**“Broken Glass” by Sally Grindley**

**Blurb:** *When two brothers find themselves homeless in the big city, things are much harder than they ever could have imagined. With the help of some other children, the brothers learn how to survive on the streets. They start work as glass collectors and soon things don’t seem so very bad – until one day Suresh realises that his younger brother Sandeep isn’t coping as well as he thought. Suresh has to think very hard about how to save Sandeep, and himself, from a terrible fate.*

**If you have a copy of the book, please read a chapter each day before completing the linked task.**

**Chapter 1:**

We are introduced to the family, living in rural India:

Appa – the father of the family who works hard at the busy local railway station, organising the timetabling of the trains.

Amma – the mother of the family who cares for the boys and their grandmother.

Suresh – the older brother (approximately 11/12 years old) who narrates the story.

Sandeep - the younger brother (about 8/9 years old).

Paati – Grandmother (dad’s Mum) who lives with them.

**Activity 1: from these quotes, what can you infer about the characters:**

* + **Appa – “Our visits (to the railway station) only lasted about ten minutes. There was no real purpose to them except that they allowed Appa to show us off…and, by slipping a few rupees into our hands, to show himself off as a kind and loving father.”**
  + **Suresh – “…we went to school every day, Sandeep and I, dressed up smartly in our bright white shirts and dark grey trousers, with shoes on our feet. Not everyone in our village went to school – not everyone had shoes either – but I was glad I did because then I could look forward to a good job when I was older.”**
  + **Paati – “…to be greeted by Paati’s disapproving scowl. Sitting in her chair in the corner of the room, her shoulders hunched and elbows pressed into her sides, she would complain bitterly that we had no feelings if we could leave an old woman on her own…”**

**Chapter 2:**

Suresh (the story’s narrator) introduces us to a typical day in the family:

“We had learned from an early age to tread carefully around him (Appa) when a storm was brewing. The snapped response to a simple question, the demand for silence, the slammed door, the warning lights in my mother’s eyes sent us scurrying to our room or out onto the street. A bad day at work, the long and tiring journey home, the heat, the monsoon, the stress of having five mouths to feed, Paati’s hectoring, Amma’s difficulties with Paati, our own boisterousness, could all spark a sudden swing in my father’s mood from rather serious and distant to fuming.”

**Activity 1:**

* **What does the quote above tell us about what life can be like in the family home?**
* **What do the words “hectoring” and “boisterousness” mean?**

Then Paati suddenly dies and “Appa was inconsolable.”

**Activity 2:**

* **What does the word “inconsolable” mean?**
* **How does Appa’s behaviour tell us about his grief?**
  + **“…he was like a tiger in a cage.”**
  + **“He stood motionless by her chair…”**
  + **“He rode off on his bicycle one morning, but the straight back had gone and his uniform no longer seemed to fit him.”**

Appa starts to drink whisky and shout at his wife and children. Things improve after a while, but then Appa learns that he has lost his job at the railway station.

**Chapter 3:**

Appa starts to drink again and becomes very angry at losing his job. The boys tiptoe around the house, avoiding their father as much as possible. To escape the tension, Amma take the boys on a picnic.

**Activity 1:**

* **What do these quotes tell you about Sandeep, the younger brother?**
  + **Sandeep shouted “Fish! I saw a fish! Beat you to it!”**
  + **Sandeep hooted with laughter and jumped in (to the water) next to me, whirling his arms round and splashing me.”**
  + **My brother jumped out and dashed toward us, then shook himself like a dog so that we were both showered with spray….Sandeep lay down on his back, his legs in the air and began to snore.”**
  + **“Me first”, cried Sandeep, “I want to go first!”**
  + **“I don’t want him (Suresh) looking after me!” wailed Sandeep.”**

**Chapter 4:**

When Amma and the boys return from the picnic, Appa has disappeared and does not return until late at night.

**Activity 1:**

**Compare these two descriptions of Appa:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Appa on a Sunday morning – before he loses his job** | **Appa on a Sunday morning - after he has lost his job** |
| **“Sunday was his day for getting up early to stand in front of the mirror and trim his moustache. He liked to makes sure that every single hair was precisely clipped, and to do that he required absolute peace and quiet…Once he was satisfied that his moustache was as it should be, he walked into the village to fetch a newspaper. He would return and sit outside on a wooden chair, a cup of chai in one hand, the newspaper in the other, reading every inch of every page…”** | **“…he was sitting on the verandah staring into space, his hair uncombed, a dark shadow round his face.”** |

* + **What is Appa like before losing his job and afterwards?**