

In Search of Solace

The sun is rising to its zenith. Silver-grey boulders lie tumbled along the track among mattresses of the thorns and smoke-blue flowers. The storm clouds that hang beyond the mountains do not move. There is no sound but the scrunch of our boots and the clink of the trekking pole. Underfoot the stones glisten with quartz. These first hours have a raw exhilaration. Perhaps it is the altitude again that brings this lightness and anticipation. Within an hour we have flown from near sea level to over 8,000 feet, and I feel weightless, as if my steps will leave no trace. Beneath us the little town of Simikot hangs above an abyss of empty valleys. Its corrugated iron roofs flash among patches of green barley. From its runway of parched earth the Twin Otter aircraft that carried us in has already turned and flown away between the mountains. There are no roads here. As we walk, a dark-forested gully opens to the west, carving a giant corridor through the mountains. Its walls rise in vertiginous foothills towards 15,000-foot summits gashed with snow and clouds. The cold raging river then twists ahead with a chill magnetism, mounting by icy steps higher and deeper through the western Himalaya, for a hundred miles before us, into Tibet.

Our purpose of travelling such a long distance away from home was not only to see a place other than Europe but was also to meet a man we once knew very well, he lived with us until my brother and I reached the age of twelve and fourteen, however one day he left, our parents never told us why he went, he was the only man who could read our faces better than anyone else, my brother and I would argue and fight, and then justify who started it, but he always knew who it was. He was a tall man around the age of sixty, coarse hands, inspiring, rational and extremely affectionate; his appearance never actually matched his personality. His daily routine was to wake up in the morning to make breakfast for us, and come straight to our room with a tray filled with assorted fruits and cereal, we always struggled to wake up, but his comforting voice was always enough to fight our tiredness or anything else. Before setting out in search of our grandfather my brother and I did not acknowledge the circumstances we could face, but were too confident that one day he would find us. Our unfamiliarity with the region was extremely worrying, however knowing our grandfather resided in such a place, only made it seem easier.

Reading Test:

Fluency: ____/5 Pronunciation: ____/5 Understanding: ____/5 Meaning: ____/5

Comments: _____

Q. Write and learn the spellings of the underlined words in the text.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

Q. Write the meanings of the following words in the spaces provided.

a. zenith _____

b. exhilaration _____

c. corrugated _____

d. abyss _____

e. anticipation _____

f. parched _____

Q. Answer the following questions to the text 'In Search of Solace' in full sentence.

a. What makes the writer feel exhilarated?

b. How does the writer describe the region he is in?

c. How does the writer know he is close to Tibet?

d. What is the writer's purpose of visiting Tibet?

e. How does the writer describe his grandfather's personality?

f. Why does the writer say 'his appearance never actually matched his personality'?

g. What can you infer about the grandfather from the writer's description? Is he a significant figure in the life of the writer?
