

THE THIEF STORY -RUSKIN BOND

Synopsis:

The story is about two different people. One is a thief of 15 years of age and the other is a man of approximately 25 years, watching a wrestling match somewhere. The name of the person watching the match is Anil. The thief approaches Anil and starts talking to him because he feels that he had not robbed anyone in the past few days and thought that it would be easy to rob a simple person like Anil. They both start talking and Anil asks the thief his name. The thief introduces himself as Hari Singh. This is not his real name as he changes his name every month to escape his ex employers or police. Then they started talking about the wrestlers and Anil was leaving when Hari called him again and asked him if he could work for Anil. Anil said that he won't be able to pay him but could feed him if he knew how to cook. Hari lied that he knew how to cook. Anil took Hari to his room which was above a sweet shop. Hari cooked a meal which was really bad because Anil did not eat it. Anil asked Hari to leave but he tried to please Anil. Hari smiled in his most attractive way and Anil could not stop laughing looking at him. Anil agreed to teach Hari how to cook, write full sentences and add numbers. Hari was grateful as he knew that there would be no limit to robbing people once he learnt how to read and write.

The narrator used to like working for Anil as he used to make him tea in the morning and then go out to buy the groceries for the day. He also used to steal 1 rupee from the money that was given to him to buy the groceries everyday. Anil knew that he used to steal but did not mind.

Anil used to make money by irregular works. Sometimes he used to borrow money and the other day, when he had money, he would be lending it to other people. Whenever he used to get money, he would go out with his friends to celebrate.

One day, Anil came in with a bundle of notes and told Hari that he had sold a book to a publisher. At night he kept the money safely under the mattress of his bed. Hari realized that he had been working for Anil for more than a month and had not stolen anything apart from the 1 rupee that he kept everyday from the grocery money. Hari had many chances to steal as he had the key to the room as well. But he was surprised with the amount of trust Anil had on him as he had never seen such a trusting person in his life. This trust thing was preventing him from robbing Anil as Hari thought that robbing a careless person like Anil didn't make much difference because he might not even notice that he had been robbed and that took out all the fun from the work. Then he thought of stealing Anil's money and justified himself that if he didn't steal money from Anil then also he would waste it on his friends and also, Anil didn't pay him for the work that he did.

Hari then woke up at night and quietly crawled to Anil's bed. He steals the money and decides to leave the city by Lucknow Express that departed at 10:30. When he reached the station, the train had slowly started moving from the platform. He could have easily caught the train, but he hesitated and he himself did not know the reason for it. Before he had reached the station he counted the money and it was 600 rupees in 50 rupee notes. He could live a lavish life for 2 - 3 weeks with so much money. After the train had left, Hari was all alone at the train station. He was left with no place to sleep at night. The only person he knew was Anil and he had looted him as well. He sat on a bench in a park and as it started to rain, he sat down under the clock tower. Then he realized that the notes had got wet. He realized that learning how to read and write would help him to get a much more respectable and honest job which would pay him much more than these few hundred rupees. Then he decided

to go back to Anil's house.

He reached the room and placed the money back. Next morning, he woke up a bit late and Anil had already made his tea. Anil gave a 50 rupee note to Hari as he had got paid for some work and he would be paid regularly. Hari took the note in his hand and realized that the note was still wet from the rain last night. Hari realized that Anil had come to know about his misdeed but there was no sadness, anger or guilt in his mind. The narrator smiled in a beautiful way and it was genuine happiness as he knew that he had saved himself from the wrong road.
