Land of my Childhood: Stories from South Asia

Before Reading

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES (PAGE 76)
Encourage students to discuss and speculate, but do not confirm their guesses or predictions at this stage. Factual answers are given below for your information only.

ACTIVITY 1 BEFORE READING CARAPACE
Open answers. Encourage discussion.

ACTIVITY 2 BEFORE READING THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS
1 good
2 few
3 none
4 hardworking

ACTIVITY 3 BEFORE READING THE INTELLIGENCE OF WILD THINGS
Open answers. Encourage discussion.

ACTIVITY 4 BEFORE READING THE KITE-MAKER
The true answers are 1 and 3.

ACTIVITY 5 BEFORE READING THE STEPMOTHER
1 Y (from Lakshman’s point of view), or N (from an adult reader’s point of view)
2 N
3 N

ACTIVITY 6 BEFORE READING THE NIGHT TRAIN AT DEOLI
1 falls in love
2 finds (love), loses (the girl)
3 wonderful (falling in love), miserable (never seeing the girl again)

ACTIVITY 7 BEFORE READING A DEVOTED SON
Open answers. Encourage discussion.

ACTIVITY 8 BEFORE READING MISSIYA, THE WILD ONE
Open answers. Encourage discussion.

ACTIVITY 9 BEFORE READING FOR A HORSESHOE NAIL
1 valuable
2 terrible

After Reading

ACTIVITY 1 AFTER READING
1 Tarun in The Intelligence of Wild Things. His sister has just come to visit him in Vermont, on the eastern side of the United States.
2 The stepmother in The Stepmother. She has just discovered some serious damage to the almirah, the beautiful wooden cupboard where she keeps her baby’s things.

3 The girl selling baskets in The Night Train at Deoli. She has just met the narrator for the second time on the platform at Deoli station.
4 The narrator’s mother in Missiya, the Wild One. She has just realized that her daughter is growing up, and that Missiya might be a bad influence on her. So she is going to tell her daughter to keep away from Missiya.
5 Ahmed and Zaheera’s son in The Kite-maker. He has just found the kite that Ahmed made for the kite-flying festival, and he has realized how badly he wants to go home.
6 Vijay in Carapace. He has just rung the narrator to ask her what time she is coming out to eat with him, and she has put the phone down on him (at the end of the story).
7 Valli in For a Horseshoe Nail. She has just heard of the death of one of her neighbours, Muthu, in Bangalore, where he was selling one of his kidneys, and is worried that the same thing may happen to her husband Raju.
8 The Master in The Inspector of Schools. He has just said goodbye to the inspector at the end of the story, after begging him to find a room or some land for a permanent school.
9 Veena in A Devoted Son. Her father-in-law, Varma, has just spat a mouthful of betel juice on to her new sari.

ACTIVITY 2 AFTER READING
Model answers:
Carapace
a) So I rang him, and we met that evening, to talk things over. It meant I missed Anura Perera’s visit, of course, but I didn’t care about that. Amma was furious, though. A month later we had a quiet wedding, and I moved into Vijay’s tiny apartment. I haven’t got any jewellery or elegant saris to wear, but Vijay and I spend our evenings dancing in the moonlight and eating prawns on the beach. I’ve never regretted the decision I made that day, to ring him back.

b) But a girl has her pride. I waited, but he didn’t ring again. And so I found myself the centre of attention at a big wedding, with hundreds of guests, and finally married to a man I hardly knew. Anura Perera’s large house in Sydney is wonderful, and I can buy anything I like. I was happy at first, but now I realize I have no friends. I’m very lonely in the daytime, and then, when my husband comes home, I feel even more lonely. We have nothing to say to each other, you see. I often wonder if Vijay is still at the
I was most impressed by the Thursday 4th June
That evening, while I’m try my hardest, but
I try my hardest, but Tarun refuses to listen. His expression is cold and hard. I ask him straight out, but he says he has no message for our dying mother. So my visit was a waste of time. I go back to make a final visit to Mother, but he stays in the USA with his girlfriend. He never sees any of our family again. Sometimes I wonder if I have a brother, or if I ever had one.

ACTIVITY 3  AFTER READING
Acceptable answers are any words that fit the grammar and the sense. Some alternatives are given in brackets.

1 I was most impressed by the Master (teacher), who is keeping teaching standards extremely high. I tested a number of his students (pupils), who were perfectly ready with their answers (replies). They also read both English and Urdu very well, showing a surprisingly good understanding of the texts. All the correct books were in use, although there weren’t many of them. The boys seem to enjoy (like, appreciate) their lessons, and are certainly making progress. However, there is one problem: the lack (absence) of a school building. At the moment, all teaching takes place in a field, which is clearly not a suitable place (arrangement). My recommendation is that the government buys (obtains) a small piece of land and gives it to the village.

2 Thursday 4th June: Showed some visiting politicians round my clinic today. Naturally, they praised everything they saw (found) there. They had a couple of reporters (journalists) with them. I expect there’ll be articles (stories) about me in most of tomorrow’s papers (newspapers). I hope they took a good photo (photograph) of me – was wearing my best suit/jacket. Drove home. Went to greet the old man. Am trying out a new medicine (drug, treatment) on him. It hasn’t been properly tested before, so if it makes him better (well), I can use it on my patients at the clinic. Just imagine how grateful they will be to me! Saving lives is what I do best, of course. And if, sadly, it makes him worse, I shall at least learn something useful (interesting).

Both haiku are about The Intelligence of Wild Things.

ACTIVITY 4  AFTER READING
Open answers.

ACTIVITY 5  AFTER READING
Notes for the teacher:
This activity helps students to think about the stories they have read, and what they see as the themes, or points of interest in the story. It also helps them to practise the key vocabulary of the stories. There are no right or wrong answers for this activity, provided that the haiku accurately reflects some aspect of the story.

- For classroom work students can work in pairs or small groups to write their haiku. When all the groups have finished, there can be a guessing competition, with other groups guessing which story each haiku is about. Other possibilities include a haiku recital (each group in turn reads out their haiku to the class), and a poster display.

- If students are doing their reading at home, writing a haiku is a creative way of showing they have read and understood the story. Haiku can be written in students’ own reading diaries, or shared with the class. A good way is to keep a big ‘Reviews Book’ in the classroom, and each student writes their haiku in the book for other students to read.

- Haiku don’t rhyme or scan, but must keep to the 5 / 7 / 5 syllable rule. They can be one long sentence, or a number of short sentences, or just phrases. They can be funny, or sad. Avoid using characters’ names. These examples for some of the other stories in this book show some different ways language can be used in haiku.

Missiya, the Wild One
Teasing all the men
Full red lips and a bold smile
Proud to be different.

Carapace
It’s a dilemma:
prawns on the beach, Sydney shops –
which should a girl choose?

The Inspector of Schools
How well boys are taught
by their respected Master!

But no school is built.

A Devoted Son
Spitting betel juice,
playing dead, begging for treats,
the old man’s dying.

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