

The story revolves around a ten year old school boy named **Swaminathan** and his friends. Throughout the novel he is called as **Swami**. All the events take place in **Malgudi**, A fictional town. Swami wakes up a bit late on a Monday morning. As usual, his father scolds him for not getting up in time and his grandmother comes to defend him as mostly she does throughout the novel. His father takes him strictly and scolds him for not completing his homework. Swami rushes through his homework and then he goes to School. He is studying in **Albert Mission School**. He feels bored in the class. He gets a poor grade in Mathematics. Swami gets involved in some arguments with his class teacher, **Mr. Ebenezar**, a Christian ideologist. Mr. Ebenezar criticizes the practices of Hindu religion, like **Idol Worship**. Swami and his friends feel offended. Swami tells about this to his father. Next day, he comes with a letter from his father to the headmaster complaining against that teacher for not giving respect to non-christian boys and their religion. The headmaster scolds Ebenezar and also asked Swami to report to him in the future but not to his father.

Swami also tells his friends about the letter. Among his friends, there are **Mani, Somu, Sankar** and **Samuel**. Mani is a mighty boy, lazy at times and not so good at studies. Somu is the class monitor. Sankar is very sharp and intelligent in studies. Samuel is nick named as 'The **Pea**' for his height. Later in that evening, Swami and Mani sit on the banks of the **Sarayu river** and they are talking about **Rajam**, one of their classmates. Rajam is the son of a wealthy Police Superintendent. Mani does not like Rajam and he wants to throw him into the river. Mani sees Rajam as his rival. Swami says that he will always take his side. But at the same time, Swami wishes him to reconcile with Rajam. In the school, Mani challenges Rajam for a fight to prove who is better and more powerful. Swami acts a mediator between the two. They decide to meet for the fight on the banks of the river. But when the time for the fight comes, Rajam suggests that they should become friends and Mani agrees. By their reconciliation, Swami is the one who is the happiest of all. He has great admirations for Rajam for his good qualities.

Swami's mother is expected to give birth to a baby. Most of the time, she is lying in the bed. Taking her to be ill, Swami worries about her. She gives birth to a boy. The baby boy is called as **Subbu**. His mother is

very caring and sweet. His father also loves him very much. But he is always concerned about his studies and exams as at times Swami becomes careless and negligent. Swami is more attached to his grandmother. More often, he talks about his friends especially Rajam, to his grandmother. Rajam invites his friends at his house and serves them with delicious food and toys. One day in the school, Somu, Sankar and Samuel make fun of Swami by calling him as "**Rajam's Tail**". Because they feel that Swami has ignored them and now he is always flattering Rajam because of his wealth. Swami feels hurt for being rejected by his friends. Coming home, Swami enjoys playing with paper boat. In school, Somu and others keep teasing him with the remarks of "Rajam's Tail". Rajam promises Swami to make a visit to his house. Swami requests his father to allow him use his room to welcome Rajam. He asks his mother to prepare delicious food. He enjoys Rajam's company. In the school, he is again mocked as Rajam's tail by Somu, Samuel and Sankar. They even draw pictures and write words on the board. Swami slaps Sankar and Samuel. Later Mani joins them and takes Swami's

side. Mani and Somu fights until the headmaster comes to stop them. A few days later, Swami and Mani go to Rajam's house. Swami and Mani acts as puppy and kitten while entering his room. To their surprise, Somu, Sankar, and Samuel are already present there. They all enjoy delicious food. Rajam advises them all to be friends and not to fight ever again. He offers each of them a gift if they promise to be friends. They all accept his gifts.

Now it is the month of April, There are only two weeks left for their exams. Swami's father treats him strictly to study consistently. Swami makes a list of things that he needs for exams like nib, ink, paper board. His father scolds him and refuses to give him money, instead telling him to take things which are already available in his study desk. Mani is so scared of the exams that he tries some unfair ways to know about the questions in advance. Eventually, exams are over. Swami finishes the final exam far too earlier than any other student. After the final exam, all the students come out in excitement and celebrate in jubilation. Swami realizes that Mani and Rajam are his close friends than any other. He gives some money to a coachman for a wheel to play. But the coachman cheated him. Mani and Rajam make a plan in which Mani will kidnap the coachman's son,

but the plan goes wrong as the boy gets away and his neighbors attack Mani and Swami. Later they try to frighten a young cart boy named **Karuppan**. At home, Swami's father makes him study again even though school is off. Swami has a visit to a Tennis club where he finds the same boy, the son of the coachman working there. Swami gets scared that the boy will attack him.

In the month of August, A protest is going for Indian independence. The leaders are motivating the people with their speeches to use Indian made goods. The English goods are boycotted. Swami and Mani become the part of this protest. Even Swami is persuaded to throw his cap into the fire as the protesters take it a foreign-made. The protesters are now enraged as an Indian political leader is imprisoned. They forcibly block the entry gate of the school to keep it closed for the day. Swami gets excited by the protest as he breaks window pane of the headmaster's office in Missionary school by throwing stone. But the peon notices him. The protesters destroy the property at both the Mission School and nearby the Board School. Swami sees Rajam's father ordering his policemen to take control over the protesters. Swami comes back home. His father tells him that his cap was locally made of

Khadi. He also has sympathy for the protesters. The next day, the headmaster calls the peon into the class to testify Swami's act of breaking the window panes. Swami is severely punished and in anger, he runs away condemning the school authorities as foreigners.

Swami is now admitted to **the Board School**, the only other school in Malgudi. He misses his friends who all are in the Mission School. Rajam has decided to form a **cricket** team with the name **MCC (Malgudi Cricket Club)**. All friends are agreed to be part of it. They write a letter for ordering the supplies like bat, ball, pads, gloves, wickets etc. Swami established himself to be a good bowler and is given the nick name as Tate by his friends, after **Maurice Tate**, an English fast bowler. One evening, the grandmother asks Swami to bring some lemons as she is feeling unwell. But he ignores her and goes to play. Later he realizes his mistake of ignoring her and feels sorry to her. Swami finds that the board school has drill practices in the evening which is compulsory for every student. As a result he often gets late for the bowling practice. It annoys Rajam that he decides to talk to the headmaster of the Board School and to request him to allow Swami to escape the drill. Swami doesn't like the idea and tries to avoid this

situation. But Rajam is adamant and he leads Swami to the headmaster's office. The headmaster flatly decline their request. The MCC schedules a cricket match against another local team **YMU (Young Men's Union)**. Swami tells a physician named **Dr. Kesavan** about this problem. Dr. Kesavan agrees to convince his headmaster about this. Swami gets delighted and skips the drill practices. He continues to practice his cricketing skills with his friends. But to his bad luck, Dr. Kesavan doesn't talk about this issue to the headmaster. When the headmaster comes to know about Swami missing the drill practices, he threatens to beat him. Being frightened, Swami runs away from the school. Swami fears that his father will be very angry, so he decides to run away. He goes to the Mission School. There, he thinks about his past life as a student. He asks someone to call Rajam. He meets Rajam and tells him about his running away from the Board School. Later wandering here and there, Swami finds himself in forest and being scared, he falls senseless.

Finding Swami missing, his father searches for him in the town, even at Rajam's house. But no clue he gets about Swami's whereabouts. The situation gets tense as it is close to mid night. His mother, grandmother all are in deep concerns for his well-being. On the

next day morning, **Ranga**, a cart man, finds him lying fainted by the roadside and takes him in his cart to the District Forest Office. **Mr. Nair**, an officer, takes care of him. When Swami comes back to his senses, the officer talks to him and gets to know about his parents. Swami inquires him about the day. He tells him that he has a cricket match on Sunday. Mr. Nair lies to him that today it is Saturday. But in fact it is Sunday, he doesn't want to hurt his feelings. On the other side, the cricket match is going on. The MCC team is missing Swami's bowling as they are losing the match. Everyone is cursing Swami for missing the match. Rajam's father comes to know about Swami's whereabouts and he accompanies Swami's father to bring him home. Swami reaches home and he is still thinking it to be Saturday. Mani arrives and informs him that he has missed the cricket match. Coming to know this, Swami gets devastated. Mani tells him that Rajam is enraged with him. Swami decides to meet him but does not get any chance. Ten days now, there is no talk or meeting between the two. Mani tells him that Rajam's father is transferred and they are leaving the town the next morning. Swami chooses a book of fairy tales from his study desk as a present for Rajam and goes to the railway station. Still he has no courage to face Rajam. The train starts. Swami asks Mani about giving the gift to

chooses a book of fairy tales from his study desk as a present for Rajam and goes to the railway station. Still he has no courage to face Rajam. The train starts. Swami asks Mani about giving the gift to Rajam. They run along the train and Mani gives the book to Rajam on Swami's behalf. Rajam may have said something to Swami. But it is not clear neither to Swami nor to the readers. The words are somewhat lost with the hooter of the train. Mani assures Swami that Rajam has promised to write to him. But Swami still doubts his words.