

The Adventure - Jayant Narlikar

Term	Explanation
considerably	To a large or noticeable extent. Here it emphasises the unexpected difference in the train's speed. Example: The Jijamata Express sped along the Pune-Bombay route considerably faster than the Deccan Queen.
industrial townships	Settlements developed around factories or industrial activity. Their absence is an early sign that the professor's surroundings differ from those he remembers. Example: There were no industrial townships outside Pune.
ghat section	The stretch of a route passing through hills or a mountain range. Here it refers to the familiar hilly part of the train journey. Example: The ghat section that followed was no different from what he knew.
the racing mind	A mind working rapidly and moving quickly from one thought to another. The expression conveys the professor's urgent attempt to understand his situation. Example: Meanwhile, the racing mind of Professor Gaitonde had arrived at a plan of action in Bombay.
historian	A person who studies and interprets the past. Gaitonde uses his historical knowledge to investigate the unfamiliar world. Example: Indeed, as a historian he felt he should have thought of it sooner.
browse through	Look through reading material without initially examining every detail. The professor plans to consult history books for an explanation. Example: He would go to a big library and browse through history books.
state of affairs	The existing situation or set of circumstances. Here it refers to the unusual political and social world he encounters. Example: That was the surest way of finding out how the present state of affairs was reached.
permits	Official documents giving permission to enter, travel or undertake an activity. Their inspection suggests a boundary between territories. Example: An Anglo-Indian in uniform went through the train checking permits.
presume	Suppose something to be true on the basis of available indications. Khan Sahib guesses that this is the professor's first visit. Example: You are going for the first time, I presume?"
ventured a question	Asked a question with some hesitation or uncertainty. The professor cautiously seeks information about the unfamiliar world. Example: He ventured a question: "And, Khan Sahib, how will you go to Peshawar?"
some flavour of life	A small but revealing impression of how people live. Listening to Khan Sahib helps the professor understand this different India. Example: For, in that way, he was able to get some flavour of life in this India that was so different.
suburban	Relating to the areas surrounding a city's main centre. It describes the railway traffic near Bombay. Example: The train now passed through the suburban rail traffic.
Union Jack	The national flag of the United Kingdom. Its appearance on the railway carriages signals British control in the story's alternative world. Example: "See the tiny Union Jack painted on each carriage?"
territory	An area of land under a particular authority or government. Here it refers to the part controlled by the British. Example: A gentle reminder that we are in British territory."
an imposing building	A large or impressive building that commands attention. It makes the unexpected presence of the East India Company especially striking. Example: As he emerged from the station, Gangadharpanth found himself facing an imposing building.
imposing	Impressive in size, appearance or dignity. Here it describes the company's headquarters. Example: As he emerged from the station, Gangadharpanth found himself facing an imposing building.
proclaimed	Announced or made something clearly known. The lettering openly identifies the building and its occupant. Example: The letters on it

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|                       | proclaimed its identity to those who did not know this Bombay landmark: east india house headquar Ters of The east india company Prepared as he was for many shocks, Professor Gaitonde had not expected this.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| landmark              | A prominent place or structure that is easily recognised. The company headquarters forms a notable feature of this unfamiliar Bombay. <b>Example:</b> The letters on it proclaimed its identity to those who did not know this Bombay landmark: east india house headquar Ters of The east india company Prepared as he was for many shocks, Professor Gaitonde had not expected this. |
| wound up              | Closed down or brought to an end, especially in reference to an organisation. The professor remembers that the East India Company had ceased to operate. <b>Example:</b> The East India Company had been wound up shortly after the events of 1857 — at least, that is what history books said.                                                                                        |
| flourishing           | Active, successful and prospering. Its continued success contradicts the history familiar to the professor. <b>Example:</b> Yet, here it was, not only alive but flourishing.                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| high street           | The main shopping or commercial street of a town. The British shops and banks give the road an English appearance. <b>Example:</b> Instead, there were Boots and Woolworth departmental stores, imposing offices of Lloyds, Barclays and other British banks, as in a typical high street of a town in England.                                                                        |
| directory             | An organised list of names and related information. The receptionist consults company records to look for the professor's son. <b>Example:</b> She searched through the telephone list, the staff list and then through the directory of employees of all the branches of the firm.                                                                                                    |
| a blow                | An event that causes disappointment, distress or a setback. The failure to find his son deepens the professor's uncertainty. <b>Example:</b> This was a blow, not totally unexpected.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| the riddle of history | The puzzling question of why history has developed differently. The phrase presents his investigation as an attempt to solve a mystery. <b>Example:</b> His main concern was to make his way to the library of the Asiatic Society to solve the riddle of history.                                                                                                                     |
| riddle                | A puzzling problem that requires an explanation. Here it concerns the relationship between the familiar past and the unfamiliar present. <b>Example:</b> His main concern was to make his way to the library of the Asiatic Society to solve the riddle of history.                                                                                                                    |
| volumes               | Separate books forming part of a larger written work. The professor consults the different parts of his own history. <b>Example:</b> His five volumes duly arrived on his table.                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| duly                  | In the proper or expected manner. The requested books are brought to his reading table. <b>Example:</b> His five volumes duly arrived on his table.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| converged on          | Came together at or finally focused upon a particular point. His reading identifies the moment at which the two histories differ. <b>Example:</b> Reading volume five from both ends inwards, Gangadharant finally converged on the precise moment where history had taken a different turn.                                                                                           |
| handsomely            | By a large or convincing margin. In the alternative account, the Marathas achieve a decisive victory. <b>Example:</b> That page in the book described the Battle of Panipat, and it mentioned that the Marathas won it handsomely.                                                                                                                                                     |
| routed                | Defeated completely and driven into disorderly retreat. Here it describes Abdali's defeat in the alternative history. <b>Example:</b> Abdali was routed and he was chased back to Kabul by the triumphant Maratha army led by Sadashivrao Bhau and his nephew, the young Vishwasrao.                                                                                                   |
| triumphant            | Victorious and marked by success. The word describes the Maratha army after its victory. <b>Example:</b> Abdali was routed and he was chased back to Kabul by the triumphant Maratha army led by Sadashivrao Bhau and his nephew, the young Vishwasrao.                                                                                                                                |
| blow-by-blow account  | A detailed account describing events in the order in which they occurred. The history book concentrates on the battle's consequences rather than every action within it. <b>Example:</b> The book did not go                                                                                                                                                                           |

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|                             | into a blow-by-blow account of the battle itself.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| elaborated                  | Explained or developed something in greater detail. The book examines the political effects of the victory. <b>Example:</b> Rather, it elaborated in detail its consequences for the power struggle in India.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| avidly                      | With intense interest and eagerness. The professor reads with excitement because the account is both familiar in style and new in content. <b>Example:</b> Gangadharpant read through the account avidly.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| morale booster              | Something that increases confidence, enthusiasm and willingness to act. The victory strengthens the Marathas' fighting spirit. <b>Example:</b> Their victory in the battle was not only a great morale booster to the Marathas but it also established their supremacy in northern India.                                                                                                             |
| morale                      | The confidence, determination and spirit of a group. Here it refers to the soldiers' collective readiness to continue fighting. <b>Example:</b> Their victory in the battle was not only a great morale booster to the Marathas but it also established their supremacy in northern India.                                                                                                            |
| supremacy                   | A position of dominant power or authority. The victory establishes the Marathas as the strongest force in northern India. <b>Example:</b> Their victory in the battle was not only a great morale booster to the Marathas but it also established their supremacy in northern India.                                                                                                                  |
| from the sidelines          | From a position of observation rather than direct participation. The company watches political developments before deciding how to act. <b>Example:</b> The East India Company, which had been watching these developments from the sidelines, got the message and temporarily shelved its expansionist programme.                                                                                    |
| shelved                     | Set aside or postponed a plan. The company temporarily gives up its intention to expand. <b>Example:</b> The East India Company, which had been watching these developments from the sidelines, got the message and temporarily shelved its expansionist programme.                                                                                                                                   |
| expansionist programme      | A policy or plan aimed at extending power, influence or territory. The Maratha victory obstructs the company's ambitions. <b>Example:</b> The East India Company, which had been watching these developments from the sidelines, got the message and temporarily shelved its expansionist programme.                                                                                                  |
| relegated to the background | Moved into a less important or influential position. Dadasaheb loses prominence in the alternative political history. <b>Example:</b> For the Peshwas the immediate result was an increase in the influence of Bhausaheb and Vishwasrao who eventually succeeded his father in 1780 A.D. The trouble-maker, Dadasaheb, was relegated to the background and he eventually retired from state politics. |
| relegated                   | Assigned to a lower or less significant position. Here it describes a reduction in political importance. <b>Example:</b> For the Peshwas the immediate result was an increase in the influence of Bhausaheb and Vishwasrao who eventually succeeded his father in 1780 A.D. The trouble-maker, Dadasaheb, was relegated to the background and he eventually retired from state politics.              |
| dismay                      | Distress or disappointment caused by an unwelcome development. The company is troubled by the strength of its new opponent. <b>Example:</b> To its dismay, the East India Company met its match in the new Maratha ruler, Vishwasrao.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| met its match               | Encountered someone equally capable or strong. Vishwasrao proves able to resist the company's political ambitions. <b>Example:</b> To its dismay, the East India Company met its match in the new Maratha ruler, Vishwasrao.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| political acumen            | The ability to understand political situations and make shrewd decisions. It helps the Maratha leaders extend their influence. <b>Example:</b> He and his brother, Madhavrao, combined political acumen with valour and systematically expanded their influence all over India.                                                                                                                       |
| acumen                      | Sharp judgement and practical understanding. Here it refers to skill in managing political affairs. <b>Example:</b> He and his brother, Madhavrao, combined political acumen with valour and systematically expanded their influence all over India.                                                                                                                                                  |
| valour                      | Great courage, especially in battle. The leaders combine bravery with political judgement. <b>Example:</b> He and his brother, Madhavrao, combined political acumen with valour and systematically expanded                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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|                      | their influence all over India.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| pockets of influence | Small, limited areas in which power or authority can still be exercised. The company's reach is restricted to a few locations. <b>Example:</b> The Company was reduced to pockets of influence near Bombay, Calcutta and Madras , just like its European rivals, the Portuguese and the French.                         |
| puppet Mughal regime | A Mughal government that remains in place but is controlled by others. Its continued existence serves the Peshwas' political purposes. <b>Example:</b> For political reasons, the Peshwas kept the puppet Mughal regime alive in Delhi.                                                                                 |
| puppet               | A person or institution directed by another power. Here it conveys the lack of real independence of the Mughal government. <b>Example:</b> For political reasons, the Peshwas kept the puppet Mughal regime alive in Delhi.                                                                                             |
| regime               | A government or system of rule. In context, it refers to the Mughal authority maintained in Delhi. <b>Example:</b> For political reasons, the Peshwas kept the puppet Mughal regime alive in Delhi.                                                                                                                     |
| de facto rulers      | People who exercise power in practice, regardless of formal titles. The Peshwas control affairs while the Mughal ruler remains nominally in place. <b>Example:</b> In the nineteenth century these de facto rulers from Pune were astute enough to recognise the importance of the technological age dawning in Europe. |
| de facto             | A Latin expression meaning in fact or in actual practice. It distinguishes real authority from a merely official position. <b>Example:</b> In the nineteenth century these de facto rulers from Pune were astute enough to recognise the importance of the technological age dawning in Europe.                         |
| astute               | Quick to understand situations and make clever, practical decisions. The Peshwas recognise the importance of new technology. <b>Example:</b> In the nineteenth century these de facto rulers from Pune were astute enough to recognise the importance of the technological age dawning in Europe.                       |
| self-sufficient      | Able to meet one's needs without depending on outside help. The local scientific centres accept assistance to develop their own capabilities. <b>Example:</b> They were accepted only to make the local centres self-sufficient.                                                                                        |
| enterprise           | Initiative, energy and willingness to undertake new ventures. Its decline weakens the Peshwas' position in the alternative history. <b>Example:</b> By then, the Peshwas had lost their enterprise and they were gradually replaced by democratically elected bodies.                                                   |
| transition           | A change from one state or system to another. Here it refers to the movement towards democratically elected government. <b>Example:</b> The Sultanate at Delhi survived even this transition, largely because it wielded no real influence.                                                                             |
| wielded              | Possessed and exercised power or influence. The Sultanate survives because it has little real authority to threaten others. <b>Example:</b> The Sultanate at Delhi survived even this transition, largely because it wielded no real influence.                                                                         |
| figurehead           | A nominal leader who has little or no effective power. The emperor retains a title but does not direct policy. <b>Example:</b> The Shahenshah of Delhi was no more than a figurehead to rubber-stamp the 'recommendations' made by the central parliament.                                                              |
| rubber-stamp         | Approve something automatically without independent examination. The emperor merely endorses the parliament's recommendations. <b>Example:</b> The Shahenshah of Delhi was no more than a figurehead to rubber-stamp the 'recommendations' made by the central parliament.                                              |
| stand on its feet    | Be independent and capable of managing its own affairs. The phrase describes the strength and self-reliance of the alternative India. <b>Example:</b> It was a country that had not been subjected to slavery for the white man; it had learnt to stand on its feet and knew what self-respect was.                     |
| sole outpost         | The only remaining base or foothold of an outside power. Bombay is the British exception within an otherwise independent subcontinent. <b>Example:</b> From a position of strength and for purely commercial                                                                                                            |

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|                       | reasons, it had allowed the British to retain Bombay as the sole outpost on the subcontinent.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| outpost               | A distant base or isolated centre of authority. Here it refers to the limited British presence at Bombay. <b>Example:</b> From a position of strength and for purely commercial reasons, it had allowed the British to retain Bombay as the sole outpost on the subcontinent. |
| lease                 | An arrangement allowing use or possession of property for a specified time. In this alternative history, British possession of Bombay is temporary. <b>Example:</b> That lease was to expire in the year 2001, according to a treaty of 1908.                                 |
| treaty                | A formal agreement between political powers or states. Here it determines the conditions of British occupation of Bombay. <b>Example:</b> That lease was to expire in the year 2001, according to a treaty of 1908.                                                           |
| journals              | Periodical publications containing articles, research or records. The professor consults them alongside books for evidence about the battle. <b>Example:</b> He went through the books and journals before him.                                                               |
| graphic               | Vivid and detailed in description. Here it refers to the lively way the historical accounts describe events. <b>Example:</b> Sometimes, buried in the graphic but doctored accounts, he could spot the germ of truth.                                                         |
| doctored accounts     | Reports altered or manipulated so that they are not fully reliable. The professor treats such historical narratives with caution. <b>Example:</b> Sometimes, buried in the graphic but doctored accounts, he could spot the germ of truth.                                    |
| doctored              | Changed deliberately to distort or influence the impression given. Here it describes unreliable versions of historical events. <b>Example:</b> Sometimes, buried in the graphic but doctored accounts, he could spot the germ of truth.                                       |
| the germ of truth     | A small element of truth within a larger, possibly inaccurate account. The professor searches for useful evidence beneath the embellishments. <b>Example:</b> Sometimes, buried in the graphic but doctored accounts, he could spot the germ of truth.                        |
| melee                 | A confused, crowded struggle or fight. Here it describes the intense fighting into which Vishwasrao rides. <b>Example:</b> And then Vishwasrao guided his horse to the melee where the elite troops were fighting and he attacked them.                                       |
| elite troops          | Soldiers selected for their superior training, skill or status. Their presence emphasises the intensity of the fighting. <b>Example:</b> And then Vishwasrao guided his horse to the melee where the elite troops were fighting and he attacked them.                         |
| elite                 | A select group regarded as especially skilled or important. Here it describes highly capable soldiers. <b>Example:</b> And then Vishwasrao guided his horse to the melee where the elite troops were fighting and he attacked them.                                           |
| brushed past          | Passed extremely close to something without striking it directly. The narrowly missing shot becomes the decisive event in the alternative history. <b>Example:</b> A shot brushed past his ear.                                                                               |
| magnificent           | Extremely impressive or splendid. It describes the library hall as the professor looks around it. <b>Example:</b> Looking around he noticed that he was the only reader left in that magnificent hall.                                                                        |
| right after his heart | Exactly the kind of person he likes or approves of. The librarian appreciates the professor's dedication to research. <b>Example:</b> Here was a user and researcher right after his heart.                                                                                   |
| shoved                | Pushed something quickly or roughly into a place. The professor hurriedly puts his notes into his pocket. <b>Example:</b> As the professor left the table he shoved some notes into his right pocket.                                                                         |
| absent-mindedly       | Without paying proper attention because one's thoughts are elsewhere. He unintentionally takes the book while absorbed in his discovery. <b>Example:</b> Absent-mindedly, he also shoved the Bakhar into his left pocket.                                                     |
| frugal meal           | A simple, modest meal without extravagance. The phrase shows the professor's lack of concern for luxury. <b>Example:</b> He found a guest house to stay in and had a frugal meal.                                                                                             |

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| frugal                    | Economical or sparing in the use of resources. Here it describes the simplicity of his food. <b>Example:</b> He found a guest house to stay in and had a frugal meal.                                                                                          |
| stroll                    | A leisurely walk. The professor walks towards the maidan after his meal. <b>Example:</b> He then set out for a stroll towards the Azad Maidan.                                                                                                                 |
| throng                    | A large, closely gathered crowd of people. It draws his attention to the lecture venue. <b>Example:</b> In the maidan he found a throng moving towards a pandal.                                                                                               |
| pandal                    | A temporary covered structure used for a gathering or public event. Here it provides the setting for the lecture. <b>Example:</b> In the maidan he found a throng moving towards a pandal.                                                                     |
| force of habit            | The influence of a repeated practice that makes someone act almost automatically. His familiarity with public meetings draws him towards the lecture. <b>Example:</b> Force of habit took Professor Gaitonde towards the pandal.                               |
| mesmerised                | So fascinated or absorbed that one seems unable to look away. The empty chair captures the professor's attention completely. <b>Example:</b> He was staring at the platform as if mesmerised.                                                                  |
| stirred him to the depths | Affected him very deeply. The empty presidential chair provokes a powerful reaction because it conflicts with his expectations. <b>Example:</b> The sight stirred him to the depths.                                                                           |
| symbolic                  | Representing an idea rather than serving an ordinary practical purpose. The audience explains that the chair is not intended for a presiding official. <b>Example:</b> "The chair is symbolic, don't you know?"                                                |
| presiding dignitary       | An important person who formally chairs or leads a meeting. The professor cannot imagine a lecture without such a figure. <b>Example:</b> Whoever heard of a public lecture without a presiding dignitary?                                                     |
| dignitary                 | A person holding a high or respected position. Here it refers to the official chairperson at a public meeting. <b>Example:</b> Whoever heard of a public lecture without a presiding dignitary?                                                                |
| gave vent to              | Expressed strong feelings or opinions openly. The professor publicly objects to the absence of a chairperson. <b>Example:</b> Professor Gaitonde went to the mike and gave vent to his views.                                                                  |
| vote of thanks            | A formal expression of gratitude delivered at a meeting. The audience regards such ceremonial remarks as unnecessary interruptions. <b>Example:</b> We are sick of remarks from the chair, of vote of thanks, of long introductions."                          |
| hostile                   | Unfriendly, opposed or aggressive. The professor believes his past experience has prepared him to face an angry audience. <b>Example:</b> But Gangadharpan had the experience of speaking at 999 meetings and had faced the Pune audience at its most hostile. |
| valiantly                 | With courage and determination despite difficulty. The word describes his continued effort to defend the convention of a chairperson. <b>Example:</b> But he kept on trying valiantly to correct this sacrilege.                                               |
| sacrilege                 | Disrespect towards something regarded as sacred or deeply important. Used humorously, it shows how seriously the professor values the traditions of public meetings. <b>Example:</b> But he kept on trying valiantly to correct this sacrilege.                |
| swarmed                   | Moved together in a large, crowded group. The audience rushes towards the stage to remove him. <b>Example:</b> Finally, the audience swarmed to the stage to eject him bodily.                                                                                 |
| eject him bodily          | Remove him by direct physical force. The audience decides to carry out its demand that he leave the stage. <b>Example:</b> Finally, the audience swarmed to the stage to eject him bodily.                                                                     |
| dumbfounded               | So astonished that one is temporarily unable to respond. Rajendra struggles to react to the professor's unusual account. <b>Example:</b> Rajendra was dumbfounded by the narrative.                                                                            |
| narrative                 | An account of a connected series of events. Here it refers to the professor's description of his experience. <b>Example:</b> Rajendra was dumbfounded by the narrative.                                                                                        |
| collision                 | A forceful impact between moving objects or people. The accident                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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|                                 | becomes a possible turning point in Rajendra's explanation. <b>Example:</b> "Professor, before, just prior to your collision with the truck, what were you doing?"                                                                                                                                                        |
| catastrophe theory              | A mathematical approach to sudden changes in a system arising from changes in conditions. In the story, it provides an analogy for a small event producing a radically different historical outcome. <b>Example:</b> "I was thinking of the catastrophe theory and its implications for history."                         |
| implications                    | Possible effects or consequences of an idea or event. The professor is considering what the theory might suggest about history. <b>Example:</b> "I was thinking of the catastrophe theory and its implications for history."                                                                                              |
| smugly                          | With an irritating sense of self-satisfaction or superiority. The professor objects to what he sees as Rajendra's overly confident smile. <b>Example:</b> "Don't smile smugly."                                                                                                                                           |
| running amok                    | Operating wildly and without control. The professor rejects the suggestion that his imagination alone created the experience. <b>Example:</b> In case you think that it was just my mind playing tricks and my imagination running amok, look at this."                                                                   |
| vital piece of evidence         | An item of proof that is essential to an argument. The torn page gives the professor something tangible to support his account. <b>Example:</b> And, triumphantly, Professor Gaitonde produced his vital piece of evidence: a page torn out of a book.                                                                    |
| grave expression                | A serious, concerned look. Rajendra's reaction changes when he examines the page. <b>Example:</b> Gone was the smile and in its place came a grave expression.                                                                                                                                                            |
| grave                           | Serious or solemn. Here it describes Rajendra's expression rather than a burial place. <b>Example:</b> Gone was the smile and in its place came a grave expression.                                                                                                                                                       |
| visibly moved                   | Showing clear outward signs of being emotionally affected. The physical evidence makes a strong impression on Rajendra. <b>Example:</b> He was visibly moved.                                                                                                                                                             |
| pressed home his advantage      | Made full use of a favourable position to strengthen an argument. The professor continues explaining after seeing Rajendra's reaction. <b>Example:</b> Gangadharant pressed home his advantage.                                                                                                                           |
| inadvertently                   | Unintentionally or without realising what one is doing. The professor explains that he took the book by mistake. <b>Example:</b> "I had inadvertently slipped the Bakhar in my pocket as I left the library."                                                                                                             |
| omen                            | An event interpreted as a sign of what will happen. The troops regard Vishwasrao's escape as a favourable indication. <b>Example:</b> It described how Vishwasrao narrowly missed the bullet; and how that event, taken as an omen by the Maratha army, turned the tide in their favour.                                  |
| turned the tide in their favour | Changed the direction of events so that they gained the advantage. The leader's survival transforms the soldiers' confidence and the battle's outcome. <b>Example:</b> It described how Vishwasrao narrowly missed the bullet; and how that event, taken as an omen by the Maratha army, turned the tide in their favour. |
| food for thought                | Something that deserves serious consideration. The page gives Rajendra a reason to reconsider his earlier judgement. <b>Example:</b> "Professor Gaitonde, you have given me food for thought."                                                                                                                            |
| material evidence               | Physical evidence that can be examined. The torn page is presented as more than a recollection or imagined event. <b>Example:</b> Until I saw this material evidence, I had simply put your experience down to fantasy.                                                                                                   |
| fantasy                         | An imagined situation that need not correspond to reality. Rajendra initially regards the professor's story in this way. <b>Example:</b> Until I saw this material evidence, I had simply put your experience down to fantasy.                                                                                            |
| dying to know                   | Extremely eager to find out. The expression conveys the professor's urgent desire for an explanation. <b>Example:</b> I am dying to know!"                                                                                                                                                                                |
| rationalise                     | Explain something in a reasoned or logically understandable way. Rajendra tries to account for the experience through scientific ideas used within the story. <b>Example:</b> Finally, he turned around and said,                                                                                                         |

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|                       | “Professor Gaitonde, I will try to rationalise your experience on the basis of two scientific theories as known today.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| I am all ears         | I am listening with complete attention. The professor eagerly invites Rajendra to continue. <b>Example:</b> I am all ears,” Professor Gaitonde replied.                                                                                                                                 |
| disparity             | A significant difference or inequality. Rajendra says the opposing armies were not greatly unequal in strength. <b>Example:</b> There was no great disparity between the latter’s troops and the opposing forces.                                                                       |
| comparable            | Similar enough to be meaningfully compared. Here it describes the equipment of the opposing forces. <b>Example:</b> Their armour was comparable.                                                                                                                                        |
| juncture              | A particular point in events, especially a critical one. Vishwasrao’s death occurs at a decisive moment in the battle. <b>Example:</b> The juncture at which Vishwasrao, the son of and heir to the Peshwa, was killed proved to be the turning point.                                  |
| heir                  | A person entitled to succeed to a position or inherit property. Vishwasrao is identified as the expected successor to the Peshwa. <b>Example:</b> The juncture at which Vishwasrao, the son of and heir to the Peshwa, was killed proved to be the turning point.                       |
| turning point         | An event or moment that produces a major change in direction. The loss of leadership alters the battle’s course. <b>Example:</b> The juncture at which Vishwasrao, the son of and heir to the Peshwa, was killed proved to be the turning point.                                        |
| utter rout            | A complete defeat followed by disorderly retreat. The phrase emphasises the collapse of the army’s resistance. <b>Example:</b> There followed an utter rout.                                                                                                                            |
| rout                  | A decisive defeat that drives a force into confusion and flight. Here it follows the troops’ loss of morale. <b>Example:</b> There followed an utter rout.                                                                                                                              |
| impetus               | A force or encouragement that makes action stronger or more effective. In the alternative account, the leader’s survival gives the army extra determination. <b>Example:</b> It boosted their morale and provided just that extra impetus that made all the difference,” Rajendra said. |
| speculation           | Thinking about possibilities without conclusive evidence. Gaitonde distinguishes imagined alternatives from the history he regards as real. <b>Example:</b> This idea of ‘it might have been’ is okay for the sake of speculation but not for reality,” Gangadharpant said.             |
| take issue with       | Disagree with or challenge a statement. Rajendra questions the professor’s claim that reality must be unique. <b>Example:</b> “I take issue with you there.                                                                                                                             |
| hear me out           | Listen to everything I have to say before judging. Rajendra requests time to complete his explanation. <b>Example:</b> In fact, that brings me to my second point which you may find strange; but please hear me out,” Rajendra said.                                                   |
| manifestations        | Different forms in which something appears or becomes known. He asks whether reality may have forms beyond ordinary observation. <b>Example:</b> Does it have other manifestations?                                                                                                     |
| constituent particles | The smaller particles that make up a physical system. Rajendra refers to the components of atoms in discussing quantum behaviour. <b>Example:</b> “That reality may not be unique has been found from experiments on very small systems — of atoms and their constituent particles.     |
| definitively          | In a conclusive or completely certain manner. The discussion contrasts definite predictions with statements of probability. <b>Example:</b> The behaviour of these systems cannot be predicted definitively even if all the physical laws governing those systems are known.            |
| assertion             | A confident statement presented as true. Rajendra says that he cannot make the same definite claim about an electron as about a bullet. <b>Example:</b> But I cannot make such an assertion for the electron.                                                                           |
| quote odds            | State the chances or probability of an outcome. The expression refers to predicting where an electron may be found. <b>Example:</b> I can at best quote odds for it being found in a specified location at a                                                                            |

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|                                  | specified time.”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| lack of determinism              | The absence of a uniquely predictable outcome from the stated conditions. In the dialogue, it refers to the probabilistic predictions associated with quantum theory. <b>Example:</b> “The lack of determinism in quantum theory! Even an ignoramus historian like me has heard of it,” Professor Gaitonde said. |
| determinism                      | The idea that given conditions and governing laws fix a definite outcome. The professor invokes it while discussing predictions in physics. <b>Example:</b> “The lack of determinism in quantum theory! Even an ignoramus historian like me has heard of it,” Professor Gaitonde said.                           |
| quantum theory                   | The framework of physics used to describe matter and energy at atomic and smaller scales. The story draws on its ideas to imagine alternative experiences of reality. <b>Example:</b> “The lack of determinism in quantum theory! Even an ignoramus historian like me has heard of it,” Professor Gaitonde said. |
| ignoramus                        | An ignorant or poorly informed person. The professor uses it humorously and self-deprecatingly about his knowledge of science. <b>Example:</b> “The lack of determinism in quantum theory! Even an ignoramus historian like me has heard of it,” Professor Gaitonde said.                                        |
| marshall his thoughts            | Collect and arrange his thoughts before speaking further. The expression describes Rajendra’s pause to organise his explanation. <b>Example:</b> Rajendra paused to marshall his thoughts.                                                                                                                       |
| nucleus                          | The central region of an atom. It is mentioned in the dialogue’s simplified description of an electron’s behaviour. <b>Example:</b> In both an electron is orbiting the nucleus of an atom...”                                                                                                                   |
| interjected                      | Inserted a remark while someone else was speaking. Gaitonde interrupts with a comparison to planetary motion. <b>Example:</b> Gangadharpant interjected.                                                                                                                                                         |
| trajectory                       | The path followed by a moving object. Rajendra uses a planet’s path to contrast classical and quantum descriptions. <b>Example:</b> We know the precise trajectory of the planet.                                                                                                                                |
| pulse of radiation               | A brief emission or burst of energy carried as radiation. The dialogue associates it with a change in an electron’s energy state. <b>Example:</b> It can make a jump from high to low energy and send out a pulse of radiation.                                                                                  |
| microscopic systems              | Physical systems on a scale too small to be seen unaided. Here the phrase refers to atoms and their particles. <b>Example:</b> Such transitions are common in microscopic systems.                                                                                                                               |
| macroscopic level                | The scale of objects and events large enough to be observed ordinarily. Rajendra extends his analogy from particles to the professor’s experience at this scale. <b>Example:</b> What if it happened on a macroscopic level?”                                                                                    |
| radically different alternatives | Possibilities that differ fundamentally from one another. The story imagines that a decisive event can lead to very different histories. <b>Example:</b> My theory is that catastrophic situations offer radically different alternatives for the world to proceed.                                              |
| viable                           | Capable of existing or working. Rajendra uses it within his proposed explanation for possible alternative worlds. <b>Example:</b> It seems that so far as reality is concerned all alternatives are viable but the observer can experience only one of them at a time.                                           |
| bifurcation                      | A division into two branches or possible directions. Here it describes the imagined separation of histories at the Battle of Panipat. <b>Example:</b> The separation or bifurcation took place in the Battle of Panipat.                                                                                         |
| by the same token                | For the same reason or following the same argument. Rajendra extends his explanation to suggest further alternative worlds. <b>Example:</b> Of course, by the same token there must be many more different worlds arising out of bifurcations at different points of time.”                                      |
| interaction                      | An influence or action involving two or more things. In Rajendra’s proposed explanation, some interaction is needed to bring about a transition. <b>Example:</b> Rajendra smiled and proceeded, “You need some interaction to cause a transition.                                                                |

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| neurons             | Nerve cells that receive and transmit information. Rajendra speculates about whether activity in the professor's brain helped trigger the experience. <b>Example:</b> Perhaps, the neurons in your brain acted as a trigger."                                                                                                                                                                     |
| trigger             | Something that initiates an event or process. Here it is part of Rajendra's tentative explanation rather than an established cause. <b>Example:</b> Perhaps, the neurons in your brain acted as a trigger."                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| recounting          | Relating or describing events that have happened. Rajendra suggests that the professor can now speak from his unusual experience. <b>Example:</b> "Now you are in the happy position of recounting your real life experience rather than just speculating," Rajendra laughed.                                                                                                                     |
| conveyed my regrets | Communicated an apology or an inability or unwillingness to attend. The professor uses the formal expression to explain that he has declined another presiding role. <b>Example:</b> The Professor Gaitonde who disappeared while defending his chair on the platform will now never be seen presiding at another meeting — I have conveyed my regrets to the organisers of the Panipat seminar." |

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