**Chapter- 9.1**

**THE SNAKE TRYING**

**By– W.W.E. Ross**

**INTRODUCTION**

Most of us think snakes as fearsome symbols of death. But the poet has a different opinion about it. In his view that snakes are not harmful if they are not disturbed. They make harm to the human body only when they think him a danger for their own life. In this poem, the snake itself becomes a victim ofhumanhardness.

***Introduction (2)****:*

*This small poem by W.W.E. Ross, written in unrhymed, free-verse with unequal lines, is the poet’s plea to human beings to treat snakes in a kind manner. Human beings generally tend to kill snakes to avoid being bitten, but the poet reveals that all snakes are not poisonous and all of them do not harm human beings.*

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***THEME***

 The poem is based on the theme of prevention of cruelty towards animals. The poet develops this thought by requesting people to maintain ecological balance and not to harm any species, in this particular case – the snakes. Since all snakes are not venomous, they are harmless and attack human beings only in self-defence. Hence they should be left on their own. They have a right to existence, too.

***MESSAGE***

The poem, in very simple and clear words, conveys the message that all creatures of nature need to be treated in a kind and sympathetic manner. Even snakes must not be attacked because they do not bite unless they sense a danger to their life. Moreover, there are certain varieties of snakes that are not poisonous and are hence harmless.

***TITLE***

*The title reveals that the snake is making an effort. This title is repeated in the opening line to reinforce the ‘trying’ by the snake. It makes the reader curious and he reads the rest of the poem to learn that the snake is a victim and is ‘trying’ to save himself from someone who is chasing him in order to kill him with a stick. Thus, the title is apt as it initiates the inquisitiveness of the reader and prompts him to find out about the snake’s efforts.*

***LITERARY DEVICES***

***Transferred Epithet***

*A transferred epithet is an adjective that grammatically qualifies a noun other than the person or thing it is actually describing.*

***Examples****:*

* *to escape the pursuing stick*

*Here, the adjective ‘pursuing’ is used with ‘stick’. But it is not intended to show that the stick is pursuing. Actually, it is to suggest that some person with a stick in his hands is chasing the snake. Hence, the epithet (adjective) is transferred from the person to the stick.*

***RHYME SCHEME***

 As the poem is written in free verse with lines unequal in length and no metre, there is no rhyme scheme in the poem.

**Poetic Devices**

1. **Imagery**

The poet uses a certain description that is appealing to the senses.

**Example:**

* He describes the beauty of the snake as small and green and the reeds as green shin reeds.

1. **Personification**

We find that the poet refers to the snake as he would refer to a human being.

***Example:***

* He glides through the water.
* O let him go.

***Summary (1)***:

 This is a beautiful poem about a snake. One day a snake was lying on the sandy bank of a pond or a river. Some one observes it and runs after it with a stick. He wants to kill it. The snake is trying to escape from the pursuing stick. It runs with sudden curves in its body. It looks very beautiful and graceful. It glides through the water to save itself from the stroke. The poet sees all this. He asks the chaser to let the snake go away without any hurt. He says that it is a small green snake. It can’t make harm even to a small child. But the chaser does not listen to the poet. He is after the snake but it disappears in the ripples among the green slim reeds.

***Summary (2)***:

This small poem of sixteen-lines deals with the idea that human beings should not be cruel towards snakes. The snakes must be left alone to enjoy themselves.The poem opens with the image of a snake being chased with a stick and trying to save itself from being struck. The long-bodied snake curves and curls its slender, thin body as it makes an attempt to avoid the stick flung at it. The poet finds different shapes of his curling body to be very elegant and fascinating.The snake moves softly through the water of the pond to hide himself among the reeds growing densely in the marsh so that he is not hit by the stick. The poet wants the person, who is chasing the snake, to let him go safely to his hide-out among the reeds without being injured. This specific snake, green in colour and small in size, is non-poisonous and therefore, cannot harm even young children. He was lying comfortably and peacefully on the sandy bank of the pond before being noticed and chased with a stick by the people. But now he has taken shelter in the green, slender reeds beyond the pond where he creates ripples while slithering on the water.

**Value Points**

* The snake was trying to escape the man with a stick.
* With his thin long body, he runs making sudden carvings.
* The poet thinks that his curves are beautiful and impressive.
* To save itself from the blow of stick, he prefers to go through water.
* He is harmless even to children.
* He finally vanishes among the green thin reeds.

**Useful Expressions**

* ***to escape the pursuing stick –*** The snake is trying to get away from the man who is chasing him with a stick.
* ***into the reeds to hide* –**The snake runs into the reeds to escape the man.
* ***harmless even to children* –**Some snakes do not bite even children.
* ***he lay until observed* –**The snake lies in the hiding place until it is noticed by someone.
* ***among the green slim reeds* –**When the snake is chased away by people, it vanishes into the bushes of the green thin reeds for protection.