

# **B.A FIRST YEAR SECOND SEMESTER**

# Chapter-8

THE BLIND DOG 🐕



**R.K NARAYAN**

INTRODUCTION TO THE AUTHOR

**Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami** (10 October 1906 – 13 May 2001),<sup>[1]</sup> was an Indian writer known for his work set in the fictional South Indian town of [Malgudi](#). He was a leading author of early [Indian literature in English](#) along with [Mulk Raj Anand](#) and [Raja Ra](#)

R.k narayan was one of the most famous indian writers.

He was born in 1906 and died in 13 may, 2001.f

First he worked as a clerk and than as teacher.

He acheiver great success as a novelist and short story writer.

His works have been translated in many languages and he is famous of countries .

# INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY :

- ‘The Blind dog ‘ is one of the most famous stories of R.K Narayan. This is the story of a dog and his loyalty to a blind beggar. This story tells us about human greed and cruelty to animals. But the most important message in the story is the loyalty of a dog to his master. The blind beggar treats the dog cruelty. A shopkeeper cuts the cord which holds the dog and it becomes free. But after a few days it returns to the beggar on his own accord.

# COMPLETE TEXT

## The Blind Dog

R. K. Narayan

IT was not a very impressive or high-class dog ; it was one of those commonplace dogs one sees everywhere, colour of white and dust, tail mutilated at a young age by God knows whom, born in the street, and bred on the leavings and garbage of the market-place. He had spotty eyes and undistinguished carriage and needless pugnacity. Before he was two years old he had earned the scars of a hundred fights on his body. When he needed rest on hot afternoons he lay curled up under the **culvert** at the eastern gate of the market. In the evenings he set out on his daily rounds, loafed in the surrounding streets and lanes, engaged himself in skirmishes, picked up edibles on the roadside, and was back at the market gate by nightfall.

This life went on for three years. And then occurred a change in his life. A beggar, blind of both eyes, appeared at the market gate. An old woman led him up there early in the morning, seated him at the gate, and came up again at midday with some food, gathered his coins, and took him home at night. The dog was sleeping near by. He was stirred by the smell of food. He got up, came out of his shelter, and stood before the blind man, wagging his tail and gazing expectantly at the bowl, as he was eating his sparse meal. The blind man swept his arms about and asked : " Who is there ? " At which the dog went up and licked his hand. The blind man stroked its coat gently tail to ear and said : " What a beauty you are. Come with me " He threw a handful of food which the dog ate gratefully. It was perhaps an auspicious moment for starting a friendship. They met every day there, and the dog cut off much of its rambling to sit up beside the blind man and watch him receive alms morning to evening. In course of time observing him, the dog understood that the passers-by must give a coin, and whoever went away without dropping a coin was chased by the dog ; he tugged the edge of their clothes by his teeth and pulled them back to the old man at the gate and let go only after something was dropped in his bowl.

Among those who frequented this place was a village urchin, who had the mischief of a devil in him. He liked to tease the blind man by calling him names and by trying to pick up the coins in his bowl. The blind man helplessly shouted and cried and whirled his staff. On Thursdays this boy appeared at the gate, carrying on his head a basket loaded with cucumber or **plantain**. Every Thursday afternoon it was a crisis in the blind man's life. A seller of bright coloured but doubtful perfumes with his wares mounted on a wheeled platform, a man who spread out cheap story-books on a gunny sack, another man who carried coloured ribbons on an elaborate frame these were the people who usually gathered under the same arch, On a Thursday when the young man appeared at the Eastern gate one of them remarked, " Blind fellow ! Here comes your scourge "

"Oh, God, is this Thursday?" he wailed. He swept his arms about and called : " Dog, dog, come here, where are you ? " He made the peculiar noise which brought the dog to his side. He stroked his head and muttered : " Don't let that little rascal "

At this very moment the boy came up with a leer on his face.

" Blind man ! Still pretending you have no eyes. If you are really blind, you should not know this either " He stopped, his hand moving towards the bowl. The dog sprang on him and snapped his jaws on wrist. The boy extricated his hand and ran for his life. The dog bounded up behind him and chased him out of the market.

" See the mongrel's affection for this old fellow!" marvelled the perfume-vendor.

One evening at the usual time the old woman failed to turn up, and the blind man waited at the gate, worrying as the evening grew into night. As he sat fretting there, a neighbour came up and said : " Sami, don't wait for the old woman. She will not come again. She died this afternoon "

The blind man lost the only home he had, and the only person who cared for him in this world. The ribbon-vendor suggested : " Here, take this white tape " He held a length of the white cord which he had been selling " I will give this to you free of cost. Tie it to the dog and let him lead you about if he is really so fond of you "

Life for the dog took a new turn now. He came to take the place of the old woman. He lost his freedom completely. His world came to be circumscribed by the limits of the white cord which the ribbon-vendor had spared. He had to forget wholesale all his old life all his old haunts. He simply had to stay on for ever at the end of that string. When he saw other dogs, friends or foes, instinctively he sprang up, tugging the string, and this invariably earned him a kick from his master. "Rascal, want to tumble me down, have sense " In a few days the dog learnt to discipline his instinct and impulse. He ceased to take notice of other dogs, even if they came up and growled at his side. He lost his own orbit of movement and contact with his fellow-creatures.

To the extent of this loss his master gained. He moved about as he had never moved in his life. All day he was on his legs, led by the dog. With the staff in one hand and the dog-lead in the other he moved out of his home a corner in a **choultry** veranda a few yards off the market : he had moved in there after the old woman's death. He started out early in the day. He found that he could treble his income by moving about instead of staying in one place. He moved down the choultry street, and wherever he heard people's voices he stopped and held out his hands for alms. Shops, schools, hospitals, hotels he left nothing out. He gave a tug when he wanted the dog to stop, and shouted like a bullock-driver when he wanted him to move on. The dog protected his feet from going into pits, or stumping against steps or stones, and took him up inch by inch on safe ground and steps. For this sight people gave coins and helped him. Children gathered round him and gave him things to eat. A dog is essentially an active creature who punctuates his hectic rounds with well-defined periods of rest. But now this dog (henceforth to be known as Tiger) had lost all rest. He had rest only when the old man sat down somewhere. At night the old man slept with the cord turned around his finger.



"I can't take chances with you," he said. A great desire to earn more money than ever before seized his master, so that he felt any resting a waste of opportunity, and the dog had to be continuously on his feet. Sometimes his legs refused to move. But if he slowed down even slightly his master goaded him on fiercely with his staff. The dog whined and groaned under this thrust. " Don't whine, you rascal. Don't I give you your food ? You want to loaf, do you ? " swore the blind man. The dog lumbered up and down and round and round the market-place on slow steps, tied down to the blind tyrant. Long after the traffic at the market ceased, you could hear the night stabbed by the far-off wail of the tired dog. It lost its original appearance. As months rolled on, bones stuck up at his haunches and ribs were relieved through his fading coat.

The ribbon-seller, the novel-vendor and the perfumer observed it one evening, when business was slack, and held a conference among themselves : "It rends my heart to see that poor dog slaving. Can't we do something ? " The ribbon-seller remarked : " That rascal has started lending money for interest I heard it from that fruit-seller He is earning more than he needs. He has become a very devil for money "

At this point the perfumer's eyes caught the scissors dangling from the ribbon-rack. "Give it here," he said and moved on with the scissors in hand. The blind man was passing in front of the Eastern gate. The dog was straining the lead. There was a piece of bone lying on the way and the dog was straining to pick it up. The lead became taut and hurt the blind man's hand, and he tugged the string and kicked till the dog howled. It howled, but could not pass the bone lightly ; it tried to make another dash for it. The blind man was heaping curses on it. The perfumer stepped up, applied the scissors and snipped the cord. The dog bounced off and picked up the bone. The blind man stopped dead where he stood, with the other half of the string dangling in his hand. " Tiger ! Tiger ! Where are you ? " he cried. The perfumer moved away quietly, muttering : "You heartless devil ! You will never get at him again! He has his freedom!" The dog went off at top speed. He nosed about the ditches happily, hurled himself on other dogs, and ran round and round the fountain in the market-square barking, his eyes sparkling with joy. He returned to his favourite haunts and hung about the butcher's shop, tea-stall, and the bakery.

The ribbon-vendor and his two friends stood at the market gate and enjoyed the sight immensely as the blind man struggled to find his way about. He stood rooted to the spot waving his stick ; he felt as if he were hanging in mid-air. He was wailing. "Oh, where is my dog? Where is my dog? Won't someone give him back to me? I will murder it when I get at it again!" He groped about, tried to cross the road, came near being run over by a dozen vehicles at different points, tumbled and struggled and gasped." He'd deserve it if he was run over, this heartless blackguard" they said, observing him. However, the old man struggled through and with the help of someone found his way back to his corner in the choultry veranda and sank down on his gunnysack bed, half faint with the strain of his journey.

He was not seen for ten days, fifteen days and twenty days. Nor was the dog seen anywhere. They commented among themselves. "The dog must be loafing over the whole earth, free and happy. The beggar is perhaps gone for ever" Hardly was this sentence uttered when they heard the familiar tap-tap of the blind man's staff. They saw him again coming up the pavement led by the dog.

"Look! Look!" they cried. "He has again got at it and tied it up." The ribbon-seller could not contain himself. He ran up and said : " Where have you been all these days ? "

"Know what happened!" cried the blind man. "This dog ran away. I should have died in a day or two, confined to my corner, no food, not an anna to earn imprisoned in my corner. I should have perished if it continued for another day. But this thing returned."

"When? When?"

"Last night. At midnight as I slept in bed, he came and licked my face. I felt like murdering him. I gave him a blow which he will never forget again," said the blind man." I forgave him, after all a dog! He loafed as long as he could pick up some rubbish to eat on the road, but real hunger has driven him back to me, but he will not leave me again. See! I have got this" and he shook the lead : it was a steel chain this time.

Once again there was the dead, despairing look in the dog's eyes. "Go on, you fool," cried the blind man, shouting like an ox-driver. He tugged the chain, poked with the stick, and the dog moved away on slow steps. They stood listening to the tap-tap going away.

"Death alone can help that dog," cried the ribbon-seller, looking after it with a sigh. "What can we do with a creature who returns to his doom with such a free heart?"

# SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

- In The Blind Dog by R.K. Narayan we have the theme of struggle, connection, greed, freedom, control and loyalty. Taken from his Malgudi Days collection the story is narrated in the third person by an unnamed narrator and after reading the story the reader realises that Narayan may be exploring the theme of struggle. Both the blind man and Tiger have difficulties in their everyday lives. Each day the blind man struggles to get enough money to live on while Tiger struggles with getting food and ends up getting into fights with other dogs just in order to survive. It is as though both the blind man and Tiger have something in common or something that connects both of them. It is also interesting that at first the blind man is appreciative of Tiger's company and his diligence when it comes to people trying to steal from him. However as time passes the reader soon realises that the blind man is a tyrant when it comes to how he treats Tiger. Tiger for the blind man is not a pet or friend or a helping hand rather he is simply a work dog that is there to serve the blind man. Any type of life that Tiger had previously known is soon forgotten due to the tyranny of the blind man. If anything Tiger is there to serve the blind man just as a servant would serve their master.
- It is also noticeable that the blind man starts to become greedy. He wishes to increase his daily income so he works Tiger more and more. He also starts to lend other people money while at the same time charging them interest. While some may pity the blind man because of the very fact he is blind others might suggest that the blind man is becoming greedy and taking advantage of Tiger's good-nature. The blind man knows he will make more money by walking along the streets with Tiger leading the way and there is a sense that the main priority for the blind man is no longer just survival but he is beginning to be driven by a desire for more money. Rather than treating Tiger with kindness and being grateful that Tiger is helping him. The blind man often beats Tiger which may suggest that the blind man is being cruel.
- It may also be important that others notice how the blind man is treating Tiger as by having others notice what is happening Narayan may be using their voices as a consensus to stop what is happening to Tiger. The cutting of the ribbon by the ribbon vendor may also be important as symbolically this action acts as a path to freedom for Tiger. He is able to live his life as he had previously lived it. Running free. It is also noticeable after Tiger has been set free how reliant the blind man was on Tiger. He is no longer able to walk along the streets and his income drops severely. Something which causes great anguish to the blind man. At no stage in the story does the reader suspect that the blind man is repentant about his treatment of Tiger. If anything he wants to beat Tiger should he end up finding him. Which again suggests a servant and master relationship between Tiger and the blind man. Rather than a common bond of friendship between the two. If anything the relationship between Tiger and the blind man is one sided. In favour of the blind man. Yet the blind man never realises that he needs Tiger more than Tiger needs him.
- The end of the story is also interesting as Narayan appears to be exploring the theme of loyalty. By returning to the blind man Tiger is showing his loyalty. Even though it is clear to the reader that nothing will change between Tiger and the blind man. Something that is noticeable by the fact that the blind man now has bought a chain to ensure that Tiger does not run away again. There is a sense that the blind man is in complete control of Tiger again. As to why Tiger has returned is difficult to say when as readers we are aware of how badly he has been treated by the blind man. However it is possible that Narayan is suggesting that just as the blind man is blind so too is Tiger's loyalty. He is willing to forgive the blind man's actions towards him even though he has been unfairly treated. It is also possible that Tiger has sympathy for the blind man. Even though he knows

# Textual exercise with Answers :

- Exercise 1 Answers :
- A. Because she has died .
- B. The blind man lost the only home whne the old woman died.
- C. She tied a string round the dogs's neck and gave one end to the blind man.
- D. Old woman place .
- E, because he was tied with a string.
- F. Whenever the dog slowed or stopped .
- G. Because he was tied to a string.
- H. No. Because his life became limited.

## Exercise-2

# Answers to Very short Answer Questions

- 1. Of an ordinary Dog .
- 2. There were scars on his body from fights with other dogs.
- 3. Man gave the food to dog and the dog remained with him in the hope of food .
- 4. Picked coins from his bowl.
- 5. The woman who give him food and shelter.
- 6. He was a beggar.
- 7. That he was cruel.
- 8. He cut the string.

# Exercise-3

## Important short Answer Questions

- What happened to Dog once it became the blind man's companion ?
- Charactersketch of blind man.
- Describe the life of dog led after being set free from blind man and death of old woman.

# Long Answers Questions

- Describe the dog of the story . How did he became a companion of the blind beggar ?
- What happens to blind man and dog in the end ?
- How the life of both blind man and the dog changed when the dog was tied with a string?

# Vocabulary exercise

## Exercise - 1

### Answers

- a. Low
- B. Front
- C. Enmity
- D. Costly
- E. Vanish
- F. Imprisoned
- G. Nonsense
- H. Expenditure
- I. Partial



# Exercise-2

## Answers

- A. Procure
- B. Thankful
- C. Scamp
- D. Irritate
- E. Maliciously
- F. Liberty
- G. Smart
- H. Cruel
- I. Watch
- J. Injure

# Exercise-3

## Answers

- A. Carnivorous
- B. Ruminants
- C. Amphibians
- D. Natives
- E. Similar
- F. Irreparable
- G. Pantomime
- H. Leader

Feel free to ask if anything is unclear.

– *Thank you !* 😊