

KRISHNAGAR ACADEMY.

SUBJECT- ENGLISH II

22/6/2020-

CLASS - VII

Dear Students,

Here is the story for
you, Educating Mother, by
Suganthy Krishnamachari.

Read the text with the
help of the meanings given.

In the next class question
answers will be provided.

Stay Home Stay Safe.

Thank you

Educating Mother

Getting Started

- * Discuss in a small group the kind of stories that were told to you when you were a child and include the qualities of a good story teller as well.

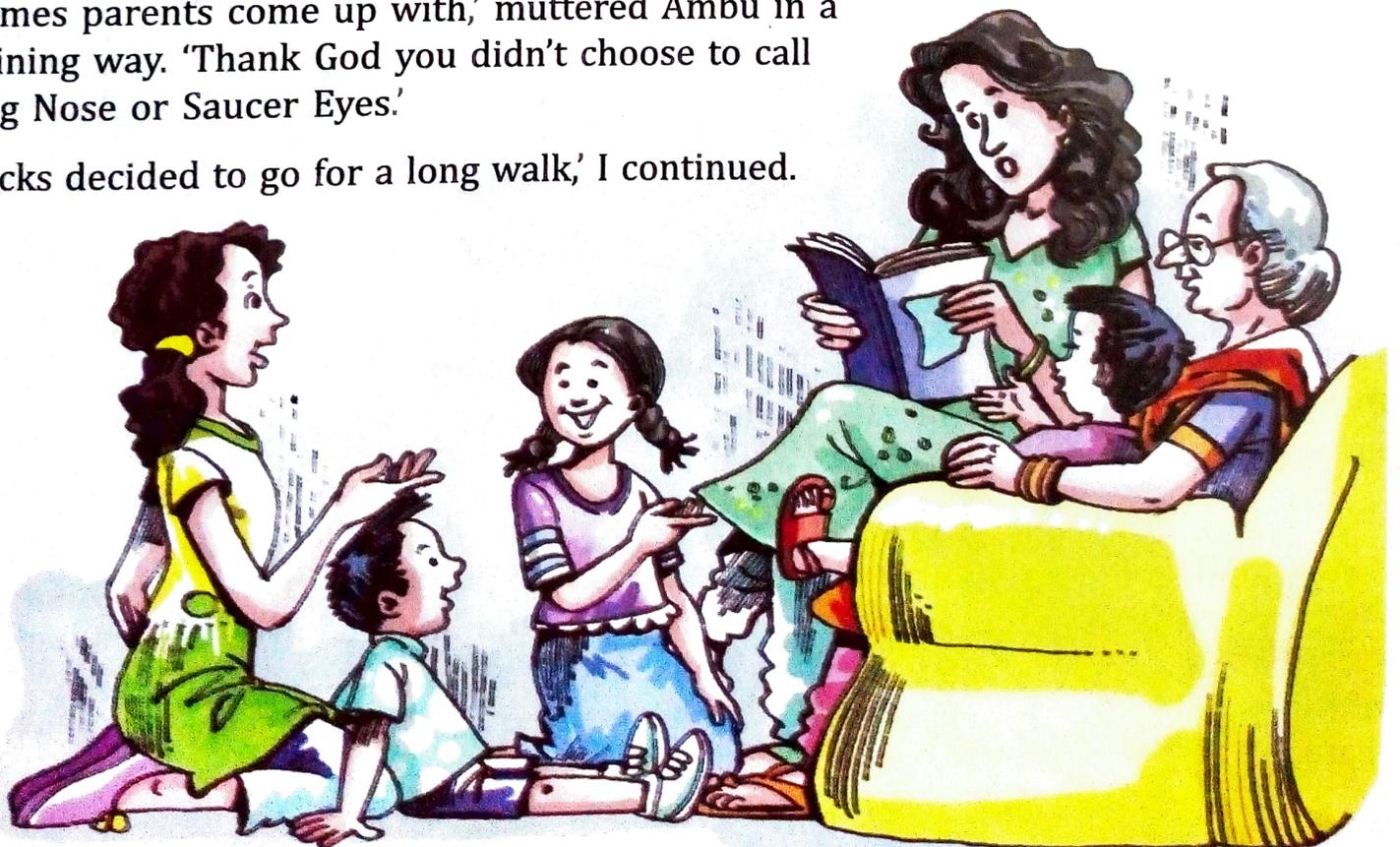
It all started when my mother asked me to tell the children a story. I cleared my throat and began, 'Long, long ago...' 'How long ago?' squeaked my three-year-old nephew Venku. 'Never mind. It was a long time ago. Let's get on with the story.'

'Try telling my history teacher that,' said my twelve-year-old daughter Ambu. 'She insists that I get all the dates right in my history test.'

I decided to ignore her. 'There was this girl called Goldilocks.'

'The names parents come up with,' muttered Ambu in a complaining way. 'Thank God you didn't choose to call me Long Nose or Saucer Eyes.'

'Goldilocks decided to go for a long walk,' I continued.



'Did she have a weight problem?' asked my four-year-old son Ramu, who seemingly appeared curious for a greater insight in the story.

'No, she didn't. She went for a long walk and strayed into the forest. Soon, she discovered that she was lost.'

'If she'd had a cell phone, she could have called her mother,' said my six-year-old niece Janaki with concern.

'Don't be stupid. They had no cell phones in those days,' said Ambu.

'Oh, so it was that long ago!' exclaimed Janaki, as if the pre-cell phone era belonged to the **ante-diluvian** days.

'The poor thing came to a cottage that belonged to the three bears. She was so hungry that she made straight for the dining room. There, on a table, were three cups of porridge. She had a sip from Father Bear's cup. It was too hot. Mother Bear's porridge was too cold. But the porridge in Baby Bear's cup was just right. So she drank the Baby Bear's porridge.'

'Actually I think Goldilocks is a murder mystery,' said Ambu in a tone with greater understanding of the story. Her reading consisted of a staple diet of thrillers and romances, and her thoughts tended towards the **macabre**. This was too much even for me, **indulgent** mother though I was. 'A murder mystery! How can you be so stupid?'

'Well, how do we know it wasn't murder mystery? I've only heard your version of it. How do I know you haven't edited out all the interesting bits, simply because you don't approve of murder stories? I think Goldilocks was an **heiress**. The house in the forest belonged to the person who stood to inherit the property if she died. Seeing her go into the forest, he must have put a bowl of poisoned porridge in the cottage. She must have drunk the porridge and died. The bears are only your invention.'

The little ones were drinking in her words with awe. Clearly, her version excited them more than mine did. Maybe Goldilocks was not the right choice. I would tell them some other story. I began the story of Red Riding Hood.

'Red Riding Hood took a basket full of cakes and went off to visit her grandmother, who lived all alone in the forest.' 'Humans shouldn't encroach on forest land,' said the environmentally conscious Janaki.

'On the way, Red Riding Hood met a wolf and told it where she was going. The wolf took a short cut to her grandmother's house and frightened off the old lady. The wolf then dressed in Grandma's clothes. Presently, Red Riding Hood arrived. She looked at the wolf and said, 'Grandma, why are your ears so big?' Ambu snorted, 'If one of us had mistaken a wolf for Grandma, we'd have been eaten by Grandma, even if the wolf had spared us.'



Even the youngest was shaking his head in disbelief. 'Grandmas don't look like wolves, do they?' he asked. My mother was watching me carefully. I could sense an air of **hostility** gathering against me.



'Of course, grandmothers don't look like wolves. Forget Red Riding Hood, I'll tell you the story of Cinderella.'

'Oh mother! Not that simpering idiot who waited all her life for Prince Charming to save her. She could have escaped her stepmother by getting herself a good education and job,' said Ambu.

'How could she have gone to school, when she was made to do all the housework by her stepmother?' I had her there.

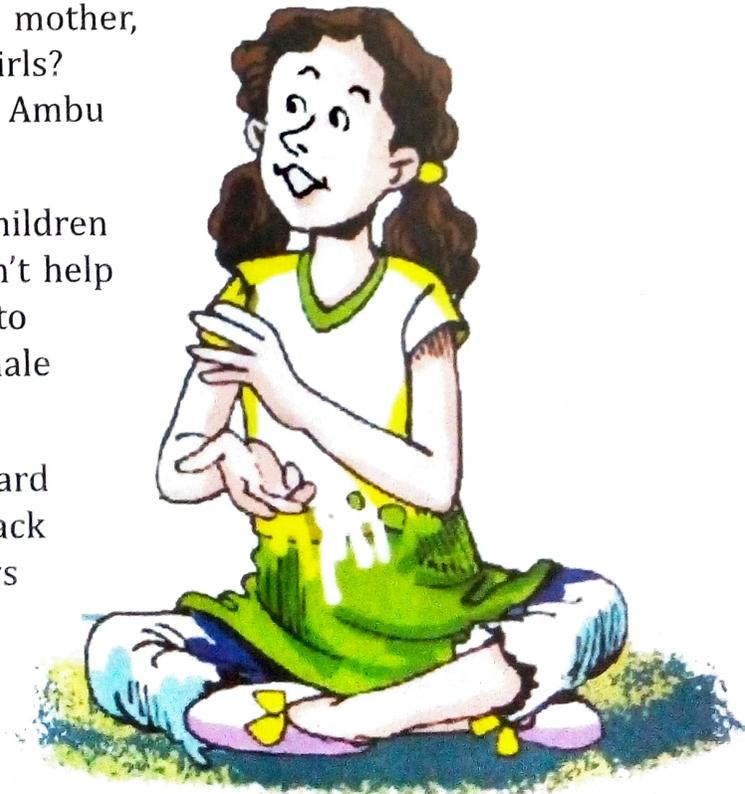
'She could have gone to night school. Anyway, mother, why are all the daft persons in your stories girls? Who wrote these stories with a **gender bias**?' Ambu asked **indignantly**.

It was difficult enough trying to keep three children out of mischief by telling them stories. It didn't help if one had to be **politically correct** too. I had to think of a story where the **protagonist** was male and preferably daft.

'What about Jack and the Beanstalk?' 'I've heard that one,' said Ramu. 'That's the one where Jack plants a seed and a very, very tall plant grows from it overnight.'

'Did Jack use a genetically modified seed?' asked Janaki.

It was no use. I had to think of something else. 'What about the old story of *Patala*



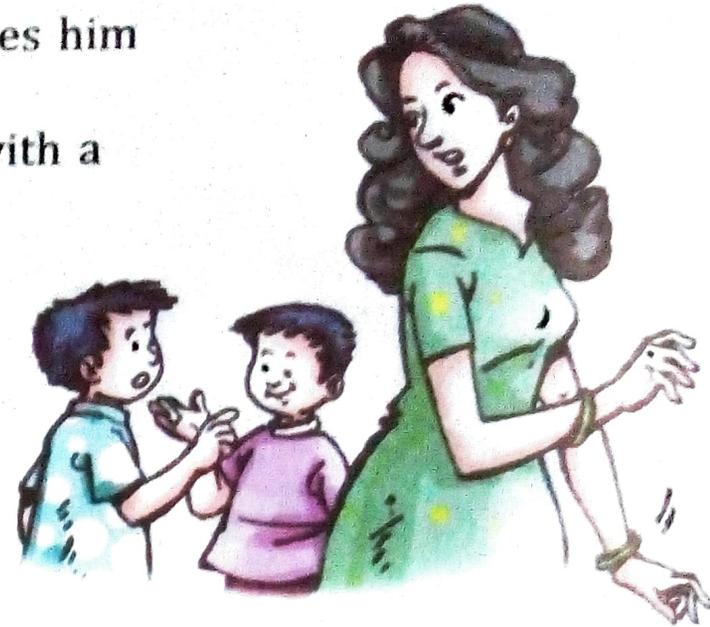
Bhairavi where a man wears magic slippers that takes him wherever he wants to go?’

‘How were those slippers **propelled**?’ asked Venku with a scientific query.

‘What kind of fuel did he use?’ asked Ramu with a similar inquisitiveness.

I fled.

—Suganthy Krishnamachari



Words to Know

squeaked	to make a short, very high cry or sound	simpering	to smile in an annoying way
ante-diluvian	extremely old fashioned	indignantly	angry because of something that is wrong or not fair
macabre	something strange and unpleasant	gender bias	unfair difference in the way men and women are treated
indulgent	to someone to do what they want even when it is not good for them	politically correct	to use language or actions that is not offensive to others
heiress	a woman or a girl who will receive or has received a lot of money	protagonist	an important supporter of an idea or political system
air of hostility	an occasion when someone begins to disagree and dislike something	propelled	to push or move something with a lot of force