

By Rabindranath Tagore

**Theme**

The main theme of Kabuliwala is friendship. Tagore has beautifully portrayed the friendship of Mini, a five year old girl and Rahmat, who is almost the age of her father.

**Understanding the text.****B. Answer these questions.**

Ans 1) the speaker is a writer. The speaker seems to have imagination, patience and sensitivity. When he writes that the Kabuliwala must have travelled on the lap of mountains, it shows that he is imaginative. He is patient because he listens to his little daughter's chatter patiently. He is sensitive as he feels sorry for the Kabuliwala when he is imprisoned, sympathises with him as a father and decides to help him reunite with his daughter even if it means letting go a few things for the wedding celebration.

Ans 2)

- a. The grown-up (the Kabuliwala) and the child (Mini) were laughing at one of their usual jokes. Mini asked what was inside the Kabuliwala's bag and the Kabuliwala replied an elephant.
- b. Their laughter has been described as innocent as the joke was very simple but it made them laugh even when they repeated it. This shows the two of them to be simple-hearted.
- c. Autumn mornings are always pleasant when the weather is cool without being cold and sunny without being hot. An autumn morning is thus a lovely setting for the sweet picture of the two friends chatting and laughing.

Ans 3)

- a. Mini usually asked Rahmat if he was going to his father in law's house, to which Rahmat would reply that he will hit the father in law. This time she was not amused as instead of the usual reply Rahmat replied yes.
- b. The Kabuliwala's words are sad because instead of staying near Mini to laugh and joke with her, he was going to the prison.

Ans 4)

- a. When the Kabuliwala went to the prison, Mini forgot him and made friends with the horse keeper in his place. This behaviour of Mini was found regrettable because Mini and the Kabuliwala had been very good friends and the speaker knew that Rahmat was very fond of her.
- b. Mini's behaviour was natural as she was just five years old who could not understand the seriousness of Rahmat's situation. One cannot expect a small child to remember a friend if she didn't meet him for a long time. It is natural for her to make new friends. On contrary, Rahmat didn't change in a similar manner. He was in the prison where it was not possible to make new friends. He remembered Mini very well.

Ans 5)

a. On their first meeting, Mini didn't trust and refused to take gifts from Rahmat. When the Kabuliwala was released from the prison, he came to the speaker's house to meet Mini. This time too, she stood away from him and could not speak with him freely. This the speaker was reminded of their first meeting.

b. The speaker was sad to see that the friendship between Mini and Rahmat didn't exist anymore. He was also sad to see the Rahmat in a poor condition than before. Moreover, he knew that as Mini was grown up and getting married so there was no chance of her becoming friends with the Kabuliwala again.

### **Appreciating the text**

1. a. On the first meeting Mini was scared of [the Kabuliwala. She could not trust him but soon both of them became great friends. When the Kabuliwala was arrested and sent away to prison Mini forgot him and made new friends. When they met again after several years, they did not meet as friends but as strangers. Mini could not speak freely with him.

b. The speaker used to enjoy watching his daughter and the Kabuliwala chat and laugh with each other. The speaker was sympathetic and felt sorry when the Kabuliwala was arrested and imprisoned. When he met him again on Mini's wedding day, and remembered that he had been in jail all that time, the speaker felt uneasy. He did not want a murderer in his house on an happy occasion. So he asks the Kabuliwala to leave. But when he saw the paper that the Kabuliwala carried, he realised how much he missed his daughter. He felt very sympathetic. He felt happy when he helped the Kabuliwala to reunite with his daughter.

2. a. i. The Kabuliwala is an adult Afghan vendor whereas Mini is only five years old girl when they meet. However when they become friends, Mini is happy to talk non stop to the Kabuliwala and he is also happy to listen to her. They share simple jokes and laugh at them. Innocence brings them together.

ii. The speaker is an educated Indian writer, patient and sympathetic in nature. He is different from the Kabuliwala who is arrested and imprisoned for his violent behaviour. However, both are father's – both of them love their daughters. The Kabuliwala like the speaker is fond of Mini. This is another common factor between them.

b. The contrasting features in the Kabuliwala's character are violence and gentleness, affection and anger. He is fond of Mini and his own daughter. This shows his soft hearted nature. He is polite and respectful to the speaker. But he gets violent and angry in a quarrel and stabs a person.

### **Extra question**

1. What kind of a person was the kabuliwala?

Ans. The Kabuliwala was an emotional man. He was very attached to Mini and was a patient listener to her innocent chatter. Although he was much older than Mini, he conversed with her like a child of her age. This could be because he saw his own child in her who was away in his village and he missed her a lot. We can also see his emotional side when he gives a fatal injury to the neighbour during a fight as he was unable to tolerate any lie.

