

B An Encounter with Bees

We walked home. The pleasure and pride which we had felt earlier in the evening had left us. In their place we had regret and sorrow. But we did not blame anyone. Our main *concern* was how to get well and fit by the following morning, for the boys and girls at school were *bound* to ask questions. What answers would we give? What would the teachers do? Perhaps they would stand us before the school and beat us. Perhaps they would flog us on top of it all for going honey-hunting when we should be doing our home-work. We were sad indeed.

While we were still thinking of this my sister came out of the bush at the back of our house and saw our appearance. She was shocked, and dashed in to tell Mother. We feared the worst.

When Mother came out, I was standing alone shivering with fever and fear. My father was not in and in this I was lucky for he, a severe man, would not mind whipping me there and then. Just then we heard an alarm coming from Nana's house. I heard 'Help! help! Nana has fainted.' I wondered. If only I could faint too, I would have my father's sympathy. But I did not faint.

I was laid on the mat and covered with many clothes. The village doctor was sent for but he did not come at once as he was busy treating Nana. When he came, he gave me some medicine to *lick*. It was sweet. It was mixed with honey. Every part of my body was rubbed with the same kind of medicine and I felt sticky. In about ten minutes I was sick all over the place. A little time after this I fell asleep and woke up in the morning completely recovered. All the swellings on my face and body had disappeared in my sleep. I looked into the mirror and I was my old self again.

As I got ready for school, I wondered what had happened to the others. Just then Dara came in looking happy. We both moved on to Nana's house. Apart from the bandage on his feet you wouldn't know it was the same boy who had been very ill and had fainted the night before. We were now satisfied that nobody would hear of our adventure at school.

But the news of the adventure had gone before us to the school. We did not know it. We walked into the school as usual as if nothing had happened. Then the boys and girls burst into laughter and a song. 'Tell us boys how sweet is the honey, how hard the bees sting?' They clapped their hands around us. All we could do was to bend our heads in shame.

Senior 2 Comprehension Exercise 02 June 2020.

Questions:

- 1 What had the boys gone out to do that afternoon?
- 2 How can you tell whether or not the attempt had been successful?
- 3 What had happened, and why were they so anxious to be completely well before the next morning?
- 4 Who saw the boys first?

- 5 Name one of the boys who had gone on the adventure with the story-teller.
- 6 How can you tell from the passage that the story-teller had had more than one companion on the adventure?
- 7 Was the story-teller beaten by his mother? What did she do?
- 8 How can we know whether or not his father beat him?
- 9 What did the village doctor do for him?
- 10 Did the boys expect to be laughed at at school? Explain.