

## CHAPTER 2

This old tale is meant to convey the moral lesson ‘Look before you leap.’ Its simple message is to not act in haste, but consider all circumstances and consequences before making decisions or taking action. As the wife from this story would testify, hasty actions can result in devastating outcomes.

# The Mongoose and the Wife



## Reading Text

There was a village called Nevalabiwi in the lands of Bihar. The village’s economy had recently begun to **boom** and families from neighbouring towns and villages were beginning to set up residences here. Nevalabiwi fulfilled all the requirements for a new village town. It had a central market for wives to buy groceries and other household goods, a trader’s spot for husbands to sell their goods and acres of lands for families to live. Most of the families residing in the village were farmers by tradition and they used their acres of land to cultivate crops.

However, for all its advantages, the little town was also **infested** with snakes. At nights, it was dangerous to freely roam the lands without looking at your feet. These reptiles would be found in houses, wells and trees.

One of the families living in this village consisted of a husband, wife and their little baby boy. The husband, like most of the people in the village, was a farmer. While coming to the town, he had found a mongoose and decided to keep it as a pet. Soon enough, his little one and the mongoose became good friends and were extremely fond of each other. They were playmates. Every day, the mongoose would wait at the door of the house for the boy to return, never once moving from his position. The mongoose would have followed the boy to school if it could, but his mother saw to it that the mongoose remained at home.



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Life was quite **tranquil** for the family at Nevalabiwi.

A few months passed and the rains were upon the town of Nevalabiwi. For farmers, this was the time to **yield** their months of **labour**. In the ongoing days, the husband was busy in the farm.

One day, the husband had an extremely **hectic** day in the fields. His wife called him to come home to take care of the child so that she could go to the market and buy some goods and provisions, but the husband refused. He reasoned that the mongoose would be there to protect the boy.

The little boy was fast asleep on his bed, so the mother reasoned to herself that nothing would happen if she quickly slipped out to run her errands. The mongoose was, anyway, lying near the cradle to guard the boy it so loved.

After buying her goods, the wife returned home. The mongoose was at the door of her house as usual. However, today, there was something unusual about it. Its mouth was covered with something, something – red. It was blood; his mouth was covered with blood, and so were his paws. When the mongoose saw the wife, he went to greet her. The wife, in shock, became angry and terrified. She **inferred** that the mongoose had killed her little boy. In her fit, she picked up a rock and threw it at the mongoose, hurting it badly.

She called for her husband and rushed into their home. As she entered the boy's room, she was **astonished**.

The boy was still sleeping peacefully. There was no blood pouring out of him and no

evidence of him being bitten. Her eyes moved to the side of the bed and saw a dead snake. The wife realised that the mongoose had fought the snake and killed it. She rushed outside to see if the mongoose was all right.

The mongoose lay dead on her doorstep. Tears poured out of her eyes after realising her mistake. She cried out loud at her hasty action.



## CHAPTER 9

‘The Fox and the Stork’ is a popular Aesop’s fable with the moral ‘Treat others as you wish to be treated.’ It also reflects the moral ‘Tit for tat’, but is looked at more as a guideline for positive behaviour and attitudes.

# The Fox and the Stork

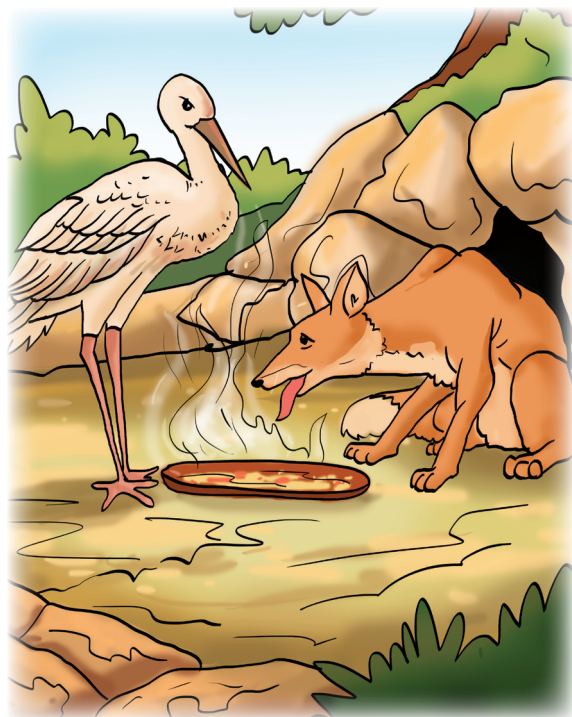


## Reading Text

In the woods of Alaska, several animals, birds and insects freely roam the grassy terrains. It was in these woods that a fox and a stork happened to become friends. The fox was **notorious** throughout the woods for being a **prankster**, whereas all who knew the stork thought of her as a hard worker.

One **blissful** day, when the sun was about to set and the night was on its ascent, the fox met the stork near the clearing of the valley. The fox invited her over to his house for dinner, promising to serve some delicious homemade cooking. Not wanting to be rude, the stork said, “I cherish your invitation with all my heart, my dear friend. I shall be there.”

As they walked towards the cave, they chatted about the daily happenings around them and soon arrived at the fox’s **abode**. The fox poured the soup in shallow bowls and placed them on the table, one for himself and the other for the stork. As promised, the **aroma** of



the soup was **appetising**. “Here is the delicious soup I have made chiefly for you,” he said “I hope you enjoy it as much as I am.”

However, the stork wasn’t happy. While the fox could easily lap up the soup, his unfortunate guest could just wet the end of her long beak. All the poor stork could do was look at her friend, the fox, slurp his soup with **relish**. The stork had arrived at the fox’s cave hungry and **unfortunately** had to leave in the same condition.

For the fox, this all seemed to be a good joke.

The next day, when the stork met the fox, just as the sun was setting and the night would begin, she asked her friend to join her for dinner. “As

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you were very kind to invite me home for dinner last evening, I think I must call you to my lovely home to taste some of my amazing food.”

Again, the friends exchanged stories about their day as they walked together. They soon reached the stork’s **dwelling** and realising the fox must have been hungry, she quickly served him their food. The stork brought out the fine hot soup in a tall jar with a narrow neck. “Here’s the soup, I trust you will like it,” said the stork. It was easy for the stork to relish the soup with her long neck and bill, but the fox was able to do was lick the top of the bottle.

“My friend, enjoy your dinner. I hope that my soup is as well flavoured as yours was yesterday,” said the stork.



Unable to satisfy his hunger, the fox retired to his cave with as much grace as he could **muster**. He realised his host had paid him back with his own coin. He learnt now that we must always remember to do unto others as we would have others do unto us!



## Fab Vocab

### A. Enhance your vocabulary with the following words from the chapter.

**notorious:** famous or well known, typically for a bad reason

**prankster:** someone who plays practical jokes on others

**blissful:** extremely happy, full of joy

**abode:** housing that someone is living in

**aroma:** a pleasant odour

**appetising:** food that is appealing in appearance, smell, or both

**relish:** great enjoyment

**unfortunate:** not favoured by fortune

**dwelling:** housing that someone is living in

**muster:** gather or bring together oneself

### B. Read the following sentences describing words from the passage and write the words.

- i) I come from the dog family.
- ii) I set everyday and rise every morning.
- iii) I am another word for eating.
- iv) I am known as a jokester.
- v) A synonym for a place to live.



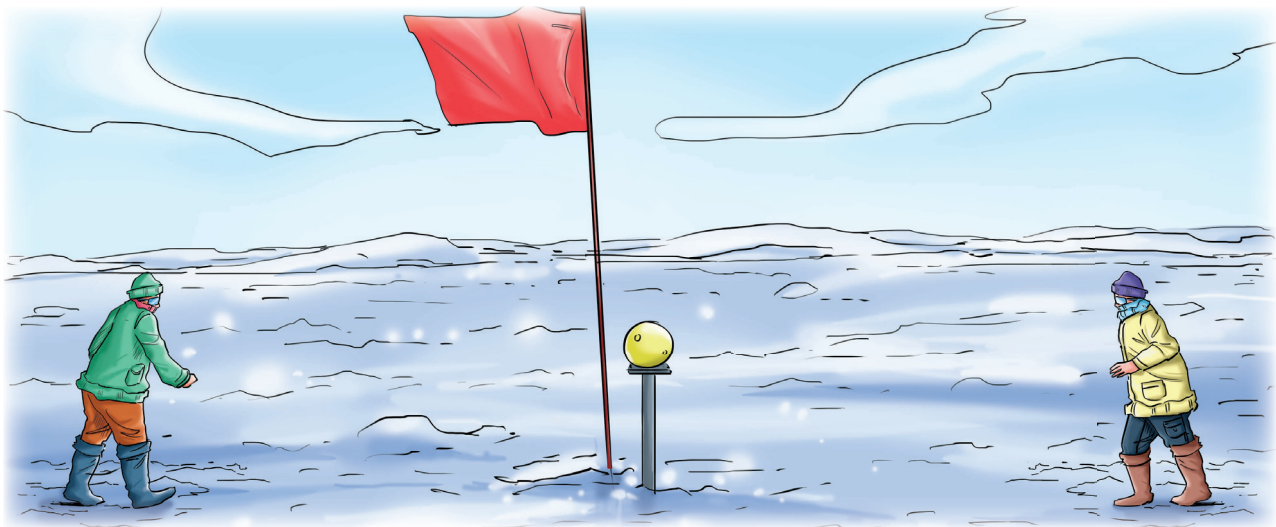
## CHAPTER 9

The beginning of the century was a glorious one, where man wanted to achieve the impossible, go to places he had never been to before and steal the imagination of the people. The race to the South Pole is one such event. This chapter chronicles the journeys made by Robert Falcon Scott and Roald Amundsen to the South Pole, and is an example of the perils of competitiveness.

### Race to the South Pole



#### Reading Text



Robert Falcon Scott was the first Englishman to lead a successful **expedition** to the South Pole. Scott was handsome, **forthright** and loyal to naval traditions, but was not an experienced polar explorer. However, he compensated for his lack of polar knowledge by reading a great deal about it and took men of practical experience to accompany him.

Scott's party set base at Ross Ice Shelf in the Antarctic. In January 1902, Scott anchored his ship 'Discovery' at McMurdo Sound. With him was Ernest Shackleton, who contracted scurvy and had to be sent home on a relief ship.

In 1908, Shackleton was still **miffed** about having been sent home six years ago and decided to lead his own expedition.



Robert Falcon Scott

Sadly, he had to turn back again as his men were **exhausted**. His polar explorations led to two important innovations – light-weight boxes to carry rations and a **modified** motor vehicle which could travel over ice and snow, proving that **combustion** engines could function in the Antarctic cold. On his return to England, the public acclaimed him as a hero and King Edward VII knighted him.

Irked by Shackleton’s success, Scott led another expedition in 1910, only to find that a Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen had reached it five weeks earlier. Read the two extracts on Scott’s expedition from two different sources.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Extract

In June, 1910, Robert Falcon Scott, then a captain, once again set sail for Antarctica. His previous expedition had been mainly in the interest of science; now he was personally intent on reaching the South Pole. His confidence, however, was dimmed considerably when he arrived in Melbourne, Australia, and found this telegraph message waiting for him: “BEG LEAVE TO INFORM YOU PROCEEDING TO ANTARCTICA. AMUNDSEN.”

It meant that Roald Amundsen, who had let the world believe he was heading for the Arctic, had changed his plans. Admiral Peary had beaten him to the North Pole; now he was on his way to try to beat Scott to the South Pole.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Extract

In 1911, Scott returned to Antarctica for a second attempt at the South Pole and so did a team of Norwegians led by Roald Amundsen. Amundsen was an experienced explorer with great knowledge regarding survival and travel to the North Pole. He had attempted a journey to the North Pole in 1910 but changed his mind about the trip when he learnt that two people had already been there. Instead, he turned to the unexplored South Pole. Amundsen’s camp was positioned in the Bay of Whales, 100 km closer to the Pole. The Norwegians were also supplied with 59 husky dogs to help with hauling supplies on sleds. Scott, on the other hand used ponies as well as dogs, but the ponies had proven useless. Scott also refused to see the usefulness in wearing fur clothing.

Fifty seven days after they started out, Amundsen’s team reached the South Pole on December 14, 1911. Using skis, Amundsen was able to safely negotiate ‘Devil’s Ballroom’. They swiftly returned to their camp and set sail for Australia to tell the world of their achievements.



Roald Amundsen



By the time Scott's support parties had laid the supply **depots**, winter had fallen. With the return of spring, or what passes for springtime in Antarctica, the polar party set out. The men were forced to pull the sledges once they started up the Beardmore Glacier, because by then the Siberian ponies were all dead.

Scott's men rose early each morning to a breakfast of tea and a gruel called hoosh. Then, after a day of dragging their sledges, they crawled wearily into wet sleeping bags at night. Scott, in his diary, commented on the strange weakness that had overcome him and his men. He blamed it on the cold and the difficult sledging, but it was probably the first sign of scurvy.

The men ignored the warning symptoms and pushed on, their strength buoyed somewhat by the thought of approaching victory. But eleven miles from the pole their **buoyant** spirits collapsed, for they came upon a black flag, sledge and ski tracks, and the marks of many dogs in the snow. It appeared Amundsen had been there before them.

On the next day, January 17, 1912, Scott reached the South Pole. There, he and his men found a tent flying the Norwegian flag, a sledge, and various other abandoned pieces of equipment. Inside the tent, Scott found a letter addressed to him from Amundsen, dated December 14; Amundsen had reached the Pole over a month earlier. While Scott and his **bedraggled** party camped briefly at the Pole, Amundsen was nearing his home base on the Ross Sea. His men were healthy, and his surviving sledge dogs were in excellent condition. There is perhaps no greater contrast in all polar history than the marches to the South Pole made by Scott and Amundsen, each within such a short time of the other.



## Fab Vocab

### A. Enhance your vocabulary with the following words from the chapter.

**expedition:** an organised group of people undertaking a journey for a particular purpose

**forthright:** characterised by directness in manner or speech

**miffed:** upset

**exhausted:** drained of energy or effectiveness

**modified:** changed in form or character

**combustion:** a state of violent disturbance

**depots:** station where transport vehicles load or unload passengers or goods

**buoyant:** characterised by liveliness and light heartedness

**bedraggled:** limp and soiled



## CHAPTER 11

On August 28, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a leader in the United States' Civil Rights Movement, delivered one of the most memorable, inspiring and overwhelming speeches at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C.

### I Have A Dream



#### Reading Text

Some American states were still enforcing laws of inequality and injustice till the early 1960s. Though African-Americans had finally been given the right to vote, many were still **discriminated** against by white Americans. Archaic policies and customs were still being practised. In some parts of the country, especially within the southern states, regulations were created to reduce the number of African-American voters or **disenfranchise** them. Worse still, rules of segregation were still in play.

A key figure in the American Civil Rights Movement was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The Movement was a struggle to acquire equal rights – political, social and economic – for African-Americans. At the age of 35, Dr. King became the second American, third black man and youngest **recipient** of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. His lectures and speeches stirred the **conscience** of the American people. His protest marches inspired the black and the poor. Inspired by and evoking the principles of non violence put forth by Mahatma Gandhi, his speeches spread hope, the belief of a better tomorrow and a sense of dignity. Not only did he **enthuse** the conscience of the generation of the 1960s, but also was responsible for the passing of the voting rights bill of 1965, which gave voting rights to all African-American citizens across the country.

The Movement had received a boost on December 1, 1955, when Rosa Parks, an African-American woman living in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give up her seat for a



*Martin Luther King, Jr.*



white passenger even though the bus driver ordered her to do so, leading to her arrest. Though Mrs. Parks was not the first person to refuse such a distasteful request, hers was the first to receive such exposure. Realising this was an **optimum** opportunity, leaders of the Movement asked their townspeople to boycott bus services. Following her arrest, the buses were almost empty. People found other ways to commute to their jobs and schools. Those who owned cars gave rides to those who didn't. Those who did not get rides walked. While African-Americans continued their civil disobedience, Mrs. Parks went to court. Officials expected the fuss over the buses to end quickly, but they were wrong. Montgomery's African-Americans attended a meeting by night to hear a young minister named Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. urge them to continue their civil disobedience. "We are going to keep walking until the bus company gives us fair treatment," said Dr. King. And they did, while empty buses rolled through the streets of Montgomery.

Dr. King and his speeches sustained the Montgomery Bus Boycott from 1955 to 1956. He was arrested 30 times for his activities relating to the quest for civil rights. On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. stood at the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee, delivering a speech when he was tragically assassinated by a criminal called James Earl Ray. Years later, Dr. King's legacy lives on. His message of non-violence and civil disobedience are still relevant today.

### **I Have A Dream**

"I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.' I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, **sweltering** with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today. This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood."



## CHAPTER 21

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam held India's highest office from 2002 to 2007 and is considered by many to be the people's President. He has been a scientist throughout his life and played major roles in India's scientific achievements.

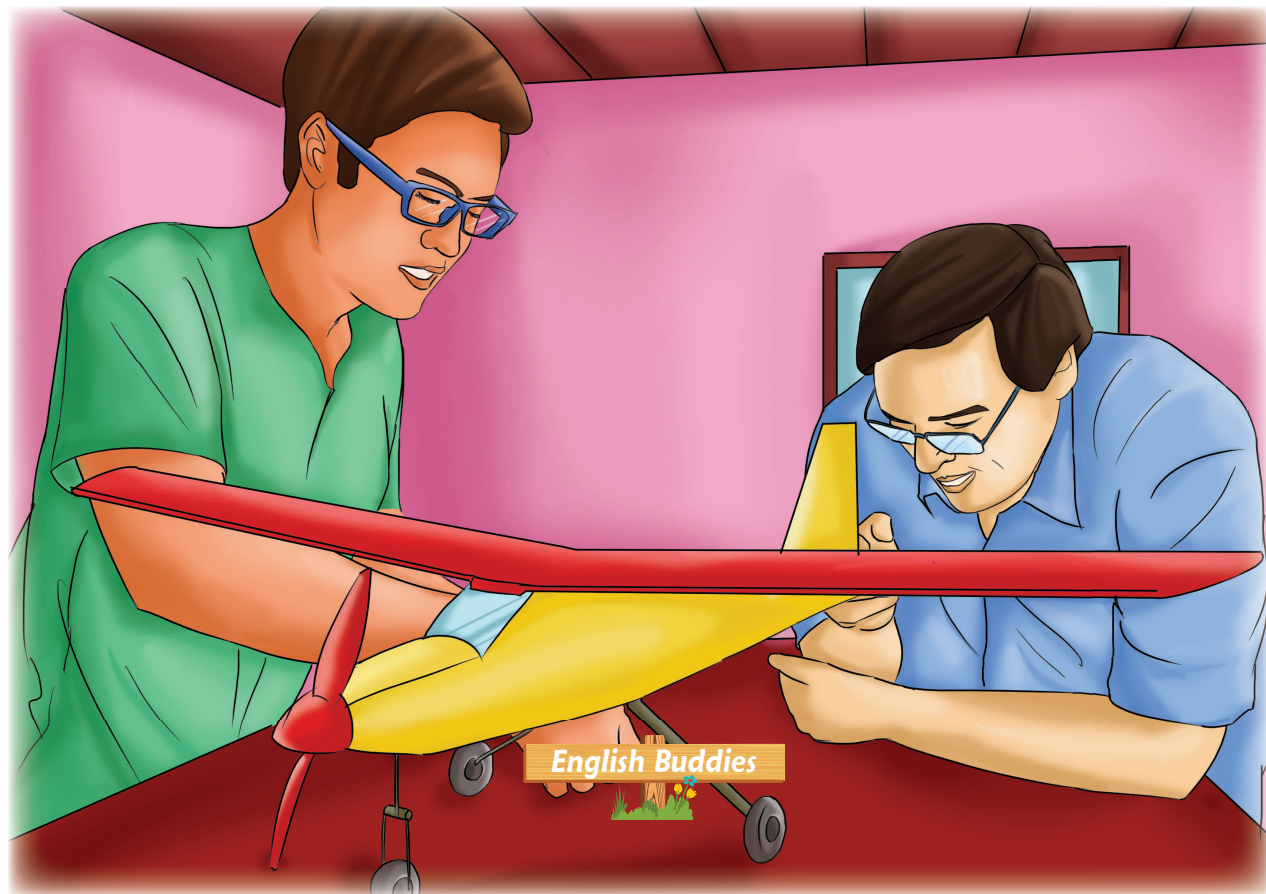
# Abdul Kalam, the People's President



### Reading Text

The young man waited and looked at Professor Srinivasan's stern face. The professor's **critical** eye **inspected** the design of a low-level attack aircraft. All the while, the young man waited with **bated** breath to hear the verdict. When it was finally delivered, it turned out to be not what this scholarship student had been hoping for. "This is just not good enough," the professor said, "I expected much better from you. This is dismal work and I am disappointed that someone with your talent has come up with work like this."

The young man was dumbfounded. He had always excelled in class and was a star pupil. For a student who never had been pulled up by his educators before, this was embarrassing feedback. Professor Srinivasan shook his head and instructing him to redo his design, he said, "Today is Friday afternoon, young man. I want to see a flawless **configuration** drawing by Monday evening. If you are unable to do so, your scholarship funding will be terminated."



English Buddies

Losing his scholarship could shatter the young man's dreams of graduating as an aeronautic engineer from the Madras Institute of Technology. He could not afford attending this institute without the scholarship. It was not only his own dreams and **ambitions** that were on the line, but also those of his parents and sisters.

He could not **fathom** such an **eventuality**. He got to work right away, determined to prove to himself that he could keep his dreams and ambitions alive. He skipped dinner and was at the drawing board throughout the night, conceiving and figuring out ways to create an elegant design. Thoughts which had earlier been floating about in his head disconnectedly were now forming concrete shapes. By Sunday evening, his work was nearing completion.

Just as he was applying his final touches, Professor Srinivasan entered the room, gave his design an appraising look and said, "I knew I was putting you under **immense** pressure when I rejected your work the other day. I set an impossible deadline—yet you have met it with work that I can only call outstanding! As your teacher, I had to push you so that you could recognise your own true potential."

That young man was our former President, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.

Born on October 15, 1931, in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, has been a lifelong scientist, played a prominent role in the 1998 nuclear weapons tests conducted by India and went on to become the President of India in 2002.

From the missile programme with DRDO to the Indian satellite and launch vehicles of ISRO, Dr. Kalam has made significant contributions to India's science fraternity. As Project Director, he chipped in with design, development and management of India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III) to send the 'Rohini' satellite into the earth's orbit. He later rejoined DRDO in 1982 and conjured the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) for **indigenous** missiles. He has played the role of Scientific Adviser for the Defence Ministry and the Department of Defence Research & Development. In 1999, he served as the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India. Dr. Kalam was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1981, Padma Vibhushan in 1990 and Bharat Ratna in 1997.

Yet, throughout his career, Dr. Kalam has taken a keen interest in igniting young minds for national development, as seen in his presidency. He pursued academia by teaching at the Department of Technology and Societal Transformation at Anna University, Chennai.

At a school event he was attending as President of the country, the seating arrangements were such that teachers and political leaders were sitting on chairs in the front and students were sitting behind a **barricade** on the ground. He looked around, told the children to jump over the barricade and come forward, requesting the teachers and leaders to move their chairs back to make room for the children.

Dr. Kalam has been the people's President. He reached out and spoke to the general public at every opportunity.







A young boy once walked up to Rashtrapati Bhawan and dropped a clumsy handwritten note addressed to Dr. Kalam, asking for a meeting to discuss some ideas for the country's development. The very next day, this young boy received a call from Dr. Kalam's secretary.

How much more devotion could India have asked for from a President?



## Fab Vocab

### A. Enhance your vocabulary with the following words from the chapter.

**critical:** marked by a tendency to find and call attention to errors and flaws

**inspected:** looked over with a discerning eye

**bated:** moderate or restrain

**configuration:** an arrangement of parts or elements

**ambition:** desire and determination to achieve something, usually success

**fathom:** comprehend

**eventuality:** finality

**immense:** unusually great in size or amount or degree, extent or scope

**indigenous:** originating where it is found

**barricade:** a barrier to impede the advance of an enemy

### B. Make sentences with the following words from the chapter. You may change the tense form of the verb to maintain grammatical correctness in your sentence.

- |                     |               |                  |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------|
| i) delivered        | ii) dismal    | iii) dumbfounded |
| iv) pupil           | v) flawless   | vi) terminated   |
| vii) conceiving     | viii) elegant | ix) appraising   |
| x) potential        | xi) prominent | xii) conjured    |
| xiii) contributions | xiv) pursued  |                  |



## Read Well

### A. Fill in the blanks to complete the sentences from the passage.

- i) When it was finally delivered, it turned out to be not what this \_\_\_\_\_ student had been hoping for.

