

## The Avanti PRE Curriculum

### Exercise Sheet 7.5.4c (Story with Questions)

#### “Keeping Good Company”

##### Story 1: “The Twin Parrots”

Two parrots built their nest in a giant banyan tree. The female parrot laid two eggs in the nest. After some time, the eggs hatched revealing two chicks. The parent birds were overjoyed and took good care of their infants. After a few weeks, the young birds were able to fly for some distances. The father bird said to his wife, “We have taken good care of our young ones. We have fed them well. They have played together. They have learned how to fly. Now they can take care of themselves. We can leave them alone during the daytime”.

Every morning, the parent parrots flew out to fetch food. They returned in the evening with food for their two twins.

A hunter had been carefully watching the bird’s behaviour. He learned that the parents left in the morning. He decided to catch the young birds, and one day tried to ensnare them with a net. As planned, he caught them both. But the two young birds squawked and struggled and one managed to escape, flying far away into the distance.

The hunter took the less fortunate twin to his house in a cage. He announced to his family, “I caught two parrots, but lost one of them. Turning to his children, he added, “Keep this parrot as a pet’. The hunter’s children played with the parrot, which very soon learnt to speak a few words. The children excitedly said to their father, “Dad, our parrot has learnt speak”

The other parrot had flown for some time until it reached a hermitage and decided to land there. The gentle holy men were happy to see the young parrot. He listened to their talks and, simply by listening, learnt to say a few words.

One day, a traveller passed the hunter’s hut. Feeling tired, he sat down nearby. He was surprised to hear the parrot speak: “You fool, why you come here have? I will cut your throat.” Sorry to hear such insulting words, he immediately got up and hurried away. By chance, he reached the hermitage, where the other parrot was perched on a branch.

The second parrot spoke, “Welcome, my dear traveller, this hermitage. We have many good fruits in this forest. Please eat whatever you like. The holy men will treat you well.”

The traveller was again surprised. He said to the parrot. “I met a young parrot nearby, close to a hunter’s hut. He spoke badly and I left the place immediately. Now I have met you, who speaks so well. Your words are kind and gentle. Both you and the other birds are green parrots. But, why is your language so different?”

Hearing this, the parrot understood that the other parrot was none other than his lost brother. The hermitage parrot replied, “Traveller, the other parrot is my twin brother. But we have lived in two different places. My brother has learnt the hunter’s language. I have learnt the language of sadhus (holy people). It is the company you keep that shapes your words, your thoughts and your deeds.”

### Questions:

1. In what two places did the twin parrots grow up?
2. Why did the two parrots speak differently when welcoming the traveller?
3. What is the moral of the story in your own words?

### Extension Questions:

4. "What do you think is 'bad company'? Explain why.
5. How might the way we talk (or the music we listen to) affect our thoughts and behaviour? Explain.