

CLASS 8 ENGLISH 2

THE BOY WHO BROKE THE BANK

Answer these questions:

1. Why was Nathu, the sweeper boy, annoyed?

Ans: Nathu, the sweeper-boy, was annoyed because his employer, Seth Govind Ram's careless business dealings had almost left him penniless. Nathu hadn't even received his regular pay for two months. Govind Ram owned a small local bank and Nathu could not understand how he could hold up a poor man's salary.

2. How did the news about the bank change from Mrs. Prakash's telling to Mrs. Bhushan's?(Para 11: para 13 & 15)

Ans: Mrs Prakash informed Mrs Bhushan that Seth Govind Ram's bank was not being able to pay its employees for two months, which included Nathu, the sweeper-boy of the bank. Mrs Bhushan concluded that if the bank was failing to pay its sweeper, then it must have gone bankrupt. She then told her husband and others that the bank had not paid its employees for three months. This is how the news about the bank changed from Mrs Prakash's telling to Mrs Bhushan's.

3. How did the barber and his customer react to the news about the bank? What words in para 17 tell you that the customer was more worried about his money than his injury?

Ans: Faiz Hussain, the barber, was so shocked to hear the news of the bank going bankrupt that his hands shook and he nicked his customer's right ear. The customer, an elderly gentleman, yelped with pain and distress – pain because of the cut and distress because of the news he had just heard. "With one side of his neck still unshaved, he ran out of the shop to a general store where there was a telephone." This line shows that the customer was more worried about his money than his injury.

4. Seth Govind Ram was known in town as a man of wealth whose haphazard business dealings had often brought him to the verge of ruin. Answer these questions about him.

a. What made the towns people think that the Seth had run away because of the bank's collapse? [para 17]

Ans: a The elderly customer at the barbershop ran out as soon as he got to know of the bank going insolvent. He went to a general store which had a telephone and dialled Seth Govind Ram's number. The Seth was not at home. He was holidaying in Kashmir. The elderly gentleman speculated that Seth Govind Ram had the left town. When this piece of information did its rounds in the bazaars, everyone else was convinced that the Seth had run away.

b. What were the absurd rumours that were spreading about Seth Govind ?[para 21]

Ans: b Among the absurd rumours that were spreading about the Seth, one was that he had fled the state. Others insisted that he had fled the country. Some believed that he was hiding somewhere close by, possibly within the town.

c. Do you think the Seth's reputation made the rumours easier to believe ? Why ?

Ans:c Yes, the Seth's reputation made the rumours easier to believe. This is because the Seth was known for his pleasure-loving attitude and careless business dealings. His frivolous ways made it difficult for the simple townsfolk to trust him entirely. Hence a lot of them withdrew their money from the bank, way ahead of the speculated crash.

5. "Everyone seems to have gone mad!" [para 22] a. Who said these words and why?

Ans: a. A clerk at the bank, which had supposedly gone bankrupt, said these words over the telephone to a relative. The relative had called him to get facts about the bank's collapse. The clerk said these words because he did not know anything about the alleged bankruptcy. He could not even understand why half the town was at the bank, trying to take their money out.

b. According to you, what incident in the story reflected the madness of the town at its peak?

Ans: b. The incident of the entire town gathering at the bank and demanding their money, threatening to break in reflects the "madness of the town at its peak". Mischief-makers, who had no investment in the bank, had also joined the crowd. When the manager tried to pacify them by declaring that the bank had plenty of money, nobody seemed to believe him. A few stones were hurled and the manager went inside closing the iron-grill gate. A brick smashed into the plate-glass window which advertised the bank's assets. This frenzied mob was ultimately dispersed off by timely police action.

6. Read paras 24 & 30 again and answer these questions

a. Do you think the town residents show any concern for workers like Nathu , the sweeper- boy ? How do you say so?

Ans: a. No, the town residents did not show any concern for workers like Nathu, the sweeper-boy. While the entire town protested against the bank going insolvent, everyone forgot about Nathu whose delayed pay had led to the speculation in the first place. On being probed, the clerks admitted that they have had their salaries. It was a few of the part-time workers who were getting paid late.

b. Who do you think will be more affected by the collapse of the bank? Businessmen like Seth Govindram or workers like Nathu ?

Ans: b. Part-time workers like Nathu will get more affected by the collapse of the bank than its rich owner, Seth Govind Ram. If the bank did shut down eventually, workers like Nathu would possibly never get their dues or salaries.

7. In your opinion, who was truly responsible for 'breaking' the bank ? Was it Nathu , Sitaram , the bank clerk , Seth Govind Ram or town folk? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans: It was Nathu who was responsible for 'breaking' the bank Nathu had complained to Sitaram, the washerman's son, about the irregular payment of his salary. In his idle conversation with Mrs Prakash, Sitaram mentioned that the bank could not pay its employees. Mrs Prakash informed her friend, Mrs Bhushan who immediately concluded that the bank had gone insolvent. From Mrs Bhushan, the rumour spread across the town like wildfire.