

Handout (Outline of the Story) 1/2

Chandni- Lesson:7(Supplementary Reader)

Module 1

Important points-

- Abbu Khan's lonely life
- His love for the goats
- The goats loved a free life on the hill side, escaped and got killed
- Arrival of Chandni and her similar wish
- Abbu Khan's warning to Chandni
- Chandni's escape

ONCE upon a time there lived an old man in Almora. He was popularly known as Abbu Khan. He lived all alone except for a few goats which he always kept as pets. He gave his goats funny names such as Kalua, Moongia or Gujri. He would take them out for grazing during the day and talk to them as one talks to one's own children; at night he would bring them back to his little hut and put a string round the neck of each goat. Poor Abbu Khan was a little unlucky in the matter of his goats. Very often at night one of the goats would pull and pull at the string till it broke loose, and then would disappear in the hills beyond. Goats in hilly regions hate being tied to trees or poles. They love their freedom. Abbu Khan's goats were of the best hill breed. They too loved their freedom. So whenever they got the chance, they would run away only to get killed by an old wolf who lived in the hills. Whenever one of his goats disappeared, Abbu Khan was very sad. He did not understand why even the juiciest grass and grains that he gave them, and all the love that he showered on them, would not stop these unfortunate goats from running straight into the jaws of death. Are these goats mad, he wondered! Or was it their love for freedom! But freedom meant struggle, hardship, even death. Abbu Khan couldn't solve the mystery. One day, when all his goats had left him, Abbu Khan said to himself, "No more goats in my house ever again. I may yet live for a few more years but I'll live without goats." However, the poor old man was terribly lonely. He simply couldn't do without his pets. Very soon he bought a young goat. He thought, "A young goat will stay with me much longer. She will soon begin to love me as well as the food I give her every day. She will never want to go to the hills." And he laughed with joy. The new goat was very pretty. She was white as snow, and had two little horns on her little head, and a pair of gleaming red eyes. She had a friendly temperament, and would listen to Abbu Khan's tales with a lot of interest and affection. Abbu Khan called her Chandni, which means 'moonlight'. He loved Chandni and would narrate to her stories of all his friends

who were dead and gone. Several years passed; Chandni was still there. Abbu Khan believed that Chandni would never leave his compound for the free and fresh air of the hills beyond. Alas! he was mistaken again.

Every morning Chandni watched the hilltops bathed in the sunlight. “How beautiful those hills are!” she thought. “How refreshing the breeze that blows through them! And how lovely to run across those green fields!” She ran towards the hills but had to stop with a jerk—the rope round her neck wouldn’t let her go any further. How she hated that rope! She stopped eating the green grass Abbu Khan brought for her; nor did she listen to his stories with interest and affection. She lost her appetite, grew very thin and stared moodily at the hilltops bathed in sunlight. Abbu Khan did not understand Chandni’s anguish. At last, she decided to speak to him frankly. “Dear Abbu Khan,” she said, “let me go to the hills, please. If I stay on in your compound, I’ll die.” Now Abbu Khan understood Chandni’s problem, but it made him very unhappy. The earthen pot which contained Chandni’s breakfast fell from his hands and broke into a thousand pieces. “Why do you want to leave me, Chandni?” Abbu Khan asked. “I want to go to the hills,” Chandni answered. “Don’t you like the food here? I’ll give you tastier food and a much longer rope.” “No, thank you. Let me go to the hills.” “Do you realise the risk you are running, you obstinate creature? There is a dangerous wolf in the hills. He’ll eat you up.” Abbu Khan did his best to warn her. Chandni answered, “God has given me a pair of horns. I’ll fight the wolf.” Chandni “Fight the wolf, indeed! Have you forgotten the story of your sister Kalua who was the size of a big deer. She fought the wolf through the night but was killed in the morning.” Abbu Khan narrated Kalua’s story for the fiftieth time.

To all this Chandni had only one thing to say: “I want to go to the hills.” Abbu Khan got very annoyed. He thundered, “You are not going anywhere. From today you’ll live in a small hut, and not move about freely in the compound. Ungrateful as you are, you must still be saved from the wolf.” He pushed her into a small hut and shut the door. But he forgot to close the small window at the back. The same night Chandni made that window her passage to freedom.
