

UNIT-4

CHAPTER 1: (Environment)

The Cherry Tree by King Robert Bruce

About the Chapter The story is about Rakesh, a young boy who plants a cherry seed with the encouragement of his grandfather. As the tree grows alongside Rakesh, it becomes a symbol of patience, love and the bond between generations. The story highlights the importance of nature, family ties and caring for the environment.

Important Characters :

Rakesh A curious and caring boy who learns valuable lessons about growth, patience and nature through planting and nurturing the cherry tree.

Grandfather A wise and loving elder who shares stories and teaches Rakesh about life, nature and responsibility.

The Cherry Tree A symbol of growth, hope and the connection between Rakesh and his grandfather.

The Woman A careless stranger who harms the cherry tree, representing thoughtlessness and the consequences of not respecting nature.

The Villagers Members of the community who witness and react to the events involving the cherry tree and Rakesh's family.

Part I :

Six-year-old Rakesh walked home from the Mussoorie bazaar, happily eating a bunch of bright red cherries from Kashmir. He lived with his grandfather in a small cottage near the forest, while his parents worked on farms in a distant village. Since there were no schools in his village, Rakesh stayed in Mussoorie to study. Life with his grandfather was simple, quiet and close to nature.

Only three cherries were left when Rakesh reached home. He offered one to his grandfather and kept the last seed in his mouth, wondering if it was lucky. Grandfather told him that nothing is lucky unless we use it well and suggested planting it. Rakesh planted the seed in a soft, quiet spot in the garden and forgot about it as he ran off to play cricket.

Winter brought cold winds that swept through the deodar trees, leaving the garden bare. In the evenings, Rakesh and his grandfather sat by a charcoal fire-sharing stories and reading newspapers. Grandfather's spooky tales were far more thrilling to Rakesh than the dull headlines. Outside, the garden waited quietly beneath the cold skies.

As spring arrived, birds returned and the forest came alive again. One morning, Rakesh spotted what looked like a wig in the garden but realized it was rooted. It was the cherry seedling they had planted months ago! Delighted, he called Grandfather, both amazed that the tiny seed had survived winter and sprouted.

The sapling was just four inches tall and Grandfather reminded Rakesh to water it gently. Rakesh gave it careful attention, even placing pebbles around it for "privacy." Though it didn't seem to grow at first, he stayed patient. After a few weeks, he noticed it had grown an inch-enough to make him smile.

The monsoon rains arrived early, bringing life back to the hills and helping the cherry tree grow rapidly. It soon reached two feet in height, much to Rakesh's joy. But then a goat wandered into the garden and ate all the leaves. Rakesh was crushed but Grandfather reassured him that cherry trees are strong and would grow again.

Part II:

After the goat attack, the cherry tree slowly began to grow new leaves. But before long, a grass-cutter accidentally chopped it in half with her scythe. Rakesh feared it was the end but Grandfather assured him it would recover. To everyone's surprise, the tree came back stronger, with fresh green shoots.

Rakesh turned eight and spent part of the monsoon helping his parents in the village. When he returned, he was delighted to see the cherry tree had grown up to his chest. He lovingly cared for it, even protecting it from caterpillars. His bond with the tree deepened as he saw it endure and flourish.

Winter arrived early that year, covering the hills in snow and bending the little tree under its weight. The cold forced mice into the cottage roof and blocked roads kept the newspaper from arriving. Grandfather grew grumpy and even his stories started to sound sad. Yet the cherry tree stood firm in the cold.

On Rakesh's ninth birthday, something magical happened-a single pale pink blossom appeared on the cherry tree. Grandfather called him out to see it and both stood in awe of the small miracle. The tree was now four years old, just like the journey they had taken together.

As time passed, the tree grew taller than Rakesh and eventually, even taller than Grandfather. Spring brought more blossoms, followed by cherries-too sour for Rakesh but perfect for birds. The tree became a little world of its own, visited by bees, birds and butterflies.

One afternoon, Grandfather relaxed in a cane chair under the tree, admiring its shade and rustling leaves. Rakesh joined him and the two sat silently, listening to forest sounds. When Rakesh asked why this tree felt so special, Grandfather replied, "Because we planted it ourselves." Rakesh gently touched the bark and whispered, "Is this what it feels like to be God?"

CHAPTER 2: (Environment)

Harvest Hymn by sarojni naidu

About the Chapter : This poem is a devotional hymn where villagers offer thanks to nature and divine forces-like the Sun (Surya) Rain (Varuna), and Earth (Prithvi)-for a successful harvest. Men, women and the entire community come together in unity, joy and gratitude, celebrating the gifts of nature with music, songs and offerings.

Important Characters :

Surya : (Sun God) A powerful and generous deity, called the lord of the lotus and the harvest. People honour him for bringing warmth, life and prosperity.

Varuna : (Rain God) The lord of rain, dew and the oceans, who nourishes the fields with water. People thank him for his care and support.

Prithvi : (Mother Earth) The queen of the harvest and mother of all life, who provides food, shelter and richness through her soil. She is worshipped by the women as loving, strong and full of blessings.

Om : (The Supreme God / Divine Spirit) Referred to as the Lord of the Universe and the Life of all life. All voices unite to offer their lives and prayers to him.

The People : (Men and Women) Devoted worshippers who celebrate the gods through song, garlands, music and prayer. They are grateful, united and respectful towards nature and divine forces that sustain life.

Stanza-wise Explanation

Stanza 1 :

Men's Voices

Lord of the lotus, lord of the harvest, Bright and munificent lord of the morn!

Thine is the bounty that prospered our sowing, Thine is the bounty that nurtured our corn.

Explanation : In the opening stanza of this devotional hymn, the men begin by praising Surya, the Sun God. They call him the lord of the lotus and the harvest, because his sunlight helps both flowers and crops to grow. They describe him as generous and bright, bringing light each morning.

They believe that because of his sunlight, their seeds grew strong and their crops turned into healthy corn. Surya is seen as the one who made their harvest successful.

Stanza 2 :

We bring thee our songs and our garlands for tribute, The gold of our fields and the gold of our fruit;
O giver of mellowing radiance, we hail thee, We praise thee, O Surya, with cymbal and flute.

Explanation : In this stanza, the men express their gratitude to Surya by offering songs, garlands and golden fruits and grains from their fields. They call these crops 'gold' to show how precious they are.

They thank Surya for his gentle sunlight that ripened their harvest. They celebrate him by playing music with cymbals and flutes, showing joy and respect.

Stanza 3 :

Lord of the rainbow, lord of the harvest, Great and beneficent lord of the main!

Thine is the mercy that cherished our furrows, Thine is the mercy that fostered our grain.

Explanation : In this stanza, the men address Varuna as the lord of the rainbow and the ocean (referred to as 'main'), symbols of his control over water. They describe rain as his divine mercy, which moistens the soil and fills the furrows-trenches made for sowing seeds. This gentle rainfall ensures that their crops thrive.

Varuna is honoured for his life-giving kindness that makes their fields fertile and productive.

Stanza 4 :

We bring thee our thanks and our garlands for tribute, The wealth of our valleys, new-garnered and ripe;

O sender of rain and the dewfall, we hail thee, We praise thee, Varuna, with cymbal and pipe.

Explanation : In this stanza, the men offer their thanks and garlands to Varuna for the fresh and ripe crops they have just gathered. They refer to their harvest as the 'wealth of our valleys', which shows how valuable the crops are. Varuna is praised as the one who sends both rain and dew, which are vital for farming. Like before, the people honour him with music and joyful celebrations.

Stanza 5 :

Women's Voices

Queen of the gourd-flower, queen of the harvest, Sweet and omnipotent mother, O Earth!

Thine is the plentiful bosom that feeds us, Thine is the womb where our riches have birth.

Explanation : In this stanza, the women speak and offer praise to Prithvi, or Mother Earth. They call her the queen of the harvest and the gourd-flower (a plant that grows from the earth). She is described as a kind and all-powerful mother who feeds them through her rich soil. Everything they grow and own comes from her womb-the place where life begins. This shows deep respect and love for nature.

Stanza 6 :

We bring thee our love and our garlands for tribute, With gifts of thy opulent giving we come;
O source of our manifold gladness, we hail thee, We praise thee, O Prithvi, with cymbal and drum.

Explanation : In this stanza, the women bring garlands and gifts from nature to thank Mother Earth. They are grateful for all the blessings she gives-food, flowers, water and life itself. She is called the source of 'manifold gladness', meaning many kinds of happiness. The women praise her with love and music played on cymbals and drums.

Stanza 7 :

All Voices

Lord of the Universe, Lord of our being, Father eternal, ineffable Om!

Thou art the Seed and the Scythe of our harvests, Thou art our Hands and our Heart and our Home.

Explanation : In this stanza, all voices join together to praise Om, the Supreme God, who is the source of all life. He is called eternal and beyond description ('ineffable'). They say he is both the beginning (seed) and the end (scythe used to cut crops) of life. God is in everything-in their hands (work), heart (feelings) and home (family). He is the spirit behind all they do.

Stanza 8 :

We bring thee our lives and our labours for tribute, Grant us thy succour, thy counsel, thy care.

O Life of all life and all blessing, we hail thee, We praise thee, O Lord, with cymbal and prayer.

Explanation : The people now offer their entire lives and hard work to God. They ask for his support, guidance and protection. They call him the source of all life and all blessings. Finally, they end the prayer by praising him with music and deep devotion.

CHAPTER 3: (Environment)

Waiting for the Rain by Kamakshi Balasubramanian

About the Chapter : This story follows Velu, a dedicated farmer facing a harsh drought. While others turn to superstition, Velu seeks logical answers. Disappointed, he meets a wise old woman who explains that the land, like people, needs rest. Her words help him see nature differently. Just as he accepts this wisdom, rain arrives. The story highlights patience, harmony with nature and the quiet strength found in hope and understanding.

Important Characters :

Velu : A hardworking and sincere farmer who is deeply connected to his land.

Old Woman : A wise and kind stranger who helps Velu understand the need for nature's rest.

Velu's Neighbours : Fellow farmers who suggest consulting astrologers during the drought.

Weather Office Staff : Officials who are unable to explain the unusual absence of rain.

Chapter Summary

Part I : Velu, a dedicated farmer, begins each day hoping for rain, even as the skies remain dry. For six years, his land has rewarded his efforts with good crops and he has never stopped working. He believes that constant hard work will eventually bring success. But this year, something feels different.

As summer ends without rain, the village begins to worry. The soil cracks, fields remain empty and farming comes to a halt. Many villagers turn to rituals and astrologers, hoping for divine help. The drought begins to affect not just crops but the spirit of the people.

Velu refuses to believe in superstition and travels to the city for answers from the weather office. But even the scientists are confused-the weather conditions seem right, yet there's no rain. Velu returns with no solution, only dust in his throat and a heart full of questions.

Weary and disappointed, Velu rests under a large tree on his way home. There, he notices an old woman sitting calmly with a gentle smile. Though troubled, he finds a sense of peace in her presence. This quiet encounter begins to change something within him.

Part II : Velu asks the old woman how she can smile when the land is suffering. She listens kindly and suggests something new-that maybe the land simply needs to rest. Her words, though simple, offer a different way of seeing the drought-not as a curse but a pause.

Velu is confused; he has always believed that more labour means better harvest. He shares his pain of being unable to farm. The old woman gently explains that like all living things, even the land can grow tired. Rest is not failure, but part of healing.

She compares nature to a loving mother who knows when her children need rest. The drought, she says, may be nature's way of giving the earth time to recover. Her words sow a new understanding in Velu's heart-that care, not control, brings balance.

As Velu walks back, he feels lighter despite the dry land. He begins to see his field with gentler eyes. Then, a cool breeze brushes past him, followed by a drop of rain. Looking up, he sees the long-awaited clouds-rain is finally coming.

Velu smiles with relief and joy. The rain brings more than just water-it brings renewal and peace. He rushes home, carrying not just good news but a new wisdom: that nature has its own time and sometimes, the most powerful thing we can do is wait.