

Unit -4 (A)

Vitamin-M

 (By Asha Nehemiah)

Key Points of the Chapter

- This heart-warming story "Vitamin-M" by Asha Nehemiah shows the importance of caring for the elderly with respect and love instead of treating them like children.
- Grandpa, who seems forgetful and frail, actually proves to be clever, independent and full of life. He cleverly tricks Ravi while enjoying his day out.
- Ravi learns that elderly people need freedom, dignity and affection, not constant supervision or overprotection.
- The chapter highlights how grandparents bring wisdom, generosity, humour and family bonding into our lives.

Detailed Summary

The story revolves around Ravi and his grandfather, who has recently come to live with the family in the city because he is considered too old to live alone. Ravi's mother believes Grandpa has become forgetful and even wishes for a "Vitamin-M" to improve his memory. At seventy-five, Grandpa has been entirely self-sufficient for most of his life, even taking over all household duties after his wife died ten years ago." Grandpa was formerly a lawyer, which explains his firm, assertive personality and strong sense of independence and self-respect. However, Grandpa dislikes the noisy, crowded city and longs for his peaceful home with the mango tree. He feels hurt when he is treated like a child and restricted from going out alone.

One day, when Ravi's mother goes to work, she asks Ravi to take care of Grandpa and not let him step out alone. But Grandpa insists on going to buy a Tamil newspaper by himself. Before heading out, Grandpa picked up his beautiful shiny-black mahogany walking stick with a brass handle carved in the shape of an eagle's head and put on his bright-yellow cap. Not wanting to hurt him, Ravi allows him to go but secretly follows him to ensure his safety. During this outing, Grandpa enjoys himself fully-he eats peanuts in the park, drinks tea, eats bananas and ice cream at a stall, and even visits a barber. Meanwhile, Ravi struggles to keep track of him, facing several funny and embarrassing situations while hiding behind bushes, trees, and stalls.

Things become confusing when Grandpa boards a bus. Ravi follows him, only to realise that the man wearing Grandpa's yellow cap is actually a stranger. Grandpa, true to his generous nature, gave his cap to a stranger in the barber shop because it was a hot day. This accidentally misled Ravi completely. Worried and tired, Ravi returns home, fearing the worst. To his great relief, he finds Grandpa safely at home, sleeping peacefully.

Later, Grandpa surprises everyone by giving them gifts on his own birthday. He gives Ravi a hardcover book titled The Best Detective Stories, hinting that he knew Ravi had been following him.. This reveals Grandpa's sharpness and awareness.

In the end, the family realises that Grandpa is not forgetful or incapable. Instead, they were wrong to underestimate him. The story highlights that elders need respect, independence, and understanding rather than unnecessary control.

Theme/Message

Theme

The story highlights the importance of respect, love, and dignity for the elderly. It shows that although older people may appear frail or forgetful, they often possess sharp minds, intelligence, and independence. Grandpa's actions reveal that he is not weak but capable, confident, and aware of everything happening around him. The theme also focuses on how society sometimes misjudges the elderly, treating them like children instead of recognising their life experience and wisdom. It emphasises that ageing does not reduce a person's abilities or self-respect. Overall, the story conveys that elders deserve to be treated with understanding, trust, and dignity, not pity or unnecessary control.

Message

The story conveys that instead of over-protecting or treating grandparents like children, we should give them freedom, respect, and emotional support. It teaches that elders value independence and self-respect more than constant supervision. The idea of "Vitamin-M" is symbolic, showing that what they truly need is not medicine but love, care, and understanding. The story encourages us to listen to their experiences, learn from their wisdom, and appreciate their presence in our lives. It also reminds us that elders are not helpless but capable individuals who deserve trust. Ultimately, it highlights that affection, respect, and companionship are the real things that keep them happy and valued.

Difficult Words

1. Frail	–	weak and delicate
2. Shuddered	–	trembled with fear or disgust
3. Poky	–	small and uncomfortable
4. Forbid	–	not allow
5. Pottering	–	moving about slowly doing small tasks
6. Winced	–	showed an expression of embarrassment
7. Jauntily	–	happily and confidently
8. Crouch	–	bend low to hide
9. Ducking	–	moving head or body down quickly
10. Deterred	–	prevented from doing something
11. Confront	–	face someone directly
12. Frantic	–	very frightened and worried
13. Creases	–	lines or wrinkles
14. Darted	–	looked quickly
15. Trailing	–	following secretly
16. Solemnly	–	seriously