

STUDENT EXAMPLE

The Lesson of "Rikki-tikki-tavi"

The short story "Rikki-tikki-tavi" is a well-known short story written by Rudyard Kipling, who wrote many other novels, such as *Kim and Captains Courageous*. "Rikki-tikki-tavi" is a story about two natural enemies: a mongoose and a cobra. The message of the story is that although you may be small, you can still overcome major enemies. This story is enjoyable because it can teach you helpful morals while keeping you entertained at the same time.

The beginning of this story is heavyhearted and dramatic. A small boy named Teddy thinks that the mongoose is dead following a bout with its first enemy – a flood that swept him away from his burrow. The mood of the story changes when the boy realizes that the mongoose is still alive, but weak. He decides to keep it, and takes care of it much like a pet, feeding it and naming it Rikki-tikki-tavi.

When Rikki-tikki goes outside into the little boy's garden to explore his surroundings, he comes upon a bird, which he confronts. The story switches back to the gloomy mood when the mongoose discovers that Nag, a cobra, ate one of the bird's eggs. When Rikki-tikki hears this, Nag comes out of the tall grass behind him.

This is when the story gets scary because Rikki faces another enemy. Nag quickly spread his hood to intimidate the small mongoose. Then, Nagaina, Nag's wife, pulse a surprise addack on Rikki-tikki and nearly eats him. Because Rikki-tikki is young and dodges the cobra's blow from behind, he gains plenty of confidence. Readers wonder whether the mongoose will stay safe.

As the story progresses, Rikki meets Karait, another snake and this builds excitement and tension. This snake isn't after the mongoose, although he is after the family. When Teddy runs out to pet Rikki-tikki, the snake strikes at the boy, but Rikki-tikki lunges at the snake and paralyzes it by biting it before it can bite Teddy.

Later, after Rikki-tikki discovers that the cobras are going to go after his owners, he is filled with rage and he takes on the challenge. The moment the reader is waiting for arrives. The mongoose and the cobra fight to kill. At one point Rikki-tikki has his teeth in Nag as Nag flings himself about. Readers may think that Rikki-tikki will surely die from the beating that he is taking, but he holds on and, thankfully, Teddy's dad hears the fighting and shoots Nag behind the bood with a shotgun, easily ending the brutal battle which leaves Nag dead and Rikki-tikki dizzy, but alive.

This story is exciting and thought provoking. It ends, leaving me and other readers to think about its real meaning. Most people can relate to a time when they have faced a challenge in their life, but have felt that they were unable to overcome it. However, when they kept trying and put their minds to it, they eventually ended with success, as Rikki-tikki did.

Student chooses to focus on the message, or theme, of the story.

Here, student summarizes the most important plot events in the order in which they occur.

The student supports the ideas about the story by giving examples of how Rikki-tikki fights several enemies even though he is small.

The student explains what message readers can take away from the story – this ties back to the main focus from the introduction.