

## An Alien hand – Part A

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“TILLOO! How **often** have you been told not to go that way?”

“But why does Daddy go there every day?”

“Because that’s his job, Tilloo!”

‘That way’ was an **underground passage**. Tilloo’s father went every day for work along that passage. And every day he came back from that direction. What **lay** at the end of that **forbidden** route? Not only Tilloo, but a great majority of the community would have liked to know. Tilloo’s father was one of the select few **permitted** to go that way. The above conversation **invariably took place** between Tilloo and his mother whenever he **insisted** on **following** his father.

Today, however, was different. Tilloo’s father was enjoying a **siesta** at home and Tilloo **managed** to get hold of his security card. Then, **evading** his **watchful** mother’s eye, Tilloo **made his way** to the forbidden passage.

A metal door **barred** his entry. But Tilloo had watched his father **slip the magic card** into a **slot**. He did the same... and the door opened noiselessly . A **well-lit** passage seemed to **beckon** him.

**Snatching** the card which had come out of another slot in the wall, Tilloo started his **march** along a gentle upward **slope**—for the passage led from the underground **habitat** to the surface of the planet. Tilloo **looked forward to** seeing the sun (if it was daytime) or the stars (if it was night) about which he had heard and read so much.

But **alas**, that wasn’t to be!

Tilloo had **underestimated** the security **arrangements**. Invisible mechanical devices had already detected and photographed the small **intruder**, sent his picture to the Central Bureau where it was **thoroughly** checked... And before he had **advanced** ten **paces** a strong hand fell heavily on his shoulder. Gently but firmly he was **escorted** by the security staff back home to an **anxious** and angry mother. While he was being **scolded** he received help from an unexpected **quarter**.

“Let me explain to him, darling!” said his father who had just **got up**. “If he is properly **briefed**, he will not do such a thing again.” He started to explain.

“Listen, Tilloo! I work on a surface where an ordinary person cannot survive because the air is too thin to breathe and where the temperature is so low that you would freeze to death.”

“But, Daddy, how do you manage to survive?”

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“Because I go well-equipped, in a special **suit** with a **reservoir** of oxygen. I can keep warm and my boots are specially designed to make it easy for me to walk on the surface. What’s more, I’ve been trained to survive and work on the surface.

“There was a time when our **forefathers** lived on the surface quite naturally. **Indeed** they did so for millions of years. But times changed. The very sun, which had provided us with **sustenance**, turned **hostile**. It changed only slightly but the change was sufficient to **upset** the balance of nature on this planet.

“First the birds became **extinct**. The animals followed. The fish couldn’t **bear** it anymore either. We managed to survive only because of our superior technology, but we were forced to live underground under **artificial** conditions. **Thanks to** solar energy, we can generate sufficient power to make our life comfortable. But the machines which make this possible must always be in good working condition. Some of them are on the surface—I belong to the team whose responsibility it is to **keep watch on** them and to service them.”

“Daddy, can I join the team when I grow up?”

“Of course, if you want to,” said his father.

“But for that you must be a good boy and do as your parents tell you.” His mother had, as usual, **the last word**.

**Vocabulary**

1. **Often** (adverb) – frequently, in many instances, repeatedly, again and again  
अक्सर
2. **Underground** (adjective) – into hiding, into secrecy, into seclusion, undercover  
गुप्त
3. **Passage** (noun) – way, way through, route, path, course रास्ता
4. **Lay** (verb) – to exist or be found होना
5. **Forbidden** (adjective) – prohibited, banned, outlawed, illegal, illicit वर्जित
6. **Permit** (verb) – Authorize, Allow, Let, Approve, Sanction, Pass अनुमति देना
7. **Invariably** (adverb) – always, every time, each time, on every occasion हमेशा
8. **Take place** (phrase) – Happen, occur, come about, come off, transpire घटित होना
9. **Insist** (on) (verb) – assert, maintain, contend, claim, demand आग्रह करना
10. **Follow** (verb) – adhere to, go by, go along with पीछा करना
11. **Siesta** (noun) – a rest or sleep taken in the early afternoon, especially in hot countries दोपहर का आराम
12. **Manage** (to) (verb) – To succeed in accomplishing, achieving, or producing, especially with difficulty सफल होना
13. **Evade** (verb) – avoid, dodge, elude, escape, sidestep बचना
14. **Watchful** (adjective) – Alert, observant, attentive, vigilant, on the alert सतर्क
15. **Make one's way to** (phrase) – to move forward usually by following a path
16. **Bar** (verb) – prohibit, debar, preclude, forbid, ban रोकना
17. **Slip** (verb) – to slide सरकना
18. **The magic card** (noun) – Security card.
19. **Slot** (noun) – a long, narrow hole, especially one for putting coins into or for fitting a separate piece into
20. **Well-lit** (adjective) – Adequately illuminated by light अच्छी तरह से प्रकाशित
21. **Beckon** (verb) – to appear very attractive to someone
22. **Snatch** (verb) – seize, grab, pluck, take, catch छीनना
23. **March** (noun) – a journey made by marching कूच
24. **Slope** (noun) – incline, angle, slant, inclination, ढलान

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25. **Habitat** (noun) – The natural abode, locality or region of an animal प्राकृतिक वास
26. **Look forward to** (phrase) – await something eagerly. आशा करना
27. **Alas** (adverb) – Unfortunately, sadly, regrettably, unhappily, unluckily हाय!
28. **Underestimate** (verb) – Underrate, misjudge, miscalculate, कम करके आंकना
29. **Arrangement** (noun) – agreement, deal, system; The thing arranged or agreed to व्यवस्था
30. **Intruder** (noun) – a person who enters a building or an area illegally घुसपैठिया
31. **Thoroughly** (adverb) – very much; completely पूर्णतया
32. **Advance** (verb) – proceed, progress, go forward, move forward, आगे बढ़ना
33. **Pace** (noun) – Step, stride, leap कदम
34. **Escort** (verb) – to go with someone to protect or guard them or to show them the way रक्षार्थ साथ जाना
35. **Anxious** (adjective) – Nervous, worried, concerned, uneasy, apprehensive, restless चिंतित
36. **Scold** (verb) – Reprimand, Reproach, Rebuke, Admonish, Caution डाँटना
37. **Quarter** (noun) – a person or group of people, especially as a source of help, information, or a reaction (here, it refers to father)
38. **Get up** (phrasal verb) – to get out of bed उठना
39. **Brief** (verb) – to give someone information about something so that they are prepared to deal with it संक्षिप्त करना
40. **Suit** (noun) – a set of clothing worn for a particular activity
41. **Reservoir** (noun) – Tank
42. **Forefather** (noun) – a person (especially a man) in your family who lived a long time ago पूर्वज, पुरखा
43. **Indeed** (adverb) – as expected, to be sure, in fact, in point of fact वास्तव में
44. **Sustenance** (noun) – the food and drink that people, animals, and plants need to live and stay healthy अन्न, भरण-पोषण
45. **Hostile** (adjective) – harsh, adverse, unwelcoming, unfavourable, unpleasant, विरोधी
46. **Upset** (verb) – disturb the balance or stability of अस्तव्यस्त करना
47. **Extinct** (adjective) – (of a type of plant, animal, etc.) no longer in existence लुप्त

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48. **Bear** (verb) – endure, tolerate, put up with, stand, suffer, abide सहना

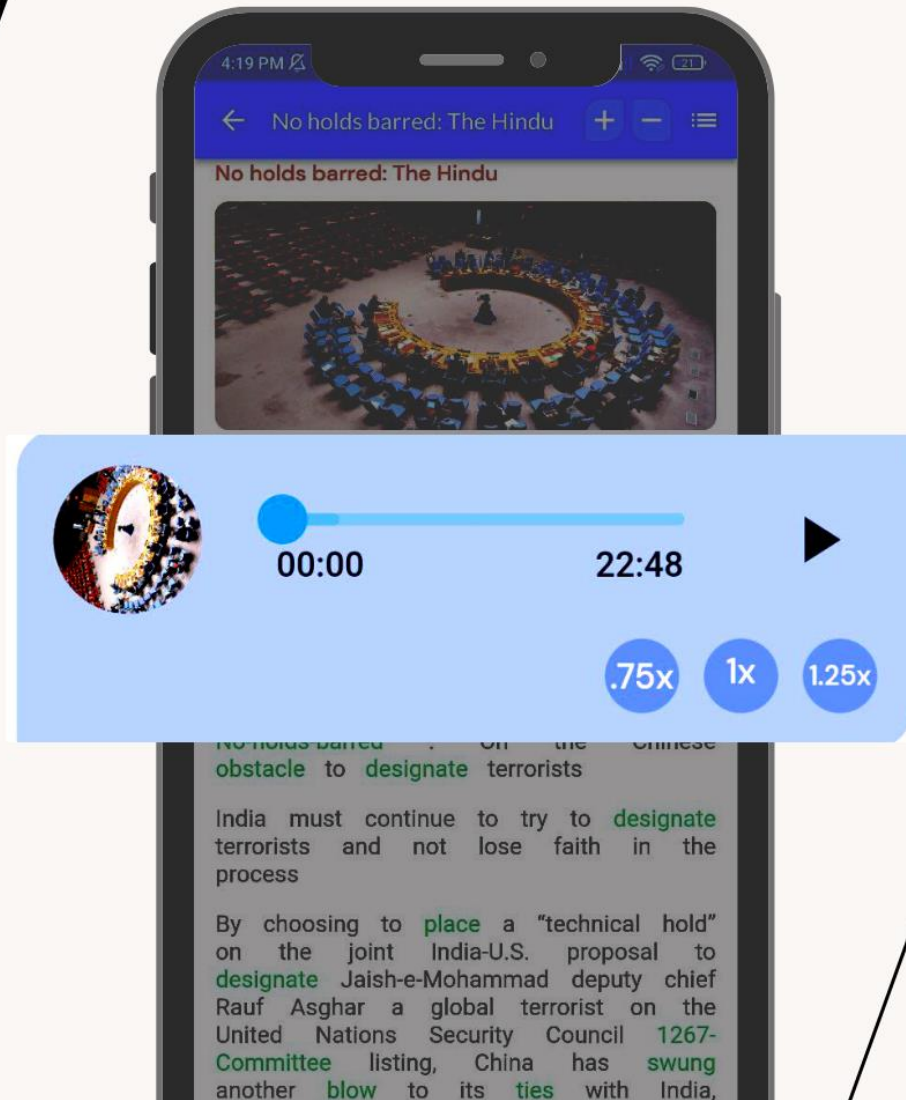
49. **Artificial** (adjective) – man-made, manufactured, unnatural, fabricated  
बनावटी, कृत्रिम

50. **Thanks to** (phrase) – As a result of; due to. के कारण से

51. **Keep watch on** (phrasal verb) – to pay attention to a situation carefully so that you can deal with any changes or problems नजर रखना

52. **The last word** (phrase) – the last comment or decision about something  
अंतिम फेसला

# Audio Explanation



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