

Tender Heart High School, Sec-33B, Chandigarh

Class:IX

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Synopsis: The Boy Who Broke the Bank

The story begins with Nathu, the sweeper-boy, angrily sweeping the steps of the Pipalnagar Bank. The bank was owned by a local rich man Seth Govind Ram. the Washerman's son, Sitaram, on his way to deliver freshly ironed clothes enquires about the cause of Nathu's annoyance. Nathu had asked for a raise but he neither

got the raise nor his salary, even on the twentieth of the month. He intended to quit his job at the bank once he received his salary. Sitaram continues on his way promising to look out for a job for Nathu. Sitaram meets Mrs Srivastava at the fourth home of his round. He hears her mention that she is in need of a sweeper. Sitaram sees an opening for his friend. He recommends Nathu, adding that the bank was not giving him his salary so he wants to quit the job.

Mrs Srivastava felt that the bank is not paying its employees. After instructing her maid and the cook, she heads to the market to checkout the cloth shops and purchase cloth. She meets her friend Mrs Bhushan under a large tamarind tree at one end of the market. After exhausting all topics of discussion such as the sweltering heat and the cloth she purchased, she tells Mrs Bhushan that the bank does not have money to pay its employees. She has come to know of this from the sweeper. This part of the conversation immediately catches Mrs Bhushan's attention. She concludes that if the sweeper is not getting his salary, other employees too must not be getting paid. She rushes to look for her husband

to share this juicy news . She finds her husband chatting with Kamal Kishore, the photography shop's Owner. She tells him that the Pipalnagar bank is about to go bankrupt as it has stopped paying its employees. Kamal Kishore is not perturbed as he did not

have money in the bank. He knows his neighbour, Deep Chand the barber has an account in the bank . So he rushes to tell him the news and advise him to withdraw his money from the bank.

Deep Chand was cutting the hair of an elderly gentleman who gets up mid way of his haircut as soon as he hears the news. He rushes to the general merchant's store to call up Seth Govind The Seth is holidaying in Kashmir so he could not be contacted. The gentleman

misconstrues the Seth's absence as his flight to avoid the penalties of his bank going bankrupt. The old gentleman thus, tries to verify the rumour. Originating from the general store the so called confirmation of the rumour gives it validity and it spreads throughout the bazaar-the customers, the betel-seller, the tailor, the free vendor the jeweller and the beggar. These are mentioned as their shops or establishments are regular haunts where people gather to chat up. It is here the narrator mentions the beggar who is known to be lame leaps up and sprints towards the bank to withdraw his savings of one thousand rupees-a handsome sum.

The town has never before faced any crisis-natural or man-made. So the crashing of the bank excites all its residents. Those who have money rush to withdraw others are glad that they don't have money in the bank. Everyone is aware of the luxurious lifestyle of the owner leading to many stories for the reasons for the collapse of the bank. Rumours such as the Seth fleeing the state, the Seth fleeing the country and the Seth hiding in the town are doing rounds. One said the Seth hanged himself and another added that the sweeper-boy found him. By noon the bank has finished all its cash reserves. They could get more cash but it would take time. Moreover the owner is not contactable to add to the woes of the bank manager. The bank manager tries to placate the irritated customers but nobody is willing to listen to him. They start shouting,. Abetted by miscreants who have no money in the bank they start throwing stones and rubbish at the bank.

The next day, the sweeper unaware of the collapse of the bank is more irritated with the glass, stones and rubbish that he has to sweep. His friend and confidant, Sitaram tells him that the bank has collapsed and he would have to look for a new job. Despite this the sweeper-boy sweeps the bank's steps clean and decides to wait for the manager to arrive. While waiting, he innocently wonders what could have caused the bank to collapse and for him the event is ironic and a mystery.

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