



3

The Coconut Tree



Let's start

Of all the trees you know, which one do you think is the most useful? Why? Discuss with your partner.

wise	seek	advice	Words to KNOW
meditation	gratefully	control	

Now let's read a story to find out why a man was turned into a tree.

There was once an old man. No one knew how old he really was. Some said he was a hundred years old, while some others said he was two hundred. But everyone agreed that he was very **wise** and helpful. That is why many people came to his cave in the hills, where he lived. The hills were near the sea. The people came to **seek** his **advice**. He always helped them make the right choice.

One day, a young man came to visit him. The old man was sitting outside his cave, busy in **meditation**. When the old man opened his eyes, he saw the young man sitting quietly near his feet.



wise: very clever or with a lot of knowledge **seek**: ask for **advice**: guidance **meditation**: concentration of the mind for a period of time, in silence or with chanting



'O Wise Father,' said the young man. 'I want to help people. I want to be useful to them. Please tell me how I may serve my fellow men.'

'That is very good!' said the old man and smiled. 'I think I can help you.' The old man went inside his cave and came out with a wooden box. 'Here is a magic box for you. Do not open it until you reach home. Open it only when you are inside.'

The young man **gratefully** took the box. 'Thank you, Wise Father! I will do as you say.'

While returning home, the young man stopped and thought, 'I wonder what's in the box? But the wise father told me not to open it until I reach home.' He walked a little more. But he could not **control** himself any longer.


'A quick look won't hurt anybody,' he said to himself. The young man opened the box and at once he turned into a tree! He became a tall coconut tree.

You see, he should have listened to the old man. The young man still got his wish, as all the parts of a coconut tree are indeed very useful in some way or the other to everyone.



—A Malaysian folk tale



gratefully: showing happiness for something **control**: stop

 Let's answer

A. Answer the questions by choosing the right option.

1. Everyone visited the wise old man because
 - a) he was very old.
 - b) he was very wise and helpful.
 - c) he gave orders.
2. If someone wanted to visit the old man, they would have to
 - a) travel for many days.
 - b) invite him to their homes.
 - c) visit his cave.
3. The young man went to the old man's cave as
 - a) he wanted the old man's advice.
 - b) he wanted to help the old man.
 - c) he did not know anything.
4. The young man was punished because
 - a) he was not wise.
 - b) he was very rude.
 - c) he did not follow the old man's instructions.

B. Answer the following questions. *(See Worksheet for Answers)*

1. What kind of a person was the young man? Describe him in two or three sentences. *(Hint: good qualities – he wanted to help everyone/ went to seek the old man's advice; bad qualities – could not wait/did not follow instructions)*
2. Why did the old man change the young man into a coconut tree?
3. Do you think it was right for the old man to punish the young man? Why?  

Answer Key
Class III
Chapter 3 The Coconut Tree

Exercise B)

1. The young man was a good person as he wanted to help people. But, he was also bad because he did not follow instructions given by the wise, old man.
2. The old man changed the young man into a coconut tree so that he could help people with his products.
3. Yes, it was right to punish the young man because he did not follow instructions given by the old man.