

Chapter 7. The Kabuliwala

Passage 1

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

One morning as I had just started writing the seventeenth chapter of my novel, Mini walked into the room and began, 'Dad, our sentry Ramdayal doesn't even know how to pronounce the word "crow." He is so backward'.

Who is the speaker in the given extract?

Answer:

The speaker in the given extract is the narrator of the story The Kabuliwala, and Mini's father.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

One morning as I had just started writing the seventeenth chapter of my novel, Mini walked into the room and began, 'Dad, our sentry Ramdayal doesn't even know how to pronounce the word "crow." He is so backward'.

What was the narrator doing when he was interrupted? Who interrupted him?

Answer:

The narrator had started writing the seventeenth chapter of his novel when Mini, his five-year-old daughter walked into the room and interrupted him with her chatter.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

One morning as I had just started writing the seventeenth chapter of my novel, Mini walked into the room and began, 'Dad, our sentry Ramdayal doesn't even know how to pronounce the word "crow." He is so backward'.

What was the narrator's profession?

Answer:

The narrator was a writer by profession.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

One morning as I had just started writing the seventeenth chapter of my novel, Mini walked into the room and began, 'Dad, our sentry Ramdayal doesn't even know how to pronounce the word "crow." He is so backward'.

What shows that Mini was a chatty girl?

Answer:

Mini walked into her father's room and began, 'Dad, our sentry Ramdayal doesn't even know how to pronounce the word "crow." He is so backward.' Before her father could explain the differences between languages, she launched herself into another topic, 'See, Dad, Bhola was saying that when elephants lift water with their trunks and spray it from the sky, it rains. Dear, oh dear! Bhola can speak such nonsense. He can rant day and night, without making any sense!' Without waiting for her father's reply, she asked him the next question, 'Dad, who is Mum to you?' There was no connection between the three questions that she asked her father. Her father mentions in the beginning of the story that Mini liked to talk all day long. It took her about a year after being born to acquire the talent for language, and since then she had not wasted a single wakeful moment of her life remaining silent.

Passage 2

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Stopping her game abruptly Mini ran to the window which overlooked the main road, and began calling out at the top of her voice...

Where was Mini sitting? What was she doing there?

Answer:

Mini was sitting beside her father's writing table close to his feet. She was playing the game of knick-knack with her hands and knees.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Stopping her game abruptly Mini ran to the window which overlooked the main road, and began calling out at the top of her voice...

Who did Mini call out to from the window?

Answer:

Mini called out to a tall, shabbily dressed Afghan who was walking down the street.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Stopping her game abruptly Mini ran to the window which overlooked the main road, and began calling out at the top of her voice...

Who was the Afghan?

Answer:

The Afghan was a street vendor from Kabul with a turban on his head and a sack on his back. His name was Rahman and he was called Kabuliwala by Mini.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Stopping her game abruptly Mini ran to the window which overlooked the main road, and began calling out at the top of her voice...

Why did Mini call out to the Kabuliwala? What did her father think when she yelled out to him?

Answer:

Mini called out to the Kabuliwala after abruptly stopping her game of knick-knack while still in her father's room. There was no particular reason for her to call him. Mini's father however, thought of him as a nuisance who would come in and interrupt his writing like his daughter.

Passage 3

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

She had this childish fear ... found in there.

She had this childish fear that if someone looked through the bag of this Afghan man, several living children like herself would be found in there.

Whom was Mini afraid of?

Answer:

Mini was afraid of the Kabuliwala as she thought that if someone looked through the bag of the Afghan man, several living children would be found in there.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

She had this childish fear ... found in there.

She had this childish fear that if someone looked through the bag of this Afghan man, several living children like herself would be found in there.

What apprehensions did Mini's mother have about the Afghan?

Answer:

Mini's mother had her own suspicions about the Afghan, Rahman. She feared that one day he would abduct Mini and take her away to Afghanistan and make her a slave. Slavery was prevalent in Afghanistan and it was common for children to be abducted and sold there.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

She had this childish fear ... found in there.

She had this childish fear that if someone looked through the bag of this Afghan man, several living children like herself would be found in there.

What did the Kabuliwala offer Mini to befriend her? Did Mini accept the little treat from him?

Answer:

The Kabuliwala offered Mini some raisins and apricots to befriend her. However, Mini was so afraid of the Afghan man that she didn't accept the treat from him.

Passage 4

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

The Kabuliwala took out some raisins and apricots from inside the bag and gave it to Mini, but she refused to take them and remained pressed against my knees with a redoubled suspicion. That was how their first meeting ended.

What was the intention of the Kabuliwala behind offering Mini raisins and apricots?

Answer:

The Kabuliwala wanted to befriend Mini and that is why he offered her some raisins and apricots.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

The Kabuliwala took out some raisins and apricots from inside the bag and gave it to Mini, but she refused to take them and remained pressed against my knees with a redoubled suspicion. That was how their first meeting ended.

Why did Mini refuse to take the goodies from Rahman?

Answer:

Although Mini called out to the Kabuliwala from her window, she didn't expect the tall Afghan to turn around and walk in her direction. His built and the sack on his back made her believe the story that the sack had living children in it. Her fear of the stranger made her refuse the raisins and the apricots that Rahman offered.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

The Kabuliwala took out some raisins and apricots from inside the bag and gave it to Mini, but she refused to take them and remained pressed against my knees with a redoubled suspicion. That was how their first meeting ended.

Why did Rahman want to befriend Mini?

Answer:

Mini reminded Rahman of his own little daughter who lived in Afghanistan. Therefore, when he heard Mini calling out to him, he was drawn to her. He offered Mini the dry fruits imagining that he was giving the goodies to his own daughter. When they became friends Mini's company helped him forget the pain of being away from his own daughter.

Passage 5

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

In her short five-year life, Mini had never found a more intent listener before other than her father. I also noticed that she had lots of nuts and raisins tied up at the loose end of her small sari. Upon discovering this, I asked the Kabuliwala, 'Why did you give all these to her? Please don't do it again.' With that, I took out a half-a-rupee coin and gave it to him.

Name the two intent listeners in Mini's life.

Answer:

The two intent listeners in Mini's life were her father and her new found friend, the Kabuliwala.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

In her short five-year life, Mini had never found a more intent listener before other than her father. I also noticed that she had lots of nuts and raisins tied up at the loose end of her small sari. Upon discovering this, I asked the Kabuliwala, 'Why did you give all these to her? Please don't do it again.' With that, I took out a half-a-rupee coin and gave it to him.

Who gave Mini half-a-rupee coin? Why?

Answer:

The Kabuliwala was given half-a-rupee by Mini's father for the dry fruits he gave her for free. However, since the Kabuliwala felt affectionate towards Mini, he gave her back the coin.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

In her short five-year life, Mini had never found a more intent listener before other than her father. I also noticed that she had lots of nuts and raisins tied up at the loose end of her small sari. Upon discovering this, I asked the Kabuliwala, 'Why did you give all these to her? Please don't do it again.' With that, I took out a half-a-rupee coin and gave it to him.

Why did Mini's mother scold her?

Answer:

Mini's mother scolded her because she had a half-a-rupee coin and no one knew where she got it from. She didn't know that Rahman had given it back to her. She wanted her to remember that taking things from strangers was not right.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

In her short five-year life, Mini had never found a more intent listener before other than her father. I also noticed that she had lots of nuts and raisins tied up at the loose end of her small sari. Upon discovering this, I asked the Kabuliwala, 'Why did you give all these to her? Please don't do it again.' With that, I took out a half-a-rupee coin and gave it to him.

What kind of a relationship had blossomed between Mini and Rahman?

Answer:

Although Mini was scared of Rahman when she saw him for the first time, one day her father saw her chatting non-stop with the Kabuliwala at the door. Mini was seated on the bench next to the door while the Kabuliwala was parked next to her feet, listening to her with a grin and

interjecting now and then in broken Bengali to give his opinion. Mini and Rahman had become great friends despite the fact that there was nothing in common between the two.

Passage 6

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Making a huge fist with his hand, Rahman would pretend to punch at his imaginary in-law and say, 'I'll wallop my in-law.'

What did Rahman mean by the word 'in-laws'?

Answer:

When Rahman used the word 'in-laws', he was referring to the police.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Making a huge fist with his hand, Rahman would pretend to punch at his imaginary in-law and say, 'I'll wallop my in-law.'

Why was Mini unable to fathom the term 'in-laws'?

Answer:

Bengali girls were familiar with the term in-laws since childhood. However, since Mini's parents were liberal, they did not believe in child marriage and hence, Mini had not yet experienced what it was to have in-laws. Therefore, she couldn't fathom the term 'in-laws' when Rahman used it.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Making a huge fist with his hand, Rahman would pretend to punch at his imaginary in-law and say, 'I'll wallop my in-law.'

Whom did Rahman pretend to punch? How did Mini react to this?

Answer:

Rahman made a huge fist with his hand and pretended to punch his imaginary in-law to show Mini how he would behave with his in-laws (the police). At this Mini exploded into peals of laughter imagining the plight of the in-law being beaten up by her friend.

Passage 7

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He had to rush from house to house to raise the collectibles, and yet he found time to visit Mini. It appeared as if the two were involved in a mischievous plot. The day he couldn't come in the morning he came in the evening.

Who is the 'he' in the given extract?

Answer:

The 'he' in the given extract is Rahman, a fruit seller and a money lender hailing from Afghanistan and a dear friend to Mini.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He had to rush from house to house to raise the collectibles, and yet he found time to visit Mini. It appeared as if the two were involved in a mischievous plot. The day he couldn't come in the morning he came in the evening.

Why did Rahman have to go from house to house?

Answer:

Rahman used to go back to his home country in January or February each year. Before going away he had to rush from house to house to collect dues from the people whom he had given money to.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

He had to rush from house to house to raise the collectibles, and yet he found time to visit Mini. It appeared as if the two were involved in a mischievous plot. The day he couldn't come in the morning he came in the evening.

How did he manage to meet Mini even on days when he was busy settling his dues?

Answer:

Although he had to rush from house to house to collect his dues, Rahman always found time for Mini. On days when he was unable to meet her in the morning, he made sure to come to meet her in the evening.

Passage 8

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Looking out, I saw our Rahman in handcuffs, escorted by two policemen, with s whole host of street urchins trailing after them.

Whom did the narrator see as he looked outside?

Answer:

The narrator saw Rahman in handcuffs escorted by two policemen as he looked outside. A whole host of street urchins was following them on the streets.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Looking out, I saw our Rahman in handcuffs, escorted by two policemen, with s whole host of street urchins trailing after them.

What caused the commotion on the street?

Answer:

There was commotion on the streets as the policemen had arrested Rahman and some other street urchins and they were being walked on the streets.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Looking out, I saw our Rahman in handcuffs, escorted by two policemen, with s whole host of street urchins trailing after them.

Why was the policeman carrying a blood-stained knife?

Answer:

The policeman was carrying a blood-stained knife which Rahman had used to stab a man who owed him money. As the man had refused to pay his dues, an argument broke out between them and in a fit of anger, Rahman stabbed the man.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

Looking out, I saw our Rahman in handcuffs, escorted by two policemen, with a whole host of street urchins trailing after them.

What happened when Mini saw Rahman with the policemen?

Answer:

Mini called out to Rahman when he was in the midst of hurling obscene abuses at the dishonest man who refused to pay him money. However, when Mini called out to him in her regular fashion, "Kabuliwala, O Kabuliwala," Rahman's face was filled with happiness in a flash. On being questioned by Mini whether he was going to his in-laws, Rahman laughed and said pointing to his hands that he would have beaten up the in-law if his hands were not tied up.

Passage 9

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

We almost forgot about him. Living our days through our daily routines in the security of our home, it never occurred to us once how his free-spirited man from the mountains was spending his years within the secluded walls of the jail.

Who is being discussed in the extract?

Answer:

The narrator is discussing Rahman in the extract.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

We almost forgot about him. Living our days through our daily routines in the security of our home, it never occurred to us once how his free-spirited man from the mountains was spending his years within the secluded walls of the jail.

Did Mini ask her father about Rahman when he was gone?

Answer:

Mini was a little girl with an inconstant little heart. She soon forgot about her old friend Rahman and did not ask about him when he was gone.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

We almost forgot about him. Living our days through our daily routines in the security of our home, it never occurred to us once how his free-spirited man from the mountains was spending his years within the secluded walls of the jail.

Where had Rahman gone?

Answer:

Rahman was serving a long sentence in the prison after having stabbed a man who refused to pay him back.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

We almost forgot about him. Living our days through our daily routines in the security of our home, it never occurred to us once how his free-spirited man from the mountains was spending his years within the secluded walls of the jail.

Did the narrator think about Rahman?

Answer:

The narrator explains that his family very conveniently forgot about Rahman. Living within the secure walls of their home, it never occurred to them where or how Rahman must be. However, the narrator felt guilty when he realised that Mini too had forgotten her Afghan friend and found a new friend in Nabi, the syce. The narrator, however, thought about how Rahman, the man from the free mountains, was spending his years within the secluded walls of the jail.

Passage 10

Question 1.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

At first I couldn't recognise him. He didn't have that customary sack with him, or the long hair and his burly look. Finally, I recognised him through his smile.

Whom did the narrator not recognise?

Answer:

The narrator did not recognise Rahman, the dry fruit seller from Afghanistan.

Question 2.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

At first I couldn't recognise him. He didn't have that customary sack with him, or the long hair and his burly look. Finally, I recognised him through his smile.

Why was the narrator unable to recognise Rahman?

Answer:

The narrator was unable to recognise Rahman because he was not wearing his usual clothes or carrying the customary sack on his back. He didn't have long hair or brawny physique like before when he came to meet Mini after spending several years in jail.

Question 3.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

At first I couldn't recognise him. He didn't have that customary sack with him, or the long hair and his burly look. Finally, I recognised him through his smile.

Why did Rahman come to meet the narrator?

Answer:

Rahman had just been freed from the prison after serving a long sentence. The first thing he wanted to do was meet his little girl, Mini, whom he must have missed a great deal while he was in prison. Therefore, he came to meet the narrator.

Question 4.

Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.

At first I couldn't recognise him. He didn't have that customary sack with him, or the long hair and his burly look. Finally, I recognised him through his smile.

How did the narrator recognise Rahman?

Answer:

At first, the narrator did not recognise Rahman as he had grown a little weak after spending many years in the prison. His physical appearance had changed significantly. However, the narrator recognised him through his smile.