

The Adventures of Feluda

The Golden Fortress

Study Material-II

- Mukul's father wants Feluda to head to Rajasthan and find out whether things were favorable or not.
- Feluda takes the case and takes Topshe along with him. On their way, they pick up a part-time traveling companion, Lalmohan Ganguly, a successful author of thrillers who writes under the pseudonym *Jatayu*.
- They soon come across Mukul and Dr. Hajra, who were visiting fortress after fortress, looking for the golden one that Mukul remembers from some past life.
- During his visit to Rajasthan, Feluda gets a threatening letter ("If you value your life -- go back to Calcutta immediately") and he comes across suspicious people.
- Dr. Hajra also moves on quietly with Mukul to Jaisalmer.
- Feluda and company follow them but it wasn't easy. Someone tries to prevent them from reaching their destination.
- Eventually after exciting trips by car, train, and camel -- everyone reaches Jaisalmer -- which is indeed the location of the Golden Fortress.
- There the complications untangle- Feluda finally meets Mukul, Fake Dr Hajra- Amiyannath Burman is caught and handed over to local police, real Dr Hajra reveals the truth how he was pushed down a slope at Kisangarh by Burman who disappeared with Mukul and Dr Hajra's belongings.

Short Notes:

Mukul's dreams

Dream is an important motif around which the whole plot is woven. The story revolves around an eight –year old boy Mukul Dhar who upsets his parents with his bizarre behavior at night. He gets up in the middle of the night and obsessively draws pictures of peacocks and foreign settings, which he claims

he remembers from his past life. He dreams of a past life which he supposed to have seen. Though nobody from his family- not even his ancestors went there. He dreamt of a golden fortress with cannon on its roof, a lot of fighting, people being killed and he himself wearing a turban, riding a camel and sand everywhere. He saw animals like camels, elephants horses and peacocks. He also linked his birthmark with his dream that the mark near his elbow was a result of the attack by a peacock. The dream about Golden Fortress in Rajasthan had such an impact that even he used to hum folk songs which had nothing to do with Calcutta but Rajasthan. The plot complicates and endangers Mukul's life as he also talks about hidden treasure in the golden fortress which the villains of the story Burman and Mandar Bose got to know when the dream is reported in a newspaper.

He is taken to Rajasthan by a Parapsychologist Dr Hajra with permission from his father as he trusts Dr Hajra. Mukul's dream also led the kidnapping of another kid in the neighborhood- Neelu who looked similar to Mukul. A detective- Feluda is hired by Mukul's father to ensure his security. The story ends with realization of Mukul's dream when he visits the fortress and the culprit handed over to police and Mukul returning to Calcutta.

Travel to Rajasthan:

The plot develops through the fascinating trip to Rajasthan. Feluda was hired by Mukul's father to ensure his safety who has gone to Jodhpur. As there was no direct train to Jodhpur from Calcutta. Feluda reaches **Agra** and from there he boards a train to **Bandikui**. He meets the writer of famous thriller *Jatayu* alias Lalmohan Ganguli who was in the same compartment and was travelling to find plot for his adventure stories. He also joins Feluda. They

reach Bandikui in the evening. The place had peacocks and parrots similar to crows and sparrows in Calcutta. Men had turbans on their heads and the skin was tanned. They wore short dhotis that touched their knees and shirts with buttons on one side. They wore *naagras* on their feet which was heavy. Most of the men carried stout sticks in their hands. They had dinner in Bandikui.

After Bandikui, Feluda alongwith Topesh and Jatayu left for **Marwar** on the same day in the middle of the night. In the morning, they reached **Kisangarh** where they had tea. They reached Marwar at 2.30p.m. and had lunch.

They took a different train to **Jodhpur** at 3.30. and reached Jodhpur at 6.30. The sun was still bright whereas in Calcutta, it would have set by then. Feluda along with Topesh stayed in Circuit House whereas Jatayu stayed at a different lodge. Feluda met Mandar Bose, Dr Hajra and Mukul in the Circuit House who were also staying there. Feluda explains Dr Hajra about the details of his visit and Mr Dhar's concern for the safety of his child.

Dr Hajra informs Feluda that he will be going to **Bikaner** next morning with Mukul to check for the fortress. Feluda, Topesh, Mandar Bose and Jatayu also joined. It had a massive fort made of red sandstone. It wasn't the fort Mukul talked about. The fort had amazing armoury with a beautiful silver throne called *Alam Ambali*. Apart from that, there were swords, spears, daggers, shields, armour and helmets. After the armoury, they saw the *Phool Mahal, Gaj Mandir, Sheesh Mahal and Ganga Niwas*. From Bikaner, they had to go to **Devikund** which was not far from Bikaner as Dr Hajra and Mukul left for the place. Devikund was known for cenotaphs or the *chhatris*

built as memorials to Rajput warriors. There were some fifty cenotaphs spread over the whole area and also had plenty of trees, all of them full of parrots. Though the scenic beauty enchanted them, the overall experience wasn't good. Dr Hajra was attacked by someone who tied his hands and covered his mouth but fortunately Mukul was safe. Feluda bought a bowl of yellow stone which he got to know from the shopkeeper that yellow stone is only found in Jaisalmer. Dr Hajra leaves for unknown place with Mukul. Feluda makes out that they might have gone to Jaisalmer and he leaves for the place in a taxi to catch a train from Pokhran.

As they left Jodhpur, the scenery started changing. Hills disappeared. It was replaced by undulating terrain which was a mixture of grass, red earth, sand and loose stones. There were acacia, cacti and similar plants. There were wild camels around. Jaisalmer was the capital of Bhati Rajputs.. Border between India and Pakistan was only sixty- four miles from the place. The journey to Jaisalmer was an adventurous one. The tyre got punctured which was done deliberately by strewing hundreds of nails on the road. It appeared that the enemies wanted to make things difficult for them. After changing the tyre when they moved ahead, about forty miles later, a second disaster hit them. Thousands of drawing pins were strewn over at least twenty feet of the road to stop them. They had no option but to ride on camel to reach the nearest station – **Ramdeora**. The camels were nicely decorated with *cowrie* shells and had wooden seat. They were properly saddled and showed their love of the owners. Feluda jumped easily on the back, Topshe managed somehow but Jatayu had a problem. They reached the station but the train they were hoping to catch left. The station was under construction.. There appeared no signs of habitation in the vicinity- no shops, nothing. They had to wait till

morning for the next train. Jatayu informs Feluda about a crumpled piece of paper with a secret code written on it- IP 1625 + U / U- M

The first part of the message is decoded as the arrival time of the train reaching Pokhran at 1625hrs. I and U more as referring to self and some other person. The second part of the message couldn't be decoded. Here for the first time, *Jatayu* gets to know that Feluda is a detective. In the morning they board a passenger train. Within no time of boarding the train, one of the villains of the story- Mandar Bose threatens them with a gun and asks them to leave. His real face is exposed here. Feluda tries to take hold of him but because of Topshe's foolishness he escapes. After his encounter with Bose, he tries to connect the strings and decipher the message which reads as- I am arriving at Pokhran at 4.25. You must join me and you get rid of Mitter i.e. Feluda. Bose had a long nail in one of his fingers which hurt Topshe when Bose used him as a shield to escape. This also made clear that he was also one of the abductors of Neelu. Bose also used cigars which gave a clue to Feluda that Dr Hajra was not the real one because he found a golden foil which is used to wrap cigar and a matchbox which was not from Rajasthan at Devikund, the place where Dr Hajra said he was attacked by someone and was found tied which made him suspect that something was fishy as he could have easily tried to release himself from the rope as only the hands were tied and not the legs.

They reached **Jaisalmer** next morning . There was not a single vehicle they could hire. They thought of leaving the luggage in the *Dak bungalow* which was nearby. There they met two men- one in his forties and the other an older man who joined them to the fort. While they were on their way, Gurbachan Singh, the driver who stayed to get the tyres fixed came back. They took leave

of them and left in their own taxi. On reaching the fort, Feluda comes to know that Dr Hajra has left and has gone in some other direction. Feluda follows the tyre marks and they come to a place which had old abandoned houses, open area with rows of yellow stones indicators of the graves of warriors. On their backside was the fort. As they moved to find the truth, Mukul came running from one of the houses and was terrified. Feluda was able to find the fake Dr Hajra as well who was busy removing stone after stone in search of treasure. Before Feluda could understand anything, Hajra was attacked by a peacock and he was badly injured. The peacock had its nest at the same place where the treasure lay hidden. Feluda catches him and is joined by real Dr Hajra who was the same person whom he met at the *Dak Bungalow*- the older one. The fake one was none other than Bhavananda (Burman) who was a bitter ally of Dr Hajra because he caught the man in a scandal in Chicago. Bhavananda, in the name of spiritual healing hypnotized people and cheated them. This was unearthed by Dr Hajra. Bhavananda was handed over to the local police. He had many charges against him. Mukul was convinced after seeing the golden fortress. He had no wish to stay in Rajasthan anymore. Dr Hajra tells the entire story to Feluda how he was pushed down a slope in Kisangarh by Bhavananda and thinking that Hajra might die, he took his belongings and also Mukul who was in a distracted condition. Dr Hajra was fortunate and was saved. He kept an eye on Bhavananda and waited for the right opportunity as Dr Hajra had no documents to prove his real identity.

The plot moves through the travel motif, gets complicated and resolved before coming back to Calcutta.

Questions to prepare

1. Aptness of the title 'The Golden Fortress'.
2. Compare the characters of Feluda and Jatayu.
3. Comment on Topshe as a narrator.
4. The Golden Fortress- As a detective story.