

## Lesson #38

### Washed Out

This is the story of the great war Rikki-tikki-tavi fought single-handed, through the bathrooms of the big bungalow<sup>1</sup> in Segowlee cantonment.<sup>2</sup> Darzee, the tailorbird, helped him, and Chuchundra, the muskrat, who never comes out into the middle of the floor, but always creeps round by the wall, gave him advice. But Rikki-tikki did the real fighting.

He was a mongoose, rather like a little cat in his fur and his tail, but quite like a weasel in his head and habits. His eyes and the end of his restless nose were pink. He could scratch himself anywhere he pleased, with any leg, front or back, that he chose to use. He could fluff up his tail till it looked like a bottlebrush, and his war cry, as he scuttled through the long grass, was ‘Rikk-tikk-tikki-tikki-tchk!’

One day, a high summer flood washed him out of the burrow where he lived with his father and mother and carried him, kicking and clucking, down a roadside ditch. He found a little wisp of grass floating there and clung to it till he lost his senses. When he revived, he was lying in the hot sun on the middle of a garden path, very draggled indeed, and a small boy was saying,

“Here’s a dead mongoose. Let’s have a funeral.”

“No,” said his mother, “let’s take him in and dry him. Perhaps he isn’t really dead.”

They took him into the house, and a big man picked him up between his finger and thumb and said he was not dead but half-choked. So, they wrapped him in cotton wool and warmed him, and he opened his eyes and sneezed.

“Now,” said the big man (he was an Englishman who had just moved into the bungalow), “don’t frighten him, and we’ll see what he’ll do.”

It is the hardest thing in the world to frighten a mongoose because he is eaten up from nose to tail with curiosity. The motto of all the mongoose family is “Run and find out,” and Rikki-tikki was a true mongoose. He looked at the cotton wool, decided that it was not good to eat, ran all round the table, sat up and put his fur in order, scratched himself, and jumped on the small boy’s shoulder.

“Don’t be frightened, Teddy,” said his father. “That’s his way of making friends.”

“Ouch! He’s tickling under my chin,” said Teddy.



He jumped on the small boy's shoulder.

1 in India, a single-story house with a verandah (porch)

2 military base

- RL.7.4 1. In the text, underline a sentence that explains why the author may have chosen the name *Rikki-tikki-tavi* for the main character.
- L.7.5 2. List three similes the author uses to describe the mongoose.
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- RL.7.3 3. The setting of this story is the home of a family in India. What major characteristic of India plays a role in this part of the story?
- A) The land in India includes deserts, mountains, and fertile plains.  
 B) During the summer, heavy rains called monsoons cause flooding in India.  
 C) India is a peninsula in Asia and is the seventh largest country in the world.  
 D) Dolphins, sea turtles, sharks, and crocodiles all swim in the Bay of Bengal.
- RL.7.3 4. What is the setting in this part of the story?
- A) The setting is a single-story house in a military base.  
 B) A main character is an Englishman who is the man of the house.  
 C) The setting of the story is a roadside ditch where a mongoose family lives.  
 D) The plot begins when a little boy finds a drowned mongoose in the yard.
- RL.7.1 5. What are the names of two other animal characters, besides *Rikki-tikki-tavi*, who are introduced in this part of the story?
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- RL.7.4 6. *Rikki-tikki-tavi* *revives*. This means he \_\_\_\_\_.
- awakens      dries off      runs away      none of these
- RL.7.4 7. When *Rikki-tikki-tavi* is *very draggled*, he is \_\_\_\_\_.
- curious      energetic      relaxed      disheveled
- RL.7.2 8. Reread paragraph eight. What is the main idea of this paragraph?
- A) Teddy is frightened when a wild animal jumps on his shoulder.  
 B) Cotton wool is good for drying and warming but not for eating.  
 C) A mongoose is very curious, and this prevents it from being afraid.  
 D) A true mongoose comes from a family that has a motto.
- RL.7.3 9. From the dialogue in this part of the story, you can tell that Teddy's parents are \_\_\_\_\_.
- very strict      easily worried      kindhearted      suspicious