



**INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2023-24)**

**QUESTION BANK – THE THIEF’S STORY- by Ruskin Bond**

**Class: X**

**Sub: ENGLISH**

**I. SUMMARY**

The *Thief’s Story* by Ruskin Bond is centered around a 15-year-old boy who is a small-time thief who keeps on changing his name to conceal his identity and avoid being caught by the police and his previous employers. He continues to execute small robberies and trick people until he meets Anil. He introduces himself as Hari Singh while Anil is watching a wrestling match. Hari Singh is desperate to rob someone as he hasn’t tricked anyone for the past few days. Anil seems an easy target for Hari Singh as Anil was a simple man.

Hari asks Anil whether he can employ him or not and Anil says that he cannot employ him and pay him but he does assure that he can feed him if he knows how to cook and to that Hari Singh lies that he knows how to cook as he has an ardent (strong) desire to rob Anil.

Hari began his job that included making tea for Anil in the morning, buying groceries, and cooking dinner. On his first day, he cooked tasteless and bland food which Anil fed to the stray dogs instead of rebuking Hari. When Hari used to go to buy groceries he used to keep the leftover balance amount of 1 or 2 rupees with himself and Anil didn’t mind that as well.

This spoke volumes about the letting go attitude and easy-going nature of Anil. Anil also taught Hari how to read, write and cook. Hari was happy because of it as he thought that now something great would happen in his life. Anil didn’t have a stable source of income and his way of earning was inconsistent and irregular as he would borrow money from someone and when he earned a huge chunk of money he would go and celebrate with his friends.

One day Anil came up with a huge amount of 600 rupees and that is the moment for which Hari was waiting desperately and one night when Anil was asleep, Hari stole 600 rupees and went to the nearest railway station to board the train but his pricked conscience didn’t allow him to proceed further and he came back. He knew no one in the town apart from Anil whom he had robbed and hence, with no alternative he slept on a bench in the park and at that time it was drizzling, so all the notes were wet now

In the morning he returned back to Anil’s home and slid the notes under his pillow where they were earlier kept. Out of 600 rupees, Anil gave him 50 rupees and that note was wet which clearly implies that Anil had figured out the misdemeanor of Hari but there wasn’t a strong reaction towards it. Seeing the genuineness of Anil’s nature, Hari melted and decided to amend his ways and start a new life afresh.

The Thief’s Story focuses on human values and relationships which are significant in our lives and those values have the power to change an individual.

## Key Takeaways

- It is easy to judge someone but it takes character and strength to understand someone's situation and step in their shoes to see life from their lens. Anil is a quintessential example of Empathy who always empathized with Hari and understood that nobody had taught him basic manners and moral values and that is why he had become a thief.
- Genuineness always melts the heart of the other person and motivates him/her to amend their wrong ways and walk upon the right path and at last, because of Anil's genuineness Hari melted and took a firm decision to change his life and give his life a proper direction
- Guilty conscience always diminishes one's self-esteem and one must always abide by their conscience to live a satisfactory life.

## II. REFERENCE TO CONTEXT:

**1. "You look a bit of a wrestler yourself". I said A little flattery helps in making friends.**

(a) Who was the speaker? Who was he trying to flatter?

**Hari Singh was the speaker and he was trying to flatter Anil.**

(b) Why did the speaker want to be friends with the listener?

**The speaker wanted to be friends with the listener because he wanted to rob him after gaining his trust.**

(c) Find the antonym of 'criticism' in the extract.

**The antonym is 'flattery'.**

(d) What is the opposite of 'friends'?

**'Enemies' is its opposite.**

**2. "Well, it's time I did some real work, I told myself; I'm out of practice."**

(a) What 'real work' is the speaker talking about?

(b) Why does the speaker say 'I'm out of practice'?

(c) Give a synonym of 'practice'.

(d) What part of speech is the word 'real' in the extract?

**Answer:**

(a) **The 'real work' in the extract refers to stealing.**

(b) **The speaker says so because he is a thief and he has not robbed anyone recently.**

(c) **Here, habit is a synonym of 'practice'.**

(d) **It is an adjective**

**3. "He knew. But neither his lips nor his eyes showed anything".**

(a) Who is 'he' in the extract? What did he know?

**'He' refers to Anil in the extract. He knew about the theft of his money.**

(b) Why did he not show anything?

**Anil did not show anything because he understood and Hari's return gave him the hope of a change in him.**

(c) Which word in the extract means the same as ‘reveal’?

**‘Showed’ means the same as ‘reveal’.**

(d) What is the antonym of ‘showed’?

**‘Hide’ is its antonym.**

**4. “When the train had gone, I found myself standing alone on the deserted platform. I had no idea where to spend the night. I had no friends.”**

(a) Why was the speaker standing alone on the platform?

(b) Why did he not have any friends?

(c) Which word in the extract is an antonym of the word ‘crowded’?

(d) What does ‘deserted’ mean?

**Answer:**

**(a) The speaker was standing alone on the platform because a train had just left.**

**(b) The speaker did not have any friends because he thought that friends were more trouble than help.**

**(c) The word is ‘deserted’.**

**(d) It means empty.**

### **III. SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:**

**1. Anil walked away. I followed casually’. Why do you think the narrator followed Anil?**

The narrator’s purpose of robbing Anil had not yet been served. He followed Anil to gain his trust and look for an opportunity that may help him give shape to his plans.

**2. What did Anil and Hari agree upon to be the mode of payment?**

When Anil stated his inability to pay Hari, Anil questioned Hari if he could feed Hari. Hari realised that he had misjudged his target and turned the situation for his benefit. Anil then agreed to feed him if he knew how to cook.

**3. Did Hari like working for Anil? Give reasons in support of your answer.**

Yes, Hari liked working for Anil. He was happy to carry on the chores for him and was grateful for the education he was receiving. He used to make profit of about a rupee a day as well, which was a decent amount besides being fed.

**4. What are the different reactions of the people when they are robbed?**

According to Hari Singh, different people react differently on being robbed. The greedy man displays fear, the rich man shows anger, and the poor man shows acceptance. However, a trusting man like Anil would be sad due to the loss of trust.

**5. Why was it difficult for Hari Singh to rob Anil?**

It was difficult to rob Anil because he was the most trusting person Hari Singh had ever met. According to Hari Singh, it’s easy to rob a greedy man because he can afford to be

robbed but it's difficult to rob a careless man because he doesn't even notice that he's been robbed and that takes all the pleasure out of the work.

**6. State the events that took place on the night of the theft.**

The night of robbery was quite eventful for Hari Singh. After stealing Anil's money and leaving Anil's house, Hari went to the railway station but didn't board the train to Lucknow. He walked slowly through the bazaar as he did not know anyone who would provide him shelter except Anil, for he didn't have any friends. He was forced to take shelter under the clock tower later when it started raining heavily. That is where he realised the importance of education and decided to go back to Anil.

**7. Had Anil really forgiven Hari Singh? Support your answer with evidence.**

Yes, Anil had forgiven Hari Singh. It is evident because Anil handed over to Hari a fifty rupee note as soon as Hari woke up. Though he knew that Hari had robbed the money at first but his subsequent actions gave him hope of change in Hari's character.

**IV. LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS:**

**1. Hari Singh didn't board the express train and return to Anil. Why did he return? What values does this incident highlight?**

Hari Singh was a thief and he had stolen Anil's money. After the theft, he realised that he had robbed not only Anil but also himself of the chance of being literate and having a bright future. His conscience pricked him to think what all he could have gained had he not done this. It was difficult for him to rob Anil but it was tougher for him not to go back. He realised that he could not make tea, buy daily supplies and learn how to read and write then. His inner self did not agree to evade this and forced him to return.

Hari's return to Anil shows that despite indulging in criminal acts, he still had a practical and positive attitude towards life. It is the awakening of Hari's conscience and Anil's love, trust and care that reformed Hari's character. It teaches us that love and trust can change a person. Anil's understanding nature and care changed Hari's behaviour and helped him mend his ways for the good.

**2. Anil plays a major role in the transformation of Hari Singh. Comment on the statement by highlighting the values possessed by Anil which touched Hari's heart and made him return to his honest ways of earning his livelihood. Write in about 100-120 words.**

Anil was a struggling writer whom Hari Singh befriended. Hari Singh was an experienced, 15-year-old thief. He found Anil an easy target to steal. Anil agreed to allow him to stay with him and volunteered to teach to read and write. Gradually, Anil develops trust in Hari Singh. But Hari Singh was waiting for the right opportunity to do what he was best at. After stealing money, he tried to go away forever but some inner voice stopped him from doing so. He returned to Anil

because he wanted to live a life of respect. Anil did not reveal that he knew the theft and accepted Hari back. Thus, the well-intentioned person, Anil changed Hari Singh and brought him on the right path. The story shows that trust and spirit to forgiveness can bring big changes in one's life.

**3. Money can't make a man as much as education can. Elucidate the statement.**

The statement stands true in almost all the aspects of life. Money may buy us all the luxuries and fulfil our needs but it cannot buy us knowledge, civilized thinking, skills and abilities to achieve our dreams. Education lays the foundation for all of us to act upon our goals according to our abilities. Education enables us to keep up with the fast moving world. It opens the door to opportunities we do not know even exist. Money, on the other hand, can assist us to a certain level. It can buy us a plan but education gives us the knowledge of its execution. Just as in the story 'A Thief's Story', Hari Singh prioritized the chance of being literate over a few hundred rupees; we must understand that education can help us to achieve whatever we desire.

**V. Read the questions and the choose the appropriate answer:**

**1- How has the narrator described Anil?**

- (a) simple
- (b) kind
- (c) easy-going
- (d) all of the above**

**2- What was Anil doing when the boy met him?**

- (a) cooking vegetables for lunch
- (b) watching a wrestling match**
- (c) playing cricket with friends
- (d) writing an article for the magazine

**3- How did the narrator attempt at being friends with Anil?**

- (a) flattering him**
- (b) teasing him
- (c) introducing himself
- (d) none of the above

**4- What did the boy ask Anil for?**

- (a) to give him food
- (b) to employ him**
- (c) to give him money
- (d) to teach him

**5- How often did he change his name?**

- (a) every day
- (b) every week
- (c) every month**
- (d) every year

**6- He changed his name in order to stay ahead of \_\_\_\_\_**

- (a) police
- (b) employers
- (c) none of them
- (d) both of them**

**7- How was the meal he cooked first night?**

- (a) delicious
- (b) mouth-watering
- (c) finger-licking good
- (d) terrible**

**8. How did Hari Singh infer that about his food cooked first night?**

- (a) Anil said he liked it
- (b) Anil couldn't have enough of it
- (c) Anil was licking his fingers
- (d) Anil gave it to a stray dog**

**9- What did Anil promise him to teach?**

- (a) write his name
- (b) cook food
- (c) write full sentences
- (d) all of the above**

**10- Who was the most trusting person narrator had ever met?**

- (a) Anil**
- (b) publisher
- (c) Anil's friends
- (d) none of the above

**11- Who is easier to rob?**

- (a) a careless man
- (b) a greedy man**
- (c) a trusting man
- (d) Anil

**12- Based on your understanding of Anil in the extract, choose the option that synchronises with his thinking.**

**a) So what if I don't have much money? Giving it to that person is important as they could do with a helping hand.**

b) I better learn how to protect my money. I think I'm being looted.

c) I earn money with such tremendous effort. Where does it all go?

d) When I become rich, I can begin to help friends then. Right now, I will spend only on myself.

## **TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Question 1:** Who does 'I' refer to in this story?

**Answer:** In the story, 'I' refers to the narrator of the story Hari Singh, who was a fifteen-year-old experienced thief.

**Question 2:** What is he "a fairly successful hand" at?

**Answer:** He had "a fairly successful hand" at stealing and robbing people. By this he meant that he was an experienced thief who was very swift and clean in his work while robbing people without getting caught.

**Question 3:** What does he get from Anil in return for his work?

**Answer:** When Hari approached Anil for work, Anil told him clearly that he could not pay him for it. So, he asked Hari to cook so he can feed him and stay with him. But when he found out that the young boy didn't know how to cook, he taught him to cook and how to write his name. Anil also promised to teach him to write whole sentences and calculate numbers. Besides, Anil also gave money to Hari to buy the daily supplies and the latter would make a rupee profit a day from it.

## **Read and Find Out (Page 10)**

**Question 1:** How does the thief think Anil will react to the theft?

**Answer:** Hari, the thief thought that on discovering his theft, Anil would be filled with sadness not because of the loss of money but for losing the trust he had in him.

**Question 2:** What does he say about the different reactions of people when they are robbed?

**Answer:** In his short career as a thief, Hari's experience had made him aware of the different reactions of people when they were robbed. According to him, a greedy man showed fear; the rich men exhibited anger and a poor man showed acceptance.

**Question 3:** Does Anil realise that he has been robbed?

**Answer:** Yes, Anil realised that he had been robbed by Hari. Probably, he came to know of it from the damp notes which got wet due to rain in the previous night. However, he didn't express anything and gave a fifty rupee note to Hari and promised to pay him regularly.

### Think about it (Page 13)

**Question 1:** What are Hari Singh's reactions to the prospect of receiving an education? Do they change over time? (Hint: Compare, for example, the thought: "I knew that once I could write like an educated man there would be no limit to what I could achieve" with these later thoughts: "Whole sentences, I knew, could one day bring me more than a few hundred rupees. It was a simple matter to steal — and sometimes just as simple to be caught. But to be a really big man, a clever and respected man, was something else.") What makes him return to Anil?

**Answer:** Hari was grateful to Anil who taught him how to write his name. He was excited to learn that Anil would teach him to write whole sentences too. He understood that being an educated man will add to his abilities and help him to achieve a social status in life. But when he stole money and left Anil's house, he realised that stealing was an utter crime to indulge himself and he might soon get caught, but being educated was a more fulfilling experience. He comprehended the respect, reputation and possibilities that he would be able to achieve if he becomes educated. Hence, he was feeling guilty for cheating a noble man who gave him food and shelter. Besides, his urge to receive education also compelled him to return to Anil's house.

**Question 2:** Why does not Anil hand the thief over to the police? Do you think most people would have done so? In what ways is Anil different from such employers?

**Answer:** Unlike others, Anil did not call the police and hand over Hari on theft charges. He was well aware of the theft from the damp notes but he did not thrash him or even mention it in front of Hari. He was happy that Hari had realised his mistake and understood the importance of education in life.

In today's world, it is difficult to find people like Anil. Most people would not react in the same manner as he did. He was very patient and considerate towards Hari as he wanted him to become an educated man and lead his life respectfully.

Anil was different from other such employers because he was very understanding and compassionate by nature. When Hari returned with the money, it gave him the hope that Hari wanted to amend his ways and grow up to become a noble and literate man.

### Talk about it (Page 13)

**Question 1:** Do you think people like Anil and Hari Singh are found only in fiction, or are there such people in real life?

**Answer:** In the real world, people like Anil and Hari Singh rarely exist and are mostly found in fiction stories only. Although there may be an exception sometimes when we may come across people like Anil. From the story, we know that Anil was a kind-hearted and considerate person who was deeply concerned about Hari's education and future. When Hari stole Anil's money, his conscience pricked him and he had a change of mind and realised the importance of education for his future. Hence, finding such kind of imaginary characters is a rare possibility in today's world.

**Question 2:** Do you think it a significant detail in the story that Anil is a struggling writer? Does this explain his behaviour in any way?

**Answer:** Yes, it is obvious that a significant detail in the story shows Anil was a struggling writer. His lifestyle was simple with irregular income and he always spent money as per his



capabilities. He made money by fits and starts. He would borrow one week, lend the next. He kept worrying about his next cheque, but as soon as it arrived he would go out and celebrate with his friends. Hari observed that Anil was unable to pay him a salary because he did not have a regular source of income. However, Hari felt that although Anil earned less, he never ill-treated him and was quite considerate towards him.

**Question 3:** Have you met anyone like Hari Singh? Can you think and imagine the circumstances that can turn a fifteen-year-old boy into a thief?

**Answer:** No, I haven't met anyone like Hari Singh but such kind of people do exist in the world. Many a time, a fifteen-year-old boy may be forced under unavoidable circumstances to become a robber. Mostly people commit crime to feed themselves or their families, or sometimes to satisfy their urge or addiction, to maintain health or to fulfil their demands to lead a luxurious life and so on and so forth.

**Question 4:** Where is the story set? (You can get clues from the names of the persons and places mentioned in it.) Which language or languages are spoken in these places? Do you think the characters in the story spoke to each other in English?

**Answer:** The story is set near Lucknow somewhere in Uttar Pradesh. We understand this from the story when it mentions of a railway station for Express train to Lucknow. The presence of sweet shops, *maidans* and *bazaars* also indicate it to be a small and decent town. We can assume that characters in the story were not speaking to each other in English but probably in Hindi language.