

Unit
14

The Mango Tree

In a small town, there was a small house in which lived a young man, his wife, and the young man's sister. This small house had a small garden at the back in which grew a small mango tree. One day the young man's wife came to him and said, 'Look here, I'm fed up with our situation. Your sister ...' 'Have you come here to complain about my sister again?' 'What can I do? I know it's quite useless. My complaints fall on deaf ears, anyway. I'm just so angry with your sister. I get up early in the morning, draw water from the well, light the fire in the kitchen, cook breakfast, wash and scrub the pots ...' 'Don't go on,' said the brother. 'I've heard it all before.' 'And what does your lazy sister do all day? Nothing ... nothing ... she lolls about in the garden, watering her mango tree, talking to it, clearing away dead leaves, and feeding it manure and mulch.' 'That isn't all she does. She comes in and talks to me. Just an hour ago, she was playing chess with me.'



'Just because she adores you, doesn't mean you should ignore her faults. You must tell her to leave that silly mango tree alone, and come and help me with the housework. I really think we should marry her off. That might teach her to be more responsible.' Since the sister was of marriageable age, the brother could not really object. He knew though, that he would miss her very, very much.

Madhur Jaffrey

Do you remember?

Read these sentences about the story. Write 'true' or 'not true' for each one.

1. The young man was married.
2. The young man's wife and sister were close friends.

3. The wife often complained about the sister.
4. Breakfast was usually prepared by the sister.
5. Watering the mango tree was important to the sister.
6. The wife thought the sister should be married.

More to think about

1. Write a sentence to answer each question.
 - a) What does the wife mean when she says, "I'm fed up with our situation"?
 - b) How would you describe the sister's behaviour?
 - c) Do you think the husband was partly responsible for the problem? Explain your answer.
 - d) What do you think of the wife's suggestion for solving the problem?
 - e) How do you think the sister might react?
2. Complete the table by listing the jobs that the wife and the sister do. One has been done to help you.

Wife	Sister
Draws water from the well	

Now try these

1. Imagine that you are the sister. Write the story from your point of view.
2. Turn this passage from 'The Mango Tree' into a play. Remember you will need to:
 - describe **the setting**.
 - list the people in your play – **the characters**.
 - write what is said – **the dialogue**.
 - describe what the characters do – **stage directions**.

