

A Strange Wrestling Match - II

VIJAY Singh picked up a piece of rock from the sand. “Take this,” he offered it to the ghost, “and **squeeze** it hard. It is filled with fluid. See if I am wrong.” While the ghost tried to squeeze the rock first with one hand, then with both, Vijay Singh **stealthily** took out the egg from his pocket.

Vijay Singh **snatched** the rock from the ghost and placed it between both hands and squeezed. At once the yellow **yolk oozed** from around his fingers, and the crackling of the egg-shell created the **illusion** of the stone being crushed. The ghost was so **astonished** he did not notice Vijay Singh bending to clean his hands with sand and **disposing of** the **tell-tale shell**. Vijay Singh then picked up another piece of rock and gave it to the ghost. Without a word the ghost took it, felt it, and peered at it. Vijay Singh put his hand into his pocket to take out the lump of salt.



“This is only a stone,” protested the ghost. “And anyway it is too dark to see “

“Never heard of a ghost who can’t see in the dark!” **remarked** Vijay Singh. “That stone which you hold in your hand contains salt. **Crumble** it and see.” Again the ghost tried to crush the stone, but **in vain**. He handed over the stone to Vijay Singh. The ghost was now beginning to doubt his ghostly powers.

“I can see that you’re not going to be a **worthy** opponent. What’s the use of wrestling with a **weakling** whom I can **floor** in a minute?” So saying, Vijay Singh casually crumbled the lump of salt and let the stone drop in the darkness. He **held out** his hand and commanded the ghost to taste the powdered stone. **Mesmerised** with the pahalwan’s extraordinary strength, the ghost did as he was told. Alarm shot through him. This man could easily **vanquish** him in a wrestling **bout** in the dark. But **perhaps**, he could be **tricked** in other ways. Assuming a **servile** manner, the ghost said, “Friend Vijay Singh, it is an honour to meet a man like you! I **admit** to being defeated. But where will you go tonight? Rest in my house. You can leave tomorrow.



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“Now thoroughly **elated**, Vijay Singh replied, “I cannot refuse your **hospitality** but tomorrow you will go with me as my **prisoner**. I must display the trophy of my victory to my people!” The ghost **bowed in agreement**, but silently **vowed** to kill Vijay Singh in the night. He led him to his house in the cave.

The ghost fed him dry fruits and a lot of milk, and later led him to a luxurious bed to sleep on, complete with pillows and **bolsters**.

But Vijay Singh **lay awake** listening to the **snores** of the ghost. In the middle of the night, he **slipped off** his bed. He placed a bolster in the centre of the bed, throwing over it a **coverlet** to make it look exactly like a sleeping man. Having done this he **crouched watchfully** in a dark corner.



Sure enough, just before the break of **dawn**, the ghost **approached** the bed armed with a stout **club**. He brought the club down on what he thought was Vijay Singh’s head. Not hearing even a **groan**, he smiled, pleased that he had killed his enemy.

However, just to make doubly sure, he struck the bolster six times more. Satisfied with his work, he returned to his couch, and covering his head, settled down to sleep again. **Meanwhile**, Vijay Singh crept silently back into bed. After a pause, he groaned, as if in **disgust**, threw back his coverlet, and sat up.

Disturbed by the noise, the ghost peeped from under his bed clothes to see the strong man stretching his arms above his head and **yawning**. For a moment the ghost turned **rigid** with shock. “Friend ghost, there are insects in your cave,” said Vijay Singh in a complaining voice. “Here I was, enjoying the sweetest sleep I’ve had in years, and there comes this insect to trouble me. I distinctly counted seven **flappings** of its wings. Of course, it has not bitten me, but it’s most annoying.” The ghost **panicked**. Those seven **blows** would have reduced any other man **to pulp**. ‘There is no safety near a **formidable** wrestler like this,’ he thought and **fled** from the cave leaving behind all his **ill-gotten** wealth.

It took several camels from the village to remove the property Vijay Singh had acquired. He returned much of it to the rightful owners. He went especially to the old woman, thanked her for her invaluable gift, and asked for her granddaughter’s hand in marriage.

Thenceforth, Vijay Singh was more careful about boasting. It is said that no traveller was ever troubled again in the Haunted Desert.

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Vocabulary

1. **Squeeze** (verb) – press, compress, embrace, crush, force दबाना, निचोड़ना
2. **Stealthily** (adverb) – secretly, covertly, surreptitiously, privately, furtively छिपकर, गुप्त रूप से
3. **Snatch** (verb) – seize, grab, pluck, take, catch छीनना
4. **Yolk** (noun) – egg yolk, vitellus, yellow, ovule, eggshell अंडे का पीला भाग
5. **Ooze** (verb) – seep, leak, exude, trickle, slime रिसना
6. **Illusion** (noun) – delusion, dream, fantasy, mirage, hallucination भ्रम
7. **Astonish** (verb) – amaze, stagger, stun, astound, surprise चकित करना
8. **Dispose** (of) (verb) – get rid of, throw away, discard, eliminate, dump फेंक देना
9. **Tell-tale** (adjective) – giving information about something secret or private सूचक, परिचायक
10. **Shell** (noun) – a hard covering that protects eggs, nuts and some animals खोल
11. **Remark** (verb) – comment, say, state, pronounce कहना
12. **Crumble** (verb) – disintegrate, collapse, break down, fall apart टुकड़े टुकड़े करना
13. **In vain** (phrase) – To no avail; fruitless, uselessly, futile व्यर्थ
14. **Worthy** (adjective) – Having worth or merit or value योग्य
15. **Weakling** (noun) – a person or animal that is not strong physically निर्बल व्यक्ति, दुर्बल प्राणी
16. **Floor** (verb) – to hit someone and cause them to fall
17. **Hold out** (phrasal verb) – Thrust or extend out फैलाना
18. **Mesmerise** (verb) – Attract strongly, as if with a magnet; hypnotise, spellbind मंत्रमुग्ध करना
19. **Vanquish** (verb) – beat, conquer, defeat, overcome, trounce हराना, पराजित करना
20. **Bout** (noun) – contest, match मुकाबला
21. **Perhaps** (adverb) – possibly, maybe, probably, perchance, शायद
22. **Trick** (verb) – deceive, cheat, fool, hoax, ruse चकमा देना
23. **Servile** (adjective) – obsequious, slavish, subservient, sycophantic, fawning चापलूस, गुलामी का

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24. **Admit** (verb) – accept, confess, acknowledge, allow, concede स्वीकार करना
25. **Elate** (verb) – Fill with high spirits; Exhilarate, Thrill, Excite, Exalt प्रफुल्लित करना
26. **Hospitality** (noun) – friendliness, welcome, kindness, cordiality, generosity अतिथि-सत्कार
27. **Prisoner** (noun) – captive, convict, inmate, detainee, jailbird कैदी
28. **Bow** (verb) – Bend one's knee or body, or lower one's head सिर झुकाना
29. **In agreement** (phrase) – agreed, in accord, in harmony, like-minded, harmonious
30. **Vow** (verb) – pledge, promise, swear, guarantee, oath कसम खाना
31. **Bolster** (noun) – a long firm cylinder-shaped pillow गोल तकिया
32. **Lie awake** (phrase) – Lie without sleeping जग कर लेटे रहना
33. **Snore** (noun) – Breathe noisily during one's sleep खर्राटा
34. **Slip off** (phrasal verb) – To escape or depart for some location quietly or in secret
35. **Coverlet** (noun) – a bedspread. चादर
36. **Crouch** (verb) – to move your body close to the ground by bending your knees and leaning forwards slightly दुबक के बैठना
37. **Watchfully** (adverb) – vigilantly, attentively, carefully, warily, cautiously सावधानी से
38. **Dawn** (noun) – sunrise, daybreak, morning, sunup, dawning प्रभात
39. **Approach** (verb) – Move towards की ओर बढ़ना
40. **Club** (noun) – a heavy usually wooden stick used as a weapon लाठी
41. **Groan** (noun) – moan, whimper, whine, wail, sigh कराहना
42. **Meanwhile** (adverb) – meantime, in the meantime, at the same time, इस बीच
43. **Disgust** (noun) – Revulsion, Repugnance, Abhorrence, Repulsion, Antipathy घृणा, विरक्ति
44. **Yawn** (verb) – Utter a yawn, as from lack of oxygen or when one is tired जँभाई
45. **Rigid** (adjective) – firm, stiff, inflexible, unyielding, uncompromising कड़ा

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46. **Flapping** (noun) – flutter, fluttering, flap, waving, flying फड़फड़ा

47. **Panic** (verb) – alarm, scare, fear, terror, frighten घबराना

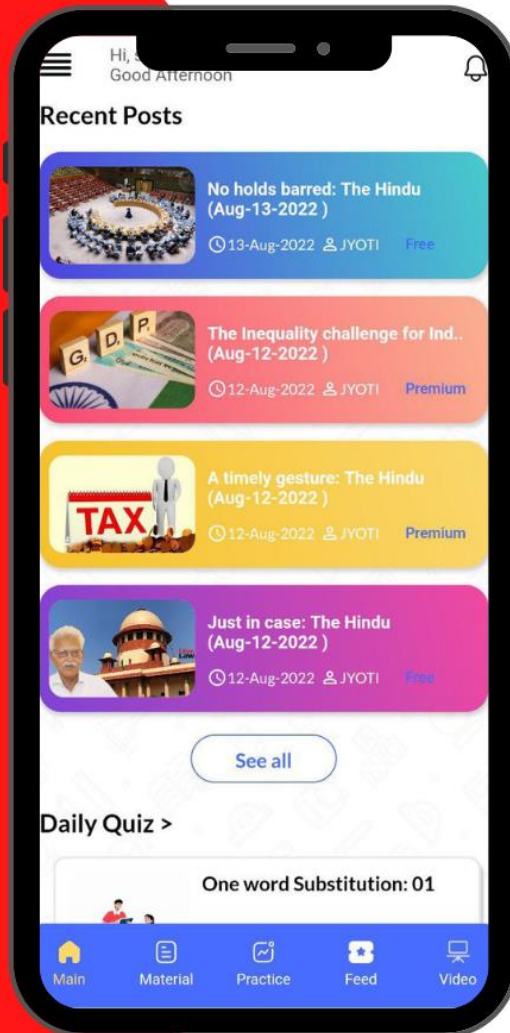
48. **Beat/blow someone to a pulp** (phrase) – to hit someone hard many times, until they are badly hurt or dead.

49. **Formidable** (adjective) – mighty, terrific, tremendous, strong, powerful दुर्जेय

50. **Flee** (verb) – escape, run away, get away, bolt, leave भाग जाना

51. **Ill-gotten** (adjective) – Obtained illegally or by improper means गलत तरीके से प्राप्त

52. **Thenceforth** (adverb) – From that time on इसके बाद से



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