

Class X English
Footprints Without Feet
The Thief's Story
Notes

Study the following notes and follow the given you tube link to understand the chapter better.

INTRODUCTION:

The story is about a 15 year old thief who changes his name every month to stay ahead of the police and old employers. This time he keeps his name Hari Singh. The other person in the story is a 25 year old writer named Anil. The thief meets Anil and asks him if he can work for him. Anil gives him work in his house. One day Hari Singh steals Anil's money and runs away. But the kindness and love of Anil make him come back and return the money. The writer shows how the reformation of a criminal is best achieved through love and understanding rather than punishment.

THEME:

The story deals with basic human values and relationships. It is easier for a thief to rob a greedy man. It is difficult even for a thief to rob a careless and honest person. Hari Singh did steal Anil's money but he couldn't run away with it. He had no friends because he regarded them to be trouble than help. The only person he really knew was the man he had robbed. Moreover, Anil was ready to educate Hari Singh. The thief's conscience pricked him. He came back to Anil and crept to his bed. He slipped the money under the mattress from where he had stolen it a few hours ago.

SUMMARY:

The narrator (Hari Singh) was a thief. Although only fifteen, he was experienced and successful in his work. He thought of targeting Anil, a young man of 25 years. Anil was a tall, lean and thin fellow. He looked easy-going, kind and simple enough for the purpose of a thief like the narrator. He wanted to win Anil's confidence. The narrator introduced himself to Anil as Hari Singh. The narrator took a new name every month. He did so to avoid arrest from the police and his former employers. Recently, he introduced himself as Hari Singh. Hari Singh wanted to work for Anil but Anil had no money to pay him regularly. The narrator thought that he had misjudged his target.

Anil was a writer and did not earn much. Anil asked Hari Singh, the thief if he could cook. Hari Singh lied that he could. So, Hari Singh agreed to work for him only for food. Hari Singh did not know how to cook. The first meal which he cooked for Anil was so terrible that it had to be thrown away to the stray dogs. Anil asked him to go away but Hari's appealing smile made Anil

give up his decision to turn him out. Anil's heart softened and he told Hari that he would teach him how to cook. He also taught Hari Singh to write his name and promised to teach him to write whole sentences and to add numbers.

Hari Singh was grateful that, at least, Anil had given him the basic education. He knew that once he could write like an educated man, there would be no limit to what he could achieve. He did odd jobs for Anil. In the morning he made tea and then brought the day's supplies from the market. Often he made a profit of a rupee a day out of these purchases. Anil had no regular income. He earned something by writing articles and stories for magazines. The day he got the money he would go out and celebrate. Then, he would wait and worry about his next cheque. One evening Anil came home with a bundle of notes. He told Hari that he had earned six hundred rupees by selling one of his books. Hari's mouth watered at the sight of money. He decided to steal that money. Anil kept the bundle under his mattress and went to sleep.

Anil was asleep. Hari Singh thought over the situation. If he stole the money, he could catch the 10:30 Express to Lucknow. He crept up to the bed and slid his hand under the mattress and drew the notes out. He counted the notes: 600 rupees in fifties. With that money, he could live like a rich Arab for a week or two. He went to the railway station to catch the train to Lucknow but hesitated and remained standing at the platform. He had no friends to go to and the only person he knew was Anil whom he had robbed a few hours ago. He came to the 'maidan' and sat on a bench. The night was chilly and it had a light drizzle. Hari Singh was drenched and the notes became damp.

Then Hari Singh remembered Anil. He imagined how sad Anil would be on finding the money stolen. Hari remembered that Anil used to teach him. He thought that without education he would remain a thief. But education would make him a big man. So, he decided to return and replace the money. He reached home and silently put the money back under the mattress.

Next morning, Anil gave Hari a 50 rupee note. The note was still wet. Hari thought that his crime had been discovered. But Anil told him that he had earned something. Now he would pay Hari Singh regularly. He also told that he would teach Hari Singh how to write sentences. Actually, Anil knew everything about the theft but neither his lips nor his eyes showed anything.

VOCABULARY:

Page 8:

hand (here) – person

betray – deceive

fairly – enough

of late – for some days

flattery – false praise

grunting – roaring

appealing – attractive

Page 9:

misjudged – guessed wrongly
stray - wandering
be off – run away
patted – stroked
grateful – obliged

Page 10:

Fits and starts – not regularly
queer – strange
tuck – to press in
afford – to bear
crept up – to move slowly
scars – spots
slid – glided
startled – surprised

Page 11:

dashed – ran fast
pick up speed – increase speed
get away – run away
deserted – (place) empty of people
acceptance (here) – agreeing with the fate
chilly – very cold

Page 12:

shelter – refuge
damp – wet
undetected – without being noticed
stretched – spread out
edge – corner
spirits (here) – courage

CHARACTERS:**HARI SINGH :**

Hari Singh is a small-time thief. He is just fifteen but an experienced and fairly successful hand. His real name is not Hari Singh, he keeps on changing names to escape from police. His modus operandi is that he earns the trust of people and then robs them and flees. When he sees Anil, he thinks of robbing him and hence approaches him and asks for work. He is an expert in telling lies. Anil, being a simple person lets him work and even starts teaching him how to cook. Hari Singh is delighted when Anil starts teaching him how to write as he plans to rob on a larger

scale. Hari exploits Anil's generosity and makes money by keeping aside a rupee for him from buying the day's supplies. One day Anil comes home with a bundle of notes. Hari Singh plans to steal the money. He breaches Anil's trust by stealing his money but later on realizes that he has no friends and well-wishers. Anil's large-heartedness and his love for education transform him in the end. He comes back to Anil and puts the stolen money back at the place from where it was stolen.

ANIL:

Anil is a kind, simple and easy-going young man. He is tall and lean in stature and has interest in sports like wrestling. He is not rich and cannot afford to employ Hari as a servant. Hari Singh manages to convince Anil and so the latter employs Hari Singh as a cook. He has the patience and goodness to not only teach Hari to cook but also to read, write and add numbers. Though he knows about Hari's stealing of little bits of money from the groceries, he ignores this fact. Anil is a writer who writes for magazines and makes money in fits and starts. He is a very trusting person. Even when he earns a large amount of money, he keeps the money under his mattress and not in a safe box. Anil knows all about the theft but does not say anything to Hari Singh. He does not want to hand over Hari Singh to the police. He is generous enough to pay Hari a certain portion of the money which Hari tried to steal from him earlier. He has a forgiving nature and forgives Hari of his theft without letting him know of his discovery. He continues to be a good man to Hari.

YOU TUBE LINK

Refer to the given link for online tutorials:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmLOzWBVkvQ&t=113s>