3

Before you read

Have you ever read a comic book? A comic book contains stories told mainly through pictures.

Gopal and the Hilsa-fish

STOP IT!
ARE YOU A COURTIER OR A FISHERMAN?
THE COURTIER FELL SILENT WITH DOWNCAST EYES. THE KING FELT GUILTY.
I'M SORRY I LOST MY TEMPER. IT IS THE SEASON FOR HILSA-FISH AND NO ONE...
...NOT EVEN GOPAL CAN STOP ANYONE FROM TALKING ABOUT HILSA-FISH. NOT EVEN FOR FIVE MINUTES!
OH, I THINK I COULD, YOUR MAJESTY.
THEN LET ME SEE YOU BUY A HUGE HILSA AND BRING IT TO THE PALACE WITHOUT ANYONE ASKING YOU A WORD ABOUT IT!
I ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE, YOUR MAJESTY.

A FEW DAYS LATER—
WHY IS YOUR FACE HALF-SHAVEN?
I'M DRESSING UP TO BUY A FISH.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? WHY ARE YOU SMEARING YOURSELF WITH ASH?
I TOLD YOU— I'M DRESSING UP TO BUY A HILSA-FISH.

LISTEN TO ME! PLEASE. YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY GO OUT IN THOSE DISGRACEFUL RAGS! WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
HOW MANY TIMES MUST I TELL YOU, WOMAN? I AM OUT TO BUY A HUGE HILSA-FISH.

IT'S HAPPENED TO HIM! HE'S GONE MAD!

GOPAL BOUGHT THE HILSA-FISH AND STARTED WALKING TOWARDS THE PALACE.
MOTHER, LOOK AT THAT MAN! ISN'T HE COMICAL!
HE MUST BE A MADMAN.
HUSH! I THINK HE'S A MYSTIC.
WHEN GOPAL REACHED THE COURT—
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I WANT TO SEE THE KING!
YOU CAN'T SEE THE KING! GET AWAY WITH YOU!
GOPAL BEGAN TO DANCE AND SING LOUDLY.

INSIDE THE PALACE –
THE MAN IS CRAZY!
THROW HIM OUT AT ONCE!
I WANT TO SEE THE KING. LET ME IN!
BRING THAT MAN TO ME AT ONCE!
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
GOPAL WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING.
IT'S GOPAL!
THE MAN HAS LOST HIS MIND!
I THINK IT'S ONE OF HIS CRAZY JOKES.

ALL RIGHT, GOPAL. OUT WITH IT! WHY ARE YOU DRESSED UP IN THIS RIDICULOUS FASHION?
YOUR MAJESTY, YOU SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING!
FORGOTTEN SOMETHING?
STRANGELY ENOUGH NO ONE SEEMS TO BE INTERESTED IN HILSA-FISH TODAY! FROM THE MARKET TO THE PALACE AND IN THE COURT, NOT A SOUL HAS SPOKEN A WORD ABOUT HILSA-FISH!
ONLY THEN DID THE KING REMEMBER THE CHALLENGE HE HAD THROWN TO GOPAL.
HA! HA! WELL GOPAL, CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE ACHIEVED THE IMPOSSIBLE ONCE AGAIN!

Working with the Text

Answer the following questions.

1. Why did the king want no more talk about the hilsa-fish?

2. What did the king ask Gopal to do to prove that he was clever?

3. What three things did Gopal do before he went to buy his hilsa-fish?

4. How did Gopal get inside the palace to see the king after he had bought the fish?

5. Explain why no one seemed to be interested in talking about the hilsa-fish which Gopal had bought.

6. Write 'True' or 'False' against each of the following sentences.

   (i) The king lost his temper easily. _____

   (ii) Gopal was a madman. _____

   (iii) Gopal was a clever man. _____

   (iv) Gopal was too poor to afford decent clothes. _____

   (v) The king got angry when he was shown to be wrong. _____

Working with Language

1. Notice how in a comic book, there are no speech marks when characters talk. Instead what they say is put in a speech 'bubble'. *However, if we wish to repeat or 'report' what they say, we must put it into* ***reported speech****.*

   Change the following sentences in the story to reported speech. The first one has been done for you.

(i) How much did you pay for that hilsa?

The woman asked the man how much he had paid for that hilsa.

(ii) Why is your face half-shaven?

Gopal's wife asked him _____

_____

(iii) I accept the challenge, Your Majesty.

Gopal told the king _____

_____

(iv) I want to see the king.

Gopal told the guards _____

_____

(v) Bring the man to me at once.

The king ordered the guard _____

_____

2. Find out the meaning of the following words by looking them up in the dictionary. Then use them in sentences of your own.

challenge	mystic	comical
courtier	smearing	

Picture Reading

1. Look at the pictures and read the text aloud.

Stag by the side of a pond.

How beautiful my horns are!

But my legs are so thin and ugly!

Hunters! Run for your life!

Let me hide somewhere.

These branches... Oh, no !

They are too close.
Get out of here!

I was proud of my horns. They could have caused my death. I was ashamed of my legs. They saved me.

2. Now ask your partner questions about each picture.
   (i) Where is the stag?
   (ii) What is he doing?
   (iii) Does he like his antlers (horns)?
   (iv) Does he like his legs?
   (v) Why is the stag running?
   (vi) Is he able to hide in the bushes?
   (vii) Where are the hunters now?
   (viii) Are they closing in on the stag?
   (ix) Is the stag free?
   (x) What does the stag say about his horns and his legs?

3. Now write the story in your own words. Give it a title.

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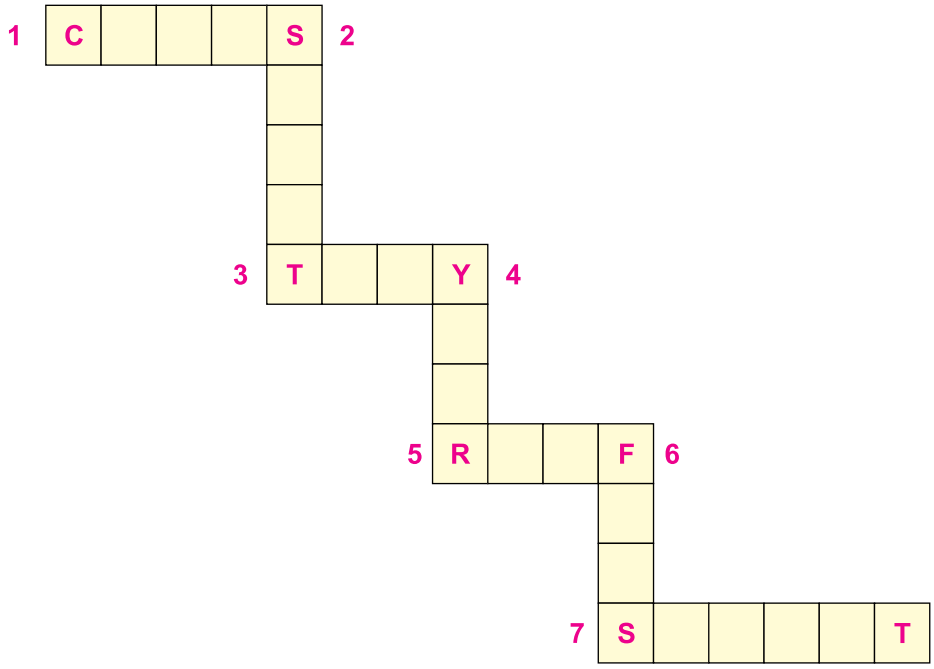
4. Complete the following word ladder with the help of the clues given below.



Clues

1. Mother will be very _____ if you don't go to school.

2. As soon as he caught _____ of the teacher, Mohan started writing.

3. How do you like my _____ kitchen garden? Big enough for you, is it?

4. My youngest sister is now a _____ old.

5. Standing on the _____, he saw children playing on the road.

6. Don't make such a_____. Nothing will happen.

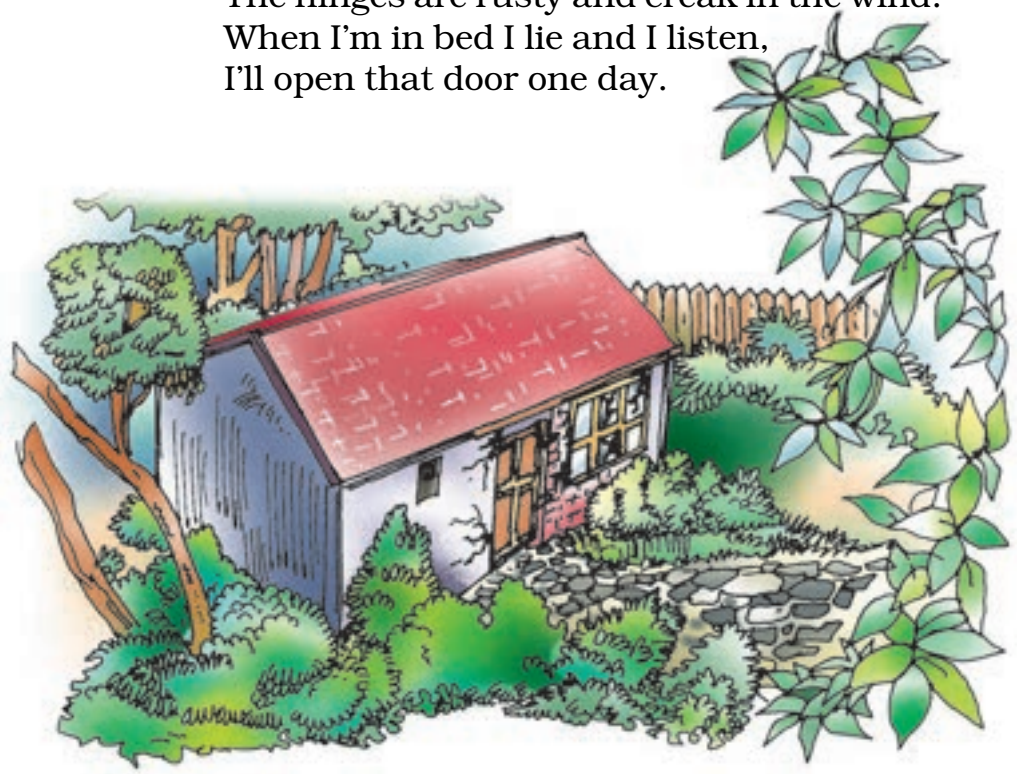
7. Don't cross the_____ till the green light comes on.

The Shed

Do you know what a shed is? A cow shed, a tool shed, a wood shed, for example. It's a small room, away from the main house, for storing or keeping things, animals, tools, vehicles, etc. Ask your partner if she/he has ever seen a shed. Let her/him describe it to the class.

Now read the poem.

There's a shed at the bottom of our garden
With a spider's web hanging across the door,
The hinges are rusty and creak in the wind.
When I'm in bed I lie and I listen,
I'll open that door one day.



There's a dusty old window around at the side
With three cracked panes of glass,
I often think there's someone staring at me
Each time that I pass,
I'll peep through that window one day.

My brother says there's a ghost in the shed
Who hides under the rotten floorboards,
And if I ever dare to set foot inside
He'll jump out and chop off my head,
But I'll take a peek one day.

I know that there isn't really a ghost,
My brother tells lies to keep the shed for his den;
There isn't anyone staring or making strange noises
And the spider has been gone from his web
since I don't know when,
I'll go into that shed one day soon,

But not just yet...

FRANK FLYNN

Working with the Poem

1. Answer the following questions.
   (i) Who is the speaker in the poem?
   (ii) Is she/he afraid or curious, or both?
   (iii) What is she/he planning to do soon?
   (iv) "But not just yet..." suggests doubt, fear, hesitation, laziness or something else. Choose the word which seems right to you. Tell others why you chose it.
2. Is there a room in your house or a house in your neighbourhood/locality where you would rather not go alone, and never at night? If there is such a place and a story to go with it, let others hear all about it.