

CHAPTER-01

THE PASSIVE VOICE

SUMMARY OF THE PROSE

The narrator did not like his younger sister being sent to a progressive school because it made her think she knew more than him; she kept plaguing him about usage in grammar. She asked him about question tags and gave him examples of how tags are added to statements to convert them into questions. She also taught him the right intonation for tag questions. The narrator was irritated with his sister's grammatical knowledge as well as her way of airing it like a teacher. He deliberately used the wrong tags to spite her. His mother asked him to be understanding as his sister was five years younger than him and, anyway, he too showed off when he was her age. The next day, his sister checked out his command over the passive voice, giving him an example of its usage that could serve not to let their mother know he had not drunk his milk while she had. At that very moment, their mother called out to ask if they had drunk their milk and his sister replied immediately, using the active voice, that she had drunk her milk and was going out to play, implying that her elder brother had not drunk his. The next day, his teacher was revising the passive voice in class and the narrator's classmate, Gia, irritated him by answering every question correctly. She

seemed worse than his little sister. She also made loud comments to her friend Pia that boys were only good at making fools of themselves. Gia's long plaits struck him every time she put up her hands to answer and Pia's plaits tickled his friend, Niks's nose. Niks sat behind Pia and so, the narrator made a signal to him to tie their plaits together. When Gia stood up to answer the next question, she tugged at Pia's plait and Pia's head struck her jaw. The girls screamed and the teacher asked the guilty boys to explain. Niks stood quiet but the narrator explained the situation using the passive voice to protect themselves. He was not sure why the teacher smiled as she left the class. He thought that, perhaps, she was impressed by the ease with which he used the passive voice.

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