. Again, Ernest looked up to the Great Stone Face, who seemed to be saying that prophecy is yet to be fulfilled.

Next Generation School

NCERT Folder

Comprehension Check - 1

Write 'True' or 'False' against each of the following statements.

1. The Great Stone Face stood near where Ernest and his mother lived_____.
2. One would clearly distinguish the features of the Stone Face only from a distance_____.
3. Ernest loved his mother and helped her in her work.
4. Though not very rich, Gathergold was a skillful merchant_____.
5. Gathergold died in poverty and neglect_____.
6. The Great Stone Face seemed to suggest that Ernest should not fear the general_____.

1. True	2. True	3. True	4. False	5. True	6. True
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Working with the Text

1. (i) What was the Great Stone Face?

The Great Stone Face was a work of nature. It had been forged by immense rocks thrown on the perpendicular side of a mountain. The formation was such that when viewed from a distance, the rocks resembled a human face.

(ii) What did young Ernest wish when he gazed at it?

The young Ernest wished to talk to the Great Stone Face. He thought that the face formed by the rocks was so gentle that its voice must therefore, be pleasant too.

2. What was the story attributed to the Stone Face?

According to an old prophecy, it was believed that in some future time a man would be born, who looked exactly like the Great Stone Face. This man would be the most noble person and in his manhood his face would resemble the Great Stone Face.

3. What gave the people of the valley the idea that the prophecy was about to come true for the first time?

When Gathergold, a rich, wealthy and sharp businessman decided to return to his native village, people think that the old prophecy was coming true. It was believed that Gathergold was both rich and noble and therefore in his face some people began to see the Great Stone Face.



4 (i) Did Ernest see in Gathergold the likeness of the Stone Face?

Ernest gets rather depressed on seeing Gathergold, for Gathergold did not resemble the Great Stone Face at all.

(ii) Who did he confide in and how was he proved right?

Ernest confided in the Great Stone Face, who seemed to have been telling him to have patience and the man who did resemble the Great Stone Face would emerge eventually. He was proved right because Mr Gathergold soon lost all his wealth and with loss of wealth people now comfortably acknowledged there being no likeness between the Great Stone Face and Gathergold.

5. (i) What made people believe General Blood-and-Thunder was their man?

The people believed General Blood-and-Thunder to be their man because he was an inhabitant of the land and had gone away (from the land) on because due to prospects.

He chose to come back to the native valley and spend rest of his days in the valley. He was a renowned commander and he came back with a lot of fanfare. People again mistakenly felt him to be their man.

(ii) Ernest compared the man's face with the Stone Face. What did he conclude?

On looking at the face of General Blood-and-Thunder, Ernest concluded that the likeness between him and the Great Stone Face that people were so easily able to recognise was not there. Therefore, he too was not a likeness of the Great Stone Face.

Working with Language

1. Look at the following words.

Like — Likeness

Punctual — Punctuality

The words on the left are adjectives and those on the right are their noun forms.

Write the noun forms of the following words by adding -ness or -ity to them appropriately. Check the spelling of the new words.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| (i) lofty _____ | (ii) able _____ |
| (iii) happy _____ | (iv) near _____ |
| (v) noble _____ | (vi) enormous _____ |
| (vii) pleasant _____ | (viii) dense _____ |
| (ix) great _____ | (x) stable _____ |



- Ans. (i) loftiness (ii) ability (iii) happiness
(iv) nearness (v) nobility (vi) enormity
(vii) pleasantness (viii) density (ix) greatness
(x) stability

2. Add -ly to each of the following adjectives, then use them to fill in the blanks.

(Perfect near kind pleasant eager)

(i) Why didn't you turn up at the meeting? We all were _____ waiting for you.

(ii) _____ write your name and address in capital letters.

(iii) I was _____ surprised to see him at the railway station. I thought he was not coming.

(iv) It is _____ believable that I am not responsible for this mess.

(v) He fell over the step and _____ broke his arm.

Ans. (i) eagerly (ii) Kindly (iii) pleasantly (iv) perfectly (v) nearly

3. Complete each sentence below using the appropriate forms of the verbs in brackets.

(i) I _____ (phone) you when I got (get) home from school.

(ii) Hurry up! Madam _____ (be) annoyed if we _____ (be) late.

(iii) If it _____ (rain) today, we _____ (not) go to the play.

(iv) When you _____ (see) Mandal again, you _____
(not / recognise) him. He is growing a beard.

(v) We are off today. We _____ (write) to you after we
_____ (be) back.

- Ans. (i) phoned, got
(ii) would be, will be
(iii) rains, will not
(iv) see, would not recognise
(v) would write, will be



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Speaking and Writing

1. I imagine you are Ernest. Narrate the story that his mother told him.

Begin like this: My mother and I were sitting at the door of our cottage. We were looking at the Great Stone Face. I asked her if she had ever seen any one who looked like the Stone Face. Then she told me this story.

My mother and I were sitting at the door of our cottage. We were looking at the Great Stone Face. I asked her if she had ever seen anyone, who looked like the Stone Face. Then she told me a story, related to an old prophecy and the Great Stone Face.

She said that it was prophesied that in some future time, there would be a man, who in his manhood would have a very close resemblance to the Great Stone Face. He would also be one of the most noble persons, the valley would have ever known. The prophecy was fairly old and this story was told to my mother by her mother, yet people believed that some day this story would definitely come true.

2. I imagine you are Gathergold. Write briefly the incident of your return to the valley.

Begin like this: My name is Gathergold. I left the valley of the Great Stone Face fifty years ago. I am now going back home. Will the people of the valley welcome me? Do they know that I am very rich?

My name is Gathergold. I left the valley the Great Stone Face fifty years ago in pursuit of wealth and business prosperity. Now I am going back home, but I am very scared of the people. Will they welcome me? Will they accept me?

Do they know that I am very rich? It might turn out that they do not accept me native inhabitant, of the valley any more. It is possible that the people of the valley would suspicious of me and my wealth.

Nevertheless. I would have to put in efforts to make a place for myself in my home town again. I would be suspicious of me and my wealth be generous towards them and my wealth would force them to be nice to me.

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Chapter Practice

Very Short Answer Type Questions

1. Why did Ernest wish to speak to the Great Stone Face?

Ernest wished to speak to the Great Stone Face because it looked very kind and gentle. Ernest wanted to hear its voice; he thought its voice would be pleasant too.

2. From whom did Ernest's mother hear the story about the Great Stone Face?

Ernest's mother had heard the story from her own mother.

3. Describe the immediate reaction of Ernest on hearing the story.

Ernest was overwhelmed on hearing the story and knowing that there would be some day a real man like the Great Stone Face. He hoped to be alive by the time the prophecy was fulfilled.

4. What was the manner in which Ernest spent his childhood?

Ernest spent his entire childhood in the log cottage where he was born, helping and assisting his mother. He was a dutiful and loving son to his mother.

5. How many times did the native people believe that the prophecy had come true?

In the story, twice did the native people believe that the prophecy had finally come true. Mr Gathergold and General Blood-and-Thunder were mistakenly believed to be a likeness of Great Stone Face.

6. What were the distinctions that Ernest noticed between the faces of Gathergold and the Great Stone Face?

Ernest observed that the wrinkled shrewd face of Gathergold bore no likeness to gentle and kind face of the Great Stone Face.

7. Why did Mr Gathergold and the general Blood- and- Thunder return to the valley?

Both Mr Gathergold and General

Blood-and-Thunder had been away from their native land for their respective works. They had now become old. They had returned to their native valley to spend their remaining days in their hometown.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Write a note describing the appearance of Gathergold.

Mr Gathergold was a sharp businessman who had gone away from the valley on business. He was a very wealthy man and when he came back to the valley he had become old. His face had wrinkled and had a yellowish skin. To Ernest, his face appeared shrewd and unpleasant.

2. Why did Ernest and the other people leave their works on the day of the general's arrival?

Ernest and the other people of the valley left their respective works to be a part of the grand banquet that had been prepared for the General Blood-and-Thunder. The banquet comprised of soldiers who were on guard and the flags that waved to honour the general. Ernest and the other people had gathered to see the likeness of the Great Stone Face in the general.

3. What was the nature of Ernest as he grew up?

As Ernest grew to become a young man, he did not attract much attention from the local people except for the fact that he was a very hard working and laborious person. He had continued to fondly gaze at the Great Stone Face and imbibed the gentle character of the Great Stone Face. His young heart was also filled with sympathies for all.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. Did the prophecy come true?

The prophecy related to the Great Stone Face was yet to come true. According to the native people the prophecy had come true twice. But, in both the cases it appeared to be a mistaken fulfilment as both the people, who had appeared to be the "likeness" of the Great Stone Face neither carried the resemblance of the Great Stone Face nor the nobility and gentleness that was emanated by the Great Stone Face.

2. In which way did the Great Stone Face become a teacher to Ernest?

Ernest did not have any teacher. So, the Great Stone Face became one to him. At the end of the day, he would spend his time looking and gazing at the Great Stone Face.

Soon, he began to imagine that the Great Stone Face too recognised him and gave him a smile of kindness and encouragement. The gentle features emanated by the Great Stone Face were soon imbibed by Ernest in his personality.

Extract Based Questions

Extract 1

Directions (Q. Nos. 1- 6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

"The years went on and Ernest grew to be a young man.

He attracted little notice from the inhabitants of the valley. They saw nothing remarkable in his way of life, except that, when the labour of the day was over, he still loved to gaze upon the Great Stone Face. Their idea was that this was a folly, but pardonable, because Ernest was industrious, kind and neighbourly. They did not know that the great Stone Face had become a teacher to him and that the sentiment which was expressed in it would enlarge the young man's heart and fill it with deeper sympathies than other hearts."

1. What role had the Great Stone Face assumed in Ernest's life?

- (a) Philosopher (b) Friend (c) Teacher (d) Doctor

Ans. (c) Teacher

2. What sentiments were expressed by the Great Stone Face?

- (a) Kindness (b) Humour (c) Sympathy (d) Gratitude

Ans. (c) Sympathy

3. What did Ernest do regularly at the end of each day?

- (a) Gave lecture to people (b) Counselling his friends
(c) Gazed upon the Great Stone Face (d) Helped his mother

Ans. (c) Gazed upon the Great Stone Face.

4. Why the native people did consider Ernest's habit every evening as a folly?

The native people felt that Ernest was obsessed with the Great Stone Face and therefore they considered it a folly.

5. What accounts were the native people willing to forgive this folly?

The native people knew Ernest to be a hard working person. Therefore, they considered the folly in Ernest to be a pardonable one.

6. Make sentences with

Folly

Labour

Folly Trusting strangers became his greatest folly.

Labour Every man must earn his living through labour.



Extract 2

Directions (Q.No.1 - 6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

"A carriage, drawn by four horses, dashed round the turn of the road. Within it, thrust partly out of the window appeared the face of an old man with yellow skin. "The very image of the Great Stone Face!" shouted the people. "Sure enough, the old prophecy is true. Here we have the great man at last!"

And, what greatly puzzled Ernest, they seemed actually to believe that here was the likeness which they spoke of. He turned away sadly from the wrinkled shrewdness of that unpleasant face and gazed up the valley, where the Stone Face seemed to say: He will come! Fear not, Ernest, the man will come."

1. Whose arrival does this passage describe?

- a. Ernest b. The General c. Mr. Gathergold d. The Great Stone Face

Ans. c. Mr. Gathergold

2. List two adjectives used by Ernest to describe old man's face.

- a. Wrinkled and unpleasant b. Old and gentle
c. Kind and pleasant d. Soothing and sympathetic

Ans. a. Wrinkled and unpleasant

3. How many times did the people think the prophecy to come true?

- a. Once b. Twice c. Thrice d. None of these

Ans. b. Twice

4. What made Ernest feel that the prophecy had not come true?

The man who was considered to be the 'likeness' of the Great Stone Face carried no resemblance with the Great Stone Face. This made Ernest believe that the prophecy had not been fulfilled.

5. Does Ernest feel comforted after the arrival of the old man?

Ernest feels disappointed on the arrival of the old man. But, he feels comforted when he thinks that the Great Stone Face was reassuring him that the prophecy was yet to come true.

6. Why do the native people think that the old man was their awaited man?

The native people get carried away by the display of old man's wealth and mistake him to be the resemblance of the Great Stone Face.