

ENGLISH

CHAPTER 4: THE OLD-CLOCK SHOP



THE OLD-CLOCK SHOP

~Summary~

-by Khushwant Singh

The **story** took place in an **old-clock shop** in **Salt Lake City** during the **Christmas Eve**. Ray, its owner, was an **old deaf man**. Having finished the work, Ray stood up and was on his way to the **backroom** when the **front door opened**. There were two men: one was in his **twenties**, and the other was about **fifty**. The **younger man** stood at the **door** while the **older one** approached **Ray**. The latter looked **unfriendly**, and his eyes suggested that they were there to **steal**.

Hiding his **fear**, Ray pushed his **notepad** and a **pencil** across the counter to communicate with his visitor. He then explained to the **man** that he was **deaf**. Meanwhile, Ray took a closer look at the man and realised that he held a **gun** in his **right coat-pocket**. Though Ray knew the ill-intentions behind the men's visit, he wrote a **message** pointing at the '**loan board**'. He asked whether the man had come back to **retrieve** his **clock** or watch that he had **pledged**.

Though Ray wasn't a **pawnbroker**, he loaned **interest-free money** to the **needy**. The man soon **started** to feel at ease. He looked at his **wristwatch** and asked him how much it was **worth**. Ray gave him a **fifty-dollar note** though the watch wasn't of much **value**. Meanwhile, the man's **unfriendly eyes** had turned **grateful** as he experienced **kindness** and **compassion**. He promised **Ray** that he would come back to **pay** him **back**.

As the story ended, all the **clocks** and **timepieces** struck 12 in **harmony**. The music from the clocks filled the shop with **hope**, and the three men realised the **timeless message** of Christmas: '**Peace on earth, goodwill towards all**'.

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~Conclusion~

Ray's story shows that good behaviour and kind treatment can melt every heart. With his good nature, he manages to thwart the bad intentions of the two men. Instead of resorting to violence or bloodshed, they leave amicably.

This also teaches us that we should not panic or allow fear to overcome our senses in difficult situations. When handled with alertness and humanly understanding, even the most dangerous situations can be resolved peacefully.

NCERT SOLUTIONS

Questions (Page No. 14)

Question 1. What made Ray think the visitor was not really a shopper?

Answer: One of the two men who visited Ray was in his twenties, the other closer to fifty. The younger man remained at the door. The older man approached the counter with no sign of friendliness in his eyes. Ray observed the shape of a gun and a restless hand in the man's right coat-pocket. Ray's old wise eyes told him that the visitor was not really a shopper.

Question 2. Why do you think he had come to the shop?

Answer: He had come to the shop because he was down on luck and in great need of money.

Question 3. How did Ray communicate with him?

Answer: Ray communicated with him by slowly pushing a note pad and pencil to him across the counter. He smiled at the unfriendly face, then pointed to his ears and shook his head from side to side indicating to the visitor that he was deaf. He then wrote the words "May I help you" on the notepad.

Question 4. What do you think the man said to his friend who waited at the door?

Answer: The man might have informed his friend that Ray was deaf and there was no need to worry about anything. He could also have discussed with him what their next plan of action was.

Question 5. Ray was not a pawnbroker. Why then did he lend money to people in exchange for their old watches and clocks?

Answer: Ray was not a pawnbroker. He lent money to people in exchange for their old watches and clocks because he knew that they were in need of money. He loaned more money than he should have. He kept the watches till the owners wanted them back and he would return them at the same price he had paid, with no interest.

Question 6. "The watch was nothing special and yet had great powers." In what sense did it have 'great powers'?

Answer: “The watch was nothing special and yet had great powers.” It had ‘great powers’ because it was something that could be exchanged for money and a way to lead people out of a bad situation. On Christmas Eve it had saved the two men who entered the shop from doing something they might later have been sorry for.

Question 7. Do you think the man would ever come back to pick up the watch?

Answer: Although Ray had paid the man far more than what the watch was actually worth I think that the man would return. He must have been touched with Rays’ kindness towards him in spite of knowing full well the reason of their visit. He appreciated his generosity and when Ray looked into his eyes, he saw gratitude and they seemed to say, “Thank you.” That is why he left a note saying that he would be back to pick up the watch as soon as he could and wishing Ray a Merry Christmas.

Question 8. When did “the unfriendly face” of the visitor turn truly friendly?

Answer: The unfriendly face of the visitor turned truly friendly when he got the money for his watch which was not worth fifty dollars. Also, by giving him the money in exchange for the watch Ray had prevented him from doing something he would be later sorry for.

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