

22. The Photograph



The boy in the picture is looking at a photograph. Whose photograph is it ? Guess.

I was ten years old. My grandmother sat on the string bed, under the mango tree. It was late summer and there were sunflowers in the garden and a warm wind in the trees. My grandmother was knitting a woollen scarf for the winter months. She was very old, dressed in a plain white sari; her eyes were not very strong



now, but her fingers moved quickly with the needles, and the needles kept clicking all afternoon. Grandmother had white hair, but there were very few wrinkles on her skin.

I had come home after playing cricket on the maidan. I had taken my meal, and now I was rummaging in a box of old books and family heirlooms that had just been brought out of the attic by my mother. Nothing in the box

interested me very much, except for a book with colourful pictures of birds and butterflies. I was going through the book, looking at the pictures, when I found a small photograph between the pages. It was a faded picture, a little yellow and foggy; it was a picture of a girl standing against a wall, and behind the wall there was nothing but sky; but from the other side a pair of hands reached up, as though someone was going to climb the wall. There were flowers growing near the girl, but I couldn't tell what they were; there was a creeper too, but it was just a creeper.

I ran out into the garden 'Granny!' I shouted. 'Look at this picture! I found it in the box of old things. Whose picture is it ?'

I jumped on the bed beside my grandmother, and she walloped me on the bottom and said, 'Now I've lost count of my stitches, and the next time you do that I'll make you finish the scarf yourself.'

Granny was always threatening to teach me how to knit, which I thought was a disgraceful thing for a boy to do; it was a good deterrent for keeping me out of mischief. Once I had torn the drawing room curtains, and Granny had put a needle and thread in my hand and made me stitch the curtain together, even though I made long, two-inch stitches, which had to be taken out by my mother and done again.

She took the photograph from my hand, and we both stared at it for quite a long time. The girl had long, loose hair, and she wore a long dress that nearly covered her ankles, and sleeves that reached her wrists, and there were a lot of bangles on her hands; but, despite all this drapery, the girl appeared to be full of freedom and movement; she stood with her legs apart and her hands on her hips, and she had a wide, almost devilish smile on her face.

'Whose picture is it ?' I asked.

‘A little girl’s, of course,’ said Grandmother. ‘Can’t you tell?’

‘Yes, but did you know the girl?’

‘Yes, I knew her,’ said granny, ‘but she was a very wicked girl and I shouldn’t tell you about her. But I’ll tell you about the photograph. It was taken in your grandfather’s house, about sixty years ago and that’s the garden wall, and on the other side of the wall there was a road going to town.’

‘Whose hands are they,’ I asked, ‘coming up from the other side?’

Grandmother squinted and looked closely at the picture, and shook her head. ‘It’s the first time I’ve noticed,’ she said. ‘That must have been the sweeper boy’s. Or may be they were your grandfather’s.’

‘They don’t look like grandfather’s hands,’ I said. ‘His hands are all bony.’

‘Yes, but this was sixty years ago.’

‘Didn’t he climb up the wall, after the photo?’

‘No, nobody climbed up. At least, I don’t remember.’

‘And you remember well, Granny.’

‘Come on, Granny,’ I said, ‘tell me, tell me.’

But Grandmother shook her head and carried on with the knitting; I held the photograph in my hand looking from it to my grandmother and back again, trying to find points in common between the old lady and the little pig-tailed girl. A lemon-coloured butterfly settled on the end of Grandmother’s knitting needle, and

stayed there while the needles clicked away. I made a grab at the butterfly, and it flew off in a dipping flight and settled on a sunflower.

‘I wonder whose hands they were,’ whispered Grandmother to herself, with her head bowed, and her needles clicking away in the soft warm silence of that summer afternoon.



Whose Photograph, do you think it was ?

Word Meanings

knitting	process of making woollen clothes using needles
clicking	sound that we hear when metal touches against metal
wrinkles	folding on skin that happens at old age
rummaging	searching through material
heirlooms	jewellery passed on from earlier generations
attic	top most room in a house, under the roof
faded	lose brightness, colour, strength, freshness
foggy	cloudy
creeper	a plant which requires support to grow
deterrent	to discourage
drapery	curtains and other hanging material
devilish smile	naughty and mischievous
squinted	to look with almost closed eyes

Reading Comprehension

A. Tick (✓) the correct answer and cross (x) the wrong one:

- The grandmother sat on the flower bed.
- The boy was ten years old.
- The grandmother was not very old.
- She had grey hair.
- The boy was interested to see a book with colourful pictures of birds and butterflies.
- The small photograph was in the box.
- The photograph was taken about 40 years ago.
- She used to go swimming in a muddy pool.
- A lemon coloured butterfly settled on the nose of the grandmother.
- There was similarity between the photograph and the grandmother

B. Answer the following questions:

- What was the boy doing after taking his meal ?
- How was the photograph?
- Who was in the photograph ?
- How can you say that the photograph was colourful ?
- Did the boy know who was in the photograph?

Vocabulary

Correct the spellings of the underlined words:

- (1) Kniting a woolen scarf requires patience.
- (2) The lady received a beautiful ring which was part of the familys hirlooms
- (3) The money - plant is a criper which requires support to grow as its stem is weak.



- (4) It was good attempt for keeping me out of **mischeaf**.
- (5) Since it was a sunny day , Tapan had to **skwint** his eyes to look at the ripe mangoes in the tree.

Grammar



A. On Raju's sister's birthday, the following things were done- make cake, call friends , decorate room, arrange plates. Guess and write 'who asked Raju to do what'? Use the words given in the box.

Example: His mother made him clean the room.

mother, father, brother, aunt, uncle, grandfather, grandmother

B. With the help of the exercise 'A' write about yourself, what you do at home and who asked you to do that:

Example: My father made me sow seeds in the field.

Writing

A. Look at your grandmother or any old person known to you. Now describe how she/he looks and what she/he does in a paragraph.

B. Arrange these words as you find them in the dictionary.

wrinkles, heirlooms, creeper, deterrent, drapery, attic

Activity

**A. Listen to the Passage on 'Camera' and circle the right answers:
See Appendix-1 Lesson 22 (The Photograph)**

- (1) A camera is a device that captures still pictures/moving pictures.
- (2) A camera captures images on video film/photographic film.
- (3) The most important parts of a camera are batteries/film roll/shutter/lens/autofocus.
- (4) The scene is captured at the front of the camera/back of the camera.
- (5) The people who improved the process of making photographs are Max Knoll/ Louis Pasteur/Louis Daguerre/William Fox.

B. Look at the pictures given below. Explain to your friend, what you think is happening in the picture.

Example:



- (1) A woman is sitting in the bus
- (2) She is wearing a saree.
- (3) A man with long hair is sitting across her
- (4) He is reading a newspaper.



- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)



- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)



- (1)
- (2)
- (3)
- (4)

Project

Narrate the story in your own words before the class.

Use the following proverb in your sentence. Meaning is given.

Proverb

Well begun is half done.

Meaning

Make a good start and you will complete the task easily.

