

CSCE TUTORIAL

Class-9

English

A Dog Named Duke

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Introduction

“A Dog Named Duke” is the story of a wonder-dog Duke who proved to be instrumental in the recovery of his paralyzed master. His intelligence and the eagerness to serve lifted his master Hooper’s spirits and rekindled his lost hope of being able to lead a normal and independent life. The dog’s constancy of effort and the master’s determination bear fruit in due course of time and Hooper is back on his feet, resumes his work and gets rewarded for his efforts. But his saviour, Duke, the dog, dies in a road accident. The story shows how love can transcend boundaries of species and language and work miracles and that the dog is more than a faithful animal- a companion, a friend and a saviour.

Title

The author has deliberately chosen the title “A Dog Named Duke” to focus on the supreme sacrifice that Duke, an intelligent, affectionate, faithful and responsible dog, makes to rehabilitate his paralysed master. Chuck Hooper got a second lease of life thanks only to his dog, a Doberman Pinscher, whom his wife had ignored and loathed initially. The entire story revolves round the role Duke plays in his master’s life, especially his recovery and rehabilitation. So, the title pays a tribute to this sacrifice and is, therefore, quite appropriate.

Theme

The theme of the story is that ‘when all is lost future still remains. All odds, all challenges, all tragedies and all handicaps of life can be overcome with strong determination, persistent hard work, insurmountable patience and unshakeable tenacity and a little help from loved ones. They can help one change one’s destiny. Another theme that the story is built around is the sublime relationship between Man and the beast, as exemplified by Chuck Hooper and his dog Duke. The mute animal ends up performing a miracle that human science could not. With sheer dogged determination, Duke helps his master get back on his feet after an accident that had left the master’s left side completely paralysed.

Message

The story conveys the message that coping with the challenges of life and accepting them as they come can give one an inner strength to find solutions to the most complex problems of life. Focusing on the solution rather than on the problem helps one wriggle out of the toughest and roughest of times. The story also gives the message that the relationship between man and beast can be sublime.

Reference to Context:

I. After the excitement of the homecoming wore off, Chuck hit a new low.

(a) What ‘homecoming’ is referred to here?

Ans. ‘Homecoming’ here means Chuck’s return home after a long stay at the hospital.

(b) What does “Chuck hit a new low” mean?

Ans. **Chuck felt extremely depressed and lonely at home. He had probably lost all hope of returning to a normal life.**

(c) What was the cause of this low feeling?

Ans. **Chuck had this feeling because he was preoccupied with his disability and felt lonely and helpless especially when Marcy went away to work each morning. There was no one at home, not even Duke.**

II. He was 23- kilo missile of joy. He hit Chuck above the belt, causing him to fight to keep his balance.

(a) Who has been called a ‘missile of joy’?

Ans. **Chuck’s dog, Duke.**

(b) How did he hit Chuck? Why?

Ans. **Duke jumped upon Chuck in great excitement and with electrifying force to express his joy on seeing his master back home.**

(c) Why did Chuck find it difficult to maintain his balance?

Ans. **One, he did not expect the dog to launch himself at him so suddenly and forcefully. Two, his disability did not allow him to be steady on his feet.**

III. He never jumped on Chuck again. From that moment, he took up a post beside his master’s bed round the clock.

(a) Why did Duke never jump on Chuck again?

Ans. **Chuck’s inability to balance himself made him realize that there was something wrong with his master and he must not bother him.**

(b) What does the extract reveal about the dog’s character?

Ans. **It reveals that the dog was very sensitive, loving and caring. He could empathize with his owner.**

(c) Why did Duke take to sitting beside his master’s bed round the clock?

Ans. **The dog must have realized that his master was too unwell to move and needed his company. This was the dog’s way of empathizing with his master.**

IV. Secretly Marcy cried as she watched the big man’s grin fade away. Severe face lined set in like cement as Chuck stared at the ceiling for hours, then out of the window, then at Duke.

(a) Marcy cried secretly because

Ans. **She was deeply distressed to see her husband’s pathetic condition but did not want him to know of her anguish lest he felt more miserable.**

(b) The expression ‘severe face lines set in like cement’ refers to **Chuck’s stiff, expressionless face and empty looks.**

(c) Chuck would stare at Duke probably because

Ans. He missed his playing and going out for walks with the dog. He was not used to Duke sitting idle like that.

V. Duke felt the sudden slack in the leash and pulled it taut. Chuck swayed forward again, broke the fall with his good right leg, then straightened.

(a) The extract shows the dog trying to

Ans. Help his master to be on his feet again and walk.

(b) There was a ‘slack in the leash’ around Duke as

Ans. Chuck had moved forward and caught up with the Dog.

(c) The expression ‘pulled it taut’ means that

Ans. Duke would move forward thus tightening the leash which meant Chuck was supposed to move forward to catch up with him at his own time and pace.

VI. The staff was amazed by the visit. But to Gordon Doule, the manager, Chuck said, “Gordon, this isn’t just a visit.....”

(a) Why did Chuck’s visit surprise the staff?

Ans. The staff was surprised because they did not expect Chuck to get back on his feet and visit the company’s local branch office so soon.

(b) What was Chuck’s real purpose in visiting the office?

Ans. Chuck wanted to test whether he could resume his work by working for an hour in the beginning. He asked Doule to update him with what had happened in the company during his absence.

(c) What problem did Chuck’s visit pose for the company?

Ans. The company could neither discourage Chuck by not allowing him to resume his work nor did they find him of much use as a salesman in his present condition.

B. Short Answer Questions (SAQ’s)

1. In 1953, Hooper was a favored young man. Explain.

Ans. Life was very kind to Hooper. It offered all joys, pleasures, success and popularity to him on a platter. There was no obstacles and pinpricks to bother him. He had everything he aspired for in his life. His journey of life was very smooth until he met with an accident.

2. How long was Hooper kept in hospital by the doctors? How far had he recovered at the time of discharge?

Ans. Hooper was kept in hospital for about four months. Despite all the baths, exercises and a wheeled walker, Hooper didn't show much progress. He could neither stand on his own nor take a step forward. That is not all; he didn't show any signs of regaining his inner strength and self-confidence that this accident had robbed him of.

3. Why did Hoopers decide to bring Duke back from the Kennel?

Ans. On coming back home, after brief spell of excitement, Hooper felt very lonely and depressed. In the absence of Marcy, who would go away to work, Hooper was alone with his thoughts. He felt so lonely and miserable that his wife and he decided to get their pet dog Duke back home hoping that his presence would give the master some emotional security and the much needed diversion.

4. How did Duke react when he saw Hooper lose his balance?

Ans. Unaware of his master's problem, Duke jumped at him in excitement to express his love and joy. However, the moment he saw his master struggling to maintain his balance, he instinctively sensed that there was something terribly wrong with his master. Never again did he jump at his master the way he had done. Instead, he took a permanent post beside Hooper's bed and stayed there round the clock.

5. How did Duke try to coax his master to make an effort to walk?

Ans. Day in and day out, the crippled master and the pet would spend hours together passively, doing nothing. Soon boredom set in, making Duke very impatient. He would then spring to his feet and push his pointed nose under his master's elbow, nudging him and trying to get him out of the bed for a walk outdoors.

6. Describe the first step taken by Hooper and Duke together after Hooper's confinement to bed?

Ans. On being coaxed to be out of bed by Duke, one evening Hooper hooked the leash to the dog's collar and asked Marcy to help him stand on his feet. Holding the leash in his left hand with the support of the right one he straightened his right leg, dragging the left one along with. Duke pulled the slackened leash tight and thus he took his first 'step'.

7. What daily struggle did neighbours see in front of Marcy's house? How did they react to it?

Ans. Every day the neighbours saw the dog leading his handicapped master on the sidewalk. He pulled the leash taut and then stood and waited for Hooper to put forward his sound leg first and then drag the paralysed one taking a clumsy step. Each day one more step was added to the previous count. The sight of an incapacitated man taking up the difficult challenge to return to normalcy with the help of his pet intrigued the neighbours. They must have felt inspired to face the adversities of life boldly.

8. How did Hooper's visit to the branch office present problems in the headquarters?

Ans. When Hooper visited the branch office and expressed his desire to restart his work on one-hour-a-day basis, the authorities found themselves in a very awkward position. They

could neither dampen their employee's enthusiasm to get back to work by telling him that his handicapped had rendered him useless for the company nor retain a sales manager who couldn't even move out of his chair.

9. Hooper's comeback was more of an asset rather than a liability for the company.

Comment.

Ans. Initially somewhat reluctant to take back Hooper in the company, the authorities wondered what use a crippled salesman would be to the company. But within thirteen months they all admired his efficiency, dedication and sincerity and were obliged to promote him. By and by it became all the more obvious that Hooper was an asset rather than a liability on the company.

10. Duke was an extraordinary dog. What special qualities did he exhibit to justify this?

Discuss.

Ans. A rough – playing, 23-kilo Doberman Pinscher, Duke was a four-year-old red colored dog of incalculable enthusiasm. Full of life, he loved to have boisterous fun, but once he realized his master's grave problem, he took upon himself the responsibility of bringing him back to his feet. His extraordinary intelligence, sincerity and tenacity endeared him to the Hoopers and the people around him.

11. Describe Duke's tragic end?

Ans. On October 12, 1957, while the Hoopers were sitting with their guests in their new house, they heard a screeching sound of brakes. A speeding vehicle just outside the house had badly hit Duke. All efforts to save his life proved futile and he succumbed to his injuries the next morning. Thus, it was really a very sad and dark day for the couple.

12. Why do you think Charles Hooper's appointment as Assistant National Sales Manager was considered to be a tribute to Duke?

Ans. Hooper's promotion orders read "..... therefore, to advance our objective step by step, Charles Hooper is appointed Assistant National Sales Manager ". Duke had accomplished his job and attained his goal of bringing his master back to his feet by making him advance one step at a time. Eventually, he made Hooper go a long way and after that there was no looking back. Hence, these thoughtfully worded orders were a tribute to Duke who achieved what even most humans would have failed to achieve.