



Unit-1

Supplementary

The Woman on Platform

About the Author:

Ruskin Bond (born 19 May 1934) is an Indian author of British descent. His first novel, *The Room on the Roof*, received the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 1957. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1992 for *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*, his novel in English. Bond has written hundreds of short stories, essays, novellas and books for children. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan in 2014.[1] He lives with his adopted family in Landour, Mussoorie.

Summary of the Story:

The narrator of the story, Arun, is a 12 year old boy studying in a boarding school. One day he was waiting all alone for his train on platform 8 of Ambala station. It was his second year at boarding school. He was going back to school after vacation. His parents thought that he was old enough to travel alone. His train was to come at midnight. He had come much earlier for his train. It was a long wait. So he passed his time in watching whatever went on at the platform. He spent his time pacing up and down the platform, reading books or throwing biscuits to stray dogs. When he was tired, he sat down on his suitcase.

Just then, he heard a woman's soft voice behind him. She was a woman of over 30 with pale face and dark kind eyes. She was dressed in a white sari. She wore no jewels but had a dignity about her. She asked him if he was alone. He told her that he was alone and his train would come around midnight. She was very gentle and soft in her questions about him. She invited him to go with her to the refreshment room and have something to eat. Arun felt like refusing her offer out of shyness and suspicion, but he could not do so as he was impressed by her kind manner. Asking a coolie to keep a watch on his suitcase, she took Arun by the hand and led him to the dining room.

She ordered tea and samosas and jalebies. The narrator was happy and started taking interest in her. Then he became friendly with the kind woman. She listened to what he said about himself. She did not ask the narrator much. But she seemed to be happy in watching him eat and talk. While returning from the refreshment room, they saw a boy jumping across a rail track beside which an engine was coming. The woman was frightened and pained. She had dug her fingers into Arun's flesh. She calmed down only when the boy reached the other side. The narrator tried to comfort and reassure her. The woman smiled and pressed Arun's hand gratefully. Then both came to the place where Arun's suitcase was placed.



Arun saw Satish with his mother. Satish was Arun's class-fellow. Satish called the narrator by his name Arun and introduced him to his mother. She was a large and stern looking woman with spectacles. She took the other woman to be Arun's mother. Arun did not say so, but the woman herself said that she was Arun's mother.

Satish's mother did a lot of talking after that. She said that it was a nuisance to wait for a train in the middle of the night. She was full of complaints regarding a boy travelling alone. She was also suspicious of strangers hanging around. Arun felt happy when the woman said that Arun could travel alone. Satish's mother advised Arun to be careful about strangers while travelling alone. Arun disliked the tone of Satish's mother and her bossing over him. Arun looked at the stranger woman who had given him tea and snacks and said that he liked strangers. Satish's mother was shocked at being contradicted. As she repeated her warning Arun looked angrily at her and moved closer to the stranger woman.

When the train came, Satish and Arun got into a compartment. Satish's mother gave him some fruits, a chocolate, and a cricket bat. She was again full of advice and asked them to be careful about strangers. She asked them not to lean their heads out of the windows and avoid eating rubbish on the way. Arun began to hate her for her hard and stern ways.

Arun bids good bye to the stranger. The other woman was standing there quietly. She did not say any word, but she felt sad. Arun held her hands and she smiled. Arun at last kissed her cheeks. When the train moved slowly out of the station, Satish bade good bye to his mother. Arun also did the same. He addressed the woman as 'mother'. He continued gazing at her until she was lost in the milling crowd.

Glossary:

1. inferno (n) – region that resembles hell
2. heaving (v) – to raise or lift with force
3. dismally (adv) – cheerless
4. serenity (n) – reverence
5. encounter (v) – brief meeting
6. clutched (v) – grasped (something) tightly
7. imposing (adj) – grand and impressive in appearance
8. embarrassed (v) – felt awkward, self-conscious, or ashamed
9. nuisance (n) – causing inconvenience or annoyance



10. staggered (v) – walked or moved unsteadily, as if about to fall
11. wagging (v) – move rapidly to and fro
12. resentfully (adv) – feeling or expressing bitterness or indignation at having
13. been treated unfairly
14. grinning (v) – smiling broadly
15. squatting (v) – crouch or sit with one's knees bent and one's heels
16. close to or touching the back of one's thighs
17. hustling (v) – push roughly; jostle
18. shrieked (v) – uttered a high-pitched piercing sound
19. mowed (v) – moved slowly into the crowd station
20. patronizing (adj) – treat in a way that is apparently kind
21. obviously (adv) – in a way that is easily perceived or understood; clearly
22. jolted (v) – moved with sudden jerk

A. Choose the best answers:

1. Satish's mother handed to her son

- a) bag of pencil
- b) bag of vegetables
- c) big box of chocolates
- d) cricket ball

Answer:

- c) big box of chocolates

2. The train would come at

- a) one o'clock
- b) twelve o'clock
- c) two o'clock
- d) eleven o'clock

Answer:

- b) twelve O'clock

3. The strange lady gave to Arun.

- a) coffee and vada
- b) tea and bajji
- c) samosas and jalebis
- d) black tea and cake



Answer:

c) samosas and jalebis

4. Arun was sitting on platform

a) no. 7

b) no. 8

c) no. 4

d) no. 3

Answer:

b) no. 8

5. Satish and Arun were years old boys.

a) 12

b) 11

c) 13

d) 10

Answer:

a) 12

B. Match the following:

1. woman in white -mother of Satish

2. train - boy of same age

3. bowler - dressed simply

4. Satish -waves of stream

5. spectacles - Arun

Answer:

1. woman in white -dressed simply

2. train - waves of stream

3. bowler - Arun

4. Satish - boy of same age

5. spectacles -mother of Satish

C. Identify the character:



1. I am glad to know that.

Answer:

Mother of Satish

2. Are you all alone, my son?

Answer:

strange lady

3. Yes, I am going to school.

Answer:

Arun

4. He is one of my friends.

Answer:

Satish

5. Goodbye mother.

Answer:

Arun