

**Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow.**

Every Monday, on his way back from work, Bipin Chowdhury would drop in at New Market to buy books. He had to buy at least five at a time to last him through the week. He lived alone, was not a good mixer, had few friends and didn't like spending time in idle chat. Those who called in the evening got through their business quickly and left. Those who didn't show signs of leaving would be told around eight o'clock by Bipin Babu that he was under doctor's orders to have dinner at eight-thirty. After dinner he would rest for half an hour and then turn in with a book. This was a routine which had **persisted** unbroken for years.

Today, Bipin Babu had the feeling that someone was observing him from close quarters. He turned round and found himself looking at a round-faced, meek-looking man who now broke into a smile. 'I don't suppose you recognize me.'

Bipin Babu felt ill at ease. It didn't seem that he had ever encountered this man before. The face seemed quite unfamiliar. 'Have we met before?' asked Bipin Babu.

The man looked greatly surprised. 'We met every day for a whole week. I arranged for an ear to take you to the Hundroo Falls. My name is



'Parimal Ghosh'. 'Ranchi?' Now Bipin Babu realised this man was making a mistake. Bipin Babu had never been to Ranchi. He smiled and said, 'Do you know who I am?'

The man raised his eyebrows and said, 'Who doesn't know Bipin Chowdhury?'

Bipin Babu turned towards the bookshelves and said, 'You're making a mistake. I've never been to Ranchi.' The man now laughed aloud.

'What are you saying, Mr Chowdhury? You had a fall in Hudroo and cut your right knee. I brought you iodine. I had fixed up a car for you to go to Netarhat the next day, but you couldn't because of the pain in the knee. Can't you recall anything? Someone else you know was also in Ranchi at that time, Mr Dinesh Mukherjee. You stayed in a bungalow. You said, you didn't like hotel food. I'll tell you more: you always carried a bag with your books in it on your sightseeing trips. Am I right or not?'

Bipin Babu spoke quietly, his eyes still on the books. 'Which month in Nineteen fifty-eight are you talking about?' The man said, 'October'.

'No, sir,' said Bipin Babu. 'I spent October Nineteen fifty-eight with a friend in Kanpur. 'You're making a mistake. Good day'.



But the man didn't go, nor did he stop talking. 'One evening I had tea with you on the veranda of your bungalow. You spoke about your family. You said, you had no children and that you had lost your wife a *decade* ago.'

When Bipin Babu had paid for the books and was leaving the shop, the man was still looking at him in utter disbelief.

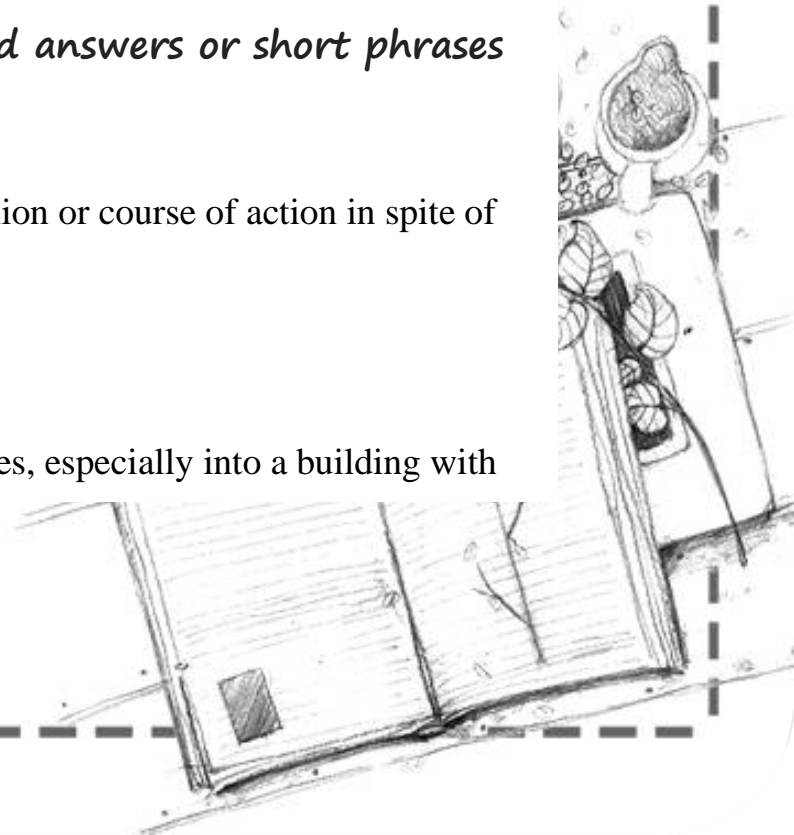
Bipin Babu's car was safely parked in Bertram Street. He told the driver as he got into the car, 'Just drive by the Ganga, will you, Sitaram.' Driving up the Strand Road, Bipin Babu regretted having paid so much attention to the *intruder*. He had never been to Ranchi. He had an excellent memory. Unless he was losing his mind!

**Question 1.** Give the meaning of the following words as used in the passage. One word answers or short phrases will be accepted.

(a) *persisted*: Continue in an opinion or course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition.

(b) *decade*: A period of ten years.

(c) *intruder*: A person who intrudes, especially into a building with



criminal intent.

*Question 2. Answer the following questions briefly using your own words.*

*(a) How did Bipin Chowdhury find time to read five books per week?*

*Ans: Bipin Chowdhury find time to read five books per week by after having dinner at 8:30, he would rest for half an hour and turn to a book.*

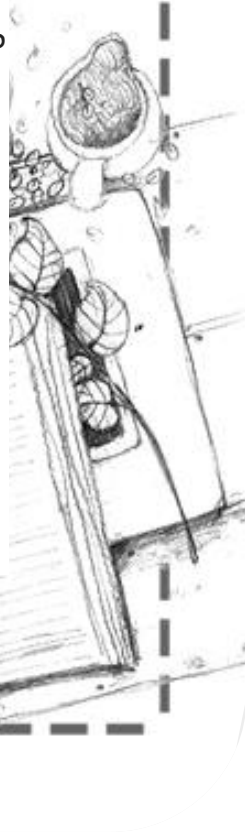
*(b) How did he get rid of visitors who stayed late?*

*Ans: If the visitors did not leave by eight, he would tell that his doctor had advised him to have dinner by 8:30.*

*(c) Which sentence tells you that Bipin was uncomfortable?*

*Ans: The sentence Bipin Babu fell ill at ease tells us that he was uncomfortable.*

*(d) What strong argument did Bipin Babu give to prove that he was not in Ranchi at that time?*



*Ans: The man said that he had met Bipin Babu in Ranchi in October 1958. To this, Bipin strongly argued that in October nineteen fifty-eight with a friend in Kanpur.*

