

A Friend for Ria

Ria had been **upset** from her very first day at the new school in the big city.

She had been really happy in her previous small town school because the teachers had loved her and she had lots of friends.

Here in the new school she had no friends. To **make matters worse** she had joined the new school in the middle of the session and was having trouble **grasping** the lessons. She got very low marks in the class tests and was **miserable**. Her parents were worried about her because she didn't talk as much as usual and was losing interest in activities she had previously enjoyed.

Then a few days later, Ria came home with a smile on her face.



"You look happy today!" said her mother, **pleased** to see her daughter smiling again.

Ria's face **lit up** as she announced proudly, "I got a new friend at school today!"

"That's wonderful news!" said her mother.

"Yes, she sits right next to me. We spoke about so many things today!"

"That's very nice **indeed**, though you have to be careful about talking in class."

"Don't I know that! We got **reprimanded** already so we talk between periods and during lunch now. She has come from an even bigger city and doesn't have any friends in class either," replied Ria.

"What's your new friend's name?" asked her mother.

"Ira!" said Ria with a huge **grin**.

Ria returned to her old **self** after her friendship with Ira. She laughed a lot and seemed happy. She talked about Ira all the time. Ira was a **trifle** weak in her studies and not good at art so she kept asking for Ria's **assistance** constantly.

"Tell her to do her own work, your teachers might not like you helping her," said her mother.

"I will," replied Ria.

"Ira is a fantastic singer. She also brings yummy chocolates and doesn't **mind** sharing them with me."

One day, Ria returned from school and said,
"Today Ira got into a fight with Lipi!"

"Why?" asked her mother.

"The Hindi teacher gave me more marks for that essay we wrote than she gave Lipi. So Lipi announced publicly in class that the teacher had made a mistake! No one else said anything but Ira **protested** by saying that it was not a mistake and caused the fight!"

"She must be a true friend of yours then!" **remarked** mother.

A week later, a family shifted to a house next to Ria's. They had a daughter named Pritika, who was the same age as Ria. Pritika joined Ria's class and took the same bus to school.

"Ira doesn't sit with me anymore Mummy! My teacher made Pritika sit next to me," said Ria to her mother when she returned from school one day.



"You can always talk to Ira during lunch time," her mother **consoled** her.

From then onwards, Ria's conversations involved Pritika! The two girls even played together after school.

Once Ria's mother asked her,
"How is your other friend? You haven't talked about her in days!"

"What other friend?" said Ria.

"Your friend Ira of course!" replied her mother.

"I completely forgot to tell you that Ira doesn't come any more. She has probably left our school," said Ria.

"Has she gone to some other school?" asked her mother.

"I have no idea, but I don't see her any more," said Ria.

"Now, can I go over to Pritika's place to play?"

"Okay," said her mother, "but make sure you're back by six."

A few days later, Ria's mother attended the PTA meeting. While talking to Ria's class teacher, her mother said,

"We're so **glad** that Ria is doing well now. When she joined the school, we were quite **concerned** because she was doing badly. I don't know what would have happened if Ira hadn't been her friend!"

"Ira?" asked the teacher looking **puzzled**.

"Who is Ira?"

"Don't you remember Ira — the girl who sat next to Ria a few days after she joined the school? She really helped Ria **come out of her shell**! It's a **pity** that she had to leave though," said Ria's mother.

"But I've never had a girl named Ira in my class!" said the teacher surprised.

Mummy was really puzzled and she had a **scowl** on her face when she returned home.

"Well, I have spoken to all your teachers," she told Ria.

"What did they say?" Ria asked **warily**.

"They said everything was fine," replied her mother.

"Then why do you look so angry?" asked Ria.

"They said that there never was a girl called Ira in your class!"

"Of course there wasn't!" said Ria with a **wicked** smile.

"Then why!"

"I could see that my **friendless state** was beginning to **bother** you and daddy and so I made her up! I used the letters in my name to create her name 'Ira'. I gave her the qualities I never **possessed**. The only thing we had in common was our friendless condition. It was a funny game. I talked and played with the imaginary Ira to **amuse** myself because I didn't have any friends! But now that I have a real friend in Pritika, I don't need Ira anymore!"

Vocabulary

1. **Upset** (adjective) – distressed, troubled, sad, disturbed, worried परेशान / दुखी
2. **Make matters worse** (phrase) – aggravate, intensify, compound, worsen, complicate स्थिति और खराब करना
3. **Grasp** (verb) – understand, comprehend, follow, absorb, catch समझना
4. **Miserable** (adjective) – unhappy, gloomy, sorrowful, downcast, depressed दुखी / दयनीय
5. **Please** (verb) – satisfy, make happy, delight, gratify, cheer प्रसन्न करना
6. **Lit up** (phrasal verb) – brightened, illuminated, beamed, glowed, shone चमक उठना / खुशी से खिल उठना
7. **Indeed** (adverb) – truly, certainly, really, undoubtedly, in fact – वास्तव में
8. **Reprimanded** (adjective) – scolded, rebuked, chastised, warned, reproached – डांटा गया
9. **Grin** (noun) – smile, beam, smirk, chuckle, laugh – मुस्कान
10. **Self** (noun) – personality, nature, identity, character, being – आत्म (व्यक्तित्व)
11. **Trifle** (adjective) – slightly, marginally, somewhat, lightly, a little – थोड़ा सा
12. **Assistance** (noun) – help, aid, support, backing, guidance – सहायता
13. **Mind** (verb) – care, object, bother, be concerned, take offense – परवाह करना
14. **Protest** (verb) – object, oppose, complain, resist, express disapproval – विरोध करना
15. **Remark** (verb) – say, comment, state, note, observe – टिप्पणी करना / कहना
16. **Console** (verb) – comfort, soothe, reassure, pacify, calm – सांत्वना देना
17. **Glad** (adjective) – happy, pleased, delighted, joyful, cheerful – प्रसन्न
18. **Concerned** (adjective) – worried, anxious, troubled, uneasy, apprehensive – चिंतित
19. **Puzzled** (adjective) – confused, perplexed, baffled, bewildered, flustered – हैरान / उलझन में
20. **Come out of her shell** (phrase) – open up, become sociable, gain confidence, be expressive, be outgoing लज्जा त्यागना
21. **Pity** (noun) – sorrow, compassion, regret, sympathy, sadness – अफ़सोस / दया
22. **Scowl** (noun) – frown, angry look, glare, grimace, glower – त्योरी चढ़ी हुई नजर

23. **Warily** (adverb) – cautiously, carefully, suspiciously, hesitantly, guardedly – सतर्कतापूर्वक
24. **Wicked** (adjective) – mischievous, playful, naughty, sly, impish – शरारती / चतुर
25. **Friendless** (adjective) – alone, lonely, isolated, companionless, solitary – बिना दोस्त वाला / अकेला
26. **State** (noun) – condition, situation, status, position, phase – स्थिति
27. **Bother** (verb) – trouble, disturb, worry, upset, annoy – परेशान करना
28. **Possess** (verb) – have, own, hold, retain, control – रखना / अधिकार होना
29. **Amuse** (verb) – entertain, delight, cheer, make laugh, please – मनोरंजन करना / हँसाना

Practice Exercise

1. **Why was Ria performing poorly in her class tests soon after joining the new school?**
 - A. The teachers in the new school marked more strictly than in her old school.
 - B. She had entered in the middle of the session and was still catching up with lessons.
 - C. She disliked the new curriculum and refused to study it.
 - D. She spent most evenings playing instead of doing homework.
2. **Who first called Ira a “true friend,” and why?**
 - A. Ria’s mother, because Ira defended Ria when Lipi challenged the essay marks.
 - B. Ria’s class teacher, because Ira shared chocolates with classmates.
 - C. Pritika, because Ira helped her make friends quickly.
 - D. Lipi, because Ira admitted the marks were fair.
3. **What change in Ria’s life caused her to stop mentioning Ira?**
 - A. Ira was moved to a different section.
 - B. Pritika arrived, became her seat-mate, and filled the need for a real friend.
 - C. Ira failed her examinations and dropped out.
 - D. The teacher forbade Ria to talk to Ira during class.
4. **Which statement best explains the teacher’s confusion at the PTA meeting?**
 - A. Ira had very poor attendance, so teachers barely noticed her.
 - B. Ira transferred to a different school long before the meeting.
 - C. Ira never existed; she was an imaginary friend invented by Ria.
 - D. Ira used a different legal name in official records.
5. **Why did Ria create the imaginary friend Ira in the first place?**
 - A. To avoid explaining her poor marks to her parents.
 - B. To make Lipi jealous of her popularity.
 - C. To trick the teacher into giving her higher grades.
 - D. To comfort herself and ease her parents’ worries while she had no real friends.
6. **What is the closest antonym of the word “miserable” as it is used to describe Ria’s feelings in the new school?**
 - A. Despondent
 - B. Exultant
 - C. Tentative
 - D. Obscure
7. **In the sentence “We got reprimanded already...,” which option is the best antonym for “reprimanded”?**
 - A. Admonished
 - B. Censured
 - C. Rebuked
 - D. Commended

8. Ria's mother returned from the PTA meeting "with a scowl on her face." Which option is the most precise synonym for "scowl" here?
- A. Beam
 - B. Glower
 - C. Grin
 - D. Sneer
9. The narrator says Ira was "a trifle weak in her studies." Which word best matches "trifle" in that context?
- A. Massively
 - B. Considerably
 - C. Slightly
 - D. Radically
10. During the PTA meeting the teacher says Ira helped Ria "come out of her shell." What does the idiom "come out of one's shell" mean in this context?
- A. Reveal a hidden talent suddenly
 - B. Become more outgoing and confident
 - C. Escape from a difficult situation
 - D. Develop an imaginary persona

Answers

1. B 2. A 3. B 4. C 5. D 6. B 7. D 8. B 9. C 10. B

Explanation

1. **B) She had entered in the middle of the session and was still catching up with**
B is correct because the passage states Ria “had joined the new school in the middle of the session and was having trouble grasping the lessons,” which directly connects late entry with low marks.
A is incorrect: the text never compares marking standards between schools.
C is incorrect: there is no mention of Ria disliking the curriculum.
D is incorrect: her parents note she has “lost interest in activities,” not that she ignores homework.
2. **A) Ria’s mother, because Ira defended Ria when Lipi challenged the essay marks.**
A is correct: After Ira quarrels with Lipi, Ria’s mother says, “She must be a true friend of yours then!” recognising Ira’s loyalty.
B is incorrect: the teacher is never quoted praising Ira.
C is incorrect: Pritika meets Ria only after Ira disappears.
D is incorrect: Lipi does not admire Ira; she argues with her.
3. **B) Pritika arrived, became her seat-mate, and filled the need for a real friend.**
B is correct: Once Pritika joins the class, Ria’s stories revolve around her, and Ira is forgotten.
A is incorrect: the teacher, not Ira, decides new seating, but Ira’s absence predates any transfer note.
C is incorrect: no academic failure of Ira is described.
D is incorrect: the teacher never prohibits conversation with Ira specifically.
4. **C) Ira never existed; she was an imaginary friend invented by Ria.**
C is correct: Ria later admits Ira was a fictional character she created.
A is incorrect: the teacher says she has “never had a girl named Ira,” not that attendance was low.
B is incorrect: the teacher’s denial shows Ira was never enrolled, not transferred.
D is incorrect: there is no hint of an alias in the narrative.
5. **D) To comfort herself and ease her parents’ worries while she had no real friends.**
D is correct: Ria confesses she “made her up” because she “could see that my friendless state was beginning to bother you and daddy...[and] to amuse myself.”
A is incorrect: the passage ties Ira to loneliness, not grades.
C is incorrect: no evidence suggests Ria sought academic advantage.

B is incorrect: Ira appears before any rivalry with Lipi.

6. **B) Exultant**

Miserable conveys extreme unhappiness; *exultant* means filled with triumphant joy—its direct opposite.

A Despondent – near-synonym, not an antonym.

C Tentative – relates to hesitation, not mood.

D Obscure – refers to lack of clarity or fame, unrelated to emotion.

7. **D) Commended**

Reprimanded means scolded; commended means formally praised—the opposite reaction. A Admonished, C Rebuked, B Censured – all synonyms or near-synonyms of reprimanded, not opposites.

8. **B) Glower**

B is correct: A *scowl* is an angry, furrow-browed look; to *glower* is to stare angrily in the same way.

A Beam – a broad smile, opposite expression.

C Grin – simple smile, not angry.

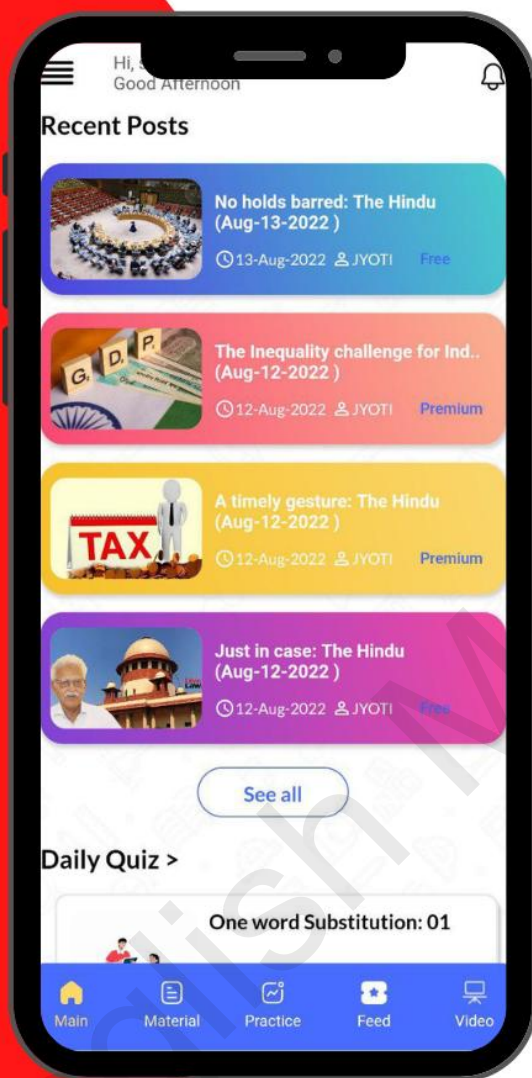
D Sneer – shows contempt with a raised lip, different nuance from a scowl.

9. **C) Slightly**

Trifle means “to a small extent”; slightly conveys the same modest degree. A Massively, B Considerably, D Radically – all imply large or significant degree, contradicting “trifle.”

10. **B) Become more outgoing and confident**

The idiom refers to a shy person growing sociable, matching Ria’s transformation.



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