

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 6: EXPERT DETECTIVES



EXPERT DETECTIVES

~Summary~

-by Sharada Dwivedi

"Expert Detectives" is an extract taken from Sharada Dwivedi's children's novel "The Broken Flute". Maya and Nishad are siblings aged 10 and 7, respectively. The story deals with their quest in finding out the real identity of a man called Mr Nath.

The story begins with the siblings walking towards their mother's clinic. As they walked, they began talking about Mr Nath. He had been living at Shankar House for over a year and had hardly made any friends. He was unfriendly, kids at the Shankar House were terrified of him, and more importantly, he had some burn scars, which Maya believed were caused by an encounter with the police. Maya is suspicious of Mr Nath and believes that he is a crook. However, Nishad thinks that the man is poor and lonely. Nevertheless, they decide to play the part of detectives and investigate the matter.

Nishad strikes a conversation with Ramesh, a restaurant worker who delivers food to Mr Nath. Through him, Nishad learns that Mr Nath always takes only two meals a day, and the menu was always the same- chapatti, vegetable, and dal. He then pays his bill immediately and tips generously. Moreover, Mr Nath has a visitor during most of the Sundays. He was a tall, fat, fair, spectacled, and talkative man, whom Maya believes was an accomplice.

Later, Maya lists out nine known facts about Mr Nath on a paper with "Catching a Crook" as its title. Eventually, Nishad and Maya get into an argument due to the difference in their opinions. Though Maya began the investigation intending to expose Mr Nath's identity, Nishad only went along because he wanted to understand why Mr Nath looked poor and lonely. He also decided to befriend Mr Nath because he liked him and had felt sorry for him. As the siblings have irritated each other through their adamant beliefs, the lesson ends with Nishad walking out of the room, leaving Maya with her list of facts.



Expert Detectives

~Conclusion~

The story "Expert Detectives" is a debate between the brilliant siblings Maya and Nishad whether a strange man Mr. Nath is a crook or a lonely man in need of kind friends. That has created a certain kind of tension in the story.

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NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 89) (Comprehension Check)

Question 1. What did Nishad give Mr. Nath? Why?

Answer: Nishad gave a bar of chocolate to Mr. Nath. He did so because of the lean appearance of Mr. Nath, which suggested that he was starving.

Question 2. What is “strange” about Mr. Nath’s Sundays?

Answer: The strange thing about Mr. Nath’s Sundays is that there was a particular visitor who used to visit every Sunday and both of them used to have lunch together.

Question 3: Why did Nishad and Maya get a holiday?

Answer: Nishad and Maya got a holiday because of the bad weather. It was raining heavily and the streets of the city were flooded with the downpour.

Questions (Page No. 93) (Working with the text)

Answer the following questions.

Question 1. What does Nishad find out about Mr. Nath from Ramesh?

Arrange the information as suggested below.

- What he eats
- When he eats
- What he drinks, and when
- How he pays

Answer: Nishad finds out the following about Mr. Nath from Ramesh:

- He is not very particular about what he eats. He eats two chapattis, dal and a vegetable.
- He eats in the morning and evening.
- He drinks two cups of tea, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.
- He pays in cash and also gives tip to Ramesh.

Question 2. Why does Maya think Mr. Nath is a crook? Who does she say the Sunday visitor is?

Answer: Maya thinks that Mr. Nath is a crook because he does not have any friends even after spending more than a year at the place. Also, he does not talk to anyone and does not have any visitors any time except for the visitor who meets him on Sundays.

She says that the Sunday visitor is his partner in crime and visits him on Sundays to give him his share of money.

Question 3. Does Nishad agree with Maya about Mr. Nath? How does he feel about him?

Answer: No, Nishad does not agree with Maya about Mr. Nath. He thinks that Mr. Nath is lonely and poor person who is starving. He thinks that Mr. Nath is a kind person who despite having less money for himself, gives tips to Ramesh.

Questions (Page No. 93-94) (Working with language)

Question 1. The word 'tip' has only three letters but many meanings.

Match the word with its meanings below.

- finger tips – be about to say something
- the tip of your nose – make the boat overturn
- tip the water out of the bucket – the ends of one's fingers

- d. have something on the tip of your tongue – give a rupee to him, to thank him
- e. tip the boat over – empty a bucket by tilting it
- f. tip him a rupee – the pointed end of your nose
- g. the tip of the bat – if you take this advice
- h. the police were tipped off – the bat lightly touched the ball
- i. if you take my tip – the end of the bat
- j. the bat tipped the ball – the police were told, or warned

Answer:

- a. finger tips – the ends of one's fingers
- b. the tip of your nose – the pointed end of your nose
- c. tip the water out of the bucket – empty a bucket by tilting it
- d. have something on the tip of your tongue – be about to say something
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Question 2: The words helper, companion, partner and accomplice have very similar meanings, but each word is typically used in certain phrases. Can you fill in the blanks below with the most commonly used words? A dictionary may help you.

- a. business _____
- b. my _____ on the journey
- c. I'm mother's little _____.
- d. a faithful _____ such as a dog
- e. the thief's _____
- f. find a good _____
- g. tennis/ golf / bridge _____
- h. his _____ in his criminal activities

Answer:

- a. business **partner**
- b. my **companion** on the journey
- c. I'm mother's little **helper**
- d. a faithful **companion** such as a dog
- e. the thief's **accomplice**
- f. find a good **helper**
- g. tennis/ golf / bridge **partner**
- h. his **accomplice** in his criminal activities

Question 3: Now let us look at the uses of the word break. Match the word with its meanings below. Try to find at least three other ways in which to use the word.

- a. The storm broke – could not speak; was too sad to speak
- b. daybreak – this kind of weather ended
- c. His voice is beginning to break – it began or burst into activity
- d. Her voice broke and she cried – the beginning of daylight
- e. The heat wave broke – changing as he grows up
- f. broke the bad news – end it by making the workers submit
- g. break a strike – gently told someone the bad news
- h. (Find your own expression – Give its meaning here.)

Answer:

- a. The storm broke – this kind of weather ended
- b. daybreak – the beginning of daylight
- c. His voice is beginning to break – changing as he grows up
- d. Her voice broke and she cried – could not speak; was too sad to speak
- e. The heat wave broke – it began or burst into activity
- f. broke the bad news – gently told someone the bad news
- g. break a strike – end it by making the workers submit
- h. the machine broke down – the machine underwent a sudden physical damage

Questions (Page No. 95)

(Speaking)

Question 1. Play detectives with each other. Find a person in your class (or some other acquaintance) to speak to. Find out the answers to the questions given below. Be careful to ask your questions in a polite and inoffensive way. Do not force the person to answer you. Then allow the person to ask you the same questions.

- a. Name?
- b. What newspapers or magazines does the person read?
- c. How long has the person lived at the current address?
- d. What does she/he do during the day, i.e. the daily routine?
- e. What do neighbors and friends say about the person?
- f. Who are his/her visitors and what are his/her eating habits? (You can ask a few others about this.)
- g. What do you think about the person?

Answer: Do it yourself.

Questions (Page No. 95-96)

(Writing)

Question 1. Who do you think Mr. Nath is? Write a paragraph or two about him.

Answer: I think Mr. Nath is just an ordinary man who is probably not eating well. He might be an introvert which is why he does not have friends and visitors. He might enjoy being alone than having company of many others.

He is very lean because he does not take meals properly. He is not even particular about the food he eats. He just needs two chapattis, dal and a vegetable. He consults Nishad's mother, who is a doctor. This means that he is having some ailment. That can be another reason why he prefers to be alone.

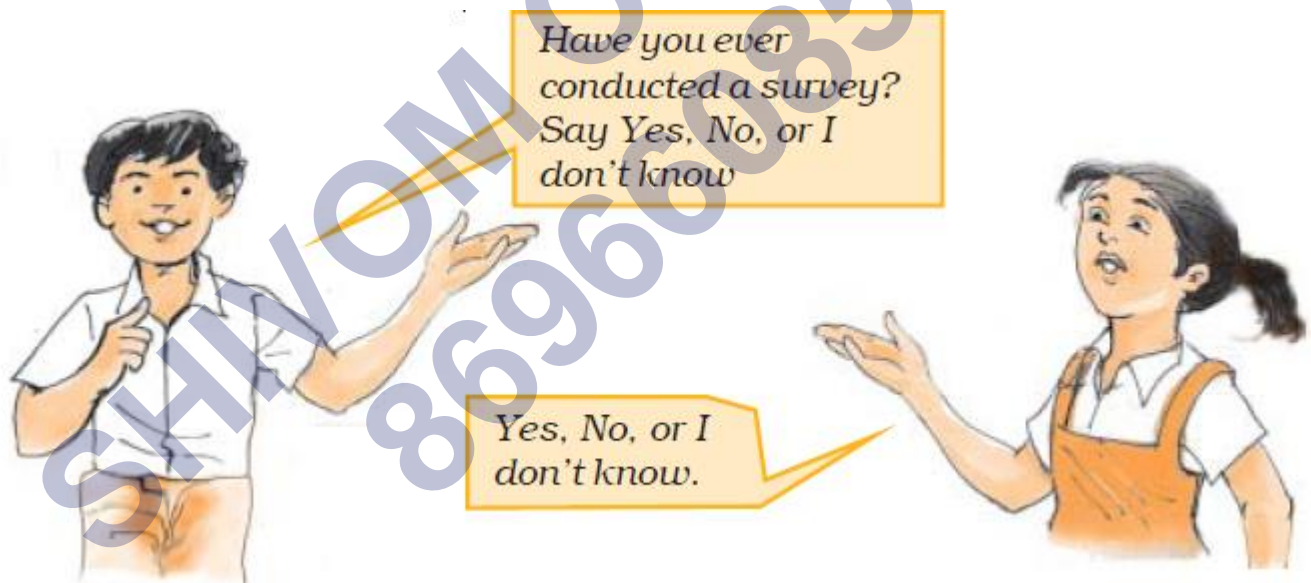
He also has scars on his face, which make people think that he is some crook. But, the scars might be from some accident. The visitor who comes every Sunday might be a family member who comes to ensure that Mr. Nath is keeping well.

Question 2. What else do you think Nishad and Maya will find out about him? How? Will they ever be friends? Think about these questions and write a paragraph or two to continue the story.

Answer: I think Nishad and Maya will find out that Mr. Nath is a good person but an introvert. They might even get to know that Mr. Nath is working from home because he does not keep well. That is the reason he prefers being at home and not having visitors.

They might become friends later, especially Nishad can be a good friend to him because he was anyway in his favour from the beginning. Maya would have regretted to have doubted him to be a criminal.

Question 3. Conducting a Survey



Step 1: Study the following questionnaire and discuss the points in small groups.

- Hardly anyone thinks that...
- No one thinks that...

Answer: Do it yourself.

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