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| <b>GRADE VIII</b>         | <b>ENGLISH</b>               | <b>MAY 2023</b>           |
| <b>QUESTION BANK NO:4</b> | <b>A SHORT MONSOON DIARY</b> | <b>NOTE:<br/>NOTEBOOK</b> |

### **A Short Monsoon Diary -An Overview**

A Short Monsoon Diary gives us a glimpse of the diary written and maintained by Ruskin Bond. A diary is a record of personal experiences written day after day over a long period of time. In his diary, Ruskin Bond wrote about the silent miracles of nature as the mountains receive monsoon showers. The monsoon season in Mussoorie begins around the last week of June and continues till the end of August. The cold rains are welcomed in October till the last darkest cloud in March which renders the sky clear for the rainbow after it hails.

### **Summary**

The excerpts from Ruskin Bond's diary give us a picture of the rain that is his faithful companion in Landour from June to March. The mists in early June herald the monsoon. They blanket the hills and muffle the sounds of the forests. In late June the warm, humid rains start and the plants and ferns start stirring. The seasonal visitors—leopards and leeches, minivets and drongos—also make their appearance. In August there is the steady thrumming of the rain on the roof one day—when it is a lullaby or a companion—and on another, the clouds break up and sounds of cowbells, crow's caws, water dripping, and the song of the whistling thrush breaks the previous hush. One remains in touch yet untouched by the rain. The last days of August signal the peak of the natural growth. There are flowers galore on the hillsides—ground orchids, mauve lady's slippers, white butterfly orchids, red, yellow, and magenta wild dahlias put on a 'fashion show.' Snakes and rodents like the shrew also come out of their flooded holes. October does not bring relief for the winter rain starts with snowfall at the higher altitudes and hailstorm at Landour. January has a 'liquid silence' to it with the rain beating on leaves and windowpanes rhythmically while the house is enveloped in misty darkness. The grey trees, however, seem to threaten the writer with their loneliness. Finally, in late March a tremendous hailstorm strikes Mussoorie for half an hour and then the sky clears, and the writer sees the promise of a rainbow. Winter is over.

### **A1. Answer these questions:**

#### **1. Why is the monsoon mist described as 'Melancholy'?**

Ans: The monsoon mist covers the hillsides in silence as the birds stop singing. It signals the arrival of the rains which means a season of continuous confinement. The mist therefore

creates a mood of depression/sadness in the writer, and he transfers this to the mist calling it melancholy.

**2. Which visitors does the rain herald?**

Ans: The rain heralded the arrival of some seasonal visitors i.e., a leopard, several thousands of leeches, scarlet minivets, drongos, a tree creeper etc.

**3. Describe the diary entry of the narrator for August 3 and August 12. How does the narrator's mood differ in these two?**

Ans: The entry for August 3 conveys a welcome break in the rainfall as the writer sees the sun breaking through the clouds. His sense of isolation is broken by the sight of a woman chopping up sticks and the tinkle of cow bells. And his heart fills with pleasure at the sudden song of the whistling thrush. The entry of August 12 tells us of the daily monotony of the writer. There is incessant rain and mist and dampness. His only relief is seeing the late- monsoon flowers—wild balsam, dahlias, begonias and ground orchids—in lush array on the hillsides.

**4. What happened on March 23<sup>rd</sup>?**

Ans: The entry of March 23 tells of the hailstorm in Mussoorie. It was the darkest cloud that the writer had ever seen that covered the sky before hailstones as big as marbles fell for half an hour. Then the sky cleared, and a rainbow started to appear.

**5. Which seasons have been described by the narrator in the chapter?**

Ans: The narrator describes monsoon and winter season.

**A2. Think and answer.**

**1. The narrator describes hill stations as 'A paradise that might have been'. Describe the sentence in your own words. Why do you think the narrator describes it in such a way?**

Ans: The narrator feels that the hill station has a natural beauty similar to that of a paradise, but this has been spoiled by man's brick and cement constructions. Since the hills and valleys have lost their pristine tranquility, the narrator feels that they could have been paradisaical but are not — they are 'A paradise that might have been.'

**2. The narrator describes nature as a living changing thing. Do you agree? Elaborate.**

Ans: The narrator uses expressions to show that he thinks of nature as living and changing. He calls the mist 'melancholy' and the forest 'deathly still.' The cobra lily 'rears its head' and the minivets 'contrive' to go unnoticed by being absolutely silent but the 'unnecessarily aggressive' drongos chase them away. The ground orchids, mauve lady's slippers and the white butterfly orchids put on a 'fashion display' and the shrew 'blunders' about. There is a liquid silence as the 'mist holds the house in a dark caress.' The trees 'menace' the writer with 'their loneliness' and the darkest cloud ever 'squatted over Mussoorie.'