



SECTION-C

LITERATURE TEXTBOOK AND SUPPLEMENTARY READING TEXT

HORNBILL: PROSE

1. THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY —KHUSHWANT SINGH
2. WE'RE NOT AFRAID TO DIE...
IF WE CAN ALL BE TOGETHER —GORDON COOK AND ALAN EAST
3. DISCOVERING TUT: THE SAGA CONTINUES —A.R. WILLIAMS
4. THE ADVENTURE —JAYANT NARLIKAR
5. SILK ROAD —NICK MIDDLETON

HORNBILL: POETRY

1. A PHOTOGRAPH
2. THE LABURNUM TOP —TED HUGHES
3. THE VOICE OF THE RAIN —WALT WHITMAN
4. CHILDHOOD —MARKUS NATTEN
5. FATHER TO SON —ELIZABETH JENNINGS

SNAPSHOTS

1. THE SUMMER OF THE BEAUTIFUL
WHITE HORSE —WILLIAM SAROYAN
2. THE ADDRESS —MARGA MINCO
3. MOTHER'S DAY —J.B. PRIESTLEY
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5. THE TALE OF MELON CITY —VIKRAM SETH

31 MARKS



1 The Portrait of a Lady

—Khushwant Singh

Introduction

This is a story written by one of the most prolific writers in India. It symbolises human relationship, and puts across the concept of the ‘generation gap’ very explicitly. The story gives an insight into how, an elderly person resorts to other means of keeping herself content and occupied. Dependence on others for one’s existence is something that man must move away from. This is characterised by the ‘lady’ in this very poignant story.

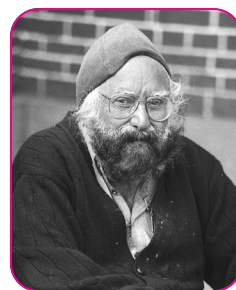
THEME

‘The Portrait of a Lady’ includes in itself, the theme of family, changing relationships, differences in the ideologies of each generation, growth, spreading of wings, empathy, love, care, needs of the elderly and understanding the next generation. It also speaks about man co-existing in harmony, with other creations of God. The story throws light upon the need of companionship and friendship felt by our elders. It also shows how love and emotion is experienced not only by human beings but by animals and birds too.

Summary

This is a personal recollection of the narrator’s relationship with his grandmother. He recalls the three phases of his relationship with his grandmother: childhood, boyhood and early youth. The narrator lived with his grandmother as his parents had moved to the city in search of better living. Initially the two, who were living in the village, had a very close and cordial relationship. Once the parents had settled in their new environment, they decide to take the narrator and the grandmother to the city. Here, the relationship between the two begins to disintegrate. The busy school life, and eventually his moving abroad for further academic excellence, widens the gap further. The grandmother, who was not to be belittled, seeks refuge in prayers. She also has an uncanny knack of associating with animals and birds. In the village, she used to feed stray dogs, and here in the city, she develops a friendship with sparrows. On the day the narrator returns to his motherland, the grandmother exhibits immense joy and merriment. This was a rise before the ultimate fall. Grandmother bids adieu to the mortal world, and is mourned by thousands of her winged friends.

Khushwant Singh (born as Khushal Singh) was an Indian author, lawyer, diplomat, journalist and politician. His experience in the 1947 Partition of India inspired him to write 'Train to Pakistan' in 1956, which became his most well-known novel. As a writer, he was best known for his trenchant secularism, humour, sarcasm, and an abiding love of poetry. He served as the editor of several literary and news magazines, as well as two newspapers, through the 1970s and 1980s.



Answers to NCERT Questions

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Mention

1. The three phases of the author's relationship with his grandmother before he left the country to study abroad.
2. Three reasons why the author's grandmother was disturbed when he started going to the city school.
3. Three ways in which the author's grandmother spent her days after he grew up.
4. The odd way in which the author's grandmother behaved just before she died.
5. The way in which the sparrows expressed their sorrow when the author's grandmother died.

Ans. 1. The three phases of the author's relationship with his grandmother before he left the country to study abroad are as follows:

- (i) **First Phase:** This is the period of his early childhood. During this time, the author used to live with his grandmother in the village. She used to wake him up and get him ready for school. They both would walk to school together and come back home together. They enjoyed a unique and memorable relationship with each other.
 - (ii) **Second Phase:** During this phase, the narrator and his grandmother moved to live in the city, as the former's parents had settled comfortably into the city life. Although the two shared the same room, there was an inexplicable distance that existed between grandson and grandmother. This was the turning point in their deteriorating relationship. They began seeing less of each other.
 - (iii) **Third Phase:** This happened when the narrator went to university, where he was given a room of his own. The common link between them, 'the same room', snapped, and this made their relationship weaker. She became quieter and changed into an even more private person. She kept spinning the wheel and chanting prayers, all day long. She would feed the sparrows once a day. This was the only thing that made her happy now.
2. During the time the author lived in the village with his grandmother, they both enjoyed a great relationship. She used to wake him up, get him ready for school, and accompany him to school. She'd stay back in the temple precincts and read the scriptures. They'd then walk back home together. This routine changed when they moved into the city. The grandmother was disturbed for the following reasons:

- (i) She could no longer help him in his lessons as he had started going to an English medium school.
 - (ii) The city school did not include lessons from the scriptures or lessons on God.
 - (iii) She didn't like him taking the music lessons. According to her, music was only for beggars and harlots, and not meant for gentle folks.
3. The author claims that his grandmother changed a lot as he grew up. She would spend most of her day at the spinning wheel, chanting prayers and feeding sparrows. She accepted her seclusion with respectable resignation.
 4. The author's grandmother surprisingly did not pray in the evening before she passed. On the contrary, she gathered the women from the neighbourhood and started singing songs of the home-coming of the warriors, thumping continuously on the sagging skin of a dilapidated drum. The next morning when she fell ill, she said her end was near. She started praying peacefully while laying on her bed. She refused to talk to anyone during her last hours.
 5. While leading a lonely life in the city, the grandmother used to find peace and contentment in feeding the sparrows, that would come in large numbers, onto her verandah each day. She developed a special relationship with them. When she died, thousands of sparrows sat scattered all around her on the floor, to express their sorrow. One could not hear the usual veritable bedlam of their chirruping. They maintained an unbelievably dignified silence. Besides, when the author's mother tried to feed them by breaking the bread and throwing it in front of them, they refused to eat any of it. Thereafter, when the grandmother's mortal remains were carried away for the final rites, they all flew away noiselessly.

TALKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. The author's grandmother was a religious person. What are the different ways in which we come to know this?
2. Describe the changing relationship between the author and his grandmother. Did their feelings for each other change?
3. Would you agree that the author's grandmother was a person strong in character? If yes, give instances that show this.
4. Have you known someone like the author's grandmother? Do you feel the same sense of loss with regard to someone whom you have loved and lost?

- Ans.**
1. When the author's grandmother lived in the village with him, she used to constantly chant prayers in a monotonous sound, even as she was getting him ready each morning. She used to go along with the author to his school. Thereafter, she would go to the temple attached to the school every day, sit inside and read the scriptures. Later, when they moved to the city, she would carry the beads of the rosary with her all the time. She would be continuously chanting her prayers as her hand remained busy counting the beads. When the author went to study at the university, she went into seclusion and spent the entire day in chanting prayers and worshipping God.
 2. In the early days, the author and his grandmother, shared a good bond. She would get him ready for school and accompany him. After his school hours, they would walk back home together, accompanied by the street dogs, who growled and fought with each other to get their share of the stale chappatis that grandma gave them

every day. Grandmother would also help him with his studies. She would say her morning prayers in a monotonous tone, everyday, while she got the young boy ready for school, in the hope that he'd pick up the words eventually. When they moved to the city, their relationship suffered. He started going to an English medium school. She could no longer accompany him to the school nor could she help him with his lessons. She disliked his new school as they did not teach him about God or the scriptures. Knowledge of science and exposure to music met with her silent disapproval. She stopped talking to him afterwards and would spend her day all alone chanting prayers and spinning the wheel.

When the author went to university and then abroad, their bond weakened even further. She would spin the wheel the whole day and chant her prayers. She accepted her seclusion with a dignified resignation.

It would probably be right to say that their feelings for each other did undergo a change, although they still loved each other deeply. This could be explained more explicitly by the fact that the grandmother went to see the author off at the railway station when he was going abroad for higher studies. She showed no emotion but kissed his forehead silently. The author valued this as perhaps the last sign of physical contact between them. However, the quality of the feeling they had for each other, that is, the love, care and concern, would definitely have remained the same.

3. Yes, the author's grandmother had a strong personality. Given below are a few instances to prove this:
 - (i) She had her own opinions about the schools and their teachings. She considered learning scriptures to be of greater significance than that of English or Science.
 - (ii) According to her, music was not meant for gentle folks.
 - (iii) When the author went to the university, she preferred to spend her time in seclusion. She would therefore, engage herself by spinning the wheel, chanting prayers, telling beads and feeding bread crumbs to the sparrows.
 - (iv) Her behaviour on the arrival of her grandson from abroad was remarkable. The aged grandmother, sang songs in honour of the homecoming of warriors, as she thumped on a dilapidated drum for hours. Her joy was so great that she didn't stop even when her family requested her not to overstrain herself.
 - (v) She realised that her end was near. Therefore, she didn't want to waste any time talking to anyone. She lay silently on her bed and chanted her prayers till her peaceful end.

4. *Self-attempt*

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

1. Which language do you think the author and his grandmother used while talking to each other?
2. Which language do you use to talk to elderly relatives in your family?
3. How would you say 'a dilapidated drum' in your language?
4. Can you think of a song or a poem in your language that talks of homecoming?

Ans. 1. The author and his grandmother would have been talking to each other in their mother tongue, which could possibly be Punjabi, as the author belongs to the state of Punjab.

2. My elderly relatives are well-versed in English and Hindi. I feel at home greeting them in English but I like to converse with them in Hindi. *(Answer can vary)*
3. In my language, 'a dilapidated drum' would be said as '*phata-purana dhol*'. *(Answer can vary)*
4. There are many folk songs and poems dedicated to the brave warriors. All of these songs talk about their homecoming after winning a battle.

WORKING WITH WORDS

I. Notice the following uses of the word 'tell' in the text.

1. Her fingers were busy *telling the beads* of her rosary.
2. I would *tell her* English words and little things of Western science and learning.
3. At her age *one could never tell*.
4. She *told us* that her end was near.

Given below are four different senses of the word 'tell'. Match the meanings to the uses listed above.

- (a) make something known to someone in spoken or written words
- (b) count while reciting
- (c) be sure
- (d) give information to somebody

Ans.

Phrases	Meaning
1. telling the beads	(a) count while reciting
2. tell her	(b) give information to somebody
3. one could never tell	(c) be sure
4. told us	(d) make something known to someone in spoken or written words

II. Notice the different senses of the word 'take'.

1. *to take to something*: to begin to do something as a habit
2. *to take ill*: to suddenly become ill

Locate these phrases in the text and notice the way they are used.

Ans. These phrases have been used in:

- (i) "...she took to feeding sparrows in the courtyard of our city house."
She would feed sparrows daily in the veranda. She made this her habit when they moved to the city.
- (ii) "The next morning she was taken ill."
This phrase refers to the fact that the author's grandmother was suddenly ill.

III. The word 'hobble' means to walk with difficulty because the legs and feet are in bad condition.

Tick the words in the box below that also refer to a manner of walking.

haggle	shuffle	stride	ride	waddle
wriggle	paddle	swagger	trudge	slog

Ans. The words which refer to a manner of walking are:
shuffle, stride, waddle, swagger, trudge, slog

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow. (3 Marks each)

1. This made her unhappy. She could not help me with my lessons. She did not believe in the things they taught at the English school and was distressed that there was no teaching about God and the scriptures. One day I announced that we were being given music lessons. She was very disturbed. To her music had lewd associations. It was the monopoly of harlots and beggars and not meant for gentlefolk. She said nothing but her silence meant disapproval. She rarely talked to me after that.

(a) What made the grandmother unhappy?

- (i) Because she didn't understand English and could no longer help the author with his lessons
- (ii) Because the author couldn't take out time for his grandmother
- (iii) Because the author was being given music lessons
- (iv) Because they had to move to the city

(b) What was the thing that she did not believe in? Why?

(c) What did the author announce one day?

Ans. (a) (i) Because she didn't understand English and could no longer help the author with his lessons
(b) She did not believe in the western education given at the English school because there was no teaching about God and the scriptures.
(c) The author announced one day that they were being given music lessons at the English school.

2. My grandmother and I were good friends. My parents left me with her when they went to live in the city and we were constantly together. She used to wake me up in the morning and get me ready for school. She said her morning prayer in a monotonous sing-song while she bathed and dressed me in the hope that I would listen and get to know it by heart; I listened because I loved her voice but never bothered to learn it.

(a) Where did the grandmother and the narrator live?

- (i) In a village
- (ii) In an ashram
- (iii) In a metropolitan city
- (iv) None of these

(b) What do you think of the grandmother's character in the chapter?

- (i) Emotional
- (ii) Strong
- (iii) Selfless
- (iv) Loving

(c) Did the author ever take time to memorise his grandmother's morning prayers?

Ans. (a) (i) In a village
(b) (ii) Strong

(c) No, the author never bothered to take time to memorise his grandmother's morning prayers, but he loved to listen to her prayers as he loved her voice.

3. People said that she had once been young and pretty and had even had a husband, but that was hard to believe. My grandfather's portrait hung above the mantelpiece in the drawing room. He wore a big turban and loose-fitting clothes. His long, white beard covered the best part of his chest and he looked at least a hundred years old.

(a) Describe the author's grandfather's portrait.

(b) What was hard for the author to believe?

(i) That his grandmother had a husband

(ii) That his grandmother had once been young and pretty

(iii) That his grandfather looked a hundred years old

(iv) Both (i) and (ii)

(c) What do you think is a ‘mantelpiece’?

Ans. (a) The author's grandfather wore a big turban and loose-fitting clothes. He had a long, white beard covering most of his chest.

(b) (iv) Both (i) and (ii)

(c) A ‘mantelpiece’ is a shelf above a fireplace.

4. The common link of friendship was snapped. My grandmother accepted her seclusion with resignation. She rarely left her spinning-wheel to talk to anyone. From sunrise to sunset she sat by her wheel spinning and reciting prayers. Only in the afternoon, she relaxed for a while to feed the sparrows. While she sat in the verandah breaking the bread into little bits, hundreds of little birds collected round her creating a veritable bedlam of chirrupings.

(a) What caused the common link of friendship to snap?

(b) How did she spend her day?

(c) Pick up the characteristics of the grandmother from the list given below.

(1) Calm

(2) Strong

(3) Independent

(4) Arrogant

(5) Loving

(6) Affectionate

(7) Rude

(8) Intolerant

(i) (2), (5), (6), (7)

(ii) (1), (3), (4), (8)

(iii) (1), (2), (3), (5), (6)

(iv) (1), (4), (6), (7), (8)

Ans. (a) The common link of friendship between the narrator and the grandmother snapped when he was sent to the university for higher education.

(b) She used to spend her day in seclusion, sitting by her spinning wheel from sunrise to sunset and reciting prayers. In the afternoon, she used to feed the sparrows.

(c) (iii) (1), (2), (3), (5), (6)

5. When I decided to go abroad for further studies, I was sure my grandmother would be upset. I would be away for five years, and at her age one could never tell. But my grandmother could. She was not even sentimental. She came to leave me at the railway station but did not talk or show any emotion.

(a) ‘... at her age one could never tell.’ What did the narrator mean?

(b) How did grandmother react to the narrator's decision of going abroad for further studies?

- (i) She refused to let him go.
- (ii) She was not at all sentimental at his leaving.
- (iii) She was extremely happy for the narrator.
- (iv) She angrily bid him goodbye.

(c) What was the narrator so sure about?

- Ans.** (a) The narrator meant that his grandmother was too old and may not be alive when he returns from abroad.
- (b) (ii) She was not at all sentimental at his leaving.
- (c) The narrator was sure his grandmother would be upset on his decision of going abroad for further studies.

6. There was no chirruping. We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to, and threw it to them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread. When we carried my grandmother's corpse off, they flew away quietly. Next morning the sweeper swept the bread crumbs into the dustbin.

(a) What time of the day is described here?

(b) What did they see when they entered the room where the grandmother lay dead?

(c) What happened when they took the grandmother's corpse away?

- (i) Neighbours visited them to pay condolences.
- (ii) They mourned her death in her room.
- (iii) Birds flew away quietly.
- (iv) Nothing happened.

- Ans.** (a) It is the dusk time of the day that has been described here.
- (b) When they entered the room where the corpse of the grandmother lay, they saw thousands of sparrows sitting on the floor, on the verandah and right up to her dead body.
- (c) (iii) Birds flew away quietly.

7. In the evening a change came over her. She did not pray. She collected the women of the neighbourhood, got an old drum and started to sing. For several hours she thumped the sagging skins of the dilapidated drum and sang of the home-coming of warriors. We had to persuade her to stop to avoid overstraining. That was the first time since I had known her that she did not pray.

(a) 'In the evening a change came over her.' What is the change being referred to here?

- (i) Grandmother did not pray.
- (ii) Grandmother went for a walk.
- (iii) Grandmother slept early.
- (iv) Grandmother did not talk to anyone.

(b) What kind of songs did the grandmother sing?

(c) Why did they have to persuade her to stop beating the drum?

- Ans.** (a) (i) Grandmother did not pray.
(b) She sang songs about the home-coming of the warriors.
(c) They had to persuade her to stop beating the drum, so that she does not exert herself and fall ill.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. Do you think the author and his grandmother shared a very strong bond of friendship? When was their friendship at the peak in the story? (Constructed Response Question)

- Ans.** Yes, the author and his grandmother indeed shared a very strong bond of friendship with each other. Their friendship was at the peak when they were living together in the village. She used to wake him up and get him ready for school. The author loved her voice when she used to sing the morning prayers. She also used to accompany him to the school.

2. Why was it hard for the author to believe that his grandmother was once young and pretty?

- Ans.** The grandmother was very old and had wrinkles all over her face. Ever since the author was a child, he had been seeing her in this condition. When the grandmother told the author that she used to play games when she was a little girl, the very notion of his grandmother being young and pretty was quite absurd and unbelievable for him.

3. What was the daily routine of the grandmother in the village?

- Ans.** Grandmother used to start her mornings by reciting prayers. After waking up early in the morning, she used to wake up the author, get him bathed and dressed for the school. Then both of them would march to the school on foot. After sending him off, grandmother would sit inside a temple, which was attached to the school, chanting and telling beads. In the evening, on their way back home from school, she used to feed the village dogs with stale chapattis.

4. What was grandmother's opinion about modern education?

- Ans.** Grandmother considered modern education to be irrelevant. She did not approve of the teaching methods in an English medium school due to many reasons. Moreover, she did not like the fact that the school only taught about science and technology, and nothing about God, the scriptures and spirituality. According to her, education should be religious.

5. How did grandmother spend her lonely days without the author?

- Ans.** Grandmother accepted her loneliness quietly. She now lived alone in her room. She was now busy with her spinning wheel. She sat at her spinning-wheel all day long reciting prayers. She hardly talked to anyone. In the afternoon, she would feed the sparrows which was her only pastime.

6. Why did the author think that the grandmother's kiss was the last sign of physical contact between them?

- Ans.** When the author was going abroad for his higher studies, his grandmother went to the station to see him off. Although she did not utter a word, she bade him goodbye

by kissing his forehead. The author thought this gesture to be the last physical contact between them, as his grandmother was growing older day by day, so he apprehended that he might not see her again on his return. He thought that death might take her away from him.

7. Mention the odd way in which the author's grandmother behaved just before she died.

Ans. Just before the day the grandmother died, a change came upon her. She did not pray in the evening. She got an old drum and started singing for her grandson, which went on for hours. Next morning, she was taken ill. The doctor thought nothing of it but the grandmother thought differently. She told everyone that her end was near and so she would spend the last of her living moments in prayer and would not waste her time in talking to anyone. She laid peacefully on the bed praying and before anyone could suspect, her lips stopped moving. She passed away peacefully.

8. How did the sparrows mourn the death of the grandmother?

Ans. The day the grandmother died, thousands of sparrows came in the courtyard and the verandah where she lay dead and wrapped in a red shroud. They all scattered around her body. They sat there in utter silence, mourning the death of the grandmother. They took no notice of the bread crumbs thrown at them and flew away silently after the corpse was taken away for the final rites.

9. How did the grandmother celebrate the home-coming of her grandson?

Ans. The grandmother was really very excited and happy when the narrator returned from abroad. She celebrated his arrival by collecting the women of her neighbourhood in the evening. She continued beating an old drum and sang for hours. She even forgot to pray.

10. The grandmother had a divine beauty. How does the author bring it out?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. The author brings out the inner beauty of the grandmother by comparing her to a snow covered winter landscape. This comparison shows her calmness and serenity. The author brings out the serenity and peacefulness that lit her face.

11. How did the narrator's grandfather appear in the portrait?

Ans. The narrator's grandfather looked very old. He had a long white beard. His clothes were loose-fitting. He wore a big turban. He looked too old to have a wife or children. He looked at least a hundred years old. He could only have lots and lots of grandchildren.

12. Which thought about the grandmother was often revolting and for whom?

Ans. The narrator's grandmother was very old and wrinkled. She had stayed at this stage for the last twenty years. People said that once she was young and pretty. The narrator couldn't even imagine her being young. So the thought was revolting for him.

13. Grandmother has been portrayed as a very religious lady. What details in the story create this impression?

Ans. She visited the temple every morning and read the scriptures. At home, she always mumbled inaudible prayers and kept telling the beads of her rosary. She would repeat prayers in a sing-song manner while getting the narrator ready for school. All these details create the impression that she was a religious lady.

14. “When people are pious and good, even nature mourns their death.” Justify with reference to the chapter.

Ans. When the grandmother passed away, thousands of sparrows clustered in the verandah and the room without chirruping. When the body was taken away, the birds left quietly, as if to declare that even nature acknowledges the godliness of a true benefactor.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. **The grandmother herself was not formally educated but was serious about the author’s education. Elucidate.**

Ans. The grandmother was quite serious about the author’s education. She woke him up in the morning and got him ready for school. She washed his wooden slate. She plastered it with yellow chalk. She tied his earthen ink-pot and red pen into a bundle. She took him to school. She even waited for him in the temple, reading scriptures. In the city, the author went to an English school in a motor bus. When he came back, she would ask him what the teacher had taught him. She could not help him with his lessons. She did not believe in the things taught at the English school. She was distressed to learn that her grandson was being taught music. She considered it unfit for gentle folks.

2. **‘The Portrait of a Lady’ partly dwells on the loneliness and insecurity of old age and the efforts of the old to fit in. Driven by such thoughts while reading the lesson, you think about the life of many old men and women in India, who lead a lonesome existence at the end of their life. Write an article on ‘Life of Old People.’**

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans.

LIFE OF OLD PEOPLE

No one wants to become old, but everyone has to. While young, no one thinks of what life would be like in old age. The old, on their part, await attention from the young for their small and big needs. Life is difficult for the old in all ways. Their physical strength is low and they easily fall victim to diseases.

Their financial condition is poor. They have a small pension or limited income or no income. Most devastating of all is loneliness. Their sons and daughters are busy with their lives and are preoccupied with the young. The old feel neglected and irrelevant. Their dismal situation should not be allowed to exist. Various agencies, like government NGOs and social organisations should provide the elderly with financial and physical support. Families should have a place for the old. Nowadays, the law demands that the young take care of their aged parents.

3. **Khushwant Singh’s mother observed closely the behaviour of his grandmother when he returned home after studying abroad, her way of celebrating the occasion, her illness and death. Write an account of this on her behalf.**

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. This morning my son, Khushwant, returned from England after five years of studies. All of us were excited, including his grandmother. Unlike others, she kept her excitement under check. She insisted on going to the station to receive him. When he arrived, she hugged him silently, all the while saying her prayers.

In the evening, she took out an old drum and called the women of the neighbourhood. Together they sang for hours, celebrating the return of her grandson. I was anxious

for her and implored her to stop and not tire herself unduly. This was the only time she was not praying. The next day, she was down with fever and exhaustion. We were anxious, because in spite of the doctor's reassurance, she was sure her end had come. She stopped talking to us and lay quietly on the bed, telling the beads of her rosary. Her end came peacefully. We came to know only when her lips stopped moving.

4. How did the grandmother receive the author when he returned from abroad?

Ans. When the author went abroad for higher studies, the grandmother went to the railway station to see him off. The author thought that it would be his last meeting with her. But he was wrong in his supposition. When he returned after five years, she had gone to the railway station to receive him. She celebrated his home-coming in a grand way.

In the evening, she collected the women of the neighbourhood, got an old drum and started singing for several hours, despite being told not to overstrain herself. Perhaps, all the pain she experienced upon being distanced from her grandchild snapped, when she saw him after so many years. The next morning, she was taken ill and she knew that her end was near. But she went on praying and telling her beads. Then her lips stopped moving and the rosary fell from her lifeless fingers. A peaceful pallor spread on her face and she was dead.

5. Gradually the author and the grandmother saw less of each other and their friendship snapped. Was the distancing in the relationship deliberate or circumstantial?

Ans. Gradually, the author and his grandmother saw less of each other and their friendship was broken. This distancing was due to the circumstances and not deliberate. When they came to the city, the author was sent to an English school. His grandmother could no longer go to school with him as he used to go in a motor bus. Nor could she help him with his lessons as she did not know the things that they taught at the English school. She was concerned about what was being taught at school. For instance, she was shocked to learn that they were given music lessons at school.

According to her, music was not meant for gentle folk. Subsequently, there was a communication gap between them. They rarely spoke to each other, though they shared the same room. Then the author went to a university. He was given a separate room of his own. When the author went abroad for higher studies for a period of five years, the distance increased even further, and whatever was left in their relationship was snapped altogether.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. We stopped half-way in the courtyard. All over the verandah and in her room right up to where she lay dead and stiff wrapped in the red shroud, thousands of sparrows sat scattered on the floor. There was no chirruping. We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to, and threw it to them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread. When we carried my grandmother's corpse off, they flew away quietly.

(a) The birds refused to eat the bread crumbs because:

- (i) they were not hungry.
- (ii) they were mourning their friend's death.
- (iii) they did not like it.
- (iv) they wanted something else to eat.

(b) What kind of a woman was the author's grandmother?

(c) What was the atmosphere of the house?

2. But that was not so. After five years I come back home and was met by her at the station. She did not look a day older. She still had no time for words, and while she clasped me in her arms I could hear her reciting her prayers. Even on the first day of my arrival, her happiest moments were with her sparrows whom she fed longer and with frivolous rebukes.

(a) Where was the author for five years?

(b) How did the grandmother react when the author came back after five years?

- (i) She was overwhelmed.
- (ii) She clasped the author in her arms and said prayers.
- (iii) She was least concerned.
- (iv) She got sentimental.

(c) How did the grandmother spend her happiest moments?

3. We felt sorry for the birds and my mother fetched some bread for them. She broke it into little crumbs, the way my grandmother used to, and threw it to them. The sparrows took no notice of the bread. When we carried my grandmother's corpse off, they flew away quietly. Next morning the sweeper swept the bread crumbs into the dustbin.

(a) Who are 'we' here? Why did they feel sorry for the birds?

(b) What do you feel about the character of the grandmother?

(Competency-focused Question)

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| (i) Emotional | (ii) Strong |
| (iii) Selfless | (iv) Loving |

(c) Why were the bread crumbs thrown into the dustbin?

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

1. Draw a comparison between village schools and city schools.
(Constructed Response Question)
2. Grandmother never complained about anything. Her patience was beyond any measure. Elucidate.
3. What would the author have experienced emotionally, when his parents left him with his grandmother and moved to the city?
4. Was it appropriate of the author to ignore the fact that his grandmother was experiencing loneliness?
(Constructed Response Question)
5. Give your opinion on the grandmother accepting her seclusion with resignation. Did she adopt the right attitude?
(Constructed Response Question)

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

1. What aspects of old people are highlighted in the chapter 'The Portrait of a Lady'?
(Constructed Response Question)
2. Describe the ups and downs of the relationship between the author and his grandmother. How could this separation have been avoided?
(Constructed Response Question)
3. Do you believe that old age is always accompanied by loneliness? Elucidate.
(Constructed Response Question)



2

“We’re Not Afraid to Die... If We Can All Be Together”

— Gordon Cook and Alan East

Introduction

This is an autobiographical account of a real adventure. The authors were fortunate to have been able to manoeuvre their way into safety after being engulfed in an unexpected mishap in the middle of their journey.

THEME

The story ‘We’re Not Afraid to Die...If We Can All Be Together’ is based on the idea of unity among people. It focuses on how we should react when we are surrounded by problems and how we should not lose hope. Being optimistic is the key to tackle all the hurdles and pave the way to success. It also shows that strength and determination can be shown by even small children while facing the strong waves of the mighty sea. Their spirit to live together gave them immense power to brave death together. The adventure unfolds specific characteristics that should be at hand while in a crisis. These include patience, support, togetherness, teamwork, courage, strength, both emotional and mental, and most importantly presence of mind.

Summary

‘We’re Not Afraid to Die...If We Can All Be Together’ is about the attempt made by Gordon Cook to replicate the feat of Captain James Cook, and make a voyage around the world. Gordon Cook’s family and crewmen face a near-death experience in the deep waters, and struggle to find the means of survival.

In the month of July in the year 1976, the writer, his wife Mary, his son Jonathan and his daughter Suzanne set sail from Plymouth, in England, in their professionally designed ship, named the Wavewalker. They were accompanied by 2 sailors – Larry Vigil, who was an American and Herb Sailor, a Swiss – to tackle one of the world’s coarsest oceans, the southern Indian Ocean.

The first phase of their journey which was about 1,05,000 kilometres up to Cape Town, passed off pleasantly. On the 2nd day, out of Cape Town, they started to encounter strong windstorms. Windstorms did not worry the narrator. But the height of the waves was alarming. They rose up to fifteen meters, as high as the main mast. On the 25th of December, the ship sailed into the southern Indian Ocean that was about 3,500 kilometres to the east of Cape Town. The family welcomed the New Year on the ship.

At the dawn of 2nd January, they were confronted by gigantic waves and unfriendly weather. The massive waves forced the sailors to slow the speed of the ship, drop the storm jib and take

various other precautions. The risk was so obvious that the sailors accomplished a life-raft drill, attached the lifelines and donned the life jackets. Unexpectedly at 6 p.m., a torrent of green and white water broke over the Wavewalker and the writer was thrown overboard. The Wavewalker was about to overturn when another massive wave hit it, throwing it upright one more time. The writer was thrown back again onto the deck and tossed around leaving his ribs cracked, mouth filled with blood and some broken teeth. In spite of a lot of injuries, the writer took charge of the situation and decided to handle it on his own. Larry and Herb started pumping the water out of the ship.

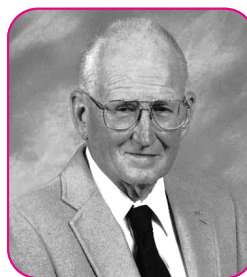
The author somehow managed to cover the canvas across the gaps to stop the water from entering into the ship. To add to their problems, the hand pumps stopped functioning and the electric pumps short-circuited at the same time. Luckily, the writer found a spare electrical pump that was functional. The entire night everyone was pumping, steering, repairing and sending radio signals for help. The author checked the charts and found that reaching, 'Ile Amsterdam', a French scientific base was their last hope.

Sue and Jon got heavily injured but they were not afraid to die as long as the whole family was together. The support and resilience of his children gave the writer the courage and determination to rescue his dear family from the unforeseen crisis. Finally, they were able to touch the 'Ile Amsterdam'. It was a volcanic island where 28 inhabitants were ready to receive them.

Gordon Cook, born on December 3, 1978, in Toronto, is a two-time Canadian Olympic sailor. He is the son of Stephen Cook and Linda Cook. He sailed for the Royal Canadian Yacht Club and had a great interest in writing stories.

Alan East was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in 2003 and has gained extensive experience as a litigator, manager and legal trainer.

In 2004, he co-founded and managed a niche legal practice specializing in Criminal Litigation and Prison Law gaining higher rights of audience in criminal proceedings and working as a Duty solicitor. In 2007, he joined the Crown Prosecution Service as a Senior Crown Prosecutor.



Answers to NCERT Questions

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. List the steps taken by the captain

- (i) to protect the ship when rough weather began.
- (ii) to check the flooding of the water in the ship.

- Ans.**
- (i) The narrator decided to slow down the ship to protect it from the bad and stormy weather. He dropped the storm jib and lashed a heavy mooring rope across the stern of the ship. Then everything was double-lashed. A life-raft drill was carried out, they attached lifelines and donned life jackets and oilskins.
 - (ii) In order to check the flooding of the water, the narrator put waterproof hatches that covered the gaping holes. This diverted the water flow to the side. The hand pumps were blocked due to debris and unfortunately, the electric pump was short-circuited. He then found a spare electric pump, connected it to the out-pipe and started it.

2. Describe the mental condition of the voyagers on 4 and 5 January.

Ans. On January 4, the voyagers felt relieved as they had been continuously pumping out water over the last 36 hours and only a few centimetres of water was left. They had their first meal in two days. Mary found some corned beef and cracker biscuits. Later, around 4 p.m., the weather changed as black clouds marched towards them. The wind was now 40 knots and the sea was getting higher. The weather got worse and by the early morning of January 5, the situation was bad. This gave them a great deal of mental agony and fear of loss of their loved ones.

3. Describe the shifts in the narration of the events as indicated in the three sections of the text. Give a subtitle to each section.

Ans.

The dream voyage begins

The first section incorporated a cheerful and enthusiastic family who had set out on their planned voyage. The desire was to replicate the feat accomplished 200 years ago by the famous Captain James Cook. They had perfected their seafaring skills for the past 16 years. Their ship 'Wavewalker' was built professionally for the voyage. It was a 23 metre long, 30 ton wooden-hulled ship. They celebrated Christmas on the ship. But the New Year brought along with it bad weather.

Attack by nature

This section changed from cheerful to intense. The family was under great pressure to confront the oncoming waves and bad weather conditions. The arrival of a gigantic wave created chaotic conditions, and the ship was about to overturn. The narrator was thrown off into the water and he almost drowned and got injured. Along with two hired crewmen, the narrator pumped out the water from the ship for over 36 hours. He also tried repairing the destroyed parts of the ship. He almost lost his hope and believed they would die. But the courage and confidence displayed by his children proved to be the impetus for the author to fight back.

The battle was won

With the support of his children, and his wife who was at the wheel, the narrator kept trying to save the ship in order to reach the Ile Amsterdam. They finally reached their destination and secured the help of the 28 inhabitants of the island. His son honoured him by saying that he was the best daddy and the best captain.

TALKING ABOUT THE TEXT

Discuss the following questions with answers.

1. What difference did you notice between the reaction of the adults and the children when faced with danger?

Ans. The children and the adults addressed the situation in totally different ways. The adults succumbed to the pressure and lost all hopes of survival. On the other hand, the children were hopeful and gave the narrator moral support. They gave the author the impetus to handle the situation with greater determination. The support and confidence of his children, Jonathan and Suzanne, and their willingness to die if they were all together, lit a spark of conviction in the author's mind. He decided that he will make it to the island at any cost. The children showed maturity. His injured daughter handed over a card with caricatures of the family together. She had added the words, "Oh, how I love you both. So this card is to say thank you, and let's hope for the best." The author was determined to uphold the faith his children had in their father.

2. How does the story suggest that optimism helps to endure “the direst stress”?

Ans. Optimism is the determination to overcome any challenges. Without optimism, it is impossible to face difficulties and solve problems. When they were faced with the wrath of nature, the family was enveloped in fear and darkness. The continued onslaught by the sea created a great deal of stress. However, the attitude of the children initiated the spirit of optimism because of which they didn't stop trying to secure the boat and all the people aboard.

The antidote to endure the stress was the team spirit displayed by the two little children. They were fearless if the family was together. Therefore, when Jonathan told the author, “We're not afraid of dying if we can all be together — you and Mummy, Sue and I” he was determined to fight the battle in all earnest. The maturity of the children and their impression with regard to the situation, played an important role in motivating the narrator who had decided to give in to the pressure. The injuries and pain were pushed to the background. The decision to fight ensured that they reach the shores safely.

3. What lessons do we learn from such hazardous experiences when we are face-to-face with death?

Ans. Life is a combination of the good and the bad, the ugly and the beautiful, happiness and sorrow, growth and fall. This is the format of human existence. It is however, in one's interest to be as careful as one can be while walking through the journey called – life. Unexpected situations may arise, this is unavoidable. Facing these with courage will help us jump the hurdles with greater strength. Being cautious is important. It would be ridiculous to invite trouble. Near death situations teach us to understand the value and purpose of life. It teaches us to be better human beings and cherish life to the fullest. It would be an ideal situation if we live and let others live happily.

4. Why do you think people undertake such adventurous expeditions in spite of the risks involved?

Ans. The urge to experiment and accept challenges drives people to take up adventurous expeditions in spite of the risk involved. People like to try out different elements of nature and some do it as a passion. Despite being aware of the risks involved in such activities, their passion for adventure makes them try out dangerous and challenging expeditions.

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

1. We have come across words like ‘gale’ and ‘storm’ in the account. Here are two more words for ‘storm’: typhoon, cyclone. How many words does your language have for ‘storm’?

Ans. In Hindi, there are many words for ‘storm’ – *toofan*, *aandhi*, *andhad*, etc.

2. Here are the terms for different kinds of vessels: yacht, boat, canoe, ship, steamer, schooner. Think of similar terms in your language.

Ans. ‘*Kashti*’, ‘*Naav*’, ‘*Nauka*’, ‘*Jahaz*’ are some terms in Hindi.

3. ‘Catamaran’ is a kind of a boat. Do you know which Indian language this word is derived from? Check the dictionary.

Ans. The word ‘Catamaran’ is derived from the Tamil language word ‘*Kattumaram*’.

4. Have you heard any boatmen's songs? What kind of emotions do these songs usually express?

Ans. Yes, such boatmen songs express love and nostalgia. They also express the longing to meet their loved ones, and their faith in the Goddess of the rivers.

WORKING WITH WORDS

1. The following words used in the text as ship terminology are also commonly used in another sense. In what contexts would you use the other meaning?

knot	stern	boom	hatch	anchor
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Ans. Knot:

- (a) a tangled mass in something
- (b) interlacing, looping, etc.

Stern: harsh, firm, strict, etc.

Boom:

- (a) to experience a sudden rapid economic growth
- (b) a loud sound

Hatch:

- (a) to cause an egg to break in order to allow a young animal to come out
- (b) to make a plan

Anchor:

- (a) host of an event
- (b) a person who can be relied upon for support

2. The following three compound words end in -ship. What does each of them mean?

airship	flagship	lightship
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Ans. Airship: a power-driven aircraft which is kept buoyant by a body of gas

Flagship: the ship in the fleet which carries the commanding admiral

Lightship: an anchored boat with a beacon light to warn ships at sea

3. The following are the meanings listed in the dictionary against the phrase 'take on'. In which meaning is it used in the third paragraph of the account:

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| take on sth: | to begin to have a particular quality or appearance; to assume sth |
| take sb on: | to employ sb; to engage sb |
| | to accept sb as one's opponent in a game, contest or conflict |
| take sb/sth on: | to decide to do sth; to allow sth/sb to enter |
| | e.g. a bus, plane or ship; to take sth/sb on board |

Ans. In the third paragraph, in lines "... we took two crewmen to help us tackle.. roughest seas", the word 'took on' means to take somebody or to hire somebody.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow. (3 Marks each)

1. In July 1976, my wife Mary, son Jonathan, 6, daughter Suzanne, 7, and I set sail from Plymouth, England, to duplicate the round-the-world voyage made 200 years earlier by Captain James Cook. For the longest time, Mary and I — a 37-year-old businessman — had dreamt of sailing in the wake of the famous explorer, and for the past 16 years we had spent all our leisure time honing our seafaring skills in British waters.

- (a) What inspired the author to undertake a round-the-world voyage?
(b) What is the profession of the author?
(c) Which of the following adjectives are applicable to the author and his wife?

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) Adventurous | (2) Determined |
| (3) Ruthless | (4) Careless |
| (5) Disorganised | (6) Systematic |
| (7) Focussed | (8) Enthusiastic |
| (i) (1), (4), (5), (7) | (ii) (1), (2), (6), (7), (8) |
| (iii) (2), (5), (6), (7) | (iv) (3), (4), (5), (6), (8) |

- Ans.** (a) The voyage made by Captain James Cook 200 years ago inspired the author to undertake a round-the-world voyage.
(b) The author is a businessman by profession.
(c) (ii) (1), (2), (6), (7), (8)

2. Our boat Wavewalker, a 23 metre, 30 ton wooden-hulled beauty, had been professionally built, and we had spent months fitting it out and testing it in the roughest weather we could find. The first leg of our planned three-year, 105,000 kilometre journey passed pleasantly as we sailed down the west coast of Africa to Cape Town. There, before heading east, we took on two crewmen — American Larry Vigil and Swiss Herb Seigler — to help us tackle one of the world's roughest seas, the southern Indian Ocean.

- (a) Why were the crewmen hired?
(b) Which phase of the journey was an enjoyable one?
(i) First leg – from England to Cape Town
(ii) Last part of the journey
(iii) First few months of the journey
(iv) None of these

- (c) For how long did they plan to stay on water?

- Ans.** (a) The crewmen were hired by the author to help them tackle the roughest sea, i.e., the southern Indian Ocean.
(b) (i) First leg – from England to Cape Town
(c) They planned to stay on water for three years.

3. Unexpectedly, my head popped out of the water. A few metres away, Wavewalker was near capsizing, her masts almost horizontal. Then a wave hurled her upright, my lifeline jerked taut, I grabbed the guard rails and sailed through the air into Wavewalker's main boom. Subsequent waves tossed me around the deck like a rag doll. My left ribs cracked; my mouth filled with blood and broken teeth. Somehow, I found the wheel, lined up the stern for the next wave and hung on.

(a) What did the author see when his head popped out of the water?

(b) What happened to the author when the waves tossed him on to the deck?

- (i) His head smashed and started bleeding.
- (ii) His left ribs cracked; mouth got filled with blood and broken teeth.
- (iii) His leg and his left hand broke.
- (iv) All of these

(c) What had happened before the author popped out his head from the water?

Ans. (a) The author saw that the ship was near capsizing and her masts were almost horizontal.
(b) (ii) His left ribs cracked; mouth got filled with blood and broken teeth.
(c) The author had lost his consciousness as he was sinking below the waves due to a torrent of green and white water that broke over the ship.

4. The first indication of impending disaster came at about 6 p.m., with an ominous silence. The wind dropped, and the sky immediately grew dark. Then came a growing roar, and an enormous cloud towered aft of the ship. With horror, I realised that it was not a cloud, but a wave like no other I had ever seen. It appeared perfectly vertical and almost twice the height of the other waves, with a frightful breaking crest.

(a) The first indication of disaster was:

- (i) around 6 p.m. when the wind dropped and the sky grew darker.
- (ii) in the next morning when the ship started creaking.
- (iii) when it started raining.
- (iv) when the winds were strong.

(b) What was the enormous cloud that towered the aft of the ship?

(c) What do you understand by the phrase 'ominous silence'?

Ans. (a) (i) around 6 p.m. when the wind dropped and the sky grew darker.
(b) A wave that appeared vertical and almost twice the height of the other waves.
(c) 'Ominous silence' means an unpleasant and threatening silence.

5. Water, Water, Everywhere. I could feel that the ship had water below, but I dared not abandon the wheel to investigate. Suddenly, the front hatch was thrown open and Mary appeared. "We're sinking!" she screamed. "The decks are smashed; we're full of water."

(a) Explain: "... I dared not abandon the wheel to investigate."

(b) Who are referred to as 'we' in the given extract?

(c) How did Mary react when the front hatch was thrown open?

- (i) She got fainted.
- (ii) She started screaming.

- (iii) She started looking for her children.
- (iv) She tried to repair the broken part of the ship.

Ans. (a) After the storm hit the Wavewalker, the author could feel that the water had begun to pour in but he could not leave the wheel, the steering of the ship, and go down to inspect the situation.

(b) 'We' here refers to the author, his wife and his two children.

(c) (ii) She started screaming.

6. We had survived for 15 hours since the wave hit, but Wavewalker wouldn't hold together long enough for us to reach Australia. I checked our charts and calculated that there were two small islands a few hundred kilometres to the east. One of them, Ile Amsterdam, was a French scientific base. Our only hope was to reach these pinpricks in the vast ocean. But unless the wind and seas abated so we could hoist sail, our chances would be slim indeed. The great wave had put our auxilliary engine out of action.

- (a) What does 'pinpricks in the vast ocean' mean?
- (b) '...our chances would be slim indeed'. What is being referred to here?
- (c) The Wavewalker 'wouldn't hold together' means the same as:
 - (i) it will not be able to withstand
 - (ii) it will stay united in a relationship
 - (iii) it will be able to stand up against the waves
 - (iv) it will remain in one piece and not break

Ans. (a) 'Pinpricks in the vast ocean' refers to the islands.

(b) The author is referring to their chances of survival which seemed quite slim in the extreme condition.

(c) (i) it will not be able to withstand

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. Why did the author and his wife go for a sea voyage and how did they prepare for it?

Ans. The author and his wife wanted to duplicate the round-the-world voyage made 200 years earlier by Captain James Cook. They got the boat Wavewalker professionally built for this purpose and were honing their seafaring skills in the British waters since the past 16 years.

2. How was Wavewalker prepared for the journey?

Ans. They bought a boat, Wavewalker, a 23 metre, 30 ton wooden-hulled vessel that had been professionally built. They spent months fitting it out and testing it in the roughest weather that they could find.

3. How was the journey till Christmas day?

Ans. From their second day out of Cape Town, they encountered strong winds that continued for the next few weeks. The gales did not worry the narrator but the sizes of the waves were disturbing. On December 25th, they were about 3,500 km east of Cape Town, facing atrocious weather, which started deteriorating thereafter.

4. What ordeal awaited them on 2 January?

Ans. At the dawn of 2 January, the waves were gigantic. As the ship rose to the top of each wave, they could see the vast sea rolling towards them. The screaming of the wind and the spray was painful to their ears.

5. What measures did they take to counter this ordeal?

Ans. To counter the endless seas rolling towards them, they dropped the storm jib and lashed a heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stern to slow the boat, and then double-lashed everything, went through their life-raft drill, attached lifelines, put on oilskins and life jackets.

6. What was the impact of the frightful breaking crest on the ship?

Ans. The roar of the waves increased to a thunder as the stern moved up the face of the wave. For a moment, the author thought that they might ride over the wave. But unfortunately, that was not to be. A mighty explosion shook the deck and a torrent of water broke over the ship.

7. How did the narrator get back onto the ship after having been thrown into the sea?

Ans. After the narrator felt he was losing consciousness, his head suddenly popped out of the water. A few metres away, he saw the Wavewalker, nearly capsizing. Then, a wave threw it upright. He grabbed the guard rails and sailed through the air into Wavewalker's main boom.

8. Were things under control for the author after he got back onto the ship?

Ans. Unfortunately, no. The waves tossed him onto the deck like a rag doll. This caused his ribs to crack and his mouth was filled with blood as he had broken his teeth. All he could do was find the wheel, line up the stern and wait in abated silence for the next wave.

9. How did they manage to throw out water from the ship?

Ans. The author's wife, Mary, took charge of the wheel. He half-swam, half-crawled into the children's cabin, where he found a hammer, screws and canvas, and struggled back on deck. He secured waterproof hatch covers across the wide-open holes. Some water continued to stream below, but most of it was now being deflected over the side.

10. How did the pumps add to their miseries?

Ans. Problems multiplied when the hand pumps started getting blocked up with the debris floating around the cabins. The electric pump short-circuited. The two spare hand pumps had been wrenched overboard. Eventually, a spare electric pump in the chartroom was connected to an out-pipe that did the task of pushing out the water.

11. What were the difficulties that they faced that night?

Ans. The night was bitterly cold, and they were pumping water out of the ship, steering the ship and working the radio. All attempts at getting help were failing as they were getting no replies to their Mayday calls. This was probably because they were in a remote corner of the world.

12. Describe the nature of Sue's injuries. How did she handle them?

Ans. Sue had bumped her head and there was a big bump above her eyes. She had two black eyes, and a deep cut on her arm. She showed remarkable maturity for a seven-year-old when she said that she didn't want to worry her father or mother while they were trying to save all of them.

13. What further damage was noticed on the ship?

Ans. On 3rd January, things seemed under control. But they noticed a tremendous leak somewhere below the waterline. On checking, the author noticed that nearly all of the boat's main rib frames were smashed to the keel. There was nothing holding up a whole section of the starboard hull except a few cupboard portions. He was worried if the Wavewalker could sustain till they reached Australia.

14. What was the plan they devised in order to survive?

Ans. Realising the gravity of the problem, the narrator checked the charts and calculated that there were two small islands a few hundred kilometres to the east. One of them was Ile Amsterdam. Knowing that the Wavewalker would not hold for much longer, they aimed to reach the island.

15. Why was the respite from the torrential waves short-lived?

Ans. It was on January 4 that they ate their first meal in almost two days after pumping out most of the water. But their breather was short-lived. Around 4 p.m., black clouds gathered, the wind rose to 40 knots and the sea kept getting higher. The weather deteriorated and by dawn on 5 January, the situation turned hopeless again.

16. What did Jon say that left the narrator speechless?

Ans. When the narrator tried to comfort and reassure the children, Jon said that they were not afraid of dying if all four of them could be together. The narrator could find no words to respond, but he left the children's cabin determined to fight the sea with everything he had.

17. What did the author do after leaving his children's cabin?

Ans. He realised that it was necessary to protect the weakened starboard side. Therefore, he decided to heave to with the undamaged port hull facing the oncoming waves, using an improvised sea anchor of heavy nylon rope and two 22 litre plastic barrels of paraffin.

18. What surprise awaited the author when he woke up at 6 p.m.?

Ans. Just as he was resigning himself to the fact that they must have missed the island, he was in for a great surprise. Jon and Sue had dropped by, to appreciate their dear dad. Jon called him the best daddy in the whole world and the best captain, and Sue very casually told her shocked father that the island was right in front of them.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. Describe the harrowing experience of the author as mighty waves hit Wavewalker in the southern Indian Ocean.

Ans. A mighty wave hit the stern of their ship Wavewalker in the evening of 2nd January. A tremendous explosion shook the deck. A torrent of green and white water broke over the ship. The author's head struck against the wheel. He was thrown overboard. He was sinking below the waves and losing his consciousness. He accepted his approaching death. He felt quite peaceful. Suddenly, his head appeared out of the water. A few metres away, 'Wavewalker' was turning over in water. Her masts were almost horizontal. Then a wave hurled her upright. The narrator's lifeline jerked taut. He grabbed the guard rails and sailed through the air into Wavewalker's main boom. Succeeding waves tossed him

around the deck like a rag doll. His left ribs cracked. His mouth was filled with blood and broken teeth. Somehow, he found the wheel, lined up the stern for the next wave and held on tightly.

2. How did the ‘disaster’ announce its ominous arrival? What followed thereafter?

Ans. The first warning of the approaching disaster came with an inauspicious silence. The wind dropped, and the sky grew dark. Then there was a growing roar, and an enormous cloud towered aft of the ship. The author realised that it was not a cloud but an extraordinary huge wave. It turned out to be a vertical wave, almost twice the height of the other waves, and had a fearsome breaking crest. The roar began to increase to a thunder as the stern moved up the face of the wave, and for a moment, he expected that they might possibly ride over it. Unfortunately, a tremendous explosion shook the deck. A torrent of green and white water broke over the ship. The author’s head hit against the wheel and he was thrown into the sea. He accepted his impending death, and felt he was losing consciousness. But soon, he was tossed back onto the ship like a ‘rag doll’.

3. How did they deal with the water that had gushed into the ship?

Ans. As Mary took control of the wheel, the author made his way towards the hatch. Larry and Herb were pumping out water frantically. He saw broken timbers hung at crazy angles, the starboard side bulged inwards; clothes, crockery, charts, tins and toys sloshed about in deep water. So, he struggled into the children’s cabin, found a hammer, screws and canvas, and laboured back on to the deck. He managed to stretch the canvas and secured waterproof hatch covers across the gaping holes. Some water continued to stream below, but most of it was now being deflected over the side. More problems cropped up when the hand pumps started to block up with the fragments floating around the cabins and the electric pump short-circuited. The water level rose threateningly. Back on the deck, he noticed that the two spare hand pumps, forestay sail, jib, the dinghies and the main anchor had been wrenched overboard. He recalled that there was another electric pump under the chartroom floor. He then connected it to an out-pipe, and this thankfully worked.

4. Why do you think people undertake such adventurous expeditions in spite of the risks involved?
(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Man is adventurous by nature. The greater the risk, the more the thrill. The thrill of exploring unknown lands, discovering the beauty lying hidden in far off lands, etc. inspires brave hearts to stake their lives. Perhaps the challenges, fear and risk involved is more valuable than leading a long and uneventful life of sloth and inactivity. It is true that sometimes adventures are quite risky and may prove fatal. The failures of some people do not hamper the quest of the real lovers of adventure. They draw lessons from the shortcomings and errors of others and make fresh attempts with greater zeal. The thrill and charm of an adventurous expedition lies in adapting oneself to the circumstances, preparing adequately and overcoming the odds. The success of an adventurous expedition brings name, fame and wealth, and gives one the satisfaction of having tried, failed and finally succeeded. History books illustrate the feats of famous explorers like Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Captain Cook and Captain Scott.

5. What qualities of human life have been expressed in the lesson by the author?

Ans. The story ‘We’re Not Afraid to Die’ gives us an insight into the adventures of a family that was out on a voyage, and the experiences they had while on the journey. The story

brings to the fore the emotional upheavals the family faces, which helps one understand the importance of a family. The story highlights the role of each member of the family and their contribution in the perseverance for survival. The support, confidence and faith the children have in their father, enhances his determination to save his family. He therefore, leaves no stone unturned and secures the safety of his beautiful family. Unity, love, courage and responsibility, and an indomitable spirit of positivity is displayed by the family members. They are even prepared to die, provided they are together.

6. 'Our optimistic attitude helps us to ace extremely dangerous situations.' Discuss with reference to the chapter. *(Constructed Response Question)*

Ans. It was the optimism of the author, the captain of the Wavewalker, that saved the lives of his family and the crew members. The craft suffered serious damage during the storm and could have sunk with all on board. But the author had an extremely positive approach. There was never a thought of giving up or allowing the situation to overwhelm him. Rather, he constantly looked for solutions as problems came up one after the other. The author was calm throughout the crisis and was, therefore, able to meet the challenges of the moment. He and his crew members were determined to weather the storm. He was thrown overboard but came back and hung on to the wheel. He arranged for pumping the sea water out. The children were a great source of strength to him. Their faith in him heightened his desire to protect them and his ship. Because of his calmness, he was able to make the best use of his navigation skills and seamanship.

7. How did the children's presence and behaviour during the crisis affect the author?

Ans. The children on board were fully aware of the crisis looming over their boat and yet did not panic or express their anxiety, which strengthened the author's resolve to save the ship. His determination to fight against all odds was further strengthened when his son proclaimed that they did not mind dying, but only wished to die together. This encouraging bravery sharpened the author's innovative streak as he worked meticulously at calculating wind speeds, changes of course, drift and current, to reach their destination.

When Sue had handed the author a 'Thank-you' card, the touching gesture dispelled negativity and boosted his determination. Even when he turned skeptical of his calculations about reaching the island, the children still had implicit faith in him and believed he had guided them to the safety of the island.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. The night dragged on with an endless, bitterly cold routine of pumping, steering and working the radio. We were getting no replies to our Mayday calls — which was not surprising in this remote corner of the world. Sue’s head had swollen alarmingly; she had two enormous black eyes, and now she showed us a deep cut on her arm. When I asked why she hadn’t made more of her injuries before this, she replied, “I didn’t want to worry you when you were trying to save us all.”
 - (a) What do you understand by the phrase ‘Mayday call’?
 - (b) How did they spend their night?
 - (c) What had happened to Sue when the author went to check on them?
 - (i) She had enormous black eyes.
 - (ii) She had a deep cut on her arm.
 - (iii) She had fractured her right leg.
 - (iv) Both (i) and (ii)
2. But our respite was short-lived. At 4 p.m. black clouds began building up behind us; within the hour the wind was back to 40 knots and the seas were getting higher. The weather continued to deteriorate throughout the night, and by dawn on January 5, our situation was again desperate. When I went in to comfort the children, Jon asked, “Daddy, are we going to die?” I tried to assure him that we could make it. “But, Daddy,” he went on, “we aren’t afraid of dying if we can all be together — you and Mummy, Sue and I.”
 - (a) ‘But our respite was short-lived’. Why did the author say so?
 - (b) Describe the weather condition on January 4.
 - (c) What was the attitude of the author’s children towards their deteriorating condition?
 - (i) Optimistic
 - (ii) Pessimistic
 - (iii) Reprimanding
 - (iv) Imbalanced
3. With land under my feet again, my thoughts were full of Larry and Herbie, cheerful and optimistic under the direst stress, and of Mary, who stayed at the wheel for all those crucial hours. Most of all, I thought of a seven-year-old girl, who did not want us to worry about a head injury (which subsequently took six minor operations to remove a recurring blood clot between skin and skull), and of a six-year-old boy who was not afraid to die.
 - (a) What were the thoughts running in the author’s mind when he felt land under his feet?
 - (b) Who steered the boat at the crucial time?
 - (c) What does the word ‘recurring’ mean?
 - (i) Happening again
 - (ii) Occurring irregularly
 - (iii) Happening occasionally
 - (iv) None of these

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

1. Describe Wavewalker.
2. Elucidate the role of Mary in the story.
3. How did the crewmen contribute in solving the crisis?
4. Was it safe for the author and his wife to undertake such a dangerous voyage with two little children?
(Constructed Response Question)
5. Do you think the behaviour of the children was beyond normal expectations?
(Constructed Response Question)

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

1. After having read the chapter, what is your opinion on 'the rationale behind undertaking such adventurous exercises'?
(Constructed Response Question)
2. Was there an element of selfishness in the minds of the author and his wife, while exposing their children to such a disastrous situation? (Constructed Response Question)
3. As a reader, how would you empathise with the mental trauma that the children might have experienced in their disastrous rendezvous with death?
(Constructed Response Question)



3

Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues

— A.R. Williams

Introduction

The chapter deals with the mysteries and theories regarding the life and death of the youngest teenaged Pharaoh of ancient Egypt – Tutankhamun. It was speculated that the Pharaoh was murdered. King Tut's tomb was discovered in 1922 by the famous archaeologist Howard Carter. After Carter's investigation, Tut's mummy was also subjected to an X-ray and a CT scan. The investigations, though not conclusive, were able to provide some insights into the mysteries surrounding the young King's death.

THEME

The chapter 'Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues' is an account of the passion of a team of researchers and the struggles they faced to unravel the mystery of the Pharaoh's sudden death. The story highlights the developments in the field of archaeology. Modern technology gives us a hope to be well equipped to solve crimes if it has taken place.

Summary

Tutankhamun was the last leader of the great Pharaoh Dynasty. He was young when he died. According to some people, his death was a murder. In the year 1922, his tomb was exposed by Howard Carter, an archaeologist. After 80 years, he was taken for a CT scan to solve the mystery of his life and death through a forensic reconstruction. His father or grandfather, Amenhotep III, was a very powerful Pharaoh who ruled over a period of 40 years. Moreover, his son, Amenhotep IV, succeeded him and initiated the strangest period in the history of Egypt. His name changed to Akhenaten, which means 'servant of the Aten'. He changed the religious capital from Thebes to Amarna. Later he attacked Amun, a god, ruined his images and shut his temples. Another mysterious ruler succeeded him who died very soon. Tutankhamun sat on the throne and ruled for 9 years.

Carter found Tut's mummified body after years of searching, in a cramped, rock-cut tomb 26 feet underground, which also had some wall paintings. He was laid with lots of gold and wealth. Many parts of the treasure in the tomb were already misplaced. After conducting research on the treasures, Carter planned to examine his 3 nested coffins. It revealed that he was buried in the months of March or April. One of the coffins put Carter into trouble. The gums used to paste Tut to the bottom of the solid gold coffin had hardened, making it impossible to displace. He placed the box under the sun for several hours so that the resins loosen up, but that didn't work. At last, he removed the adhesive with a chisel and hammer. Carter sensed he didn't have any choice other than cutting the mummy from limb to limb. If not, then thieves would have robbed the gold and the treasures. His men first removed the head of the mummy, then

they cut off nearly every major joint. After the process of removing all the body parts, they reassembled the parts on a layer of sand in a wooden box and placed it at the original place.

Later, in January 2005, the body was taken for a CT scan, which takes hundreds of X-Rays and generates a 3D image. That night of the scan, the workmen carried his body from the tomb into a box. They went through the ramp and stairs, and lifted the body on a hydraulic lift into the trailer that was holding the scanner. The scanner suddenly stopped working and the process of the CT scan stopped. After the use of spare fans, the scan was finally completed. After 3 hours, they transferred his body back to his tomb where the pharaoh is now resting in peace.

A.R. Williams developed a love for reading at a very young age and in the fourth grade, when an assignment to write their own works of fiction was given, it occurred to him that he too could craft tales for others to enjoy. During a membership in a book club, Williams discovered that there were books dedicated to teaching amateur writers more about the craft of writing. He started putting that knowledge to the test, crafting imaginative stories in science fiction and fantasy genres.



Answers to NCERT Questions

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. Give reasons for the following.

- (i) **King Tut's body has been subjected to repeated scrutiny.**
- (ii) **Howard Carter's investigation was resented.**
- (iii) **Carter had to chisel away the solidified resins to raise the king's remains.**
- (iv) **Tut's body was buried along with gilded treasures.**
- (v) **The boy king changed his name from Tutankhaten to Tutankhamun.**

- Ans.**
- (i) King Tut's body has been subjected to repeated scrutiny because of his ancestry, the treasures he was buried with and to unravel the mystery that surrounded his untimely death.
 - (ii) Howard Carter's investigation was resented because of his unscientific methods. He resorted to cutting the body of the Pharaoh to take him out of the tomb. He also focused more on protecting Tut's funerary treasures, and less on finding solutions to the mystery of his life and death.
 - (iii) Carter had to chisel away the solidified resins to raise the king's remains because the body was cemented to the bottom of the solid gold coffin as a result of the hardening of the resins. It was impossible to extract the body from the coffin. Keeping the body in the sun, under 149 degrees Fahrenheit also did not help.
 - (iv) Tut's body was buried along with gilded treasures as the ancient Egyptian royals were extremely wealthy. They also believed that the royalty would take all the treasures with them for their use in the afterlife.
 - (v) Tutankhamun means 'living image of Amun'. Amun was a major god of ancient Egypt. Amenhotep IV smashed his images and closed his temples. When the boy king sat on the throne, he changed his name to Tutankhamun, the living image of Amun, and oversaw the restoration of the old ways.

2. (i) List the deeds that led Ray Johnson to describe Akhenaten as “wacky”.
- (ii) What were the results of the CT scan?
- (iii) List the advances in technology that have improved forensic analysis.
- (iv) Explain the statement, “King Tut is one of the first mummies to be scanned — in death, as in life...”

- Ans.** (i) According to Ray Johnson, Akhenaten was wacky because of the following reasons:
- (a) He smashed images and closed Amun’s temples.
 - (b) He worshipped Aten, the sun disk.
 - (c) He moved the religious capital from the old city of Thebes to the new city of Akhetaten, called Amarna.
 - (d) He changed his name to Akhenaten.
- (ii) The CT scan machine scanned the mummy head to toe, creating 1,700 digital X-ray images in cross section. Tut’s head, scanned in 0.62 millimetre slices to register its detailed structures, takes on strange and frightening details in the resulting image. The neck vertebrae appeared as clearly as in an anatomy class. Other images revealed a hand, several views of the ribcage and a transection of the skull.
- (iii) With the advancement in technology, it has become possible for many scientific tests to be carried out with greater accuracy in order to determine the cause of a crime. X-Ray, CT scan, post mortem, biopsy, and autopsy are the processes that are a part of the improved forensic analysis.
- (iv) Tut’s mummy was the first one to be X-rayed in 1968 and later, in 2005, the first to be scanned through Computing Tomography (CT). CT scan revealed new three-dimensional images of his body.

TALKING ABOUT THE TEXT

Discuss the following in groups of two pairs, each pair in a group taking opposite points of view.

1. Scientific intervention is necessary to unearth buried mysteries.
2. Advanced technology gives us conclusive evidence of past events.
3. Traditions, rituals and funerary practices must be respected.
4. Knowledge about the past is useful to complete our knowledge of the world we live in.

- Ans.** 1. **For:** To understand the various mysteries in history, it is important to be aware of the mysterious circumstances that surrounded people and leaders. For this purpose, scientific intervention plays an invaluable role. It can help get the answers to the questions and gives us an idea about what occurred in the past, and the lifestyle of our ancestors. Example – the scientific intervention of Indus Civilization.
- Against:** There is no doubt that scientific intervention can be useful but it destroys the sanctity and respect that has been accorded to the dead. It interferes in the secrecy of the funerary rituals and treasures. Unnecessary expenses are involved in these processes.
2. **For:** With advanced technology, we can know about the past and those who could have been involved in a supposed crime. Investigation using a CT scan made it possible to get an idea about King Tut and his body. It provided data for forensic

reconstruction and satellite images helped find burial sites. Different kinds of software make it possible to get an idea of the time, date and place where an event might have occurred.

Against: Even after the CT scan images of Tut, no conclusive premises could be drawn. It was not possible to arrive at the cause of his death, which continues to remain a mystery. Instead of using time and money on past events, the government should focus on the present and the future.

3. **For:** Every religion has its own traditions, rituals and funerary practices which must be respected. It should not be disturbed as Carter did with King Tut's tomb. Cutting up the body was the most disrespectful way in which the mortal remains of a dead person was treated.

Against: Traditions, rituals and funerary practices, should be practised only to a level that is logical and sensible. Elaborate and expensive funeral rites must be done away with. It is important to give a respectful burial or cremation to the mortal remains of a person, but indulging in fancifulness is disrespectful to the departed soul.

4. **For:** Knowledge of past events and important personalities help us understand our ancestry. It helps us to know about how the world we live in has evolved. From past experiences and lessons, we learn not to commit the same mistakes and become more sensitised. Knowing about King Tut's life helped us understand the Pharaoh Dynasty and the Egypt Empire.

Against: Delving into the past doesn't help us in any way. It only wastes time and resources. No one can change the past. It would be more advantageous if we focus on the present and look forward to what the future has in store for us. Ranting about what happened yesterday cannot help us.

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

1. What do you think are the reasons for the extinction of languages?

2. Do you think it is important to preserve languages?

3. In what ways do you think we could help prevent the extinction of languages and dialects?

- Ans.** 1. A language can become extinct due to many reasons. The world adapts and changes according to the advances in technology. Example, the Sanskrit language cannot be seen used on a daily basis by people. However, in ancient times, it was a language used both verbally and for the purpose of writing. Also, if some level of restrictions are imposed on a certain class of people regarding the use of a language, other languages will suffer. E.g., the compulsory use of English in institutions in India. Modernisation, along with westernisation is another cause for extinction of the mother tongue. Generations resort to using the more widely used language and move away from the language of their birth, gradually wiping it off the surface of the earth.
2. Yes, it is very important to preserve languages as it helps us understand our culture and traditions. It gives us an identity. It helps in developing oneself culturally, and helps us to connect with the important past events. It gives us knowledge about literature and the history of the language.

3. We could help prevent the extinction of languages and dialects in the following ways:
 - (a) Include the teaching of mother tongue/state language in school and college curriculums
 - (b) Promote the use of different languages and dialects verbally
 - (c) Conduct seminars and cultural activities to enhance the knowledge of the languages among people
 - (d) Encourage people to study different languages

WORKING WITH WORDS

1. Given below are some interesting combinations of words. Explain why they have been used together.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| (i) ghostly dust evils | (vi) dark-bellied clouds |
| (ii) desert sky | (vii) casket grey |
| (iii) stunning artefacts | (viii) eternal brilliance |
| (iv) funerary treasures | (ix) ritual resins |
| (v) scientific detachment | (x) virtual body |

- Ans.**
- (i) **ghostly dust evils:** it refers to the anger of the dusty winds by frightful movements on those people who try to disturb the king
 - (ii) **desert sky:** it refers to the dusky sky of the desert
 - (iii) **stunning artefacts:** it refers to the beautiful items which were found in the tomb
 - (iv) **funerary treasures:** it refers to the gold items which were kept while burying the king because Egyptians believed that there is an afterlife
 - (v) **scientific detachment:** it refers to the objectiveness present in science
 - (vi) **dark-bellied clouds:** it refers to the dark clouds containing rain
 - (vii) **casket grey:** it refers to how the stars were covered by dark-bellied clouds similar to the way jewels are kept in a casket box
 - (viii) **eternal brilliance:** it refers to how the timeless luster and shine of the gold and other valuable items of the king
 - (ix) **ritual resins:** it is a customary duty in the process of burying a dead body
 - (x) **virtual body:** three-dimensional body created by CT scan

2. Here are some commonly used medical terms. Find out their meanings.

CT scan	MRI	tomography	autopsy	dialysis
ECG	post mortem	angiography	biopsy	

- Ans.**
- (i) **CT scan** – a three-dimensional scan of a body with the help of hundreds of X-Rays, in cross section together
 - (ii) **MRI** – Magnetic Resonance Imaging, a medical examination with the help of a strong magnetic field and radio waves to create a detailed image of the organs of the body
 - (iii) **Tomography** – a technique used to display a cross-section of a human body using hundreds of X-rays or ultrasound
 - (iv) **Autopsy** – a post mortem examination used to discover the cause of death of the dead person

- (v) **Dialysis** – the process of purification of blood with the help of a machine which works as a substitute for kidney
- (vi) **ECG** – also known as Electrocardiography, it is a process to test for the signs of any heart disease by recording the electrical activity through small electrodes attached to the chest, arms and legs
- (vii) **Post Mortem** – an examination of a dead body to know the cause of death
- (viii) **Angiography** – radiography of blood or lymph vessels
- (ix) **Biopsy** – examination of tissue removed from a living being to know the reason for the disease

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow. (3 Marks each)

1. Since the discovery of his tomb in 1922, the modern world has speculated about what happened to him, with murder being the most extreme possibility. Now, leaving his tomb for the first time in almost 80 years, Tut has undergone a CT scan that offers new clues about his life and death — and provides precise data for an accurate forensic reconstruction of the boyish pharaoh.

- (a) Who is the ‘boyish pharaoh’?
- (b) Why was his tomb being taken out?
- (c) In which of the following sentences has the word ‘speculate’ been used differently from the context in the extract?
 - (i) She could only speculate about her friend’s motives.
 - (ii) He speculated as to whether she would come.
 - (iii) If you want me to speculate, I’d say it ran far deeper than that.
 - (iv) Only speculate with money you can afford to lose.

- Ans.** (a) The ‘boyish pharaoh’ is King Tutankhamun, an ancient Egyptian king who ruled Egypt and died very young at the age of 19.
- (b) His tomb was being taken out to be scanned so as to get a precise data of his life and early death.
- (c) (iv) Only speculate with money you can afford to lose.

2. In his defence, Carter really had little choice. If he hadn’t cut the mummy free, thieves most certainly would have circumvented the guards and ripped it apart to remove the gold. In Tut’s time the royals were fabulously wealthy, and they thought — or hoped — they could take their riches with them. For his journey to the great beyond, King Tut was lavished with glittering goods: precious collars, inlaid necklaces and bracelets, rings, amulets, a ceremonial apron, sandals, sheaths for his fingers and toes, and the now iconic inner coffin and mask — all of pure gold.

- (a) ‘...Carter really had little choice.’ What does this statement indicate?
- (b) Explain the phrase, ‘journey to the great beyond’.
- (c) What is a mummy?

- (i) A body of a human being that has been ceremonially preserved by removing the internal organs.
- (ii) A body of a human being that has been treated with natron and resin.
- (iii) A body of a human being that has been wrapped in bandages.
- (iv) All of these

- Ans.** (a) This statement indicates that Carter was compelled to cut the mummy free, otherwise thieves would have ripped it apart to steal the gold.
- (b) The phrase 'journey to the great beyond' means the afterlife where one is said to go after dying.
- (c) (iv) All of these

3. Archaeology has changed substantially in the intervening decades, focusing less on treasure and more on the fascinating details of life and intriguing mysteries of death. It also uses more sophisticated tools, including medical technology. In 1968, more than 40 years after Carter's discovery, an anatomy professor X-rayed the mummy and revealed a startling fact: beneath the resin that cakes his chest, his breast-bone and front ribs are missing.

(a) What was Carter's discovery?

(b) In what way has archaeology changed?

(c) What was the startling revelation made about Tut's mummy?

- (i) That his kidneys were missing (ii) That his breast-bone was missing
- (iii) That his front ribs were missing (iv) Both (ii) and (iii)

- Ans.** (a) Carter discovered the largely intact tomb of King Tutankhamun after years of futile searching.
- (b) Archaeology has changed substantially in the intervening decades, focusing less on treasure and more on the fascinating details of life and intriguing mysteries of death.
- (c) (iv) Both (ii) and (iii)

4. The night of the scan, workmen carried Tut from the tomb in his box. Like pallbearers they climbed a ramp and a flight of stairs into the swirling sand outside, then rose on a hydraulic lift into the trailer that held the scanner. Twenty minutes later two men emerged, sprinted for an office nearby, and returned with a pair of white plastic fans. The million-dollar scanner had quit because of sand in a cooler fan. "Curse of the pharaoh," joked a guard nervously.

(a) Who are pallbearers?

(b) What happened to the scanner?

- (i) It stopped working due to malfunctioning of a fan.
- (ii) It functioned more efficiently.
- (iii) It stopped taking images.
- (iv) It got short circuited.

(c) What was the pharaoh's curse?

- Ans.** (a) Pallbearers are those who carry the coffin to the grave.
- (b) (i) It stopped working due to malfunctioning of a fan.

(c) The pharaoh's curse was that death or misfortune would fall upon those who disturbed him.

5. The boy king soon changed his name to Tutankhamun, 'living image of Amun,' and oversaw a restoration of the old ways. He reigned for about nine years — and then died unexpectedly. Regardless of his fame and the speculations about his fate, Tut is one mummy among many in Egypt. How many? No one knows. The Egyptian Mummy Project, which began an inventory in late 2003, has recorded almost 600 so far and is still counting.

(a) Why has the phrase 'boy king' been used for Tut?

(b) How many mummies are there in Egypt?

(c) Which of the following informations is incorrect about Tutankhamun?

(i) He changed his name to Tutankhamun.

(ii) He oversaw a restoration of the old ways.

(iii) He ruled for more than ten years.

(iv) All of these

Ans. (a) The phrase 'boy king' has been used for Tutankhamun because he was a very young boy when he became the king.

(b) The Egyptian Mummy Project has recorded almost 600 mummies so far but no one knows the exact count of mummies that exist in Egypt.

(c) (iii) He ruled for more than ten years.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. Who was Tut? What had happened to him?

Ans. The Pharaoh Tut, was the last heir of the powerful family of pharaohs that ruled Egypt for centuries. He ruled for a period of nine years and then died unexpectedly. People believed that the king died under mysterious circumstances and his death might involve every possibility of murder.

2. Why did King Tut's mummy have to undergo CT scan?

Ans. King Tut was a teenager when he died under very mysterious circumstances. Ever since his tomb was discovered in the year 1922, the modern world has speculated about what might have happened to him, with murder being the most extreme possibility. Therefore, he was removed from his tomb after 80 years to undergo a CT scan, in order to acquire some clues into his life and death.

3. What did the tourists in the burial chamber of King Tut do?

Ans. The tourists from around the world queued up as usual all afternoon into the narrow rock-cut tomb. They lined up to pay their homage to King Tut. They looked keenly at the murals on the walls of the burial chamber. Some also peered at Tut's gilded face. Some visitors read from guidebooks, whereas others stood silently, thinking about the Pharaoh's curse which stated that death or misfortune would befall those who disturbed him.

4. Why did the artefacts in Tut's tomb cause a sensation at the time of discovery?

Ans. The stunning artefacts of gold discovered in Tut's tomb, whose eternal brilliance meant

to guarantee resurrection, caused a sensation and surprised all present there. They remain the richest royal collection ever found and have become part of the pharaoh's legend.

5. What did Carter find in the three nested coffins?

Ans. In the first coffin, he found a shroud adorned with garlands of willow and olive leaves, wild celery, lotus petals and cornflowers. His body was lavished with glittering goods: precious collars, inlaid necklaces, bracelets, rings, amulets, a ceremonial apron, sandals and sheaths for his fingers and toes — all of pure gold. The coffin also contained everyday things for the afterlife, such as board games, a bronze razor, linen undergarments, cases of food and wine.

6. Why did Carter have to detach Tut's mummy from the coffin? What did he do?

Ans. When Carter and his men were working on the tomb of King Tut, they found that the ritual resins had hardened and had cemented the mummy of King Tut to the bottom of his solid gold coffin. The mummy could not be taken out. He set the mummy outside in the blazing sun at 149 degrees Fahrenheit but did not serve any purpose.

7. How did Carter defend his action of cutting the mummy free?

Ans. Carter, in his defence, wrote later that if he hadn't cut the mummy free, thieves would have circumvented the guards and ripped it apart to remove all the gold. The mummy had been kept with a lot of wealth in the form of ornaments and other riches, all of gold. The funerary treasures would have surely attracted thieves had he not severed the mummy to make it free from the adornments.

8. How was King Tut's mummy scanned by the CT scanner?

Ans. A portable CT scanner was taken in a trailer to the sandy area near Tut's tomb. Tut's body was carried there from his tomb in a box for scanning. However, the million-dollar portable scanner quit because of sand in a cooler fan. In a short while, a pair of white plastic fans were brought to help in the scanning. The CT machine scanned the mummy from head to toe, creating 1,700 digital X-ray images in cross section. Tut's head, which was scanned in 0.62 millimetre slices to register its intricate structures, takes on eerie detail in the resulting image.

9. What did the CT scan of Tut's mummy reveal?

Ans. The CT scan gave surprising as well as fascinating images of Tut's body. The image of a grey head took shape from a scattering of pixels and the technician tilted it in every direction. Neck bones appeared quite clearly. Other images revealed a hand, several views of the rib cage, and a transection of the skull.

10. Carter had to take a drastic decision regarding the mummy. What was it? How did he justify it?

Ans. The hard decision that Carter had to take was to chisel away the hardened resins from under Tut's body. This could damage the skeleton. The workers had to remove Tut's head and sever nearly all the joints. Carter's justification was that if he hadn't cut the mummy free, thieves would have ripped it apart to get the gold.

11. "King Tut's body had been subjected to repeated scrutiny". Why?

Ans. King Tut was the last Pharaoh who ruled Egypt. He died a teenager after ruling for nine years. Mystery shrouded his untimely death. Therefore, since the discovery of his tomb

in 1922, Tut's body had been subjected to repeated scrutiny to appease the speculations that the possibility of death could be murder, and to provide a precise data for accurate forensic reconstruction of the young pharaoh.

12. Enumerate the adornments on Tut's body. Why had the adornments been buried along with the body?

Ans. The tomb of the Pharaoh consisted of stunning gold objects of great beauty like precious collars, inlaid necklaces, bracelets, rings, amulets, and all other things needed by the King in his afterlife such as board games, linen undergarments, cases of food and drink. Egyptians believed that the king would need these articles in his life after death.

13. Who were the rulers who preceded King Tut?

Ans. King Amenhotep III, Tut's grandfather or father, was succeeded by his son Amenhotep IV, who changed his name to Akhenaten or the Servant of Aten. He was succeeded by a mysterious ruler who vanished from the scene after a brief rule. King Tut, still a young boy was the next heir to the throne. He ruled for a period of nine years, until his untimely death as a teenager.

14. What were the changes that occurred in the viewpoint of archaeologists with the passage of time?

Ans. Initially, the archaeologists focussed on the treasures that were in the tomb and in protecting them from being robbed. Thereafter, the attention was more on the fascinating details of life and intriguing mysteries of death. Moreover, now, they had more sophisticated tools, including medical technology at their disposal.

15. Who was Amenhotep IV? Why is he described as 'wacky'?

Ans. Amenhotep IV was the son of Amenhotep III who succeeded the throne after his father. Akhenaten was 'wacky' because he moved the religious capital from the old city of Thebes to the new city of Akhetaten. It is now known as Amarna. He also attacked Amun, a major god, smashing his images and closing his temples.

16. How has archaeology undergone a change in the twentieth century?

Ans. The change is in two ways: approach and techniques. Firstly, archaeology now focuses less on treasure and more on the fascinating details of life and interesting mysteries of death. Secondly, it uses more sophisticated tools including medical technology.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. "He was the last of his family line." What do you learn about Tut's dynasty from the chapter 'Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues'?

Ans. Tut's father or grandfather, Amenhotep III, was a powerful Pharaoh who ruled for almost four decades at the height of the eighteenth dynasty's golden age. His son and successor, Amenhotep IV promoted the worship of the Aten, the sun disk. He changed his name to Akhetaten or 'servant of the Aten'. He moved his religious capital from the old city of Thebes to the new city of Akhetaten. He further shocked the country by attacking Amun, a major god, breaking his images and closing his temples. Thus, the 'wacky' king started one of the strangest periods in the history of ancient Egypt. After Akhenaten's death, a mysterious ruler named Smenkhkare appeared briefly and vanished without leaving any sign. Then a very young Tutankhaten took over the

throne. He is widely known today as King Tut. The boy king soon changed his name to Tutankhamun, meaning 'living image of Amun'. He supervised the restoration of the old ways. Tutankhamun ruled for about nine years and then died unexpectedly. The details of his passing away are not known. The modern world has speculated about what happened to him. How he died and how old he was at the time of his death are two questions which remain unanswered even today.

2. A.R. Williams says, "King Tut is in death, as in life, moving regally ahead of his countrymen." How far do you agree with the assertion and why?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Perhaps no other Pharaoh of Egypt has fascinated the public mind so greatly as the boyish King Tutankhamun. Although King Tut died in his teens and ruled for about nine years only, he introduced certain changes during his brief rule. These were significant as they marked the revival of the old ways of the worship of Amun. The unanswered questions about the cause of his death are still present. After his death, his body has been a centre of scientific examination. Howard Carter, the British archaeologist discovered Tut's tomb in 1922. In 1968, an anatomy professor X-rayed the mummy. The Egyptian Mummy Project began an inventory in late 2003. It has so far recorded 600 and is still counting. The next phase of CT scanning with a portable CT machine began on January 5, 2005. King Tut's mummy was the first one to undergo a CT scan. Hence, King Tut being regally ahead of his countrymen in death as in life is undoubtedly a valid assertion.

3. How has Tut's mummy fascinated scientists and commoners alike over the previous decades?

Ans. King Tutankhamun was the last Pharaoh left of his line. His funeral marked the end of a dynasty. He was laid to rest laden with gold as the royals in Tut's time were extremely wealthy and thought they could take their riches with them. His tomb was discovered by Howard Carter, an English archaeologist in 1922, more than 3000 years after his death. The rich royal collection of jewellery and golden artefacts fascinated Carter. Visitors thronged to the teenage king's tomb. The particulars of King Tut's death and its aftermath are not clear. Carter's investigation revealed a startling fact. The breast-bone and front ribs of Tut were missing. Thereafter, once again on 5th January 2005, a CT scan was done to obtain precise data for an accurate forensic reconstruction of King Tut. It was hoped that it would offer new clues about his life and death. Thus, Tut's mummy has been the centre of fascination throughout the previous decades.

4. Who was King Tut? What happened when his mummy was being CT scanned? What did the tourists do?

Ans. King Tut was just a teenager when he died. He was the last heir of a powerful family that ruled Egypt and its empire for centuries. He was laid to rest laden with gold and then forgotten. After several years of research, in 1922, the British archaeologist Howard Carter, discovered his mummy and startling facts about him came to light. Later, on January 5, 2005, when his mummy was removed again to be subject to a CT scan, an angry wind began to blow. Dark clouds appeared in the sky. The tourists gazed at the murals on the walls in his burial chamber. They peered at the gilded face. Some tourists stood silently. They wondered if the Pharaoh's curse that death or misfortune befall upon those who disturbed him was really true. But except a change in the weather nothing happened.

5. What problems did Howard Carter face in regard to King Tut's mummy? What did he do to solve them?

Ans. After years of research, Howard Carter, the British archaeologist, discovered King Tut's burial chamber and his gold coffin in 1922. When he opened the last coffin, he found that the ritual resins had hardened. It had cemented Tut to the bottom of his solid gold coffin. He tried to loosen it by putting the mummy under 149 degree Fahrenheit scorching sunshine. But nothing happened. Then he reported that the material had to be chiselled away from beneath the limbs and trunk. It had to be done as it was not possible to raise the King's remains. Carter defended his decision by saying that the thieves would have ripped the mummy apart to remove the gold. So, his men removed the mummy's head and severed nearly every major joint. Then they reassembled the remains on a layer of sand and put the mummy in a wooden box.

6. What light does the chapter throw on King Tut's father or grandfather?

Ans. King Tut's father or grandfather was a powerful Pharaoh. He ruled Egypt for almost 40 years at the height of the 18th dynasty's golden age. His son Amenhotep IV succeeded him. He started certain changes. He promoted the worship of the Aten, the sun disk. He changed his name to Akhenaten, or 'servant of the Aten'. He also moved the capital from Thebes to Akhenaten. It is now known as Amarna. He shocked the country by breaking the images of Amun, a major god and closing his temples. After Akhenaten's death, Smenkhkare ruled Egypt briefly. Then a very young Tutankhaten sat on the throne — King Tut as he is widely known today. The boy king changed his name to Tutankhamun, which meant 'living image of Amun'. He restored the old ways. He ruled for nine years and then died unexpectedly.

7. Imagine you are Howard Carter. You were fortunate to find King Tut's tomb intact. Describe what you saw in the burial chamber. Describe King Tut's coffin and its contents.
(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. I have searched for many years and today my search has come to a fruitful end. I have found the tomb of King Tut. The year 1922 has become historic in archaeology. The burial chamber is small, rock-cut and 26 feet underground with murals on the walls. King Tut's outer coffin shows his features in a gilded and painted face. There are three nested coffins. In the first, I found a shroud adorned with garlands of spring flowers. The innermost coffin contained the body of King Tut, lavished with precious collars, inlaid necklaces and bracelets, rings, amulets, a ceremonial apron, sandals, sheaths for his fingers and toes, all of pure gold, and a painted mask of great beauty. Besides, in the burial chamber, there were articles of everyday needs like board games, a bronze razor, linen undergarments and cases of food and wine.

8. In 1922 Tut's tomb was discovered. Much of the treasure buried in the tomb had already been plundered. The materialistic attitude of man does not allow even the dead to rest in peace. Will there be any end to this attitude? Discuss.
(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. For a handful of gold, man can go to any extent. Tut's mummy was buried deep in the desert with a lot of gold and other things believing that the dead Pharaoh would need those things in the afterlife. It was a matter of faith. When Tut's tomb was discovered, most of the treasure had already been looted. The thieves who did so were driven by the mad force of materialism. Materialistic attitude attaches no importance to beliefs,

religious sentiments, social rites and rituals. But when Carter finally succeeded in discovering Tut's tomb, he found the richest royal collections — all made of solid gold — in the tomb. Even the coffin was made of gold. In order to remove Tut from his coffin, Carter had to cut the body from its joints. So, man doesn't allow even the dead to rest in peace.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. In his defence, Carter really had little choice. If he hadn't cut the mummy free, thieves most certainly would have circumvented the guards and ripped it apart to remove the gold. In Tut's time the royals were fabulously wealthy, and they thought — or hoped — they could take their riches with them.
 - (a) What did the royals of Egypt think in ancient times?
 - (b) How did Carter's men remove the gold from the mummy?
 - (i) By hardening the resins
 - (ii) By softening the resins
 - (iii) By chiseling the body
 - (iv) None of these
 - (c) What does the word 'circumvent' mean?
2. Back in the trailer a technician pulled up astonishing images of Tut on a computer screen. A grey head took shape from a scattering of pixels, and the technician spun and tilted it in every direction. Neck vertebrae appeared as clearly as in an anatomy class. Other images revealed a hand, several views of the rib cage, and a transection of the skull. But for now the pressure was off. Sitting back in his chair, Zahi Hawass smiled, visibly relieved that nothing had gone seriously wrong. "I didn't sleep last night, not for a second," he said.
 - (a) Who was Zahi Hawass?
 - (b) What was he worried about?
 - (c) Why was Zahi Hawass relieved?
 - (i) Because he could capture clear images of the mummy
 - (ii) Because the scan revealed that the head, neck and rib cage were in proper order
 - (iii) Because he could collect more archaeological evidence about Tut
 - (iv) All of these
3. The new pharaoh promoted the worship of the Aten, the sun disk, changed his name to Akhenaten, or 'servant of the Aten,' and moved the religious capital from the old city of Thebes to the new city of Akhetaten, known as Amarna. He further shocked the country by attacking Amun, a major god, smashing his images and closing his temples. "It must have been a horrific time," said Ray Johnson.
 - (a) What changes did Akhenaten make to ancient Egypt's religion?
 - (b) Who was Ray Johnson?
 - (i) An archaeologist
 - (ii) Director of the University of Chicago's research centre

- (iii) Secretary General of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities
- (iv) Forensic Officer

(c) Why did Ray Johnson say, "It must have been a horrific time."?

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

1. Write a short note on Amenhotep IV.
2. What changes in nature were observed during the excavation of Tut's body?
3. What made Carter conclude that Tut died sometime in the month of March or April?
4. When King Tut was being finally laid to rest, nature was at rest too. Explain.
5. What attempt did Tut make to restore the ancient religion in Egypt?

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

1. The lesson 'Discovering Tut' allows us to peep into the past or history. For many, history is a dry subject but its study does make us wiser. What do you think?
(Constructed Response Question)
2. 'Archaeology has changed substantially in the intervening decades.' We find that science is helping the cause of culture. Write an article showing that science can help in investigating and preserving history.
(Constructed Response Question)
3. Analyse the dynasty of King Tut as discussed in the lesson, 'Discovering Tut: the Saga Continues'.
(Constructed Response Question)



4

The Adventure

— Jayant Narlikar

Introduction

‘The Adventure’, centres on certain unusual experiences that the historian Gangadhar Pant, the protagonist, had undergone. He finds himself in two worlds that were completely different from each other. It begins with the professor wondering about the fate of India if the Marathas had not allowed a concession to the East India Company to stay in Mumbai. He believes that this step and the failure of Maratha soldiers during the Battle of Panipat cost Indian history a great deal. But at the library he reads that Vishwasrao had a narrow escape in the battle against Abdali. In one space Vishwasrao and the Marathas have lost the Battle of Panipat and in the other they have won.

Professor Gaitonde travels through time and experiences very different events and is in a state of shock. The discussion and attempted solution to this mystery has been discussed in this chapter.

THEME

The story deals with the explanation of time travel and is a perfect blend of history and science. In this unique story, the author has tried to concoct a new blend of history and physics with a detailed explanation of the theory of parallel worlds. The protagonist Professor Gaitonde travels through time and experiences very different events and is in a state of shock. He imagines the state of India where Britishers have never ruled and this lesson is a complete juxtaposition of facts and historical events.

Summary

This fictional narrative by Jayant Narlikar belongs to the genre of science fiction and deals with the much intriguing aspect of time. The protagonist of this story, Professor Gaitonde, a historian, is preparing for his thousandth presidential address in which he was to speak on the topic “What course history would have taken if the result of the Battle of Panipat had gone the other way?”. Professor Gaitonde was travelling from Pune to Bombay via the Jijamata Express, a train which was faster than the Deccan Queen. As he was crossing towns and villages, he met a man named ‘Khan Sahib’ who talked about his business and chatted about several things. They got off at Victoria Terminus station which was neat and clean. It had British officers, Parsees and Anglo-Indian staff all around. He was confused as to how the East India Company was ruling the country as according to his facts, they had fled away after the events of 1857.

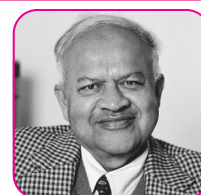
He walked along Hornby Road and noticed that the shops were different. He entered the Forbes building and inquired about Mr Vinay Gaitonde but as checked by the receptionist, no such man had ever worked there. He went to the Town Hall and sat in the reading room. He took five books related to the history and decided to go through them one by one and check

how the facts had changed. He started investigating from the period of Ashoka to the Battle of Panipat.

Most of the history was as he knew it in his world, but the point from where history had changed was the Battle of Panipat. In this different world, the Marathas had won. They had not allowed the East India Company to expand. In fact, its influence was limited to a few places like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. India had become a democracy but allowed the British to carry on for commercial reasons. Prof. Gaitonde wanted to find out how the Marathas had won the battle. While leaving the library as late as 8 p.m., he accidentally puts the Bakhar into his pocket.

The next morning, he went for a stroll to Azad Maidan. There was a lecture in progress, and Prof. Gaitonde went and sat on the vacant presidential chair. It turned out that in this world, people were fed up of long speeches and had abolished the custom of presidential chair, introduction and vote of thanks. All they were interested in were the words of the speaker. Prof. Gaitonde began speaking much to the angst of the audience. The maidan became a scene of complete chaos. He only remembers that he was found lying in Azad Maidan. When Rajendra enquired what he was doing prior to the accident in which a truck had hit him, he said that he was thinking about the catastrophe theory, and its implications on history. Eventually he lands in a hospital room and talked to Rajendra Deshpande about what he had experienced in the last couple of days. But where had he been for the past two days remained a mystery. He showed Rajendra Deshpande the proof – the torn-off page of the Bakhar – for his claim that he had been somewhere else and was not just imagining things. After thorough discussions, Prof. Gaitonde and Rajendra Deshpande came to the conclusion that there could be many ‘different worlds at different points of time.’ They could all have a different history. Rajendra Deshpande, his scientist friend offers a scientific explanation of his strange experience. He says that professor Gaitonde was living in the present but was experiencing different worlds. They reach the conclusion that ‘the lack of determinism in quantum theory’ is what describes the experience that Prof. Gaitonde had. He gives the example of a bullet and an electron to explain the possibility of one person experiencing life at two different spaces in time.

Jayant Narlikar, born on 19 July 1938 at Kolhapur in Maharashtra, is an Indian astrophysicist and emeritus professor at the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics. He developed with Sir Fred Hoyle the conformal gravity theory, known as Hoyle-Narlikar theory. It synthesises Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and Mach's principle.



Answers to NCERT Questions

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

I. Tick the statements that are true.

1. The story is an account of real events.
2. The story hinges on a particular historical event.
3. Rajendra Deshpande was a historian.
4. The places mentioned in the story are all imaginary.
5. The story tries to relate history to science.

- Ans.**
- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. False | 2. True |
| 3. False | 4. False |
| 5. True | |

II. Briefly explain the following statements from the text.

1. “You neither travelled to the past nor the future. You were in the present experiencing a different world.”
2. “You have passed through a fantastic experience: or more correctly, a catastrophic experience.”
3. Gangadharpant could not help comparing the country he knew with what he was witnessing around him.
4. “The lack of determinism in quantum theory!”
5. “You need some interaction to cause a transition.”

- Ans.**
1. This statement was said by Rajendra to Professor Gaitonde. As he made a transition from one world to another, he had a real-life experience for two days in an alternative reality. He neither travelled to the past nor the future. He was in the present all the time, experiencing two time zones, one which belonged to the past and the one in which he was currently living in.
 2. This statement was said by Rajendra to Professor Gaitonde. When he was hit by the truck, he was thinking about the catastrophe theory and its implications for history. He did not have a clue as to where he had spent the last two days. He experienced an alternate world, having a real-life experience of many things which were not true in the real world he actually lives in. He could not get a grip of what had happened. He noticed that the facts about history were different, the turning point of which was the different results history had presented of the Battle of Panipat. That is why, Rajendra feels that Prof. Gaitonde had experienced the catastrophic effect.
 3. Gangadharpant Gaitonde had witnessed different facts of history which were the decline of Marathas and British rule. In a different world, the reality was also different. The Marathas had won the Battle of Panipat and there was no slavery under the white man. India was free and the people had self-respect. When he compared the two different facts of the same country, he liked this different version of India more.
 4. The lack of determinism in quantum theory states that: If a bullet is fired from a gun in a given direction at a given speed, one will know where it will be later, but such an assertion cannot be made for an electron. When an electron is emitted from a source, it may be anywhere. This is the lack of determinism in quantum theory. This theory asserts that reality is never one-sided. Alternative worlds may exist at the same time.
 5. Professor Gaitonde understands that he had made a transition from one world to another and back again. But he wanted to know what caused the transition to happen. Rajendra confessed that this could be one of the unsolved questions in science, but offered to make a guess. He said, “You need some interaction to cause a transition. Perhaps, at the time of the collision, you were thinking about the catastrophe theory and its role in wars. Maybe you were wondering about the Battle of Panipat. Perhaps, the neurons in your brain acted as a trigger.” Gaitonde appreciated the assumption made by Rajendra and said that he was indeed wondering what course of history would have taken if the result of the battle had gone the other way.

TALKING ABOUT THE TEXT

1. Discuss the following statements in groups of two pairs, each pair in a group taking opposite points of view.
 - (i) A single event may change the course of the history of a nation.

(ii) **Reality is what is directly experienced through the senses.**

(iii) **The methods of inquiry of history, science and philosophy are similar.**

Ans. (i) For: A single event may change the course of the history of a nation. In the case of the Battle of Panipat, had it been won by the Marathas, the course of India's history would have been different compared to the one we live in now. The British rule would have ended and India would have become a democratic nation. People would have been leading respectful and decent lives instead of being servile to the British.

Against: It is a matter of perspective that a single event may change the course of the history of a nation. The experience that Prof. Gaitonde went through, made him perceive two different patterns of the same nation, one that was in the present and the other that was a period in history in a book written by him. The Bakhar had a different report about the battle. The central point of the crisis was the result of the Battle of Panipat. The event seemed to have caused a confusion rather than a change in the course of history. Therefore, it cannot be conclusively claimed that a single event may change the course of history.

(ii) **For:** Our senses, that is, the senses of touch, sight, taste, hearing and smell provide us with the information about the realities that abound in the world that we live in. If any of the senses fail, it would be difficult for the person to experience the multitude of realities that are around him. Knowledge is acquired from experiences that come through these senses. We would not be able to enjoy the fragrance of flowers or enjoy the sweet music of nature, if our senses were not sensitive. The reality is revealed to us because of our sense organs.

Against: Reality is not necessarily what is directly revealed to us by our senses. The explanation given by Rajendra in the lesson, ascertains the fact that it is not only "seeing that is believing." We cannot experience so many entities like atoms and molecules but they are real. We cannot even predict the behaviour of these entities accurately. He explains how the electron orbits the nucleus of an atom and these could be in various states of energy. All these are happening simultaneously, and being in a particular reality, we are not able to know anything about it. We can predict the position of a bullet fired in a particular direction from a gun but we cannot predict the position of an electron fired from a source. This proves that reality is not what is directly revealed to the senses. There can be alternative realities existing side by side.

(iii) **For:** The methods of inquiry of History, Science and Philosophy are similar. In the story, 'The Adventure', one can find the attributes of History, Philosophy and Science converging towards a focal point. History employs the methods of observation, analysis and rationalism to understand the details of events that had transpired in the past. The study of Science is based on the principle of 'Rationalism' and involves observation, experimentation and analysis. Philosophy is the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence. Philosophy examines everything including the assumptions and methodology of science and other disciplines like History. In the story, 'The Adventure', History, Science and Philosophy intersect. Prof. Gaitonde tried to understand his experience rationally but he failed to get an answer. Rajendra intervened to explain this phenomenon in the light of the catastrophe theory which is being employed by Physicists in understanding the behaviour of atoms. Here we find Science and History integrating. A similar perspective is seen in Philosophy, which is that truth is relative and not absolute. In other words, the methods of inquiry of History, Science and Philosophy are similar.

Against: It is absurd to state that the methods of inquiry adopted in History, Science and Philosophy are similar. The similarity, if there is any, is on a superficial level and not at the core. In the story 'The Adventure', Rajendra tries to rationalise the experience of Prof. Gaitonde by applying the catastrophe theory. But this explanation is not convincing though it seemed to have answered the queries of the professor. Catastrophe theory explains the existence and functions of the physical world, whereas History deals with the behavioural world. It tells us about the causes, events and results of actions undertaken by a person or a group of people. The methods of inquiry will also be centred around human behaviour. Philosophy is the systematic study of ideas and issues, a reasoned pursuit of fundamental truths, a quest for a comprehensive understanding of the world. In other words, the methods of History, Science and Philosophy are not similar. The three disciplines, namely, Science, History and Philosophy have to employ different methodologies of inquiry in keeping with the subject matter involved.

2. (i) **The story is called 'The Adventure'. Compare it with the adventure described in 'We're Not Afraid to Die...'**

(ii) **Why do you think Professor Gaitonde decided never to preside over meetings again?**

- Ans.** (i) 'We're Not Afraid to Die...' is a story about a family who went on a seafaring trip with their two children and two crewmen. The challenge was to stay alive and reach the shore safely when they were hit by a storm and their boat nearly capsized. Their experience was real and painful. On the other hand, Professor Gaitonde's experience may be classified as an imaginary one, in which he had travelled into another time zone, wherein he experienced a different era in Indian history. This happened because of the thought processes that were going on in his mind prior to an accident that had him in a coma. It was during this period of comatose that he slipped into a different period in history. The two experiences are totally different from each other.
- (ii) When in a different world, the professor noticed the empty presidential chair on the stage in an ongoing lecture at the Azad Maidan, he tried to sit on it as it is unethical to have the presidential chair unoccupied. An enraged crowd and the speaker asked the professor to move out. He was unperturbed, and continued to make them realise their folly. The audience was not ready to listen to him. They threw many objects at him and asked him to move aside. They physically lifted him off the stage. This experience prompted the professor to say that he'd never preside over meetings again.

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

- 1. In which language do you think Gangadharpant and Khan Sahib talked to each other? Which language did Gangadharpant use to talk to the English receptionist?**
- 2. In which language do you think Bhausahebanchi Bakhar was written?**
- 3. There is mention of three communities in the story: the Marathas, the Mughals, the Anglo-Indians. Which language do you think they used within their communities and while speaking to the other groups?**
- 4. Do you think that the ruled always adopt the language of the ruler?**

- Ans.** 1. Gangadharpant and Khan Sahib communicated in Marathi, and they used a translator to communicate with the English-speaking receptionist.
2. Bhausahebanchi Bakhar was written in Maratha language.

3. When they spoke to each other, they used their traditional slang, but when they spoke to other groups, they used the language that is understood by people from all three communities.
4. *Answer may vary*

WORKING WITH WORDS

I. Tick the item that is closest in meaning to the following phrases.

1. to take issue with

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| (i) to accept | (ii) to discuss |
| (iii) to disagree | (iv) to add |

2. to give vent to

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| (i) to express | (ii) to emphasis |
| (iii) suppress | (iv) dismiss |

3. to stand on one's feet

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| (i) to be physically strong | (ii) to be independent |
| (iii) to stand erect | (iv) to be successful |

4. to be wound up

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| (i) to become active | (ii) to stop operating |
| (iii) to be transformed | (iv) to be destroyed |

5. to meet one's match

- (i) to meet a partner who has similar tastes
- (ii) to meet an opponent
- (iii) to meet someone who is equally able as oneself
- (iv) to meet defeat

Ans. 1. (iii) 2. (i) 3. (ii) 4. (ii) 5. (iii)

II. Distinguish between the following pairs of sentences.

1. (i) He was *visibly* moved.
(ii) He was *visually* impaired.
2. (i) Green and black stripes were used *alternately*.
(ii) Green stripes could be used or *alternatively* black ones.
3. (i) The team played the two matches *successfully*.
(ii) The team played two matches *successively*.
4. (i) The librarian spoke *respectfully* to the learned scholar.
(ii) You will find the historian and the scientist in the archaeology and natural science sections of the museum *respectively*.

Ans. 1. (i) clearly (ii) defective eyesight
 2. (i) one after the other (ii) in place of
 3. (i) with success (ii) one after the other
 4. (i) dignity (ii) same order

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow. (3 Marks each)

1. Meanwhile, the racing mind of Professor Gaitonde had arrived at a plan of action in Bombay. Indeed, as a historian he felt he should have thought of it sooner. He would go to a big library and browse through history books. That was the surest way of finding out how the present state of affairs was reached. He also planned eventually to return to Pune and have a long talk with Rajendra Deshpande, who would surely help him understand what had happened.

- (a) What was Professor Gaitonde's plan of action in Bombay?
(b) Who was Rajendra Deshpande?
(c) Where was Professor Gaitonde travelling to?
(i) From Pune to Bombay (ii) From Pune to Delhi
(iii) From Bombay to Pune (iv) No where

- Ans.** (a) He planned to go to a big library and consult the history books there to find out how history had changed.
(b) Rajendra Deshpande was a professor of physics at Mumbai University.
(c) (i) From Pune to Bombay

2. Prepared as he was for many shocks, Professor Gaitonde had not expected this. The East India Company had been wound up shortly after the events of 1857 — at least, that is what history books said. Yet, here it was, not only alive but flourishing. So, history had taken a different turn, perhaps before 1857. How and when had it happened? He had to find out.

- (a) What had Professor Gaitonde not expected in Bombay?
(b) Why was Professor Gaitonde surprised to see the name of East India Company?
(c) Where was Professor Gaitonde in the given extract?
(i) Indore (ii) Victoria Terminus
(iii) Pune (iv) Kalyan

- Ans.** (a) Professor Gaitonde did not expect to see the domination of East India Company in Bombay. According to the history books, the company had been wound up after 1857.
(b) As the professor came out of the station, he saw the headquarters of East India Company which left him in utter shock because the company existed in the 18th and 19th century but was wound up after the revolt of 1857.
(c) (ii) Victoria Terminus

3. She searched through the telephone list, the staff list and then through the directory of employees of all the branches of the firm. She shook her head and said, "I am afraid I can't find anyone of that name either here or in any of our branches. Are you sure he works here?"

This was a blow, not totally unexpected. If he himself were dead in this world, what guarantee had he that his son would be alive? Indeed, he may not even have been born!

- (a) Who is referred to as 'she' in the given extract? What was she searching?
- (b) What shocked Gaitonde the most?
- (c) In which of the following sentences has the word 'branches' been used in the same context as in the extract?
 - (i) Sophie was on the branches of a tree eating an apple.
 - (ii) Under its branches men and animals found pleasant shade.
 - (iii) Soft, pale shadows of waving branches moved back and forth, like the ghosts of dreams.
 - (iv) The store has branches in all major towns.

Ans. (a) 'She' refers to the English receptionist. She was searching the details of Gaitonde's son.
 (b) The fact that there was no trace of his son shocked Gaitonde the most because he was not born at that time.
 (c) (iv) The store has branches in all major towns.

4. Gangadharpant pressed home his advantage. "I had inadvertently slipped the Bakhar in my pocket as I left the library. I discovered my error when I was paying for my meal. I had intended to return it the next morning. But it seems that in the melee of Azad Maidan, the book was lost; only this torn-off page remained. And, luckily for me, the page contains vital evidence."

- (a) What does 'pressed home his advantage' mean?
- (b) What did the professor slip into his pocket before leaving the library?
 - (i) Bakhar
 - (ii) English literature
 - (iii) Newspaper
 - (iv) Money
- (c) What was Gangadharpant's vital piece of evidence?

Ans. (a) It means that he used an advantage that he already had in order to succeed in what he wanted to do.
 (b) (i) Bakhar
 (c) Gangadharpant had inadvertently slipped the Bakhar into his pocket when he left the library. He was left with only a torn-off page of the book which contained the vital evidence that described how Vishwasrao narrowly missed the bullet.

5. "Professor Gaitonde, you have given me food for thought. Until I saw this material evidence, I had simply put your experience down to fantasy. But facts can be stranger than fantasies, as I am beginning to realise."

- (a) Who is speaking the given lines?
- (b) Which experience was mistaken for a fantasy?
- (c) What 'fact' is the speaker talking about?
 - (i) The information in the Bakhar
 - (ii) The fact that the professor was fantasising
 - (iii) The fact that the war never took place
 - (iv) The fact that the professor met with an accident

Ans. (a) Rajendra Deshpande is speaking the given lines.

(b) The experience of the professor being in another time zone was mistaken for a fantasy.

(c) (i) The information in the Bakhar

6. “You have heard a lot about the catastrophe theory at that seminar. Let us apply it to the Battle of Panipat. Wars fought face to face on open grounds offer excellent examples of this theory. The Maratha army was facing Abdali’s troops on the field of Panipat. There was no great disparity between the latter’s troops and the opposing forces. Their armour was comparable. So, a lot depended on the leadership and the morale of the troops. The juncture at which Vishwasrao, the son of and heir to the Peshwa, was killed proved to be the turning point.

(a) Who is speaking to whom in the given extract? What are they discussing about?

(b) What do you understand by the term ‘catastrophe theory’?

(c) What happened to the Maratha army in reality?

(i) They lost the battle.

(ii) They won the battle.

(iii) They signed a treaty after the battle.

(iv) Nothing happened.

Ans. (a) Rajendra Deshpande is speaking to Professor Gaitonde. They are discussing about how the theory of catastrophe might have changed the fate of the battle.

(b) Catastrophe theory can be explained as a small change in circumstance that can bring alternation in the manner or behaviour of something.

(c) (i) They lost the battle.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. Who was Professor Gaitonde? What was his plan in Bombay?

Ans. Professor Gaitonde was a historian who lived in Pune. He had authored five volumes of books on History. He was on his way to Bombay to visit the library and consult the history books there to find out how the present state of affairs was reached.

2. Who was Khan Sahib? What was his travel plan?

Ans. Khan Sahib was a co-passenger who was enroute to Peshawar. After the train reached Victoria Terminus, he planned to take the Frontier Mail out of Central Station the same night. Therefore, he’d be travelling from Bombay to Delhi and from there to Lahore and finally reach Peshawar. It would be a long journey and he would reach Peshawar only two days later.

3. Why was Professor Gaitonde surprised to see the name of East India Company on an imposing building in Bombay?

Ans. Prof. Gaitonde was a professor of history who lived in Pune during the 20th century. But through a transition in time, he was taken to a different period of history. Thus, he was surprised to see the name of East India Company, as he had studied that it had been wound up after 1857.

4. For what did Professor Gaitonde enter the Forbes building? What was his experience there?

Ans. The professor went to Forbes building to meet his son Vinay Gaitonde. The receptionist consulted their directory of employees only to inform him that there was no person bearing that name in their organisation. The blow was not totally unexpected. He concludes that if he himself were dead, there was no guarantee that his son would be alive or even born.

5. What did the professor do in the Town Hall library?

Ans. He entered the Town Hall library and asked for a list of history books, including the ones he had written. While reading through them he gathered that there was no change in the events up to the death of Aurangzeb. The change had occurred in the last volume. Reading the fifth volume in and out, Gangadharpant finally converged on the precise moment when history had taken a different turn. He read the description of the Battle of Panipat. It mentioned that Abdali was defeated by the Maratha army led by Sadashivrao Bhau and his nephew, Vishwasrao. It established the supremacy of the Marathas.

6. How did the Peshwas establish supremacy over the northern part of India?

Ans. Their victory in the battle was not only a great morale booster to the Marathas but it also established their supremacy in northern India. The East India Company were observing these events, and thought it wise to temporarily defer its plan of expansion. For the Peshwas the immediate result was that the influence of Bhausaheb and Vishwasrao increased and Vishwarao succeeded his father in 1780 A.D. Dadasaheb, who was a spoke in the wheel was pushed to the background. He eventually had to retire from state politics.

7. What was the effect of the victory of the Peshwas on the East India Company?

Ans. The East India Company was alarmed when the new Maratha ruler, Vishwasrao, and his brother, Madhavrao, expanded their influence all over India. The Company was limited to pockets of influence near Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. For political reasons, they kept the puppet Mughal regime alive in Delhi. However, in the nineteenth century the Marathas were aware of the importance of the technological age starting in Europe. Hence, when they set up their own centres for science and technology, the East India Company saw another chance to extend its influence, it offered support and experts. But they were accepted only to make the local centres self-sufficient.

8. What ensued in the twentieth century?

Ans. During the twentieth century, inspired by the West, India moved towards a democracy. By then, the Peshwas had lost their enterprise and democratically elected bodies slowly but surely replaced them. The Sultanate at Delhi survived even this change because it exerted no real influence. The Shahenshah of Delhi was a nominal head to rubber-stamp the 'recommendations' made by the central parliament.

9. Why could Gangadharpant not help comparing the country he knew with what he was witnessing around him?

Ans. As the train passed through the suburban rail traffic, he saw trains bearing the name 'Greater Bombay Metropolitan Railway', a service that was run by the British. When he got off at Victoria Terminus, he found the station to be very neat, and the staff were Anglo-Indians and Parsees along with a few British officers. Outside the station he found

an imposing building that had the letters 'EAST INDIA HOUSE HEADQUARTERS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY' inscribed on it. He was shocked that while he was living in the late 20th century, the sites he was seeing around him were a replication of India under the British.

10. "But why did I make the transition?" What explanation did Rajendra give to the professor?

Ans. Rajendra guessed that the transition must have been caused by some interaction. Perhaps, at the time of the collision the professor had been thinking about the catastrophe theory and its role in wars. The professor admitted that he had been wondering at that time what course history would have taken if the Marathas had won the Battle of Panipat.

11. "That is, assuming that in this world there existed someone called Rajendra Deshpande!" Why does Professor Gaitonde feel so?

Ans. Professor Gaitonde was travelling to Bombay to clarify the distortion of history, that was being visualised by him due to a transition in the time zone. Though he was living in the 20th century, he was noticing around him a period in history that had already passed by. He decided to go to a big library in Bombay and browse through the history books. He felt that it would be the surest way to find out the reason for the changed state of affairs. He also planned to have a discussion with Rajendra Deshpande who could probably help him understand what was happening. However, he doubts the existence of such a man because of all the distortions in history that he was experiencing.

12. Explain the professor's experience at Azad Maidan.

Ans. After a frugal meal, Prof. Gaitonde decided to go on a stroll to Azad Maidan. There, he noticed a throng moving towards a pandal, where a lecture was in progress. He was surprised to see that the presidential chair was lying vacant. Like a piece of iron that gets attracted to a magnet, the professor swiftly moved towards the chair. The entire programme was disrupted as the audience disapproved of the professor's action and told him to get off the chair and the stage. Being a speaker himself, he tried to pacify the crowd and explain the significance of the symbolic chair. The crowd was agitated. They began throwing eggs, tomatoes and objects at him. They swarmed to the stage to eject him bodily. And after a while, Gangadhar Pant was nowhere to be seen.

13. What were the things that Professor Gaitonde noticed as the train entered the British Raj territory?

Ans. As the train touched Sarhad, from where the British Raj began, an Anglo-Indian in uniform went through the train checking permits. The blue carriages of the train carried the letters GBMR on the side, an acronym for 'Greater Bombay Metropolitan Railway'. There was a tiny Union Jack painted on each carriage as a reminder that they were in British territory. As the train stopped at its destination, Victoria Terminus, the station looked remarkably neat and clean. The staff was mostly made up of Anglo-Indians and Parsees along with a handful of British officers.

14. What came as the biggest blow to Professor Gaitonde?

Ans. Professor Gaitonde was shocked to see the East India Company flourishing. He found a different set of shops and office buildings at Hornby Road. But when he turned right along Home Street and entered Forbes building, a greater shock awaited him. He asked for his son Mr Vinay Gaitonde. The English receptionist looked through the telephone

list, the staff list and then through the directory of employees of all the branches of the firm but could not find anyone with that name.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. How did Rajendra Deshpande analyse the professor's experience as a catastrophic experience? *(Constructed Response Question)*

Ans. Gangadharpant narrated to Rajendra his experience at the Azad Maidan meeting. He informed him that for two days he was in coma as a result of the accident. He asked Rajendra to explain where he had spent those days. He admitted that before the accident, he had been thinking of the catastrophe theory and how it could change the course of history. He produced a page from the Bakhar which he had accidentally taken from the library, to prove that his mind was working normally. The page described that, "... And then Vishwasrao guided his horse to the melee where the elite troops were fighting and he attacked them. And God was merciful. A shot brushed past his ear. Even the difference of a til (sesame) would have led to his death." This was contrary to what his own history book said. And he wanted to know the facts. It was after hearing these details that Rajendra chose to infer, that catastrophic situations offer radically different alternatives for the world to proceed. 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.

2. How did Rajendra explain the concept of reality with the example of movement of an electron?

Ans. Rajendra Deshpande tried to rationalise the professor's experience on the basis of two scientific theories. Gangadharpant had passed through a strange catastrophic experience. The juncture at which Vishwasrao was killed in the battle proved to be a turning point. The Marathas lost their morale and the battle. Rajendra then moved to his second explanation. Reality is not exactly what we experience directly with our senses. It can have other manifestations. He elaborates his thought by giving the example of an electron that doesn't follow the laws of science. It is called as the lack of determinism in quantum theory. It can be found in different places and each one of them is real. It happens by transition. The professor also experienced two worlds—one that was in the present, and the other that took him to a completely ancient period in history.

3. Describe the observations made by the professor as he entered the alternative universe.

Ans. Professor Gaitonde was shocked when the train stopped beyond the long tunnel at a small station called Sarhad. An Anglo-Indian in uniform was checking the train permits. Then the train passed through the suburban rail traffic. The blue carriages carried the letters, GBMR, on the side that stood for 'Greater Bombay Metropolitan Railway'. There was a tiny Union Jack painted on each carriage as a gentle reminder that they were in British territory. The station at Victoria Terminus looked impeccably neat and clean. The staff comprised mostly of Anglo-Indians and Parsees along with a handful of British officers. Coming out of the station, he found himself facing an imposing building. It was the office of the East India Company. As he walked along the Hornby Road, as it was called, he found a different set of shops and office buildings. There was no Handloom House building. 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. The greatest shock that awaited him was when he entered Forbes building and wished to meet his son, Mr Vinay Gaitonde. The receptionist searched through the telephone list, the staff list and then through the directory of employees of all the branches of the firm and finally shook her head and said that nobody of that name was either here or in any of their branches.

4. What was the outcome of the Battle of Panipat in the alternative universe?

Ans. Their victory in the battle increased the morale of the Marathas. The East India Company temporarily shelved its expansionist programme. The Peshwas expanded their influence all over India. The Company was reduced to pockets of influence near Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The Peshwas kept the puppet Mughal regime alive in Delhi. With the dawn of the technological age in Europe, they set up their own centres for science and technology. Here, the East India Company saw another opportunity to extend its influence but its aid and experts were accepted only to make the local centres self-sufficient. The twentieth century brought about further changes inspired by the West. India moved towards a democracy and democratically elected bodies and replaced the Peshwas. After reading this, Professor Gaitonde began to appreciate that India because it had not been subjected to slavery for the white man; it had learnt to stand on its feet and knew what self-respect was. From a position of strength and for purely commercial reasons, it had allowed the British to remain.

5. 'But we live in a unique world which has a unique history.' Why did the professor say so?

Ans. Rajendra tried to rationalize Professor Gaitonde's experience on the basis of two scientific theories known today. He had passed through a catastrophic experience. He applied it to the Battle of Panipat. The Maratha army was facing Abdali's troops on the field of Panipat. There was no great disparity between the latter's troops and the opposing forces. So, a lot depended on the leadership and the morale of the troops. In the history known to us, Vishwasrao, the son and heir to the Peshwa, was killed.

This proved to be the turning point in the battle. Whether Bhausaheb was killed in battle or survived is not known. The soldiers lost their morale and fighting spirit and were defeated. However, in the alternative universe, the bullet missed Vishwasrao, and it boosted the morale of the army and provided that extra force that made all the difference. Professor Gaitonde felt that similar statements are made about the Battle of Waterloo, which Napoleon could have won. But all this is an assumption. We live in an inimitable world which has a distinctive history. This idea of 'it might have been' is not acceptable for reality.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. “Vacate the chair!”

“This lecture series has no chairperson...”

“Away from the platform, mister!”

“The chair is symbolic, don’t you know?”

What nonsense! Whoever heard of a public lecture without a presiding dignitary? Professor Gaitonde went to the mike and gave vent to his views. “Ladies and gentleman, an unchaired lecture is like Shakespeare’s ‘Hamlet’ without the Prince of Denmark. Let me tell you...”

(a) What did the professor do when he noticed the empty chair?

(b) How did the crowd react when he sat on the empty chair?

- (i) They threw several objects at him and pushed him away.
- (ii) They politely asked him to leave.
- (iii) They heard his speech.
- (iv) They did nothing but ignored him.

(c) What happened after the empty chair incident?

2. “That is all I have to tell, Rajendra. All I know is that I was found in the Azad Maidan in the morning. But I was back in the world I am familiar with. Now, where exactly did I spend those two days when I was absent from here?”

Rajendra was dumbfounded by the narrative. It took him a while to reply.

“Professor, before, just prior to your collision with the truck, what were you doing?” Rajendra asked.

(a) Where are Rajendra and Gaitonde in the given extract?

(b) What mishap had occurred to professor Gaitonde?

(c) Where did Gaitonde spend his two days?

- (i) He was in an alternative world.
- (ii) He was under coma in a hospital.
- (iii) He was looking for evidence.
- (iv) He was studying his own theory of alternative worlds.

3. At eight o’clock the librarian politely reminded the professor that the library was closing for the day. Gangadharpant emerged from his thoughts. Looking around he noticed that he was the only reader left in that magnificent hall.

“I beg your pardon, sir! May I request you to keep these books here for my use tomorrow morning? By the way, when do you open?”

“At eight o’clock, sir.” The librarian smiled. Here was a user and researcher right after his heart. As the professor left the table he shoved some notes into his right pocket. Absent-mindedly, he also shoved the Bakhar into his left pocket.

- (a) What is the scene described in the given extract?
- (b) What does 'emerged from his thoughts' mean?
- (i) To come out of one's thoughts
 - (ii) To speak about one's thoughts
 - (iii) To expose your thoughts to others
 - (iv) To go down deep into your thoughts
- (c) Why did the professor want to come again to the library?

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

1. Why was Professor Gaitonde going to Bombay?
2. What was the plan of action in professor Gaitonde's mind as his train approached Bombay?
3. What important discovery was made by Gangadharpant on reading history books?
4. How did Rajendra Deshpande try to rationalise Gangadharpant's experience at Azad Maidan scientifically?
5. 'That is, assuming that in this world there existed someone called Rajendra Deshpande!' Why does Professor Gaitonde feel so?

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

1. Write a summary of Professor Gaitonde's catastrophic experience.
2. How would you concur with the inference of Rajendra Deshpande?
(Constructed Response Question)
3. Do you believe the experience was real or a figment of the professor's imagination?
(Constructed Response Question)



5

Silk Road

— Nick Middleton

Introduction
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The chapter 'Silk Road' is a travelogue written by the famous adventurer and geographer, Nick Middleton. In this chapter, Nick has explained the importance of the Silk Road, also known as Silk Route, an ancient trade route linking China with the West, that carried goods and ideas between the two great civilizations of Rome and China. Silk went westward, and wools, gold, and silver went towards east. China also received Nestorian Christianity and Buddhism (from India) via the Silk Road. The author also gives a vivid description of kora, a religious pilgrimage taken by Tibetan Monks around Mount Kailash.

THEME
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In this chapter, the author chronicles the challenges and hardships he faced in the Silk Road regions. Having no religious inclinations himself, he begins to speculate on Tibetan Buddhism as a prerequisite for survival at such an altitude, yet makes the classic Western error of putting bodily discipline before mental striving. He faces a lot of difficulties, but is able to complete his pilgrimage due to his undeterred faith.

Summary

The author, Nick Middleton, describes his journey to Mount Kailash on the Silk Road. In order to complete his kora, the author wishes to visit Mt. Kailash. Thus, he hires Tsetan (a tourist guide and driver), so that he can get someone to drive him up to the mountain. While he was parting with Lhamo (caretaker of the accommodation at Ravu), he receives a long-sleeved sheepskin coat. In order to gain companionship, the author takes Daniel (interpreter from Lhasa) with him till Darchen.

Upon starting their journey, Tsetan takes a shortcut to the south-west. He says that it is a direct route to Mt. Kailash, and in order to reach their destination, they would have to cross the high mountain passes. However, Tsetan assures them that due to lack of snow, it would be easy to do so. On their way, they cross few gazelles, a herd of wild donkeys and shepherds that were tending their flocks.

Upon reaching the hill, they notice dark tents. They learn that those tents are the homes of nomads and see Tibetan mastiffs guarding the tents. When they reach near the tents, the dogs with large jaws run after their car. Upon entering the valley, they witness mountains and rivers covered in snow and ice.

They ride on the hill which starts turning sharper and bumpier. As they reach higher, the author could feel the pressure and he noticed that they were at a height of 5,210 metres above the sea level. After clearing the first hurdle of snow-filled roads, they were on and about. The

author, after some time, starts feeling uneasy due to the height and pressure. At around 2 o'clock in the afternoon, they stop for lunch.

Finally, they reach a small town called 'Hor' by late afternoon. The author takes a break in Hor and sits at a local café sipping tea. During this time, Tsetan gets the car fixed and Daniel leaves for Lhasa. The author does not like Hor very much. After resuming the journey, they spend the night at a guest house in Darchen. The author suffers from nose congestion due to altitude change and chilly weather. He goes to see a Tibetan doctor and receives a five-day course of medication.

After that, he feels better and enjoys his stay at Darchen, where he meets another pilgrim, Norbu. As Darchen had no pilgrims, the author is now relieved and decides to complete his pilgrimage with him. Finally, they hire yaks for their luggage and climb Mount Kailash.

Nick Middleton teaches geography at Oxford University and is a fellow of St Anne's College. He is a Royal Geographical Society award-winning writer, and the author of 'Travelogues'. He specialises in desertification. Dr. Nick Middleton's background is in the physical side of geography, but his interests span the entire subject. His academic role is supplemented by his work as an environmental consultant and freelance author having written more than 200 articles in journals, magazines and newspapers, and 16 books. He has also co-written and edited another nine volumes.



Answers to NCERT Questions

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

I. Give reasons for the following statements.

1. The article has been titled 'Silk Road.'
2. Tibetan mastiffs were popular in China's imperial courts.
3. The author's experience at Hor was in stark contrast to earlier accounts of the place.
4. The author was disappointed with Darchen.
5. The author thought that his positive thinking strategy worked well after all.

- Ans.**
1. The article has been titled 'Silk Road' because the protagonist explored the region of the old Silk Route which was one of the historical routes for trade. Trade of Chinese silk, spices, teas and porcelain, Indian textiles, pepper and precious stones, the Roman Empire's gold, silver, glassware, wine, carpets, and jewels, etc. were done through this route.
 2. Tibetan mastiffs were popular in China's imperial courts as big hunting dogs. They were fearless and furious with big jaws. They were brought along the Silk Road as watchdogs from Tibet. They were a tribute in ancient times.
 3. Hor was a grim, miserable place. The dust and rocks were scattered everywhere in abundance; there was little vegetation. The place seemed unfortunate and dejected, though it sat on the shore of the lake Manasarovar. The author was flabbergasted to realise the contrast in his experience to that of the earlier read accounts. A Japanese monk, Ekai Kawaguchi, who had arrived there in 1990, was so moved by the sanctity of the lake that he burst into tears. The hallowed waters had a similar effect

on Sven Hedin, a Swede who was not prone to sentimental outbursts. However, when the author reached Hor, he first had to get two punctures mended. The only relaxation was the tea served by a Chinese youth in the only cafe in the town, which was constructed from badly painted concrete with three broken windows.

4. The author was disappointed with Darchen because he was having health issues due to the change in altitude. He caught a cold and was unable to sleep at night. The place had no pilgrims and it was filled with loads of remains and trash.
5. The author thought that his positive thinking strategy worked well after all because he finally met someone who understood his language and was there to complete the kora just like him. Earlier, he got ill as soon as he reached the place. No one understood English well. He felt lonely as there were no pilgrims around. He met Norbu at Darchen's only cafe and decided to team up with him to complete his journey. He was glad that he maintained his positive thinking approach in life.

II. Briefly comment on

1. **The purpose of the author's journey to Mount Kailash.**
2. **The author's physical condition in Darchen.**
3. **The author's meeting with Norbu.**
4. **Tsetan's support to the author during the journey.**
5. **"As a Buddhist, he told me, he knew that it didn't really matter if I passed away, but he thought it would be bad for business."**

- Ans.**
1. The author wanted to go to Mount Kailash to complete the kora which is an essential pilgrimage in Buddhism. Buddhist believers are supposed to perform meditation during this process.
 2. The author was ill when he reached Darchen. He caught a cold because of the weather and altitude change. He didn't sleep well and the next day, he went to a Tibetan doctor who gave him some medicine.
 3. The author was feeling lonely in Darchen as Tsetan left for Lhasa. No one knew the English language much in that place. There were no pilgrims at that time of the year. He met Norbu at a local café. Norbu was an academic from Beijing who worked for the Institute of Ethnic Literature. He was at Darchen to complete the kora.
 4. Tsetan played an important role during the author's journey. He was an efficient driver. He took care of the author when he got ill after reaching Darchen. He took him to the medical college and got medicine for him. He also informed him about the places they were visiting in their journey.
 5. Tsetan was a Buddhist who believed that death is not the end. He might have gone directly to heaven as Kailash is a holy place. He thought it would be bad if the author died because it might affect his business and he would not get any customers in the future. He could have lost his credibility.

TALKING ABOUT THE TEXT

Discuss in groups of four

1. **The sensitive behaviour of hill-folks.**
2. **The reasons why people willingly undergo the travails of difficult journeys.**

3. The accounts of exotic places in legends and the reality.

- Ans.**
1. The hill-folks are very innocent and unsophisticated people. They are good at hospitality like Tsetan, who took care of the author all the time.
 2. The author was an academican who wanted to take the journey for the purpose of education. He wanted to learn from this experience. Normally, people take such a difficult journey for the spirit of adventure. Also, religious beliefs play an important role in such journeys.
 3. Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar are two prominent places in legends. Many people talk about these and there are many articles published online regarding the two places.

THINKING ABOUT LANGUAGE

1. Notice the kind of English Tsetan uses while talking to the author. How do you think he picked it up?
2. What do the following utterances indicate?
 - (i) "I told her, *through* Daniel ..."
 - (ii) "It's a cold," he said finally *through* Tsetan.
3. Guess the meaning of the following words.

kora

drokba

kyang

In which language are these words found?

- Ans.**
1. Tsetan must have picked up English through his interactions with tourists.
 2.
 - (i) She didn't know English, so Daniel translated what the author was saying in the Tibetan language.
 - (ii) The Tibetan doctor was speaking in the Tibetan language. Tsetan translated it to the author in English.
 3. **Kora** – circumambulation of the temple
Drokba – shepherd
Kyang – a wild donkey of Tibet
These words are found in the Tibetan language.

WORKING WITH WORDS

1. The narrative has many phrases to describe the scenic beauty of the mountainside like:
A flawless half-moon floated in a perfect blue sky.

Scan the text to locate other such picturesque phrases.

2. Explain the use of the adjectives in the following phrases.
 - (i) shaggy monsters
 - (ii) brackish lakes
 - (iii) rickety table
 - (iv) hairpin bend
 - (v) rudimentary general stores

- Ans.**
1.
 - (i) After ducking back into her tent, she emerged carrying one of the hand sleeved sheepskin coats that
 - (ii) It involved crossing several fairly high mountain passes.

- (iii) Extended banks of cloud like French loaves glowed as the Sun emerged to splash the distant mountain tops with a rose-tinted blush.
2. (i) Shaggy means hairy and unkempt
 (ii) Brackish means slightly salty
 (iii) Rickety means wobbly or shaky
 (iv) Hairpin means very sharp
 (v) Rudimentary means elementary or basic

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow. (3 Marks each)

1. A flawless half-moon floated in a perfect blue sky on the morning we said our goodbyes. Extended banks of cloud like long French loaves glowed pink as the sun emerged to splash the distant mountain tops with a rose-tinted blush. Now that we were leaving Ravu, Lhamo said she wanted to give me a farewell present. One evening I'd told her through Daniel that I was heading towards Mount Kailash to complete the kora, and she'd said that I ought to get some warmer clothes. After ducking back into her tent, she emerged carrying one of the long-sleeved sheepskin coats that all the men wore. Tsetan sized me up as we clambered into his car. "Ah, yes," he declared, "drokba, sir."

(a) Where was the author heading towards?

- (i) Mount Kailash (ii) Himalayas
 (iii) Uttarakhand (iv) Delhi

(b) What do you understand by 'drokba'?

(c) Who was Lhamo?

- Ans.** (a) (i) Mount Kailash
 (b) Drokba refers to the people who wander as nomads in the region of Tibet.
 (c) Lhamo was a Tibetan woman who had set up a tent for pilgrims near Ravu. She was honest and helpful. She offered a long-sleeved sheepskin coat as a farewell gift.

2. Tired and hungry, I started breathing through my mouth. After a while, I switched to single-nostril power which seemed to be admitting enough oxygen but, just as I was drifting off, I woke up abruptly. Something was wrong. My chest felt strangely heavy and I sat up, a movement that cleared my nasal passages almost instantly and relieved the feeling in my chest. Curious, I thought.

(a) Where is the author in the given extract? What has happened to him?

(b) Was he able to sleep that night?

(c) Where did Tsetan take the author to seek medical help the next day?

- (i) Darchen Medical College (ii) Tibetan Ayurvedic Doctor
 (iii) To Lhasa (iv) To Ravu

- Ans.** (a) The author is in a guest house staying for a night in Darchen. His nostril was blocked again due to which he couldn't sleep that night. He was gasping for oxygen throughout the night.

(b) No, he could not sleep at all that night. As soon as he laid down to sleep, his sinuses filled and he felt something strange in his chest.

(c) (i) Darchen Medical College

3. These shaggy monsters, blacker than the darkest night, usually wore bright red collars and barked furiously with massive jaws. They were completely fearless of our vehicle, shooting straight into our path, causing Tsetan to brake and swerve. The dog would make chase for a hundred metres or so before easing off, having seen us off the property. It wasn't difficult to understand why ferocious Tibetan mastiffs became popular in China's imperial courts as hunting dogs, brought along the Silk Road in ancient times as tribute from Tibet.

(a) Why were Tibetan mastiffs popular in China's imperial courts?

(b) Why was the author fascinated by seeing the Tibetan Mastiffs?

(c) What did the big dogs do when they saw the approaching car?

(i) They ran behind it as a bullet fired from a gun.

(ii) They ignored it.

(iii) They barked towards the car.

(iv) They never saw it.

Ans. (a) Tibetan mastiffs were popular in China's imperial courts as hunting dogs. They were brought along the Silk Road in ancient times as tribute from Tibet. They were huge black dogs used as watch dogs.

(b) Crossing the nomad's dark tents pitched in remoteness, the author noticed that a huge black dog guarded most of the tents. These monstrous creatures would tilt their great big heads when someone moved towards the them.

(c) (i) They ran behind it as a bullet fired from a gun.

4. Hor was a grim, miserable place. There was no vegetation whatsoever, just dust and rocks, liberally scattered with years of accumulated refuse, which was unfortunate given that the town sat on the shore of Lake Manasarovar, Tibet's most venerated stretch of water. Ancient Hindu and Buddhist cosmology pinpoints Manasarovar as the source of four great Indian rivers: the Indus, the Ganges, the Sutlej and the Brahmaputra. Actually only the Sutlej flows from the lake, but the headwaters of the others all rise nearby on the flanks of Mount Kailash. We were within striking distance of the great mountain and I was eager to forge ahead.

(a) What was unfortunate, according to the author?

(b) Why was Hor an ugly and miserable place?

(i) Because it had no modern markets

(ii) Because it had no vegetation

(iii) Because it didn't have any proper medical facilities

(iv) Because it had no place to live

(c) How was the author feeling on reaching Hor?

Ans. (a) It was unfortunate that the town of Hor which sat on the shore of lake Manasarovar, Tibet's most venerated stretch of water, had become a grim, miserable place with years of accumulated refuse.

(b) (ii) Because it had no vegetation

(c) The author was feeling disappointed and depressed on reaching Hor.

5. One afternoon I sat pondering my options over a glass of tea in Darchen's only cafe. After a little consideration, I concluded they were severely limited. Clearly I hadn't made much progress with my self-help programme on positive thinking. In my defence, it hadn't been easy with all my sleeping difficulties, but however I looked at it, I could only wait. The pilgrimage trail was well-trodden, but I didn't fancy doing it alone. The kora was seasonal because parts of the route were liable to blockage by snow.

(a) What is 'kora'?

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (i) Yoga asana | (ii) Medication |
| (iii) Name of a small town | (iv) Meditation in Buddhist tradition |

(b) Why did the author not dare to do the kora alone?

(c) How did the author conclude that he had arrived early to do the kora?

Ans. (a) (iv) Meditation in Buddhist tradition

(b) The author was afraid of getting sick and he thought that someone should be there with him if he needs any kind of help or care. So he did not dare to complete the kora alone.

(c) The author had planned to do the kora in the company of other devotees. But to his surprise, there were no pilgrims to be found in Darchen. It looked quite deserted.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. While crossing the rocky wilderness, whom did they see and what was their reaction?

Ans. While crossing the rocky wilderness, they saw solitary drokbas, both men and women, well-wrapped in sheepskin coats, who were tending their flocks. They would pause and stare at their car, sometimes waving as they passed.

2. How did the Tibetan mastiff react when they approached?

Ans. The dogs cocked their great big heads when they became aware of their approach and fixed them in their sights. As they drew nearer, they exploded into action, speeding directly towards them as fast as a bullet from a gun.

3. How did the author feel when they were at a height of about 5,400 metres above the sea level?

Ans. When they were up about 5,400 metres from the sea level, the mountain was covered with snow and the author felt his head throbbing horribly. He took some water from his bottle, which was supposed to help a rapid ascent.

4. What disappointed the author at Darchen?

Ans. Darchen was grimy, partially dilapidated place scattered with rubble and refuse. The lethargic and sluggish town had few simple general stores which sold Chinese cigarettes, soaps and other basic necessities, as well as customary strings of prayer flags. The high altitude also gave him health problems and he caught a cold. He did not see any pilgrims in the place because of his early arrival. All these circumstances disappointed him.

5. When did the author feel unwell for the first time? What did he do?

Ans. When they went further up the trail and were 5,400 metres above the sea level, the

author got an awful headache. He took gulps from his water bottle, which was supposed to help during a speedy uphill journey. His headache soon cleared as they went down the other side of the pass.

6. What was the sight on the plateau ruins of the Tethys Ocean?

Ans. The author and his friends stopped for lunch in a long canvas tent, beside a dry salt lake. The plateau was covered with salty desert area and salty lakes that were remnants of the Tethys Ocean. The place was bustling with activity. Men with pickaxes and shovels were moving back and forth in their long sheepskin coats and salt-covered boots.

7. Why was the author sorry to see the miserable plight of Hor?

Ans. Hor was a dismal place with no vegetation. It only had dust and rocks coupled with years of accumulated refuse. The author found this unfortunate, since this town was on the banks of Lake Manasarovar, which is Tibet's most venerated stretch of water.

8. The author '...slept very soundly. Like a log, not a dead man'. Explain.

Ans. After going to the Tibetan doctor, the author soon recovered. Unpalatable as it seemed, the medicine led him to a quick recovery. Hence, the author had a healthy and sound sleep unlike when he was ailing and restless. He slept undisturbed. He was not tossing and turning because he was in a sound sleep.

9. How did the author and his companions cross the first snow blockage on their way to Mount Kailash?

Ans. The snow was so steep that they could not go around it. They had to go over it. The danger was that they could slip. They flung handfuls of dirt and covered the snow completely with soil. The author and Daniel got off the vehicle to lighten the load and Tsetan drove the vehicle over the snow.

10. How does the author recount his experience at the Darchen Medical College?

Ans. The doctor at the Darchen Medical College did not wear the traditional white coat of a doctor. He observed the author and diagnosed his problem as the effect of cold and high altitude. He gave him brown powders and pellets to be taken with hot water. The author benefitted from this treatment.

11. What did the author notice about the 'drokbas'?

Ans. As the author went further up the hills from the rocky wasteland, he noticed the solitary drokbas tending their flocks. Sometimes these well-wrapped figures would halt briefly and stare at their car. They seldom waved as they crossed. When the road took them close to the sheep, the animals would swerve away from the speeding car.

12. Who was Norbu? How could he be a help to the author?

Ans. The author met Norbu in a cafe. He was Tibetan, and worked in Beijing at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in the Institute of Ethnic Literature. He had come to do the kora. Norbu had been writing academic papers about the Kailash kora and its importance in various works of Buddhist literature for many years but he had never actually done it himself. The author was relieved to team up with him. He would not be alone then.

13. 'As a Buddhist, he told me, he knew that it didn't really matter if I passed away, but he thought it would be bad for business.' Demonstrate.

Ans. Tsetan was a Buddhist. He believed that death is the final 'Nirvana'. Kailash was a holy

place. He had a feeling that the author's death would discourage tourists from coming, which might prove to be a bad sign for their business as their credibility for looking after the tourists would be at stake.

14. How was the experience of the author at Hor different from the earlier visits to the place?

Ans. Earlier, Hor was filled with natural beauty and was situated on the sacred Lake Manasarovar. There were stories that various pilgrims cried seeing the beauty of the place. But the narrator's experience was different from theirs. He did not feel good about the place as he observed that there was no vegetation in Hor and the entire place looked dusty and rocky.

15. How do you think Tsetan supported the author during his journey?

Ans. Tsetan was a Buddhist who was also a good and efficient driver in the hills. He was very careful while driving. During his journey with the author to Darchen, he looked after the author. When he saw that the author was not well, he immediately took him to Darchen Medical College and got him treated.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. The author on his way to Mount Kailash came across a lot of topographic variation. Comment.

Ans. The author and his companions took a short cut to get off the Changtang. Tsetan knew a route that would take them south-west, almost directly towards Mount Kailash. It involved crossing several fairly high mountain passes. From the gently rising hills of Ravu, the short cut took them across vast open plains with nothing except a few gazelles that were grazing in the arid pastures. Further ahead, the plains became more stony than grassy. The hills ahead became steeper where solitary drokbas were tending their flocks. This led them to the snow-capped mountains and then to the valley, where the river was wide and clogged with ice. At a height of 5,515 metres, piles of stones marked the landscape. Next was the plateau which was covered with salty desert areas and salty lakes that were the remnants of the Tethys Ocean. Hor was next in line. It was a wretched place with no vegetation and years of accumulated refuse scattered liberally.

2. The author realised that the snow was both dangerous as well as beautiful. Justify.

Ans. Tsetan on his way surveyed the snow on the path by stamping on it. It was not deep. But in case they slipped, the car could turn over. Hence, to cover the risk, they flung handfuls of dirt across the frozen surface. When the snow was spread with soil, they drove without difficulty. Ten minutes later, they stopped at another blockage. This time they decided to drive round the snow.

However, the risks did not undermine the scenic beauty of the place. In the valley, they saw snow-capped mountains and the river was wide but mostly blocked with ice that was sparkling in the sunshine. As they moved ahead, on their upward track, the turns became sharper and the ride bumpier. The rocks around were covered with patches of bright orange lichen. Under the rocks, hunks of snow clung on in the near-permanent shade.

3. Narrate the author's meeting with the Tibetan doctor.

Ans. After an awfully uncomfortable and breathless night, Tsetan took the author to the

Darchen Medical College. The college was new and looked like a monastery from the outside with a very solid door that led into a large courtyard. The consulting room was dark and cold, and occupied by a Tibetan doctor who did not have any kit that the author had been expecting.

He wore a thick pullover and a woolly hat. The author explained the symptoms and the doctor shot him a few questions while feeling the veins in his wrist. Finally he said, it was the cold and the effects of altitude. He said that the author would soon be well enough to do the kora. He gave him a brown envelope stuffed with fifteen screws of paper. Each package had a brown powder that had to be taken with hot water. It tasted just like cinnamon. The contents of the lunchtime and bedtime package were less obviously identifiable. Both contained small, spherical brown pellets. Though the medicine looked like sheep dung, it helped him recover quickly.

4. Meeting Norbu came as an immense relief to the author. Why?

Ans. The author was not only disappointed with the filth in Darchen but also because of the lack of pilgrims. Moreover, since Tsetan had left, he had not come across anyone in Darchen who knew enough English to answer even his most basic questions. It was then that he met Norbu in a cafe. He was Tibetan, he told him, but worked in Beijing at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in the Institute of Ethnic Literature. He had also come to do the kora. Norbu had been writing academic papers about the Kailash kora and its importance in various works of Buddhist literature for many years, but he had never actually done it himself. The author was relieved to form a team with another academician. Norbu suggested to hire some yaks to carry their luggage, and they began their climb to Mount Kailash.

5. Describe in detail the author's miserable night in Darchen.

Ans. The author reached the Darchen guesthouse after 10:30 p.m. This was just the beginning of his troubled night. The open-air rubbish dump of Hor had set off his cold once more. One of his nostrils was blocked again and he was tired and hungry. He started breathing through his mouth. After a while, he woke up abruptly. His chest felt strangely heavy, but when he sat up, his nasal passages cleared almost instantly and relieved the feeling in his chest. He lay down again. Just as he was about to doze off, his sinuses filled and his chest felt strange. He tried supporting himself against the wall, but could not manage to relax enough to sleep. He did not know what was wrong but had a feeling that if he slept, he would not wake up again. So, he stayed awake all night.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

- 1. We took a short cut to get off the Changtang. Tsetan knew a route that would take us south-west, almost directly towards Mount Kailash. It involved crossing several fairly high mountain passes, he said. "But no problem, sir", he assured us, "if there is no snow." What was the likelihood of that I asked. "Not knowing, sir, until we get there."**
(a) What did Tsetan say would be the only hurdle while they were on their way to Mount Kailash?

(b) Why did Tsetan take a short cut?

- (i) He wanted to avoid the traffic.
- (ii) He knew the shortest route towards Mount Kailash.
- (iii) He had to pick up another passenger.
- (iv) He didn't want to go to that town.

(c) Who was Tsetan? How did he know the route?

- 2. I didn't think he was from those parts because he was wearing a windcheater and metal-rimmed spectacles of a Western style. He was a Tibetan, he told me, but worked in Beijing at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in the Institute of Ethnic Literature. I assumed he was on some sort of fieldwork.**

"Yes and no," he said. "I have come to do the kora." My heart jumped.

(a) About whom is the author talking?

(b) What was the author's assumption about the stranger?

(c) What was the purpose of the stranger in doing the kora?

- (i) He wanted to become a monk.
- (ii) He wanted peace.
- (iii) He was practising meditation from a long time.
- (iv) He was writing an academic paper on the Kailash kora.

- 3. The plateau is pockmarked with salt flats and brackish lakes, vestiges of the Tethys Ocean which bordered Tibet before the great continental collision that lifted it skyward. This one was a hive of activity, men with pickaxes and shovels trudging back and forth in their long sheepskin coats and salt-encrusted boots.**

(a) Why is it that on the top of the mountain there is a plateau pockmarked with salt flats?

(b) What activity was going on in the area where there were flats of salt?

(c) Where is the author in the given extract?

- (i) He has reached Hor.
- (ii) He is sitting in a cafe.
- (iii) He is in a canvas tent.
- (iv) He is in a guest house.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

- 1.** Describe the initial phase of their journey.
- 2.** How did Tsetan manoeuvre across the first patch of snow that they came across?
- 3.** What difficulties did Tsetan face while taking shortcuts?
- 4.** What made the author believe that his strategy of positive thinking went well?
- 5.** Why, do you think, the chapter has been titled 'Silk Road'?

(Constructed Response Question)

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

- 1.** Describe the author's journey from the top of the pass to his stay at Hor.
- 2.** "He's an adventurer, but at heart he was more a meticulous academic than a daredevil." Explain the truth of the statement based on your reading of the chapter 'Silk Road'.

(Constructed Response Question)

- 3.** The author realised that the snow was both dangerous as well as beautiful. Justify.



1

A Photograph

— Kathleen Shirley Toulson

About the Poet

Kathleen Shirley Toulson was an English writer, poet, journalist and local politician. She was born on 20 May 1924, at Henley-on-Thames, United Kingdom. Toulson attended Prior's Field School and worked with the Auxiliary Territorial Service during World War II. Starting in 1977 with her book, *The Drovers' Roads of Wales*, Toulson was the author of several books on the subject of walking routes used by farmers moving livestock from Wales to England.

Introduction

The poem presents a contrast between the permanence of nature and the transitory (ever-changing) nature of the lives of human beings. Human life is not permanent. We undergo stark changes from birth until old age when we finally meet the end. On the other hand, elements of nature like the sea, tend to remain in the same state. Man is a mortal being but nature has the quality of permanence. The poet is reminiscing about her past while also recollecting the past of her mother as she looks at a photograph of her mother when she was a young girl.

THEME

The poem 'A Photograph' focuses on the concept of loss, memory and the transience of life, which forms the basis of human life. The poet establishes that people may die, but strangely, they continue to live within individuals in the form of memories.

Summary

The poet has a photograph of her late mother and her two cousins when they had gone paddling. Her mother was the eldest of the three. She was around 12 years of age at the time the photograph was taken. The poet says that her mother had such a lovely face, before she was born. The three girls were escorted to the beach by their uncle, and the photograph was taken by him. The girls stood in the shallow waters, as the sea waves seemed to be washing their transient feet. The sea remains as permanent as ever.

After a gap of over 20-30 years, when her mother looked at the photograph, she would be amused at the way in which they had been dressed for the beach. She would laugh as she thought about her wonderful childhood.

The poet now says that as she looks at the photograph, she realises that the sea holiday was her mother's past, and now that her mother is no longer with her, the joy and laughter of her mother, has become a thing of the past for the poet. Both mother and daughter, had lost their joy and laughter with the passage of time. And both of them were disappointed as they had to struggle to handle their respective losses. It has been over 12 years since her mother's demise,

and all that remains in the world for the poet is the silence that was brought upon her by the loss of her dear mother.

POETIC DEVICES

Allusion

“The cardboard” is an indirect reference to something that originates from outside the text.

Transferred Epithet

“Terribly transient feet” – human life is temporary, not the feet itself (we transfer an adjective which is usually associated with a human being to another object or idea)

Alliteration

“my mother’s”, “stood still to smile”, “terribly transient feet” (repetition of sound ‘t’) and “its silence silences” (repetition of sound ‘s’)

Oxymoron

“laboured ease” (the coming together of two opposite ideas to describe the same concept)

Personification

“the cardboard shows me”, “and the sea, which appears to have changed less”, “silence silences” (the situation has been given a human quality)

Enjambment

Used by the poet in the second and third verses (the continuation of a sentence or phrase from one line of poetry to the next). An enjambed line typically lacks punctuation at its line break, so the reader is carried smoothly and swiftly – without interruption – to the next line of the poem.

Synechdoche

“transient feet” (in this, a small part is used to describe the whole thing) Here, “feet” is used to describe the whole human being and not only their feet.

Explanation of the Poem

1. The cardboard shows me how it was
When the two girl cousins went paddling,
Each one holding one of my mother's hands,
And she the big girl – some twelve years or so.
All three stood still to smile through their hair
At the uncle with the camera. A sweet face,
My mother's, that was before I was born.
And the sea, which appears to have changed less,
Washed their terribly transient feet.

Exp- In the first verse, the poet has a photograph that has been stuck on to a piece of cardboard. The picture is of her mother and cousins, when they had gone paddling to the beach. She was just twelve years of age at that time. In the picture, the three girls were smiling at the camera through their hair that was strewn all over their face. The poet looks at the picture and exclaims about the beauty of her mother before she was born. She says this perhaps, as she had seen the changes in her mother's face while she was growing old. The poet says that the picture showed the waves that were slipping away from under the feet of her mother and aunts. This is to point out the transient

nature of human beings in contrast to the permanence of nature. The waves keep going back to their source and repeat their flow to and from the shore. (Feet is used to refer to human beings)

2. Some twenty — thirty — years later
 She'd laugh at the snapshot. "See Betty
 And Dolly," she'd say, "and look how they
 Dressed us for the beach." The sea holiday
 Was her past, mine is her laughter. Both wry
 With the laboured ease of loss.

Exp- The poet says that some twenty to thirty years after the picture was taken, her mother would look at the photograph and laugh. She would take the names of her cousins Betty and Dolly and tell her daughter in an amused way, to look at the attire they were made to wear by the elders while going to the beach. With great sorrow, the poet says that for her mother, the sea holiday was her past. But for the poet, the past is the laughter of her mother while she reminisced about the sea holiday. She adds that both of them were very cynical when faced with loss, but tried hard to lessen the pain that loss had given them.

3. Now she's been dead nearly as many years
 As that girl lived. And of this circumstance
 There is nothing to say at all.
 Its silence silences.

Exp- The poet says that the number of years that have passed since her mother died is equal to her age when the photograph was taken. With great sorrow she says that the circumstances that had resulted have caused a great deal of silence in her life. With great poignance, she says that the silence of the circumstance supersedes all words and does not leave room to say anything.

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINK IT OUT

1. What does the word 'cardboard' denote in the poem? Why has this word been used?
2. What has the camera captured?
3. What has not changed over the years? Does this suggest something to you?
4. The poet's mother laughed at the snapshot. What did this laugh indicate?
5. What is the meaning of the line "Both wry with the laboured ease of loss."
6. What does "this circumstance" refer to?
7. The three stanzas depict three different phases. What are they?

Ans. 1. In the poem, the word 'cardboard' means a medium or base, which supports the photograph. In the olden days, the pictures would be developed, printed and stuck

- on to cardboards to ensure that they do not get spoiled. Sometimes it would be further strengthened by framing it within a glass and wooden frame.
2. The camera has captured the poet's mother and her two cousins, Betty and Dolly, on the beach. They went for paddling where her mother's uncle captured the nostalgic moment. Her mother was around twelve years old and stood in the middle. She was holding the hands of her cousins who were on either side of her. It was one of her mother's favourite memories of the past. Therefore, it would be appropriate to state that youth, innocence, and memories were captured by the camera.
 3. The lines 'And the sea, which appears to have changed less' depicts that the sea which touched her mother's feet is the one which has remained unchanged in all these years. Contrarily, her mother and her cousins grew older. And her mother has bid good bye to the mortal world. The sea symbolises eternity and immortality. Human beings have a life span and they are known as mortal beings. That is, this human life is not permanent. The poet's mother had aged and changed from what she was in the photograph, and the poet's life too has undergone a drastic change with the demise of her dear mother. This suggests that 'change' is the only thing 'permanent' in man's life.
 4. The poet's mother laughed at the snapshot while recalling the occasion when she was enjoying on the beach with her cousin sisters. She looked at the photograph and remembered how their parents would dress them up for the beach holiday. Her laugh indicated the joy that she experienced while leading a carefree and pleasure-filled life as a child. Childhood is the best part of our lives. Behind the laugh, perhaps there is a hidden longing for the times gone by, and it was also indicative of a closure to the memories of childhood. The nostalgia that accompanied the photograph was inexplicable.
 5. In the poem, the poet is talking about losses – the loss of her mother's memorable childhood, and the loss of the poet's memories of her mother reminiscing about her childhood. Strangely, both of them have lost the best memories of their lives to time. Both of them have changed with the circumstances, but they have been working very hard to ensure that they handle the irony of life with greater ease.
 6. The words 'this circumstance' refers to the situation they were in. Time keeps moving and changes happened in the lives of her mother and her own. The mother could not change the life she led and the poet could not enliven her memories. She says that there is nothing one can say to pacify someone who is facing such circumstances, thus, granting silence the power to take charge and supersede words, actions and thoughts.
 7. The first stanza depicts her mother's childhood days when she was around twelve years of age. It illustrates the fun and frolic that was part of her life as a little girl. In the second stanza, the poet refers the child who has changed over the years and grown older. Here the childhood of the poet is paralleled with the mother who is probably around thirty-two to forty-two years of age. In the last stanza, the poet speaks about a time when it was about twelve years since her mother's demise. The poem covers the childhood, middle age and demise of the poet's mother.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

(3 Marks each)

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. The cardboard shows me how it was
 When the two girl cousins went paddling,
 Each one holding one of my mother's hands,
 And she the big girl — some twelve years or so.

- (a) How does this extract contrast with the rest of the poem?
(b) Why is there no punctuation at the end of line 1 of the stanza?

- (i) To show that the poet is speaking in a casual tone
(ii) To create a sense of continuity between the past and the present
(iii) To indicate that the poet is confused about her feelings
(iv) Both (i) and (ii)

- (c) What does the use of the word 'paddling' suggest?

- Ans.** (a) This extract contrasts with the rest of the poem by showing the happiness and innocence of the past, while the rest of the poem shows the sadness and loss of the present.
(b) (iv) Both (i) and (ii)
(c) The use of the word 'paddling' suggests that the girls were having fun in the water.

2. All three stood still to smile through their hair
 At the uncle with the camera. A sweet face,
 My mother's, that was before I was born.
 And the sea, which appears to have changed less,
 Washed their terribly transient feet.

- (a) Who is the uncle with the camera in the stanza?
(b) What is the effect of using the word 'still' in line 1 of the stanza? Select the option that is NOT TRUE.

- (i) To show that the photograph captures a moment in time
(ii) To contrast the movement of the sea with the stillness of the people
(iii) To imply that the people are no longer alive or smiling
(iv) To create a sense of suspense and mystery

- (c) How does this extract relate to the theme of nostalgia in the poem?

- Ans.** (a) The uncle with the camera is the poet's mother's uncle.
(b) (iv) To create a sense of suspense and mystery
(c) This extract relates to the theme of nostalgia in the poem by showing the poet's longing for her mother and her childhood.

3. The sea holiday
was her past, mine is her laughter. Both wry
with the laboured ease of loss.

(a) Explain the phrase 'laboured ease of loss'.

(b) What does the use of the word 'holiday' suggest?

- (i) The poet's mother enjoyed her time at the sea.
- (ii) The poet's mother was a carefree and adventurous person.
- (iii) The poet's mother had a different lifestyle than the poet.
- (iv) All of these

(c) What does the word 'wry' mean in the context?

- Ans.** (a) The phrase 'laboured ease of loss' suggests that the poet and her mother have learned to cope with their losses, but it is not easy or natural for them.
- (b) (iv) All of these
- (c) The word 'wry' means dry or mocking in this context.

4. Now she's been dead nearly as many years
As that girl lived. And of this circumstance
There is nothing to say at all.
Its silence silences.

(a) Explain, 'Its silence silences.'

(b) Why is there nothing to say about the death of the poet's mother?

- (i) Because the poet was more focussed on the photograph
- (ii) Because the poet was not on talking terms with her mother
- (iii) Because the death of the poet's mother has left a deep void in the poet's heart
- (iv) Because the poet did not have a good relationship with her mother

(c) What does the poet remember of that girl?

- Ans.** (a) The loss of her mother is too deep for the poet. Now she has nothing to say at all. The silence of the whole situation silences the poet and leaves her quiet.
- (b) (iii) Because the death of the poet's mother has left a deep void in the poet's heart
- (c) The poet remembers how much her mother had changed from a young girl. She also remembers the sweet laughter of her mother.

5. Some twenty — thirty — years later
She'd laugh at the snapshot. "See Betty
And Dolly," she'd say, "and look how they
Dressed us for the beach."

(a) Who are Betty and Dolly?

(b) Why did 'she' laugh?

- (i) Because of the funny dresses they were wearing for the beach holiday
- (ii) Because she remembered a joke one of them had cracked

(iii) Because of the funny dresses they were wearing as children

(iv) Because of the funny man they saw at the sea holiday

(c) Identify the poetic device used in the given stanza.

Ans. (a) Betty and Dolly were her cousins who had gone with her to the beach for paddling.

(b) (i) Because of the funny dresses they were wearing for the beach holiday

(c) The poetic device, enjambment, has been used in the given stanza.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. What was in the cardboard that the poet has spoken about?

Ans. The cardboard had the picture of three girls who had gone on a beach holiday. The girls were her mother and her cousins when they were small children. This photograph had captured the joy, buoyant spirits and freedom of her mother's childhood.

2. What do you learn about the poet's mother from the photograph?

Ans. The poet's mother was a twelve-year-old girl and was the eldest of the three girls in the picture. She had a sweet face and enjoyed swimming as well as wading in the seawater with her cousins. She held the memories of her childhood very close to her heart.

3. How did the three girls face the camera?

Ans. The three of them stood still to smile through their hair that was strewn all over their face, as their uncle captured the moment in his camera. The poet's mother stood in the middle with her two younger cousins standing on either side.

4. The poet's mother laughs at her past. How does the poet react to her past?

Ans. The sea holiday was a past experience for the poet's mother. A glimpse of the photograph perhaps revived some feelings of shared joy and she laughed. She was thinking about the time when her mother was reacting to her childhood photograph, some twenty to thirty years after it was taken. The poet was overcome with emotion as she was not able to express in words the sorrow she experienced due to the loss of her mother.

5. Why, do you think, the poet says, "Its silence silences."?

Ans. The poet has no words to express her reaction to such a solemn and painful incident. Death silences everyone. The extensive quietness and prevailing misfortune silences her and her mother. Her mother has lost her happy childhood, while the poet is embroiled in a pall of gloom even after twelve years of her mother's death. The circumstances of loss that she and her mother underwent were so painful that she is at a loss of words to express them. The silence of the loss is so powerful that no sound or expression can express it as well as the silence itself.

6. Comment on the tone of the poem.

Ans. The tone of the poem is that of sadness. Shirley Toulson looks at an old photograph of her mother and is sadly reminded of her, who is no more. She mentions the death of her mother indirectly and this photograph has made her speechless and silent.

7. Why does the poet feel nostalgic?

Ans. The poet sees an old photograph of her mother in which she was standing on the beach with her two cousins – Dolly and Betty. They were enjoying themselves. The photograph captured her mother's sweet and smiling face. At that time, she was around twelve years

old. The poet remembers how her mother used to laugh whenever she looked at that old photograph. But time has passed and now the poet has been left only with the memories of her mother. Thus, she feels nostalgic.

8. The poet's mother laughed at the snapshot. What does this laugh indicate?

Ans. The poet's mother laughed at the snapshot. This is an indication of the fun and joy she had experienced during the beach holiday and she had fond memories of that particular incident. It brought joy to her when she looked at the snapshot.

9. Explain, 'the sea holiday was her past, mine is her laughter'.

Ans. Gone are the childhood days of the poet's mother and the sea holiday that had become her past. The photograph flashes her back to the scene that was captured around 30 years ago. Gone is the carefree laughter of her mother which was love at one time. But now, the laughter of her mother has eventually become a thing of the past for the poet. She has silently resigned herself to this fate.

10. What is the meaning of the line "Both wry with the laboured ease of loss."?

Ans. The line expresses the similarity between the facial expressions of her mother and herself. Both faces had turned very cynical owing to the terrible feeling of loss in their respective lives. The mother was sad about the absence of a happy and cheerful childhood. The poet had turned sad at the loss of her mother's laughter as the latter was dead.

11. Briefly evaluate the poet's attitude towards life as seen in the last stanza of the poem, 'A Photograph'.

Ans. The period of nearly twelve years since the poet's mother passed away, has been painful for the poet. She can not hear her laughter anymore. There is only silence now. The life of the poet has been dull and eventless after the death of her mother. The void created by her death is slowly becoming less painful. The time that passes silently but steadily weakens old memories of loss and grief.

12. What did the girls do on the sea beach?

Ans. The poet's mother is on the beach with two of her girl cousins. Each of the cousins is holding one of the hands of the poet's mother who is older than them. The wind was blowing on the beach, the hair was flying on the girls' faces and they were very happy. Their smiles could be seen even through their hair. They were smiling at the person who was taking their snap at that time. It was their uncle who was capturing the three girls on his camera. While the young girls stood in the sea, the water washed their mortal feet.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. What impression do you form of the poet and the poet's mother after reading the poem 'A Photograph'? *(Constructed Response Question)*

Ans. The poem presents the poet as a sensitive person who is quite affectionate towards her mother and is deeply attached to her. She loves her 'sweet' face and has obviously observed the changes in it as she advanced in age. She remembers all the incidents connected with her life including her laughter as she sat looking at the photograph, years after it was taken. She finds it hard to bear her death. The pangs of separation push her to speechlessness. The poet's mother appears as an attractive person with a sweet face and beautiful smile.

She has a friendly temperament and interacts well with other people. She has great affection towards her cousins and goes with them for a sea holiday where they appear to have created magical and nostalgic moments. She poses with them smilingly for a snap. Her laughter on seeing the dresses in the snap shows her fine temperament and sense of humour.

- 2. “Its silence silences,” writes Shirley Toulson. The loss of her mother has silenced her. Do you think that this attitude of the poet is the right attitude to live life? Why/Why not? (Constructed Response Question)**

Ans. There is no doubt that Shirley Toulson has given a very touching tribute to her mother by remembering her through her poem ‘A Photograph.’ It is apparent that she is nostalgic and is grieving the loss of her mother. She avers that despite it being nearly twelve years since her mother’s passing, she has not been able to adjust to the circumstances too well. She finds herself surrounded by silence and a deep void.

It is difficult to handle the loss of someone close to one’s heart. But the attitude shown by the poet may hamper the progress she needs to make in her life. Man is mortal, and death is imminent. Therefore, instead of succumbing to emotions, we must try to live the life our beloved ones wanted us to lead. If we let ourselves get depressed because of their passing and forget to live, we may be distressing the souls of those who have gone.

- 3. Happy moments are short-lived but they provide a lifetime memory. They provide a cushion to bear the difficulties which the future has in store for us. Comment in light of the poem ‘A Photograph’ by Shirley Toulson. (Constructed Response Question)**

Ans. Our life is a mixture of happy as well as adverse times. We must learn to hold on to those happy memories which provided us with immense joy and happiness. As life is not a bed of roses, everyone at one stage or another is likely to face difficulties. Life is like a roller-coaster ride with all its high and low moments.

The happy moments can help to give us solace and fill us with positivity that may come handy to tackle difficult times. Change is the only thing that is permanent in life. Therefore, if times are bad, that too will change and usher in good times. It is this combination that provides the cushion to soften the difficult times, and to maintain control when the going is good.

- 4. ‘Both wry with the laboured ease of loss.’ The poet is missing her mother. What is the role of the mother in forming the personality of a child? (Constructed Response Question)**

Ans. A mother’s role in shaping the personality of a child is significant. The child watches his/her mother intently and learns the techniques of surviving in the world. The mother plays an important role in making a child become a good human being. When a mother is nurturing and taking care of her child, she develops a strong and healthy bond with the child.

This bond snaps after a while, when the parent is aged and has to surrender to the final phase of life – death. This is a traumatic moment for the child. But loss of loved ones, moments, and things is imminent. Just as, when the poet lost her mother, and the mother her childhood, and both of them were trying to ease the pain that ensued, with a great deal of difficulty. One wonders whether it was the exceptionally sensitive nature of the mother in dealing with her loss that was seen in her daughter, who was unable to handle the loss of her mother, even after twelve years of her demise.

Extract-based Questions

1. The cardboard shows me how it was
When the two girl cousins went paddling.
Each one holding one of my mother's hands,
And she the big girl — some twelve years or so.

- (a) What does the word ‘cardboard’ refer to in the stanza?
- (b) How old was the poet’s mother when this photograph was taken?
- (i) Ten years
- (ii) Twelve years
- (iii) Fourteen years
- (iv) Sixteen years
- (c) What is the rhyme scheme of the stanza?

2. All three stood still to smile through their hair
At the uncle with the camera. A sweet face,
My mother's, that was before I was born.
And the sea, which appears to have changed less,
Washed their terribly transient feet.

- (a) What are the three of them doing in the photograph?**
- (i) Playing (ii) Standing beside their house
(iii) Holding hands (iv) Holding hands and paddling
- (b) How does the poet feel about her mother's sweet face?**
- (c) What does the use of the word 'transient' suggest?**

3. Some twenty — thirty — years later
She'd laugh at the snapshot. "See Betty
And Dolly," she'd say, "and look how they
Dressed us for the beach." The sea holiday
Was her past, mine is her laughter. Both wry
With the laboured ease of loss.

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Short Answer Questions

(40–50 words)

1. Why are the feet said to be transient?
2. What is the role that the cousins played in the mother's life?
3. What had the camera captured in the poem 'A Photograph'?
4. A philosopher once said, "Nothing is permanent except change". Express your views in reference to the poem 'A Photograph'.
(Constructed Response Question)
5. Does the poet's mother come across as an emotional wreck?
(Constructed Response Question)

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 words)

1. Compare and contrast the relationship that existed between the mother and daughter in 'A Photograph', with the author and his grandmother in 'The Portrait of a Lady.'
(Constructed Response Question)
2. Have you ever experienced loss in your life? How did you handle it?
(Constructed Response Question)



2 The Laburnum Top

— Ted Hughes

About the Poet

Ted Hughes was an English poet, translator, and children's writer. He was born on 17 August, 1930 in the United Kingdom. Critics frequently rank him as one of the best poets of his generation and one of the twentieth century's greatest writers. He was appointed Poet Laureate in 1984 and held the office until his death.

Introduction

The poem brings to the reader's attention the relationship between birds and trees. A laburnum tree stands silent and still. A goldfinch builds a nest and breeds her chicks upon the branches of the tree. The poet highlights the difference in appearance of the tree when the bird sits on its branches and when it flies away. The poet emphasises the dependence of the different elements of nature on each other for their survival, happiness and growth.

THEME

The poem 'The Laburnum Top' is a beautiful poem in which the poet has used the laburnum tree and goldfinch as a symbol of life and its fluctuations. The laburnum tree symbolizes the pattern of our life which is usually dull and inanimate. The theme of the poem is the symbiotic or the close and long-term biological interaction between two different biological organisms, in this case the tree and the bird.

Summary

The poet has drawn a beautiful picture of an autumn afternoon. The laburnum tree is silent and still. Its leaves have turned yellow and some seeds have fallen. However, as soon as a goldfinch comes and sits on its branches, the whole tree comes to life. The poet has compared the alert, abrupt and sleek movement of the goldfinch with that of a lizard. After feeding her young ones, the goldfinch flies away towards the infinite sky. The laburnum tree becomes quiet and silent once again.

This is how the cycle of life goes on in nature. It is all instinctive. The mother bird makes her nest amongst the thick leaves of a tree. She brings up her chicks until they are strong enough to fly and find their food on their own. The yellow bird has her shelter on the tree where she feeds her young ones. The dependence of the tree on the bird and the bird on the tree has been depicted with a great deal of sensitivity by the poet.

POETIC DEVICES

Alliteration

repetition of a consonant sound at the beginning of two or more consecutive words—
“September sunlight”, “tree trembles”

Simile

comparison between two things using ‘like’ or ‘as’
“sleek as a lizard”

Metaphor

a figure of speech in which a word or phrase denoting one kind of object or action is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them

“a machine starts up” (the family of the goldfinch is a machine)

“It is the engine of her family” (the chicks in the nest are the engine)

“Showing her barred face identity mask” (the stripes caused by the shadows of the laburnum on its face is a mask)

Personification

the attributes of human characteristics to something non-human

“the whole tree trembles and thrills”

Transferred Epithet

the figure of speech where the adverb is transferred to another noun

“her barred face”, “identity mask”

Explanation of the Poem

1. The Laburnum top is silent, quite still
In the afternoon yellow September sunlight,
A few leaves yellowing, all its seeds fallen.

Exp- The poet was observing a laburnum tree. It stood tall, but was silent and still. It was afternoon, and the yellow hue of the sunlight was shining on the few leaves that were left on the tree. Being September, most of the leaves and seeds had fallen off the tree. All that could be noticed was the silence in the environment. The colour yellow symbolizes happiness, warmth and sunshine in most cultures; these are characteristics of the yellow sun and its effects on every object, animate and inanimate.

2. Till the goldfinch comes, with a twitching chirrup
A suddenness, a startlement, at a branch end.
Then sleek as a lizard, and alert, and abrupt,
She enters the thickness, and a machine starts up
Of chitterings, and a tremor of wings, and trillings —
The whole tree trembles and thrills.

Exp- This silence was all of a sudden broken with the arrival of a beautiful yellow coloured bird. A Goldfinch bird comes suddenly with a twitching chirrup, and startles the branch upon which she has perched. The bird with sleek, rapid, and alert moments like that

of a lizard, enters the thickness of the laburnum's branches in which her young ones live. She has started the engine and her younger ones started chirruping and imitating vibrations with wings, making a sound like a machine. The whole interaction between mother and children comes across as the sound and effect of the starting of a machine and its working. Because of the movement of the bird and her young ones, the tree starts to shake and thrill.

The poet has given two opposite scenarios of the tree. The tree first being death-like and still and then giving life and shelter to the bird and her young ones. The birds have given life to an almost dead tree. And alternately, the tree has given a place for the birds to hatch and grow.

3. *It is the engine of her family.*

She stokes it full, then flirts out to a branch-end

Showing her barred face identity mask

Exp- The chicks in the nest are the engine of her family. She provides food to her young ones and moves to the end of a branch to ensure that there are no predators and that her children are safe. She teaches her children to identify her face that appears to be striped as a result of the shadow of the branches and leaves falling on it. The children learn to identify their mother by looking at her barred face that resembles a mask.

4. *Then with eerie delicate whistle-chirrup whisperings*

She launches away, towards the infinite

And the laburnum subsides to empty.

Exp- After the completion of her motherly duties, the bird makes delicate whistle-like chirping sounds to her little chicks and flies off into the infinity of the skies. This saddens the laburnum again and it slips into silence and solitude.

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINK IT OUT

1. What do you notice about the beginning and the ending of the poem?
2. To what is the bird's movement compared? What is the basis for the comparison?
3. Why is the image of the engine evoked by the poet?
4. What do you like most about the poem?
5. What does the phrase 'her barred face identity mask' mean?

Ans.

1. At the beginning and at the end of the poem, the laburnum tree was standing silent and still, with a feeling of emptiness.
2. The goldfinch's movement is compared to that of a lizard because she was as abrupt, sleek and alert as the latter. The poet says that the bird was sleek, alert and abrupt like the lizard, as she enters the thickness that nests her little chicks.
3. An engine is essential to run a machine. The bird is compared to the engine as she is the feeder of her family. The poet assesses the entire activity that occurred

on the laburnum tree and compares the bird to an engine and her family to the machine. She sets off the machine with her presence and her chirping, and enlivens the fledgelings that are still dependent on her for food and life. The image of the engine evokes the beginning of life and activity.

4. The most attractive portion in the poem is the beautiful relationship between the laburnum tree and the goldfinch. The effect the bird has on the tree is incredible.
5. The phrase “her barred face identity mask” means that the bird’s face with the stripes formed by the shadow of the branches and leaves, became her identity and the symbol of recognition for her chicks.

NOTE DOWN

1. the sound words
2. the movement words
3. the dominant colour in the poem

- Ans.** 1. Twitching, chirrup, chitterings, trillings, whispering
2. Comes, enters, starts up, flirts out, launches away, tremble, subside
3. Yellow

LIST THE FOLLOWING

1. Words which describe ‘sleek’, ‘alert’ and ‘abrupt’.
2. Words with the sound ‘ch’ as in ‘chart’ and ‘tr’ as in ‘trembles’ in the poem.
3. Other sounds that occur frequently in the poem.

- Ans.** 1. Lizard, machine, and suddenness
2. Goldfinch, branch, chitterings, chirrup, trillings, twitching, tremors
3. ‘ing’ sound in words like twitching, chitterings, wings, trillings, whisperings

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

(3 Marks each)

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. The Laburnum top is silent, quite still
In the afternoon yellow September sunlight,
A few leaves yellowing, all its seeds fallen.

(a) What do you understand by the ‘laburnum top’?

(b) What has happened to the tree?

- (i) The tree is being worshipped.
- (ii) The tree has been cut down.
- (iii) The leaves of the tree have turned purple and are falling down.
- (iv) The leaves of the tree have turned yellow and its seeds are falling down.

(c) Find a word from the stanza which is the antonym of the word ‘noisy’.

- Ans.** (a) ‘Laburnum top’ means the top part of the laburnum tree.

- (b) (iv) The leaves of the tree have turned yellow and its seeds are falling down.
 (c) The word 'silent' is the antonym of the word 'noisy'.

2. Till the goldfinch comes, with a twitching chirrup
 A suddenness, a startlement, at a branch end.
 Then sleek as a lizard, and alert, and abrupt,
 She enters the thickness, and a machine starts up
 Of chitterings, and a tremor of wings, and trillings —
 The whole tree trembles and thrills.

(a) How is the goldfinch described in the given stanza?

(b) How did the bird arrive on the branch of the tree?

- (i) With a chirping sound (ii) With a twitching chirrup
 (iii) Without making any sound (iv) Circling above the tree for a while

(c) What does 'machine' refer to in the given stanza?

- Ans. (a) The goldfinch is described as sleek, alert and abrupt in the given stanza.
 (b) (ii) With a twitching chirrup
 (c) It refers to the nest of the goldfinch where its young ones are staying.

3. It is the engine of her family.
 She stokes it full, then flirts out to a branch-end
 Showing her barred face identity mask
 Then with eerie delicate whistle-chirrup whisperings
 She launches away, towards the infinite
 And the laburnum subsides to empty.

(a) What does the poet mean by 'the engine of her family'?

(b) What happened to the bird?

- (i) She completed her motherly duties and flew away.
 (ii) She flew to the other side of the branch.
 (iii) She stayed there and stared into the sky.
 (iv) She took some rest in the nest and then flew away.

(c) How does the poet use imagery to create an effect in the extract? Explain with examples.

- Ans. (a) By 'the engine of her family' the poet means the bird's nest.
 (b) (i) She completed her motherly duties and flew away.
 (c) The poet uses 'imagery' to create an effect of vividness and contrast in the extract. He uses words and phrases that appeal to the senses of sight, sound, and touch to describe the bird and the tree.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. How does the laburnum tree appear in September? Does the arrival of the goldfinch bring about a change in it?

Ans. It is autumn, and the laburnum tree has hardly any leaves and seeds left on it. Therefore, it stands silent and quiet in the afternoon, under the yellow September sunlight. However as soon as the goldfinch comes and perches on its branch, it bursts into activity and life. There is plenty of sound and movement in its branches.

2. Why is the poem named 'The Laburnum Top'?

Ans. The poem has been named 'The Laburnum Top' because the top of the laburnum tree has been described in detail in the poem. It is on the top of the laburnum tree, in the thickness of its branches, that the nest of the goldfinch is located.

3. What is the significance of 'yellow' in the poem?

Ans. The flowers of the laburnum tree and its leaves both are yellow in colour. The feathers of the goldfinch are also yellow in colour. The sun is spreading its yellow hue on everything it surveys. The poem signifies the efforts that the bird takes to ensure the safety of her babies and the colour yellow all around helps in camouflaging from predators. It also establishes a unity in everything around – the environment, the tree and the bird.

4. How is the tree transformed during the bird's visit?

Ans. As soon as the goldfinch sits on the tree, the silent and still laburnum tree suddenly starts trembling and moving with joy. The whole tree comes to life, the branches shake, and there is a lot of noise as the chicks of the goldfinch begin to chirrup and trill on seeing their mother.

5. Why is the image of the engine evoked by the poet in 'The Laburnum Top'?

Ans. The image of the engine has been evoked by the poet in 'The Laburnum Top' to establish the loud sound and activities that begin as soon as the mother bird begins her routine. She chitters, tremors and trills, just as an engine is started, and enlivens the chicks. It is a process of setting them on to activities that they have to follow every day to become young independent birds. The stirrings and the sounds and energy that can be seen when the goldfinch enters the thickness of the tree, sets alive the dead and silent laburnum tree too. The engine begins to whirr and the entire surrounding is set into motion. Life begins!

6. What is the engine of the machine? What is its fuel?

Ans. The chicks in the nest have been called the engine of the machine. The fuel of the engine is the food that the goldfinch brings for her chicks. When goldfinch feeds them, the engine starts working and naturally the machine too.

7. How does the laburnum ensure security for the nestlings?

Ans. The bark and the seeds of the laburnum tree are believed to be poisonous. So, predators generally stay away from the tree. Besides this, the paling leaves in the autumn season, and the yellow sunlight, complemented by the yellow-coloured feathers of the goldfinch, provide a perfect camouflage for the bird and her nestlings. Additionally, she flirts along the branches before she reaches her nest, to ensure that everything is safe before she approaches the nest.

8. Explain the line, 'And the laburnum subsides to empty'.

Ans. This is the last line of the poem. It describes that with the departure of the goldfinch from the laburnum tree, it falls silent. The tree was noisy and lively when the goldfinch came to feed its chicks, but it reverts to its earlier self after her departure from the tree.

9. Explain the expression: "barred face identity mask".

Ans. There is an obvious black colour on the face of the goldfinch bird. So, wherever its face remains bared or hidden behind the yellow leaves and flowers of the tree, it becomes difficult to find it. As a result, its identity remains masked, meaning hidden.

10. What effect does the entrance of the mother goldfinch bird to the inner part of the branch produce?

Ans. Due to the arrival of the mother goldfinch bird to the inner part of the branch, the baby goldfinch birds twitter with delight and shake their wings. Later on, they produce sounds of high notes. As a result, the tree shakes and produces a sound of its own.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. What values do you learn from the goldfinch in the poem 'The Laburnum Top'?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. The goldfinch has its nest on the top of the laburnum tree in the poem 'The Laburnum Top'. Her chicks stay in the nest while she (the mother goldfinch) keeps going out at regular intervals to get food to feed her chicks. This shows her caring nature and highlights the values of motherly care and affection of a mother towards her offspring.

The other aspect of the goldfinch that is captured in the poem is its movement. She arrives at the laburnum top in a sudden manner and is very much alert to her surroundings. The poet had compared her movement with the sleek movement of a lizard. However, there is a reason for her moving like this (in an alert and sudden manner). She is moving in this manner so as to avoid getting noticed by any predator. She does not want any predator to know that her chicks are resting in her nest on the laburnum top as then the predators may kill them or harm them. The values of safety and security for her offsprings are highlighted in this act of the goldfinch.

2. The arrival of the goldfinch on the laburnum top brings about a change in the poem. How do you interpret the change? Is change good or bad in life?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. At the beginning of the poem, the top of the laburnum tree in the poem is silent and still. There is hardly any activity on it as the sunlight falls on it on a September afternoon. However, with the arrival of the goldfinch, it suddenly becomes a place of feverish activity. The silence of the place is broken by the twittering and chirruping of the chicks and the goldfinch.

I think that the change brought about by the arrival of the goldfinch on the laburnum top is good, as it breaks the monotony. The tree becomes alive and lively with the movement of the goldfinch and the twittering and chirrupings of the chicks.

2. Describe the scene depicted in the poem 'The Laburnum Top'.
(Constructed Response Question)
3. Describe the activities of the laburnum tree.
4. What happened when the goldfinch came to the laburnum tree?
5. Write an account of the wonders of nature in the context of 'The Laburnum Top'.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 words)

1. As the goldfinch, express your gratitude to the laburnum tree for allowing you to make a nest on its top.
(Constructed Response Question)
2. What would have happened to the tree if the goldfinch had not been there to enliven it?
(Constructed Response Question)



3 The Voice of the Rain

— Walt Whitman

About the Poet

Walt Whitman is one of the most influential American poets who was born on May 31, 1819 in West Hills, Long Island, New York. He was nicknamed “Walt” to distinguish him from his father. In 1855, he self-published the collection ‘Leaves of Grass’; the book is now a landmark in American literature. Whitman later worked as a volunteer nurse during the Civil War, writing the collection ‘Drum Taps’ (1865) in connection to the experiences of war-torn soldiers.

Introduction

‘The Voice of the Rain’ is a beautiful poem that relates the importance of nature in human life. This poem is a beautiful conversation (dialogue) between the poet and the rain. This is an imaginary conversation. The rain describes her importance for Mother Earth and her inhabitants. The rain presents herself to be unbiased, who showers her blessings equally upon everyone. In this poem, the rain symbolises a perpetual periodic lifestyle and how it returns to its origin, making it beautiful and pure and giving it life. In the poem, the poet says that both rain and poetry hold an equally important place on earth. The rain originates from the bottom of the sea. In the form of water vapour, rain rises to the heaven (sky) upwards. It condenses to form clouds and then precipitates on the earth and enables life to survive and to thrive. In the same way, poetry originates from the heart of a poet and goes to various people who praise and criticise it. But in the end, love comes from all directions to the poet.

THEME

The poem signifies the everlasting role that rain plays in nourishing, quenching, purifying and nurturing the different elements of the Mother Earth. The poet finds a similarity between the music and the rain. He feels that both share similar features. He feels that both music and rain take birth from the heart of the earth and after fulfilling its deed, returns to its soul.

Summary

In the poem, the poet casually asks the soft-falling shower, “Who are you?” He is surprised when the rain answers him. It replies that she is the poem of the earth. It is a strange thing for the rain to reply to the poet. The rain tells the poet that she cannot be touched as she rises in the form of water vapour in the sky from the land and the bottomless sea. It changes its shape, yet it remains the same. The vapour changes into clouds due to condensation. Here, the rain describes her journey (water cycle).

It precipitates back on the surface of the earth to provide water to the drought-prone areas, and to beautify and purify the earth (its birthplace). It provides life to the seeds inside the earth and helps them grow. The rain doesn’t care if anyone bothers about her deeds or not, she completes her work and comes back home.

The poet also compares the rain with a song as they both share a common journey. The song originates from the heart of the singer, travels across to fulfill the aim and comes back with due love for the singer (its originator).

POETIC DEVICES

Personification

a poetic device in which non-living things are attributed with human traits. Here, the rain is personified and expressed as a human.

“I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain”

“Eternal I rise impalpable”

“I descend”

Metaphor

a poetic device in which an indirect comparison is done based on some common qualities of two different things.

“I am the Poem of Earth” (rain is being compared to a poem)

Hyperbole

a poetic device in which an idea or a statement is exaggerated.

“Bottomless sea”

Paradox

a poetic device in which a statement is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense, yet it appears to be true.

“I give back life to my own origin”

Parallelism

a poetic device that represents connection and similarity.

“(For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfilment, wandering Reck’d or unreck’d, duly with love returns.)”

Imagery

a poetic device that gives a visual description of something.

“soft-falling shower”

Rhyme Scheme

free verse

Explanation of the Poem

1. *And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower,
Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated:
I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain,
Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless sea,*

Exp- The poet is speaking to the soft drizzle as it falls on him perhaps, and asks it, “who are you?”. To his utter surprise, he receives an answer, and he has translated the voice of the rain in the words his readers can comprehend. Rain tells him that it is the ‘Poem of the Earth’. It says that it carries on an everlasting journey, as it rises in an impalpable form out of the land and the sea, into the skies.

2. Upward to heaven, whence, vaguely form'd, altogether changed, and yet the same,
I descend to lave the droughts, atomies, dust-layers of the globe,
And all that in them without me were seeds only, latent, unborn;

Exp- The rain continues its tale, and says that it rises upward into the heaven and is initially scattered in vague forms in the sky. Its appearance as clouds is different from its original form, but the basic content within it remains unchanged. As the clouds gather and fall down as rain, it washes of the dryness, tiny particles and layers of dust that are found all over the globe. Further, it says that the latent seeds under the surface of the earth that were waiting for the rain to fall, begin to germinate.

3. And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin,
And make pure and beautify it;

Exp- The rain continues its duty of giving back life to its origin, day and night, and ensures that the origin, Mother Earth is always kept pure and beautiful.

4. (For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfilment, wandering
Reck'd or unreck'd, duly with love returns.)

Exp- The last two lines are known as Parenthesis. Here the poet has completed the poem in his words, and has therefore placed it within the brackets. The poet is comparing the rain to the notes of music, which rise and fall like the rain. In doing so, both give fulfilment to the source, whether it is reckoned or unreckoned, in the midst of their journey. Both rain and music aim at returning love to their sources.

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINK IT OUT

- I. 1. There are two voices in the poem. Who do they belong to? Which lines indicate this?
2. What does the phrase “strange to tell” mean?
3. There is a parallel drawn between rain and music. Which words indicate this? Explain the similarity between the two.
4. How is the cyclic movement of rain brought out in the poem? Compare it with what you have learnt in science?
5. Why are the last two lines put within brackets?
6. List the pairs of opposites found in the poem.

Ans. 1. The two voices in the poem are the ‘voice of the rain’ and the ‘voice of the poet’. The line which indicates the voice of the rain is “I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain” and the line which indicates the voice of the poet is “And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower”.

2. The phrase “strange to tell” means that it was difficult to comprehend how the soft-falling rain was replying to the poet’s question. The poet was surprised that the rain had a voice.

3. The lines “For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfilment, wandering/Reck’d or unreck’d, duly with love returns”, draws a parallel between rain and music. Through these lines, the poet compares the rise and fall of rain to the melody of a song. Songs originate from the soul of the singer and travel to numerous listeners. Whether it is liked or not, the song comes back to the soul of the singer and gives him satisfaction. Similarly, the rain that originates from the earth fulfils its duty to beautify and purify the earth and wanders and comes back to love and nurture its creator.
4. In the poem, the rain says that it rises from the land and the bottomless sea in the form of vapour, and then changes its appearance and transforms itself into clouds. It eventually comes down to the earth in the form of rain. While doing so, it washes the drought, cleanses the earth, and provides water to enable the unborn and latent seeds inside the earth to grow. The rain purifies, beautifies and propagates life on earth.
We have learnt in science, that water evaporates in the form of water vapour, then as it goes upwards and mixes with the cooler areas in the atmosphere it condenses and forms clouds. When the clouds get laden with a huge amount of moisture, it comes down as rain. The rain water flows into the rivers, streams, ground, ocean, and to the depth of the earth.
5. The poet has used parenthesis in the last two lines. In the main part of the poem, he has transcribed the voice of the rain for the readers. He has concluded the poem in his own words which has been put within the brackets, wherein the poet is giving his view on the subject. The view being, to draw a similarity between the qualities of the rain and a song.
6. Day, Night; Reck’d, Unreck’d; Rise, Descend

II. Notice the following sentence patterns.

1. *And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower.*

2. *I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain.*

3. *Eternal I rise*

4. *For song...duly with love returns*

Rewrite the above sentences in prose.

- Ans.**
1. I asked the soft-falling shower who it was.
 2. The rain replied that it was the poem of the earth.
 3. The rain tells the poet that it rises eternally.
 4. The poet says that a song travels to the listener from the soul of the singer, and comes back to his soul with the same love with which it had been rendered.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

(3 Marks each)

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. *And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower,
Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated:
I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain,*

(a) What was the strange thing that happened?

- (i) The rain began speaking. (ii) The rain started laughing.
- (iii) The rain ignored the poet. (iv) The rain replied to the poet.

(b) Why is the rain calling itself as 'the Poem of Earth'?

(c) Why is the answer being 'translated' by the poet?

Ans. (a) (iv) The rain replied to the poet.

(b) The rain is calling itself as 'the Poem of Earth' because it is an integral part of the earth.

(c) The answer is being translated by the poet, so that the common people can understand what the rain is saying.

2. Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless sea,
 Upward to heaven, whence, vaguely form'd, altogether
 changed, and yet the same,

(a) What does the word 'eternal' indicate here?

(b) What do you understand by 'altogether changed, and yet the same'?

(c) Why is rain 'impalpable out of the land'?

- (i) Because rain is invisible as it rises
- (ii) Because rain cannot be touched as it rises
- (iii) Because she is up in the sky
- (iv) Because she rises in the form of water vapour

Ans. (a) The word 'eternal' indicates the continuous process of rain which is everlasting.

(b) Here, the poet means that although the form of the rain changes, yet the basic component of all these forms is water which remain the same.

(c) (iv) Because she rises in the form of water vapour

3. I descend to lave the droughts, atomies, dust-layers of the globe,
 And all that in them without me were seeds only, latent, unborn;

(a) With what purpose does the rain descend from the sky?

(b) Why are seeds latent?

(c) What will happen if 'I' was not there?

- (i) It would result in happiness on the Earth.
- (ii) It would not matter to the residents of the Earth.
- (iii) The seeds will remain as seeds and plants will not grow.
- (iv) It would result in the rise of temperature on Earth.

Ans. (a) The rain descends from the sky in order to give life to the dry areas and wash the famine-stricken lands.

(b) Seeds are latent because of lack of water which is needed for them to germinate and form a new plant.

(c) (iii) The seeds will remain as seeds and plants will not grow.

4. And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin,
 And make pure and beautify it;

- (a) In what way does the rain help its place of origin?
(b) What idea do you form by the phrase 'And forever, by day and night'?
(c) The voice of the rain says that it gives back life to its own origin. What does this imply about the relationship between the rain and the earth?
 (i) The rain and the earth are interdependent and harmonious.
 (ii) The rain and the earth are independent and indifferent.
 (iii) The rain and the earth are dependent and unequal.
 (iv) The rain and the earth are conflicting and hostile.

- Ans.** (a) The rain helps its place of origin by providing water to the drought-stricken areas and by washing away impurities from the earth.
(b) 'And forever, by day and night' means continuously without any rest or break.
(c) (i) The rain and the earth are interdependent and harmonious.

5. (For song, issuing from its birth-place, after fulfillment, wandering
 Reck'd or unreck'd, duly with love returns.)

- (a) Why are the above lines put within brackets?
(b) 'Reck'd or unreck'd' means the same as:
 (i) enrichment or no enrichment (ii) to be judged or not judged
 (iii) to purify or not (iv) to wash or not to wash
(c) Where does the song return?

- Ans.** (a) The above lines are put within brackets because they are a general observation made by the poet about the course of a song.
(b) (ii) to be judged or not judged
(c) The song returns to the place of its origin i.e., it comes back to the singer (poet).

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. Why does the poet get surprised?

- Ans.** The poet gets surprised when he gets a response to a question he asks to the rain. The poet is so amazed by this phenomena that he takes it upon himself to translate the voice of the rain for the benefit of mankind.

2. 'I am the Poem of Earth'. How does rain establish this fact?

- Ans.** A poem is a piece of writing in which the words are chosen for their beauty and sound, and are carefully arranged, often in short lines which rhyme. Similarly, the rain follows a carefully arranged process of evaporation and condensation, comes back to the earth with a rhythmic sound, and appears to be falling in straight lines which has its own intrinsic rhyme. In this process of creating poetry, it beautifies the earth from which it originates.

3. “Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless sea”. Explain.

Ans. Water rises impalpably, in the form of vapour from the land and the bottomless sea. It goes upward and changes its shape and form, and falls back on to the earth in the form of rain. As it falls, it cleanses the small dust particles and drought and gives life to the seeds that are lying under the ground. The water that falls flows back into the rivers, oceans, seas, deep into the ground, to resume the process once again.

4. Why does the rain call itself ‘impalpable’?

Ans. Impalpable means something that cannot be felt by touching or seeing. When water takes the form of vapour, it is not visible to the human eye. Thereafter, in the process of cloud formation, condensation is also invisible to man. He knows the process, but cannot touch or see it. Therefore, rain calls itself impalpable.

5. What happens when it rains after the hot summer months?

Ans. During the summer months, everything gets dried up on earth. A lot of dust and grime is seen everywhere on the surface of the earth. The trees dry up and the leaves are coated with dust. When it rains, all the dust that has accumulated on earth gets washed away, giving a new fresh look to nature. The trees begin to look more alive. Besides this, the seeds that are lying underground, latent and unborn, begin to germinate and grow.

6. Why do you think the poet says ‘reck’d or unreck’d’ while giving his opinion about rain?

Ans. The words ‘reck’d and unreck’d’ when expanded reads as reckoned and unreckoned. The poet is trying to emphasise the fact that even if the living beings on earth recognise or do not recognise this natural process that is going on around them, it does not matter to the rain. It continues its cycle diligently and returns with a lot of love for its origin, Mother Earth, only to resume the process again.

7. What is the tone adopted by the poet in this poem? Why?

Ans. The poem adopts a conversational tone. The conversation is between the poet and the rain. This conversation has been translated by the poet for the benefit of his readers. The conversational tone gives it a magical quality of life. One begins to feel that the rain is like a human being that nurtures and cares for all the living beings on earth. He has personified the rain in the poem.

8. What is the central idea of the poem ‘The Voice of the Rain’?

Ans. The poet wants to convey the birth, growth, change and finally the blessings of rain. It is water that turns into clouds, wanders in the sky, takes on strange shapes, but finally in the form of water returns to the earth. It purifies, bathes and adds beauty to all things on the earth. Rain does its duty unmindful of any recognition. Human beings should learn a lesson from this and make efforts to preserve the earth.

9. Justify the title of the poem ‘The Voice of the Rain’.

Ans. ‘The Voice of the Rain’ is an imaginative conversation between the poet and the rain, in which the poet is trying to point out that the rain does have a voice and even compares it with a song. The poet sees the rain as an entity with a voice that is indispensable for the survival of the earth. Therefore, the title of the poem is justly chosen by the poet.

10. ‘Behind the apparent simplicity, the poem hides a deep meaning’. What exactly does the poem convey to the reader?
(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. The poem conveys that like a song, the rain is also everlasting and has an unbreakable

life cycle. It rises from the earth, and comes back to it. The song also originates from its birth place, wanders here and there, whether heeded to or not, and returns with love to its own origin.

11. Describe the never ending cycle of rain.

Ans. Water rises unperceived in the form of vapour from land and water bodies on the earth. It goes up, takes the form of a cloud, changes its shape and falls down on earth in the form of water drops to bathe the small dust particles, land and sea. The water then returns back to the sky from the rivers, oceans and seas after it rains on earth.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. Rain is an eternal process benefiting mankind. Contrast it with human life which is short-lived on this earth. Should we disturb these eternal elements of nature?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. The poem, 'The Voice of the Rain' beautifully shows the continuous process of rain which sounds like music to human ears, as it fulfills our needs. It is an ever-going process which sustains human life and provides us with food, pure air and green cover. On the other hand, human lives are mortal. We come on this earth for a short period and then depart without leaving any mark on this planet. Moreover, human beings, for their greed and selfish motives, indulge in destructive activities which may disturb these eternal processes of nature. We must learn a lesson from nature, which is that if we want a peaceful co-existence, we need not disturb the balance of nature, otherwise the whole of humanity will be in danger. We must learn a lesson from such eternal processes and do something good for humanity at large.

2. Rain does its duty unconcerned of any recognition. What is the lesson we learn from the rain?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Rain is the poem of the earth and follows a rhythmic movement, of rise and fall from and to the earth, its origin. It does not forget its mother and works relentlessly to keep her green, happy and clean. It descends to the earth to wash off the dust and grime, and provide moisture for the seeds lying under the ground to sprout and grow. It fulfils the purpose of its birth by doing the different duties assigned to it, not bothered about pleasing, annoying or satisfying anyone, and finally returns to its mother and rests in her lap. The poet has conveyed a very significant message to man through this poem. Man must do whatever he can to enhance the beauty and splendour of this earth which is his mother too. But unfortunately, he destroys unmindfully, what has been given to him to relish, enjoy, protect and preserve. Therefore, it is important that man understands and values the gifts he receives from nature and stop indulging in its indiscriminate exploitation. Let us take a leaf out of the life cycle of the rain, and become the nurturers and protectors of our Mother Earth.

3. Compare the eternal quality of rain to the transient nature of human life. Elucidate their inherent characteristics.

Ans. The poet has very beautifully explained in the poem that everything that nature gives us has a quality of eternity attached to it. Nature continues to serve all living things on earth. Rain is one such gift provided by nature to nurture life on earth and therefore possesses the quality of being eternal. Nature is an eternal provider. On the contrary, man is a

mortal being. His time on earth is transient. However, he thinks he is the master of all he surveys and does everything in his might to destroy what is eternal. His ruthless and insensitive nature causes the disruption of the natural processes of nature at all levels. Man in his transient life plays the role of a destroyer.

4. Summarise the poem ‘The Voice of the Rain’ in your own words.

Ans. The poet narrates a conversation he had with the falling drops of rain. In the Poem, he asks the rain, “And who art thou?” on which the rain replies by calling itself ‘the poem of Earth.’ Moreover, the rain defines how it rises unnoticeably (as vapour) out of the land and sea, and floats up to the sky, where it converts into clouds. After that, it falls back to the earth to refresh the drought-filled land. This allows the seeds to grow into something necessary and beautiful. Further, the poet equates the role of the poet in making this ‘song’ (poet refers to the poem as a song). He also writes that this ‘song’ is born from the poet’s heart. Besides, it leaves the poet’s soul and then it changes form. But it is the same at its core and eventually, returns to the poet as love from the readers.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. And who art thou? said I to the soft-falling shower,
Which, strange to tell, gave me an answer, as here translated:
I am the Poem of Earth, said the voice of the rain,
- (a) Who is 'I' in the first line?
(b) What does the rain call itself?
(c) Which of the following themes is best represented in the given stanza?
(i) The cycle of water
(ii) The dialogue between man and nature
(iii) The identity of the rain
(iv) The beauty of poetry
2. Eternal I rise impalpable out of the land and the bottomless sea,
Upward to heaven, whence, vaguely form'd, altogether
changed, and yet the same,
I descend to lave the droughts, atomies, dust-layers of the globe,
- (a) What does the word 'atomies' refer to?
(b) Where does it go?
(c) Select the option that is NOT TRUE about the use of the word 'lave' in the last line of the stanza.
(i) It shows movement and action which contrasts with the static and dry state of the earth.
(ii) It shows that the rain is cleaning and refreshing the earth.
(iii) It shows that the rain is destructive and violent.
(iv) It shows that the rain is gentle and soothing.

3. I descend to lave the droughts, atomies, dust-layers of the globe,
And all that in them without me were seeds only, latent, unborn;
And forever, by day and night, I give back life to my own origin,

- (a) The voice of the rain says that it gives back life to its own origin. What does this imply about the relationship between the rain and the earth?
- (b) With what purpose does the rain descend from the sky?
- (c) 'And all that in them without me were seeds only...' What does this suggest about the role of the rain?
- (i) The rain is a creative and nurturing force that enables growth.
 - (ii) The rain is a destructive and oppressive force that prevents growth.
 - (iii) The rain is a passive and neutral force that observes growth.
 - (iv) The rain is a complex and mysterious force that influences growth.

Short Answer Questions

(40–50 words)

1. Why does the poet call this poem a 'translation'?
2. 'Eternal, I rise impalpable.' What gives eternity to rain?
3. How does the rain benefit the earth?
4. How has man's activities disrupted the natural process of the rain?
5. The poem begins in a conversational tone. Who are the two participants? What is the advantage of this method?

Long Answer Questions

(120–150 words)

1. Scientifically explain the process of the water cycle. Does it concur with the claims of the rain made to the poet?
(Constructed Response Question)
2. Compare the relationship of the goldfinch and the laburnum tree with that of man and rain.
(Constructed Response Question)



4

Childhood

— Markus Natten

About the Poet

o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o

Markus Natten is a Norwegian writer who wrote poems in English that deal with serious topics related to human emotions and complex psychological aspects. He raises important questions related to human life. He is known for his poem 'Childhood' which talks about the transition of the poet from his childhood to maturity.

Introduction

o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o

The poet is recalling his childhood with a great deal of remorse. He is not able to place the time during which he lost his childhood. He is disappointed that he was not able to enjoy the best period of his life the way he should have.

THEME

o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o

The poem, 'Childhood' focuses on the theme of loss of innocence. In this poem, the poet, Markus Natten wonders when and where he lost his childhood. In this quest to find the moment, he grew up. Markus highlights the innocence and faith he lost even as he gained rational individuality. Adolescence is usually a confusing time for a child who is unable to immediately come to terms with the physical, hormonal and psychological changes in his or her personality. He becomes a 'young adult'; he neither wants to call himself a child nor an adult. Now, he finally finds the answer that he lost his childhood to some forgotten place and that his childhood has now become a memory. The poem also hints at the hypocrisy prevalent in our society, where people pretend to be nice to each other, but in reality, they do not like each other.

Summary

As the name suggests, this poem is about childhood and innocence. The poet, who is an adult now, misses his childhood days and his innocence. He finds the adults as hypocrites. Hence, he longs to find the innocence which he had in his childhood. The poem has been divided into four stanzas and is in the form of rhetorical questions which the poet is asking to himself. The tone seems to be sad because the poet is missing his innocence which he had during his childhood. In the poem, the poet wonders when he lost his childhood and the innocence he had. He gets conscious because he can no longer see the world as he did earlier and can now sense the hypocrisy in people. He recalls many instances in his life when he could have lost his childhood. He wonders if it was the day when he ceased to be eleven or when he realised that hell and heaven didn't exist in this world and no one could find them in geography. Then, he talks about his realisation that adults are not what they seemed to be and that they are hypocrites. They talk and preach of love, but their actions don't say so. He then wonders

if it was the day when he realised that his mind was his own and capable of producing his own thoughts. No one could own his thoughts. He is an individual with a unique personality. In the last stanza, he talks about the whereabouts of his childhood. He concludes that it had gone to some forgotten place and it can only be found in the innocent face of an infant.

POETIC DEVICES

Inversion

when we reverse (invert) the normal word order of a structure, most commonly the subject-verb order, it is known as inversion.

"To use whichever way I choose."

Refrain

a group of phrase which is repeated in the poem

"When did my childhood go?"

"Was that the day!"

Antithesis

when two opposite words are used together in a sentence

Hell and Heaven

Alliteration

the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of closely connected words

"The time"; "My mind"; "Whichever way"; "Thoughts that"

Personification

the attribution of human characteristics to non-human things and animals. In this poem, childhood is personified.

"It went to some forgotten place."

Enjambment

the continuation of a sentence to multiple lines

Rhyme Scheme

abbccd

Explanation of the Poem

1.

When did my childhood go?

Was it the day I ceased to be eleven,

Was it the time I realised that Hell and Heaven,

Could not be found in Geography,

And therefore could not be,

Was that the day!

Exp- The poet begins his poem with a very poignant question that gets one thinking—"When did my childhood go?". The poet is trying to decipher the course his life has taken, and the changes that happened in the course of time. He wonders if it was when he was eleven years old, or when he realized that "Hell and Heaven" had no geographical representations. These are just the components of a child's bedtime story, which were

probably told to teach moral values to children. Analysing his past has made it evident, that the poet has already begun to rationalise the various facts and myths that he was introduced to as a child.

The poet uses the line, “And therefore could not be” for emphasizing the fact that hell and heaven are non-existent. They happen to be imaginary destinations that have been passed down through generations. However, he wonders, if it was on the day he had begun to rationalise that he lost his childhood. He uses the refrain to express to the reader that he has still not got an answer to his question.

2. When did my childhood go?
Was it the time I realised that adults were not
all they seemed to be,
They talked of love and preached of love,
But did not act so lovingly,
Was that the day!

Exp- In these verses, he is wondering if his upbringing had anything to do with the loss of his childhood. He wondered if it was the behaviour of adults, and their hypocrisy, that had snatched his childhood from him. He remembers that his elders used to preach about love and relationship, but in reality, they do not include love or acts of love in their individual lives. He asks himself, whether the day he realised this dual nature of adults was the day he had lost his childhood.

3. When did my childhood go?
Was it when I found my mind was really mine,
To use whichever way I choose,
Producing thoughts that were not those of other people
But my own, and mine alone
Was that the day!

Exp- The question still unanswered, he now wonders if he had lost his childhood when he realised that he was an individual with a mind of his own. He could think and act the way he chose to. There came a time when he had begun to stop thinking the thoughts that were planted in his mind by others. Thoughts began to get produced in his own mind which were his and sacred to him. Here, there is a concept of self-awareness that develops in the mind of a child after stepping into adolescence. According to the poet, it made him aware of his own body and thoughts. The poet could not think like a child, he had lost his innocence and the touch of purity which is always there in an infant's soul. He tries to recall if that was the day when the change had happened.

4. Where did my childhood go?
It went to some forgotten place,
That's hidden in an infant's face,
 That's all I know.

Exp- In this stanza, the poet becomes practical. He accepts that he is an adult now. He can no longer think like a child and cry over the spilled milk. The past has long gone by, never to return. The question he asks himself has now changed from 'when' to 'where' his childhood had gone. He concludes that it has perhaps gone to a place that is way beyond

his memories and is perhaps, hidden in the face of that infant, whose childhood he has no clue about. But he rests assured that it definitely did exist on the child's face. Other than accepting this fact, neither he had any options to choose from nor he had any clues to help him locate his lost childhood.

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINK IT OUT

1. Identify the stanza that talks of each of the following.

individuality

rationalism

hypocrisy

2. What according to the poem is involved in the process of growing up?

3. What is the poet's feeling towards childhood?

4. Which do you think are the most poetic lines? Why?

Ans. 1. (a) **Individuality** – Third stanza

*When did my childhood go?
Was it when I found my mind was really mine,
To use whichever way I choose,
Producing thoughts that were not those of other people
But my own, and mine alone
Was that the day!*

(b) **Rationalism** – First stanza

*When did my childhood go?
Was it the day I ceased to be eleven,
Was it the time I realised that Hell and Heaven,
Could not be found in Geography,
And therefore could not be,
Was that the day!*

(c) **Hypocrisy** – Second stanza

*When did my childhood go?
Was it the time I realised that adults were not
all they seemed to be,
They talked of love and preached of love,
But did not act so lovingly,
Was that the day!*

2. According to the poem, the process of growing up involves attaining maturity and becoming a rational and logical thinker. When the poet became an adult, he was able to see the hypocrisy of other people. He could distinguish the double standard preach and talk of love. A grown-up can tell the difference between reality and fantasy. A mature person stresses on his thoughts and is capable of having his own opinion.

3. The poet is disappointed and puzzled by the loss of his childhood. He wants to know the moment when he became a grown-up and lost his innocence. He expresses his confusion by asking — when and where did his childhood go.
4. The following lines in the last stanza are the most poetic lines in the poem.

*It went to some forgotten place,
That's hidden in an infant's face,
That's all I know.*

The poet beautifully describes the disappearance of his childhood. He talks about how one can find innocence in an infant's face. It is a process of life that an individual grows and slowly starts understanding the concept of the world and the people around him. During childhood, a person believes in things that aren't true or has a different mindset of reality. When the child grows up and is able to process his own thoughts, he realises that many things don't exist the way he had thought them to be.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

(3 Marks each)

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1.

*When did my childhood go?
Was it the day I ceased to be eleven,
Was it the time I realised that Hell and Heaven,
Could not be found in Geography,
And therefore could not be,
Was that the day!*

- (a) What does the use of the word 'ceased' suggest?
- (b) Do you agree or disagree with the poet's view that childhood is linked to innocence and ignorance? Give reasons for your answer. *(Competency-focused Question)*
- (c) The poet realised that:
 - (i) hell and heaven are on the earth.
 - (ii) hell and heaven are marked on the globe.
 - (iii) hell and heaven do not exist.
 - (iv) hell and heaven are not found in Geography.

- Ans.**
- (a) The use of the word 'ceased' suggests that the poet's childhood ended abruptly and forcefully.
 - (b) I agree with the poet's view that childhood is linked to innocence and ignorance, because children are not exposed to the harsh realities and complexities of the world, and they have a simple and imaginative outlook on life.
 - (c) (iv) hell and heaven are not found in Geography.

2.

When did my childhood go?
Was it the time I realised that adults were not
all they seemed to be,
They talked of love and preached of love,
But did not act so lovingly,
Was that the day!

(a) How did the poet feel when he realised that adults were not all they seemed to be?

(b) Do you think the poet's view of adults is fair or unfair? Give reasons for your answer.
(Competency-focused Question)

(c) Why is the poet confused?

- (i) Because he does not seem to understand when he lost his childhood
- (ii) Because he could not find heaven and hell in geography
- (iii) Because he is getting a lot of negative thoughts
- (iv) Because he has lost his mind

Ans. (a) The poet felt betrayed and disillusioned when he realised that adults were not all they seemed to be.

(b) The poet's view of adults is fair, especially when seen through the eyes of an innocent child who realises that the adults do not practise what they preach. They talk about love and unity but practise hatred and hypocrisy.

(c) (i) Because he does not seem to understand when he lost his childhood

3.

When did my childhood go?
Was it when I found my mind was really mine,
To use whichever way I choose,
Producing thoughts that were not those of other people
But my own, and mine alone
Was that the day!

(a) What did the poet realise?

(b) Identify the poetic device used in 'Was it when I found my mind was really mine'.

(c) What did the poet sense about himself when he realised he could use his own mind the way he wants?

- (i) He sensed that he was as intelligent as his friends.
- (ii) He sensed his own individuality and a separate personality.
- (iii) He sensed that he was very smart.
- (iv) He sensed that he could use his mind in creative work.

Ans. (a) The poet realised that his mind could produce thoughts that were his.

(b) Alliteration has been used in the line 'Was it when I found my mind was really mine'.

(c) (ii) He sensed his own individuality and a separate personality.

4. Where did my childhood go?
 It went to some forgotten place,
 That's hidden in an infant's face,
 That's all I know.

(a) What is the tone of the given stanza?

(b) How does the poet relate his childhood to an infant's face?

(c) What did the poet conclude about his lost childhood at the end of the poem?

- (i) It went to another dimension.
- (ii) It went to some other forgotten place.
- (iii) It moved away with time.
- (iv) It shifted to his younger sibling.

Ans. (a) The tone of the given stanza is melancholic and nostalgic.

(b) The poet relates his childhood to an infant's face because an infant represents innocence, purity, and joy which are the qualities that he associates with his childhood.

(c) (ii) It went to some other forgotten place.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. What, according to the poet, is involved in the process of growing up?

Ans. As a person grows up, he becomes a rationalist, an egoist and a hypocrite. He accepts nothing that is not logical. He loses faith in God. He does not believe in hell or heaven. He becomes very conscious of his self. He wants to follow his own desires and ideas. He talks and preaches of love, but actually does not show love in his actions. In short, he loses all the innocence of his childhood in the process of growing up.

2. How does the poem expose man and present him in his true colours?

Ans. According to the poet, childhood symbolises innocence, purity, softness and love. As a child grows up, these qualities start receding. Man adheres to lying, shrewdness, cunningness and hypocrisy. Adults preach about love and honesty, but they themselves practise hatred and lying. The simplicity and honesty of childhood evaporates the moment man crosses the threshold of innocent childhood.

3. What is the poet's feeling towards his childhood?

Ans. The poet regards childhood as a period of innocence. A child sincerely feels that he is free from all evils and that there is really a hell and a heaven. A child knows no hypocrisy. There is no difference between his thoughts and actions. In short, childhood is a state of innocence and purity of heart.

4. According to Markus Natten, when does a child become an adult?

Ans. Becoming an adult is a complex process which is associated with physical, mental and social development. A child becomes an adult when he is able to live his own life and take care of his responsibilities individually. He also develops his own thought process, using which, he can form his own beliefs and opinions.

5. What is the poet trying to convey when he says that childhood is hidden in an infant's face?

Ans. The poet says that an infant is really innocent as it trusts everyone and does not try to fool others. The poet brings out this fact by contrasting it with the behaviour of adults, who are manipulative and hypocrites. As a person develops rational thoughts, his childlike innocence fades away.

6. What did the poet notice about independent thinking? How important was this discovery?

Ans. The poet discovered that he was different from others and could think independently. He could have his own opinions without getting influenced by anyone else. This discovery was very important to him as it revealed to him his abilities for independent thinking and decision making.

7. Bring out the hypocrisy that the adults exhibit with regard to love.

Ans. As the poet grew up, he could understand the double standards followed by adults. He realised that though adults preached and talked of love, their behaviour was totally different and full of manipulation. They were all hypocrites who behaved differently from the way they talked.

8. What does the poem tell us about human beings and their nature?

Ans. According to the poet, childhood symbolises innocence, purity, softness and love. As a child grows up, these qualities start receding. Man adheres to lying, shrewdness, cunningness and hypocrisy. Adults preach about truth and honesty, but they themselves practise hatred and lying.

9. What is the poet talking about in the poem 'Childhood'?

Ans. In the poem 'Childhood', the poet is trying to pinpoint the age when he lost his childhood, and became mature enough to understand the worldly things. So he keeps saying, "When did my childhood go?". He finally realises that his childhood has gone to some forgotten place, that is hidden in an infant's face.

10. What is the poem 'Childhood' about?

Ans. 'Childhood' is written by Markus Natten. In this poem, the poet thinks over his lost childhood. He wonders about the moment when he lost his innocence and realised that the world is not what it seemed to be. He recalls when his thoughts changed and also realises the hypocrisy of the people around him.

11. What does the poet feel had happened after he ceased to be eleven years of age?

Ans. The poet was trying to find out when and where he had lost his childhood. While doing so, he wonders whether it was at the time he ceased to be eleven, that he had lost his childhood.

12. How did the poet conclude that hell and heaven were imaginary places?

Ans. The poet would have at some point as a child, tried to locate hell and heaven on the globe or the atlas. When he realised that these places are not a part of the geography of the earth, he concluded that they are imaginary and created by man.

13. How does the poet analyse the character of adults?

Ans. Our elders always teach us to be loving, kind, giving and caring of everybody around us. It was the same for the poet also. But, as he was growing older, he realised that none of these characteristics were displayed in the behaviour of the adults while they engaged

with the people around them. He concluded that the adults never practised what they preached.

14. What are the characteristics that form a part of childhood?

Ans. The poet regards childhood as a period of innocence. It is the time when one believes that every word that comes out of the mouths of the elders is the gospel truth. It is the time when one believes that there is a place called heaven and hell on earth, the time when one believes in the concept of loving every one, and the time when one processes only the thoughts that have been passed on from the minds of other people.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. How does the poem explain childhood? What is so special about childhood? How are children different from adults?
(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. The poet regards childhood as a period of heavenly innocence. A child sincerely feels that there is a God above. He is free from all earthly evils. He believes that there is really a heaven and a hell. He is truly religious in his soul. A child knows no hypocrisy. He always means what he says. There is no difference between his thoughts and actions. A child is free from any sense of ego. He does not think himself to be different from or superior to others. Childhood symbolises innocence, purity, softness and love. As a child grows, these qualities start receding. Man becomes impure, cunning, shrewd and hypocrite. Grown-ups become blatant liars. They talk of love but practise hatred. They preach brotherhood of mankind but perpetuate hatred and killing. Simplicity and honesty evaporate into thin air the moment man crosses the threshold of innocent childhood.

2. Write a brief summary of the poem 'Childhood'.

Ans. The poet ponders deeply upon the spiritual questions of life and ultimately realises the fact that his childhood days have finally become a thing of the past and would never return. Childhood would now only remain in his memories. He wonders if the end of his childhood was the day he ceased to be eleven years old; the time when he realised that heaven and hell are not real places because they could not be located in any geography books and never could be. The poet also realises that adults were not all they seemed to be. They talk of love, but practise hatred. In the poem 'Childhood', the poet is trying to find out the age when he lost his childhood; when he became mature enough to understand the worldly things. So, he keeps asking, "When did my childhood go?". He finally realises that his childhood has gone to some forgotten place that is hidden in an infant's face.

3. Markus Natten, though showing disapproval regarding the behaviour of adults, also raises a very important point, that of independent thinking and individuality. Do you agree that independent thinking and individuality make us what we are? Elaborate in the context of the poem 'Childhood'.
(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Of course, independent thinking is a step towards adulthood. As a child, one is not able to make one's own decisions and one's thinking is always influenced and directed by adults. A child is so innocent that he cannot distinguish between truth and imagination. As a child's thinking is influenced by others, it has no individuality. Moreover, it is prone to manipulations which lead to fickle-mindedness. Independent thinking makes us what we

are. It shapes our personality and we are known among people through what our mind thinks and what decisions we take. Independent thinking helps us to stay away from evil people who try to influence our thoughts for their selfish purposes. We cannot claim to be an individual, if we cannot take decisions ourselves.

4. What is the greatest loss for the poet?

Ans. The poet has discussed a lot about the different losses he faced while growing up. Through this poem, Markus Natten raises moral questions about education, immoral behaviour of adults and one's individuality and independence. He confesses that the greatest loss is losing the innocence of childhood. The poet laments the loss of the innocence he had as a child. He regards childhood as an important stage in the process of growing up. When he turned twelve, he realised that contrary to what he had been told, hell and heaven did not exist. He reasoned through his ideas and came to his own conclusions. He lost confidence in people and began to be a bit more cynical. Towards the end, the poet has one hope that he could see his childhood being manifested in some other infant. He is happy that he could see his childhood, though he would not be able to experience it any more.

5. Compare and contrast between childhood and adulthood, as mentioned in the poem.

Ans. Human life is full of experiences. It is divided into a number of phases. Markus Natten is a great philosophical poet who has tried to explore the philosophy of life. He has discussed about two of the most important phases of man – childhood and adulthood – in the poem. He has distinctly brought out the difference between the two. He says that childhood is the best part of one's life. It is also the most important stage. Innocence is the most integral part of it. The child is dependent on his parents for everything. He believes in what is said or taught to him. He is irrational and unbiased. He does not follow philosophies of life. He is limited to his knowledge gained by books. The next stage discussed is adulthood. As the child enters into this stage, a number of changes creep into him. He becomes rational. He becomes free and self-dependent. He seeks for philosophical knowledge. He also becomes a hypocrite. There is discrepancy between his words and his actions. Thus, we can clearly see that there is a lot of difference between these two stages of human life i.e., childhood and adulthood.

6. Analyse the central theme of the poem, 'Childhood'.

Ans. Childhood symbolises innocence, purity, beauty and love. As a child grows, these qualities are left somewhere in the past. Man becomes selfish, cunning, shrewd, and hypocrite. Lying is no longer a sin for an adult as he justifies it according to the circumstances. The adults preach love but practise hatred. They speak of brotherhood and unity, but propagate hatred and killing. Simplicity and honesty are left behind at the threshold of innocent childhood. The poet seems to be affected by such a turn of events. He laments the fact that elders teach children wrong things about hell and heaven, about loving and giving. It is unfortunate that what is practised is not preached. His thoughts, whether another's or his own, should be chaste and pure. Perhaps, the poet wishes that all that is taught in childhood should be the way that man leads his life in reality. Then, there would be less hatred and more peace everywhere. The innocence and love with which we are created should stay with us till we depart. Life is a gift given to us by the Almighty; we should focus on leading it the right way.

7. Write an article in about 150 words about childhood and the process of growing up.

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans.

CHILDHOOD

By Manav Singh

When I was a child, the world seemed to be a place of joy and happiness to me. There was nothing worth worrying about. Whenever I cried, somebody consoled me. When I did not like to sit alone, I was always in somebody's arms. My mother always looked after me. These are my most cherished memories and I believe that looking at a child playing and enjoying childhood makes me somewhat nostalgic.

Childhood is free from cares. There are no duties or responsibilities on the shoulders of a child. A child only eats, drinks, sleeps and plays. Thus, a child lives in the bliss of ignorance and innocence. As we grow in age, worries about studies, choice of profession, shouldering responsibilities, etc. keep haunting us. Tension, stress and worry become a part of adult life and the individual forgets to live a carefree life.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. When did my childhood go?
Was it the day I ceased to be eleven,
Was it the time I realised that Hell and Heaven,
Could not be found in Geography,
And therefore could not be,
Was that the day!

(a) How does the poet express his confusion and doubt in the last line of the extract?

(b) At what age does the poet think that he might have lost his childhood?

- (i) After he crossed the age of eleven
- (ii) After he crossed the age of twelve
- (iii) After he crossed the age of ten
- (iv) After he crossed the age of nine

(c) Why did the poet realise that hell and heaven could not be found in Geography?

2. When did my childhood go?
Was it the time I realised that adults were not
all they seemed to be,
They talked of love and preached of love,
But did not act so lovingly,
Was that the day!

(a) What is the effect of repeating the question, 'When did my childhood go?' at the beginning of each stanza?

(b) What does the word 'lovingly' mean?

(c) The adults can be characterised as:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| (i) trustworthy | (ii) honourable |
| (iii) hypocrites | (iv) truthful |

3. Where did my childhood go?
 It went to some forgotten place,
 That's hidden in an infant's face,
 That's all I know.

(a) Where did the poet's childhood go?

- (i) It went to an unknown place.
- (ii) It went to some forgotten or unknown place.
- (iii) It went to a known place.
- (iv) It went to the poet's native place.

(b) Do you think childhood can be regained or restored? Why/Why not?

(Competency-focused Question)

(c) What does the use of the word 'forgotten' suggest?

Short Answer Questions

(40–50 words)

1. The poet has asked two questions—one is about the time and the other is about the place. Why has he used these questions?
2. What is the theme of the poem?
3. What did the poet notice about independent thinking? How important was this discovery?
4. What is the poet's feeling towards his childhood?
5. What idea do you get about the child who learns to see through the hypocrisy of an adult?

(Constructed Response Question)

Long Answer Questions

(120–150 words)

1. In the poem, the poet has highlighted different aspects of human nature in the first three stanzas. What are they? Explain.
2. "Is independence of mind a step towards adulthood?" Explain with reference to the poem 'Childhood'.

(Constructed Response Question)



5

Father to Son

— Elizabeth Jennings

About the Poet

Elizabeth Jennings was born in Boston, Lincolnshire (18 July 1926 – 26 October 2001). When she was six, her family moved to Oxford, where she remained for the rest of her life. There she later attended St Anne's College. After graduation, she became a writer. Regarded as a traditionalist rather than an innovator, Jennings is known for her lyric poetry and mastery of form. Her work displays a simplicity of metre and rhyme.

Introduction

The author introduces the reader to a very disturbing concept – generation gap. In the poem, the father is lamenting about the strained or negligent relationship with his son. The father is seen as a helpless human who has found it impossible to establish an emotional rapport with his son. It is ironical that two people who are biologically connected and living in the same house have no clue about each other.

THEME

The poem is based on the concept of Generation Gap between parents and their children. The father has his own set of beliefs and ideas while the son has turned into a mature individual who wants to live life on his own terms. Both are unable to compromise or reconcile with each other.

Summary

The poet shares the anxiety of a father regarding his relationship with his son. They have spent several years in the same house yet, the father is unable to understand his son. He doesn't know his son's likes and dislikes. The father made an effort to build up a relationship with his son's when he was small. However, over the years, there is a void in their relationship. He laments the fact that there is no love lost between him and the child he has created, despite the fact that they share the same space on the surface of the earth.

The father acknowledges his role in causing the communication gap between him and his son. He explains that despite his efforts, things don't seem to be improving. His son is in a place that he is not able to access.

He says that silence surrounds them and he wishes that he could get back his prodigal son. He'd pardon and welcome him with open hands. He does not want him to move into another world of his own, away from him.

He asserts that the father and son must live in the same place on the globe. Unfortunately, the son says that he does not understand himself, and often the grief within him manifests as anger for the father. He further says, that both of them put out an empty hand, but neither of them

reciprocate by placing their hand on the one stretched out to make peace. Both want to forgive the other, but neither is willing to take the first step.

POETIC DEVICES

Simile

a figure of speech that makes comparison and shows similarities between two things

"We speak like strangers"

Alliteration

the occurrence of the same letter or sound at the beginning of closely connected words

"The seed I spent or sown it where" ('s' sound)

"Silence surrounds us"

Metaphor

an indirect comparison between a quality shared by two persons or things

"The seed I spent or sown it where

The land is his and none of mine?"

The words 'seed', 'sown' and 'land' are metaphors for the father's efforts that he made to build a relationship with his son, and the son's, heart, respectively.

Allusion

reference to 'prodigal' son story of the Bible

Personification

attribution of human characteristics to something non-human

"Anger grows from grief"

Enjambment

a poetic term for the continuation of a sentence or phrase from one line of poetry to the next

"I do not understand this child

Though we have lived together now

In the same house for years. I know

Nothing of him, so try to build

Up a relationship from how

He was when he was small"

Explanation of the Poem

1.

I do not understand this child
Though we have lived together now
In the same house for years. I know
Nothing of him, so try to build
Up a relationship from how
He was when small. Yet have I killed

Exp- The poet is speaking about the anguish of a father who is unable to establish a cordial relationship with his son. They have been living together in the same house from the time the little boy was born. He has been trying hard to build up a relationship all this time but all his efforts have been 'killed'.

2. The seed I spent or sown it where
 The land is his and none of mine?
We speak like strangers, there's no sign
 Of understanding in the air.
 This child is built to my design
 Yet what he loves I cannot share.

Exp- The father laments that though he has created this child in the same space which belonged to him, now it appears that the space belongs to the child and none of it is his. That is, there is no similarity in the original species, the creator (the father) and the one that has been created (the son), who live in the same habitat. Under the same roof, in the same environment, the child he has designed or created, is a stranger to the father. He does not have any clue about the likes and dislikes of his offspring.

3. Silence surrounds us. I would have
 Him prodigal, returning to
His father's house, the home he knew,
 Rather than see him make and move
 His world. I would forgive him too,
 Shaping from sorrow a new love.

Exp- Father and son are surrounded by silence. The father says, he'd welcome his prodigal son to his home, and pardon him for all that has happened between them. He would not like to see him move out of the house and create a world of his own. He would work on building a new relationship, full of love, with his son, with the hope of wiping out all the sorrow that existed between them.

4. Father and son, we both must live
On the same globe and the same land,
 He speaks: I cannot understand
Myself, why anger grows from grief.
 We each put out an empty hand,
 Longing for something to forgive.

Exp- The son takes the turn to speak in the last verse. He agrees that father and son have to stay together but is disturbed by the fact that he is unable to understand himself or the agony that is within him. He experiences excessive anger towards his father that has grown out of the grief that he has experienced over the passage of time. He says that both of them put out their hand in the hope of forgiving each other. But all their efforts are in vain, as they are not able to fill up the void that exists between them.

Answers to NCERT Questions

THINK IT OUT

1. Does the poem talk of an exclusively personal experience or is it fairly universal?
2. How is the father's helplessness brought out in the poem?
3. Identify the phrases and lines that indicate distance between father and son.
4. Does the poem have a consistent rhyme scheme?

- Ans.**
1. This is a poem that has dealt with the perennial problem that exists between two generations—the generation gap. In his struggle to take care of the family, the father has no spare time to develop an emotional connection with his children. And, when he grows old and has time on his hands, the children are too busy with no time to spare for their father. This vicious circle continues from generation to generation.
 2. The father's helplessness is brought out in the poem in the following lines:
"I do not understand this child, though we have lived together now, In the same house for years."
"Yet what he loves I cannot share" and *"I know nothing of him"*.
"He speaks: I cannot understand myself, why anger grows from grief."
These lines indicate the desperation of the father. He is striving to establish a relationship with his son, but all his efforts are in vain.
 3. The phrases/lines indicating distance between father and son are:
"I do not understand this child."
"I know nothing of him."
*"We speak like strangers, there's no sign
Of understanding in the air."*
"..What he loves I cannot share."
"Silence surrounds us."
"...see him make and move his world"
 4. No, the poem does not have a consistent rhyme scheme. The first two stanzas have the rhyme scheme abbaba whereas the third and fourth have a slight alteration. The third stanza has abcaba, whereas the fourth one has abbcba scheme.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

(3 Marks each)

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. I do not understand this child
Though we have lived together now
In the same house for years. I know
Nothing of him, so try to build
Up a relationship from how
He was when small.

- Ans.** (a) The poet complains that he knows nothing about his son.
(b) The father and his son have been living in the same house for many years now.
(c) (iv) The poet wants to start a new relationship with his son.

- (a) Why does the father feel that the seed was sown in the land that was not his?
- (b) What does the use of the word ‘strangers’ suggest about the relationship between the father and the son?
- (c) ‘Built to my design’ means:
 - (i) that his son does not look like him.
 - (ii) that his son looks like him as far as physical features are concerned.
 - (iii) that his son wears the same brand of clothes that he does.
 - (iv) that his son wears clothes designed by him.

3. Silence surrounds us. I would have
Him prodigal, returning to
His father's house, the home he knew,
Rather than see him make and move
His world. I would forgive him too,
Shaping from sorrow a new love

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- (i) It means the silence of the night.
- (ii) It means the silence in the house due to the switching off of electrical appliances.
- (iii) It means the silence in the house due to the demise of a loved one.
- (iv) It means the silence due to no conversation happening between the father and the son.

Ans. (a) The word 'prodigal' means wasteful or reckless in this context.
 (b) The father wants his son to return to his father's house rather than make and move his world because he misses him and wants to reconnect with him.
 (c) (iv) It means the silence due to no conversation happening between the father and the son.

4. Father and son, we both must live
 On the same globe and the same land,
 He speaks: I cannot understand
 Myself, why anger grows from grief.
 We each put out an empty hand,
 Longing for something to forgive.

(a) How does the use of colon (:) show a change of perspective in the poem?

(b) What is the tone of the poet in the last line of the stanza?

- (i) Hopeful
- (ii) Resentful
- (iii) Desperate
- (iv) Indifferent

(c) What does the son mean by 'why anger grows from grief'?

Ans. (a) The use of colon (:) shows a change of perspective in the poem by introducing the son's voice and point of view.
 (b) (iii) Desperate
 (c) The son means that he is angry because he is sad about his relationship with his father.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. Why doesn't the father know anything about his son though they have lived in the same house?

Ans. The problem expressed in the poem is the strained relationship that exists between the father and the son. They live under the same roof like strangers. Therefore, the father doesn't know anything about his son.

2. Why is the father unable to understand his son in the poem 'Father to Son'?

Ans. The father is unable to understand his son due to generation gap. Over the years they seemed to have grown apart, and as a result the father is unable to understand or see eye to eye with his son.

3. Why is the father unhappy with his son?

Ans. The father is unhappy with his son because he is not able to fill the void that has grown between them. Despite all his efforts to get through to his son, the father fails. This makes him unhappy.

4. How does the father feel when his relationship with his son comes under strain?

Ans. The father is saddened by the fact that the relationship with his son is deteriorating by the day. He laments the fact that he has not been able to understand his son and his perspectives of life. This has subsequently lead to augmenting the strain between them.

5. Describe the relationship between the father and his son.

Ans. The poem emphasises the strained relationship between a father and his son. Their interests are totally different. The father does not know what his son loves. The communication between them is limited. They live like strangers under the same roof.

6. What does the poet mean by ‘Silence surrounds us’?

Ans. The father claims that he and his son live in a zone that is surrounded by a depressing silence. They hardly communicate with one another. They do not have anything in common, and therefore they are in their individual spaces, despite being in the same house. Their companionship is with silence as words are never exchanged between them.

7. “I would have him prodigal”. Elaborate.

Ans. In the Biblical parable of the Prodigal Son, a son receives his inheritance and travels to a distant country, wastes all his money in wild extravagance, becomes desperately poor, returns to his father, and is received with open arms. The father in the poem desires to replicate this parable and welcome his son back.

8. What do the words ‘an empty hand’ signify?

Ans. The words ‘an empty hand’ signify that both the father and the son want to forgive each other and extend a hand of friendship to each other, but neither of them is willing to be the first one to do so. This means that although they recognise the void and desire to forgive each other, their pride and ego is preventing them from taking the first step to better their relationship.

9. How has the generation gap been presented by the poet?

Ans. Generation gap is the absence of understanding and communication between human beings of different generations. In the poem, we hear only the father’s version of the story. The young boy has been suppressed to speaking a line or two in the last verse of the poem. This is evidently due to the non-acceptance of the individuality of their offspring by the older generation. Consequently, the son speaks of his suppressed grief manifesting in the form of inexplicable anger. Neither the father nor the son is willing to relent and extend an olive branch to revive their strained relationship.

10. Is the father responsible for the present situation? What are your views?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Yes, I think the father is responsible for the present situation. We do not get to hear the son’s version about his relationship with the father here. But the father is guilty of allowing the silence and non-communication to continue between them and also not understanding the son’s aspirations and feelings.

11. The father is ready to have his prodigal son back when he returns. What inference can you draw from this?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Prodigal means wastefully extravagant. Here, the reference is to the story in the Bible in which a father gives his inheritance to his sons. The younger brother leaves, wastes his fortune and returns to his father’s home. Still the father is ready to take him back and

forgive him. In the poem, the father also wants to forgive his son, so that they can live peacefully together again.

12. The root cause of the generation gap presented in the poem lies in the fact that it is only the father talking to his son rather than hearing or understanding him. Explain.

Ans. One of the reasons of the generation gap is absence of understanding and communication. Here in this poem, we hear only the father's point of view. We do not hear anything from the son's side. The root cause of the generation gap has been lack of sharing of interests or not paying attention to the child's emotional needs when he is growing up. The child should be allowed to express his opinions freely and adults should not behave like dictators.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. Do you sympathise with the anxiety of the father? (Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Being a youngster, I often disapprove of the authoritarian attitude of elders. It is unfortunate that they fail to accept the fact that the children have grown and have a mind of their own. I know that the relationship between a father and son is strong yet delicate. It would be wonderful if the older generation becomes more flexible and liberal in their attitude. Youngsters too, must appreciate the anxieties and fears that are experienced by their parents. It is their over-cautiousness that makes them over-protective. This is so, because of the love and concern for their children. The solution would be to decide upon a middle path. This will re-establish cordial relations, which will fill the void that exists between the generations.

2. The generation gap is a perennial problem that gets passed on to successive generations. Can this be controlled? Analyse. (Constructed Response Question)

Ans. The generation gap is a psychological and emotional gap between the older and successive younger generations. This gap causes misunderstanding and rebellion between the two generations. The success of parenting lies in how effectively they avoid the generation gap by establishing a strong rapport with their children. The generation gap is widening further as a result of the fast-paced development of society. In earlier times, two or three generations lived in the same house and followed the same culture and lifestyle. Obedience and submission to the older generation was the accepted norm in every household. In the modern world, the awareness and exposure that the youth enjoy has made them desire greater independence. One should be flexible in their approach and must try to understand the reason behind a particular behaviour. Learning and unlearning should be followed by everyone, because change and growth is the inevitable reality of human life.

3. The poem talks about the universal problem of generation gap. Why does such a situation exist? How can someone avoid such confrontations? Express your views. (Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Generation gap is a psychological and emotional gap between parents or elder people and the younger ones. This creates misunderstanding and lack of attachment between parents and children. The success of parenting lies in how effectively they avoid the generation gap or ignore differences with their children. Generation gap is the result of the fast-paced development of society. In earlier times, two or three generations lived in the same lifestyle and environment, as development was slow. Today, parents do not even know

many of the modern technologies and equipment that their children use. Being up-to-date is the only way to cope with the generation gap. Moreover, generation gap occurs when there are differences of opinion. One should be flexible in their approach and must try to understand the reason for a particular behaviour.

- 4. In the fast moving materialistic world, parents are busy in earning while their children grow without being given enough time by them. This is a major factor in creating a generation gap. There should be a balancing act on the part of parents. Discuss.**

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. In today's materialistic world, parents, specially fathers, are busy with their careers, finding very little time for their children. Childhood is a tender age and the child needs his/her parents at every stage of his growing up. In the pursuit of money or career, children are left at the mercy of caretakers or maids who may provide or fulfil the child's basic needs but their emotional and intellectual needs are left unfulfilled. Bonding between parents and children keeps on diminishing until it reaches an alarming level. Parents need to understand that between career and children, a balancing act has to be practised. Children need their parents to guide them, to share their likes and dislikes, to spend quality time with them. No parent should allow such a situation where they may not understand their children or there may be no communication at all between them. Emotional bonding is a must for a family to stay together.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the following extracts carefully and answer the questions that follow.

1. Silence surrounds us. I would have
Him prodigal, returning to
His father's house, the home he knew,
Rather than see him make and move
His world. I would forgive him too,
Shaping from sorrow a new love.

- (a) How does the father's attitude change from line 1 to line 5 in the extract?
(b) Identify the poetic device used in the phrase "shaping from sorrow a new love".
(c) Which of the following words means a person who spends money or uses resources freely and recklessly?

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| (i) Returning | (ii) Prodigal |
| (iii) Prodigy | (iv) Shaping |

2. We speak like strangers, there's no sign
Of understanding in the air.
This child is built to my design
Yet what he loves I cannot share.

- (a) What is wrong between the father and his son?

(b) Select the option that is NOT TRUE about the lack of punctuation at the end of line 1 in the extract. *(Competency-focused Question)*

- (i) It creates a sense of continuity and flow.
- (ii) It shows that the father is hesitant and unsure.
- (iii) It reflects the distance and disconnect between them.
- (iv) It emphasizes the contrast and conflict in the next line.

(c) How does the rhyme scheme of the extract contribute to the tone and mood of the poem?

3. Father and son, we both must live
On the same globe and the same land,
He speaks: I cannot understand
Myself, why anger grows from grief.
We each put out an empty hand,
Longing for something to forgive.

(a) What does the word 'globe' mean in the context of the poem?

(b) What does 'empty hand' signify?

(c) Why must father and son live on the same globe and the same land?

- (i) To take care of each other
- (ii) To not let others take disadvantage of them staying apart
- (iii) To make their life easy
- (iv) To rebuild their relationship

Short Answer Questions

(40–50 words)

1. Father and son behave like strangers to each other. What can be the possible reason for this?
2. What does the father feel about this stranger-like relationship with his son? Does he wish to change it?
3. What is the need to live as a family?
4. Analyse the boy's role in the life of his father.
5. The poem is a commentary on generation gap. Do you agree with the statement? Support your answer. *(Constructed Response Question)*

Long Answer Questions

(120–150 words)

1. Love, care and understanding are just pre-conceived notions for a man to live. Justify. *(Constructed Response Question)*
2. 'Give and get respect.' How relevant is this thought to the poem 'Father to Son'? Explain. *(Constructed Response Question)*



The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse

— William Saroyan

Introduction

'The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse' is a story about two Armenian boys – Aram and Mourad. They belong to the Garoghlanian family, a tribe that is renowned for their honesty. The two boys long to ride a horse. Mourad the elder of the two, had stolen a horse from a farmer a month ago. They rode the horse for many days. One day the owner of the horse, John Byro, comes to their house and mentions about his missing horse to uncle Khosrove. The story unravels the honesty of the two boys.

THEME

There are two main themes in 'The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse' – conflict between feelings and reason, and the importance of character and reputation. Throughout the short story, Aram and Mourad are caught between what they feel and what they know. Though they live in extreme poverty, the Garoghlanians do not steal, valuing honesty over wealth and their reputation over whatever they might gain through stealing.

Summary

Aram and Mourad were two poor lads from the Armenian Garoghlanian family, who had a reputation for honesty dating back to the eleventh century. Mourad, Aram's cousin, arrived at his window with a lovely white horse one early morning while Aram was sleeping and dreaming happily. Aram couldn't believe what he was seeing and thought it was a dream. But because there was a sliver of light outside, he was certain that the horse was real. He couldn't believe that the horse was theirs, given their financial situation. He was attempting to figure out if his cousin had taken the horse. Mourad had come to take him along for a trip. He asked him to come quickly before the rest of the world awoke. Aram leaped out of the window, dressed, and sat behind Mourad on the horse.

They rode along Walnut Avenue, which ran through the historic farmland of the area where they lived. Mourad asked him to dismount after a while since he wanted to ride the horse alone. Aram inquired if he could ride the horse alone like him, to which Mourad said that he will look into it because it was for his own protection. Mourad had kidnapped the horse a month ago and was riding it every morning, he discovered. When Aram was given the opportunity to ride, the horse took him to the vineyard, flung him off, and fled. Mourad finally found the horse after a thirty-minute search, and they concealed him in an abandoned vineyard with some oats and hay. Mourad had a way with animals, particularly horses. He knew how to deal with all kinds of animals, as well as humans. They would ride the horse every morning for two weeks and then hide it again.

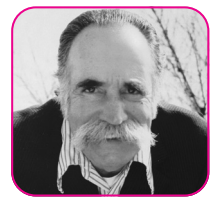
Then one day, farmer John Byro came to Aram's house to speak with his uncle Khosrove, who was ill-tempered and yelled at virtually everything. Byro informed him about his missing horse, which he had purchased for \$60. He couldn't find it for a month and had to trek 10 miles to get to their house. "It is no harm; pay no mind to it", Khosrove screamed at him. Byro grew angered by his behaviour and left.

Aram went to Mourad and informed him of Byro's missing horse, requesting that he not return it until he had learned to ride it. Mourad estimated that learning to ride a horse would take him a year. He went on to say that they couldn't possibly be thieves because their tribe is known for its honesty and that they would return the horse in six months.

On their way back to the hiding site to hide the horse, they met John Byro, who was returning to town. He conversed with them and examined the horse with care. He admitted that the horse looked just like his, but he didn't think that they had his missing horse because he knew their parents and their family's honesty. He assumed it was a doppelganger. Mourad was able to convince Byro that it was not his horse, and they were able to flee. The horse was returned to Byro's vineyard and put in the barn the next morning by both of them. The dogs silently followed them all the way out of the area.

John Byro returned home later that day to inform Aram's mother of his horse's return. He was overjoyed and amazed to observe the horse's improved temperament and strength. Uncle Khosrove shouted at him again to be quiet and not keep talking about his horse now that he got it back.

William Saroyan (born on 31 August 1908, in Fresno, California, United States & died on 18 May 1981, in Fresno, California, United States) was an Armenian-American novelist, playwright, and short story writer. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1940, and in 1943 won the Academy Award for Best Story for the film *The Human Comedy*.



Answers to NCERT Questions

READING WITH INSIGHT

1. **You will probably agree that this story does not have breathless adventure and exciting action. Then what in your opinion makes it interesting?**
2. **Did the boys return the horse because they were conscience-stricken or because they were afraid?**
3. **"One day back there in the good old days when I was nine and the world was full of every imaginable kind of magnificence, and life was still a delightful and mysterious dream..." The story begins in a mood of nostalgia. Can you narrate some incident from your childhood that might make an interesting story?**
4. **The story revolves around characters who belong to a tribe in Armenia. Mourad and Aram are members of the Garoghlanian family. Now locate Armenia and Assyria on the atlas and prepare a write-up on the Garoghlanian tribes. You may write about people, their names, traits, geographical and economic features as suggested in the story.**

- Ans.**
1. It is true that the story does not consist of any exciting action or breathless adventures. But it certainly has an element of suspense, which makes it interesting for the readers. The story touches the core of the readers heart, as it unravels the secret rendezvous of the little boys with the stolen horse. It has been established in the story that their family was poor and they could not afford to own such a magnificent horse. Mourad had stolen it and the duo rode on it for quite some time. They returned the horse to its owner before their little secret was discovered by the family. A child nurtures several desires in his or her childhood. He achieves it sometimes, or is forced to discard it due to circumstances. The innocent attempt of the young boys at fulfilling their desire to learn horse-riding is what makes the lesson interesting.
 2. The boys returned the horse not because they were afraid but because of their conscience. Their family was known for its honesty yet they had stolen the horse months ago. When they met John Byro on his way to town, the horse was with them. He carefully examined it and said that it looked exactly like the one he had, just like a twin. It felt like it was his own horse but since he knew their parents, he didn't believe that it was his horse they were carrying. This struck the boys and they decided to take the horse back to the farmer's vineyard and put it in the barn.
 3. By reading these lines, no one can stop themselves from traveling down the memory lane. I remember that when I was twelve years old, I used to visit my grandparent's home which was located at a hill station. I would spend my entire summer vacation with them. We would go to the market to eat delicious snacks, would go shopping, and watch TV together. I remember once going to a summer camp for a month. They would drop me off at the place and would come to pick me up after the classes got over. Sometimes, my grandmother would bring a packed lunch for me. I would eat it as fast as I could and we would go shopping after that. I always got sad whenever I had to go back to my home and to school.
 4. The Garoghlanian tribe is said to be a work of fiction by the author William Saroyan in his book 'My Name is Aram', published in the year 1940. They were Armenian. They were poor people who hardly managed to gather food to feed their stomachs every day but they were known for their honesty. Hospitality is one of the important aspects of the tribe. Most of the Armenian people followed Christianity. They have a huge variety of food at social gatherings. They focus on forgiveness of sins and on the spirit of tolerance.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

(4 Marks each)

1. Will you let me ride alone? I asked.

That is up to the horse, my cousin said. Get down.

The horse will let me ride, I said.

We shall see, he said. Don't forget that I have a way with a horse.

Well, I said, any way you have with a horse, I have also.

For the sake of your safety, he said, let us hope so. Get down.

All right, I said, but remember you've got to let me try to ride alone.

I got down and my cousin Mourad kicked his heels into the horse and shouted, *Vazire*, run.

- (a) List any two sensory details present in this extract.
- (b) Identify the line from the text that bears evidence to the fact that the narrator was eager and curious to ride the horse alone.
- (c) The narrator agreed to allow Mourad to have a solo ride on the horse on the condition that:
 - (i) Mourad will keep the horse for a year.
 - (ii) Mourad will teach the horse to behave properly when it will be the narrator's turn for the solo ride.
 - (iii) Mourad will allow him to have a solo ride on the horse.
 - (iv) None of these
- (d) Which of the following headlines best suggests the central idea of the extract?
 - (i) A Boy's Challenge to his Cousin's Skill
 - (ii) A Boy's Desire to Prove Himself to a Horse
 - (iii) A Boy's Dream of Riding a Horse Alone
 - (iv) A Boy's Adventure with his Crazy Cousin

- Ans.**
- (a) Two sensory details present in the extract are "kicked his heels into the horse" and "shouted, *Vazire*, run".
 - (b) The line from the text that bears evidence to the fact that the narrator was eager and curious to ride the horse alone is "but remember you've got to let me try to ride alone".
 - (c) (iii) Mourad will allow him to have a solo ride on the horse.
 - (d) (iii) A Boy's Dream of Riding a Horse Alone

2. We were poor. We had no money. Our whole tribe was poverty-stricken. Every branch of the Garoghlanian family was living in the most amazing and comical poverty in the world. Nobody could understand where we ever got money enough to keep us with food in our bellies, not even the old men of the family. Most important of all, though, we were famous for our honesty. We had been famous for our honesty for something like eleven centuries, even when we had been the wealthiest family in what we liked to think was the world. We were proud first, honest next, and after that we believed in right and wrong. None of us would take advantage of anybody in the world, let alone steal.

- (a) What does the word 'poverty-stricken' mean in the given extract?
 - (i) Affected by a disease
 - (ii) Lacking in education
 - (iii) Suffering from hunger
 - (iv) Lacking in money
- (b) Identify the line from the extract that shows that the narrator's family was poor for a long time.
- (c) Explain any one possible inference that can be drawn from the line, "We were proud first, honest next, and after that we believed in right and wrong."

(d) How does the narrator's tone suggest his attitude towards his family's poverty?

- (i) He is ashamed and embarrassed by it.
- (ii) He is angry and resentful about it.
- (iii) He is amused and optimistic about it.
- (iv) He is indifferent and detached from it.

Ans. (a) (iv) Lacking in money

- (b) The line from the extract that shows that the narrator's family was poor for a long time is "Every branch of the Garoghlanian family was living in the most amazing and comical poverty in the world".
- (c) One possible inference that can be drawn from this line is that the narrator's family had a very high sense of self-esteem and dignity. They valued their reputation and honour more than anything else. They also had a clear moral code that guided their actions and decisions.
- (d) (iii) He is amused and optimistic about it.

3. I got down and my cousin Mourad kicked his heels into the horse and shouted, *Vazire*, run. The horse stood on its hind legs, snorted, and burst into a fury of speed that was the loveliest thing I had ever seen. My cousin Mourad raced the horse across a field of dry grass to an irrigation ditch, crossed the ditch on the horse, and five minutes later returned, dripping wet.

The sun was coming up.

Now it's my turn to ride, I said.

My cousin Mourad got off the horse.

Ride, he said.

I leaped to the back of the horse and for a moment knew the most awful fear imaginable.

(a) What did the horse do when Mourad kicked and shouted at him?

(b) The 'loveliest thing I had ever seen' was:

- (i) the running of the horse in a fury of speed
- (ii) the walking of the horse
- (iii) the galloping of the horse
- (iv) the jumping of the horse

(c) The phrase 'the most awful fear imaginable' refers to:

- (i) the immobility of the horse
- (ii) the running of the horse
- (iii) the galloping of the horse
- (iv) the jumping of the horse

(d) Where did Mourad race the horse?

Ans. (a) The horse stood on its hind legs, snorted and burst into a fury of speed.
(b) (i) the running of the horse in a fury of speed.
(c) (i) the immobility of the horse
(d) Mourad raced the horse across a field of dry grass to an irrigation ditch.

4. No member of the Garoghlanian family could be a thief. I stared first at my cousin and then at the horse. There was a pious stillness and humour in each of them which

on the one hand delighted me and on the other frightened me. Mourad, I said, where did you steal this horse? Leap out of the window, he said, if you want to ride. It was true, then. He had stolen the horse. There was no question about it. He had come to invite me to ride or not, as I chose.

- (a) What does the phrase 'there was no question about it' suggest?
- (b) What does the term 'pious' indicate about the cousin and the horse?
- (c) Why was it difficult to believe that the boys had stolen his horse?
 - (i) Because he didn't examine the horse carefully
 - (ii) Because their family was known for their honesty
 - (iii) Because the horse did not recognise him
 - (iv) Because his horse had a twin
- (d) Which of the following best suggests the central idea of the extract?
 - (i) A Boy's Dilemma Between Family and Law
 - (ii) A Cousin's Generous Offer to Share a Horse
 - (iii) A Family's Tradition of Honour and Honesty
 - (iv) A Horse's Mysterious Appearance and Disappearance

- Ans.** (a) The phrase 'there was no question about it' suggests that the narrator was sure that his cousin had stolen the horse.
- (b) The term 'pious' indicates that the cousin and the horse had an expression of religious stillness.
- (c) (ii) Because their family was known for their honesty
- (d) (i) A Boy's Dilemma Between Family and Law

5. I would swear it is my horse if I didn't know your parents. The fame of your family for honesty is well known to me. Yet the horse is the twin of my horse. A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart. Good day, my young friends.

Good day, John Byro, my cousin Mourad said.

Early the following morning we took the horse to John Byro's vineyard and put it in the barn.

- (a) Who was John Byro?
- (b) Who was the true owner of the horse?
 - (i) John Byro
 - (ii) Fetvajian
 - (iii) Dikran Halabian
 - (iv) Zorab
- (c) John Byro said, "A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart." What does it tell about him?
- (d) Why did the boys return the white horse to its rightful owner?
 - (i) Because they were overcome by guilt
 - (ii) Because they were afraid of getting caught
 - (iii) Because they found it difficult to hide the horse
 - (iv) Because they were accused of theft

- Ans.** (a) John Byro was an Assyrian farmer who lived in the neighbourhood and was a frequent visitor of Aram's house.

- (b) (i) John Byro
- (c) It tells us that he believed in the honesty of the Garoghlanian family.
- (d) (i) Because they were overcome by guilt

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. Why was Aram surprised when he saw Mourad in the morning?

Ans. Aram was surprised to see Mourad because he had come early in the morning with a beautiful white horse. He could not believe that a boy of his tribe could buy or steal a horse.

2. Who was uncle Khosrove? Why was he considered to be the craziest member of his tribe?

Ans. Uncle Khosrove was a relative of Aram who was an enormous man. A man so furious in temper, so irritable, so impatient that he stopped anyone from talking by roaring, "It is no harm; pay no attention to it."

3. What had led to John Byro's sadness?

Ans. John Byro was sad because his horse was stolen and now, he had to go on foot for long distances as the surrey was useless without a horse.

4. Why did Mourad return the horse?

Ans. Mourad belonged to a tribe which was known for its honesty. He realised that Byro had recognised his horse when he saw it. Mourad understood that it was not safe any longer for him to hold on to the horse and he did not want to be looked down by the community as a robber.

5. Why did John Byro fail to recognise his horse and claim ownership?

Ans. Though John Byro knew on examination that the horse was his, he did not blame the boys of stealing, because he knew their parents well. He knew that their family and tribe were famous for being honest.

6. What two character traits of Mourad are hinted at by the narrator in the initial part of the story?

Ans. Firstly, Mourad was considered crazy by everybody who knew him. It was believed that he was the natural descendent of Khosrove, who was a very crazy member of the family. He was quite crazy about horses. Secondly, he enjoyed being alive more than anybody else.

7. "This was the part that wouldn't permit me to believe what I saw." What 'part' does the narrator hint at?

Ans. The narrator refers to their poverty. They had no money. They lived in extreme poverty and it was difficult to understand how they got food to satisfy their hunger. So, when he saw his cousin with a beautiful white horse, he was not able to understand what was going on.

8. What traits of the Garoghlanian family are highlighted in this story?

Ans. The Garoghlanian family though now poor, were famous for their honesty even when they were wealthy. They were proud of their family first, honest next and after that they believed in right and wrong. None of them would take advantage of anybody in the world. They would not steal. No member of the Garoghlanian family could be a thief.

9. “It was true, then. He had stolen the horse. There was no question about it. He had come to invite me to ride or not, as I chose.” How did the narrator convince himself to enjoy a horse ride with his cousin Mourad?

Ans. It seemed to him that stealing a horse for a ride was not the same thing as stealing something else, such as money. Since he and Mourad were quite crazy about horses, it wasn't stealing. He convinced himself with the thought that their action could be considered stealing only if they offered to sell it.

10. Give an example to illustrate how uncle Khosrove's impatience sometimes worked to his own disadvantage.

Ans. Once uncle Khosrove was getting his moustache trimmed at a barber's shop. At the same time, his house was on fire. His own son Arak ran eight blocks to the barber's shop to inform him. Khosrove got impatient and roared at his son. When the barber reminded him that his house was on fire, Khosrove roared at him and stopped him from talking. His reply to both his son and the barber was: “Pay no attention to it, it's no harm.”

11. “The distribution of the various kinds of spirit of our tribe had been from the beginning capricious and vagrant.” Elucidate.

Ans. The narrator explains that a man can be the father of his son biologically, but it is not necessary that he imbibe all his father's attributes. He says that in his tribe the spirit, nature, characteristics, have all been distributed among generations in such a way that at times any of them could be possessing capricious (moody, erratic, inconsistent) or vagrant (tramp, migrant, homeless) characteristics.

12. How does Aram describe Mourad's horse-riding experience?

Ans. Mourad kicked his heels into the horse and shouted, “Vazire, run!” The horse stood on its hind legs, snorted, and burst into a fury of speed that was the loveliest thing Aram had ever seen. Mourad raced the horse across a field of dry grass to an irrigation ditch, crossed the ditch on the horse, and five minutes later returned, dripping wet.

13. Describe the narrator's first experience on horse back.

Ans. He kicked into the muscles of the horse and it reared and snorted. Then it began to run. Aram didn't know what to do. Instead of running across the field to the irrigation ditch the horse ran down the road to the vineyard of Dikran Halabian where it began to leap over vines. The horse leaped over seven vines before he fell. Then the horse continued running.

14. “We'll either take him back or hide him until tomorrow morning”. Which course of action did the speaker take and why?

Ans. Mourad took the latter option. He hid the horse in the barn of a deserted vineyard which at one time had been the pride of a farmer named Fetvajian. There were some oats and dry alfalfa in the barn. So Mourad did not seem worried about the horse as it had its supply of food.

15. “I have an understanding with a horse”, “Horses understand me”, “I have a way with a horse.” How do you think Mourad developed an understanding with the horse and what was the result?

Ans. Mourad had been quite tender and affectionate towards the horse. He would put his arms around it, press his nose into the horse's nose and pat it. It was not easy to tame

someone else's horse and get it to behave nicely. At first, it wanted to run wild. Gradually, Mourad was able to control the horse and make him do what he wanted. Even John Byro, the rightful owner, admitted that the horse had become better-tempered and stronger than ever.

16. What arguments did farmer John Byro advance to prove the usefulness of a horse to a city dweller?

Ans. First, his surrey was no good without a horse. Second, that he had to walk ten miles to get there and his left leg pained him. Thirdly, that the horse had cost him sixty dollars. All of which, he claimed, a city dweller like Khosrove may not understand.

17. Why did farmer John Byro walk out of the house?

Ans. The farmer John Byro, visited the narrator's house perhaps because he was homesick, sad and lonely. His horse had been stolen for over a month, and he could not use his surrey. Instead of showing any sympathy or concern for his loss, uncle Khosrove repeated his catchphrase: "It is no harm; pay no attention to it". When John Byro talked about the cost of horse, uncle Khosrove commented, "I spit on money." These words were too much for John Byro to bear, so he left the house in disgust.

18. How did Mourad help the wounded robin to fly? What does this incident indicate?

Ans. The narrator noticed Mourad trying to heal the hurt wing of a young robin which could not fly. He was talking to the bird. After sometime, he threw the bird into the air. The bird tried hard and almost fell twice. However, at last it flew away, high and straight. This incident shows that in spite of having a crazy streak, Mourad was kind and gentle at heart and really did have a way with animals and birds.

19. What request did Aram make? Did Mourad comply to the request?

Ans. Aram requested his cousin Mourad not to return the horse to farmer John Byro till he had learned to ride. Mourad observed that it might take him a year. The narrator suggested that they keep the horse for a year. Mourad shouted that he was inciting him to steal. He declared that the horse must go back to its true owner.

20. What did John Byro say after observing the horse that the two boys had with them?

Ans. After examining the horse, Byro knew that it was the horse that was stolen from his stable. However, he says, "I would swear it is my horse if I didn't know your parents. The fame of your family for honesty is well known to me. Yet the horse is the twin of my horse. A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart."

21. "A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart." In what context was this observation made and by whom?

Ans. After recognising his horse, John Byro chose to ignore the wrong committed by the boys. Respecting the honour of the family they belonged to, he said the above words. It means that if he were to suspect the children, he would go with what his eyes had proved to him, but alternately, he was choosing to listen to what his heart was telling him which was about the respectability of the family the children belonged to.

22. What do you think induced the boys to return the horse to its owner?

Ans. The boys were impressed by John Byro's attitude towards their parents and family. He knew their parents very well and so believed whatever the boys said. Secondly, the fame

of their family for honesty was well-known to him. The boys returned the horse to him for the sake of their family pride and dignity.

23. What is the main message of the story 'The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse'?

Ans. The primary message of the story, 'The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse', is that despite social or economic challenges, there are some truths which are absolute and should be practised under all circumstances.

24. What is the conflict in the story 'The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse'?

Ans. The conflict is between feelings and reason throughout the short story. Aram and Mourad are caught between what they feel and what they know. When Aram first sees Mourad riding the white horse, he knows that Mourad must have stolen it, as his family was too poor to afford a horse. Yet, he reasons to himself that there is nothing wrong in what they have done, as long as they were not indulging in any business deals or making money. Byro feels that it is his horse, but reasons that the boys will not engage in any wrong activity because of the family they belong to.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. What characteristics of the Garoghlanian family does the narrator lay emphasis on?

Ans. The narrator says that he belongs to the Garoghlanian family, and that they were poor and had no money. Their whole tribe was poverty-stricken. Every branch of the Garoghlanian family was living in the most amazing and comical poverty in the world. Nobody could understand where they ever got money enough to keep themselves with food in their bellies, not even the old men of the family. Most important of all, though, they were famous for their honesty. They had been famous for their honesty for something like eleven centuries, even when they had been the wealthiest family in what they liked to think was the world. They were proud first, honest next, and after that they believed in right and wrong. None of them would take advantage of anybody in the world, let alone steal.

2. "Every family has a crazy streak in it somewhere." Explain.

Ans. Aram felt that every family has a crazy element somewhere, and Mourad seemed to have inherited it from their uncle Khosrove, a man so furious in temper, so irritable, so impatient that he stopped anyone from talking by roaring, "It is no harm; pay no attention to it." That was all he said no matter what anybody happened to be talking about. Even when his own son Arak came running to the barber's shop where he was having his moustache trimmed to tell him that their house was on fire, Khosrove roared exactly the same thing. The barber repeated what the boy had said but Khosrove roared, "Enough, it is no harm, I say." Mourad, was the one who had inherited the streak of madness from Khosrove, though he was the son of Zorab, who was practical and nothing else.

3. Aram's first experience with the horse. Elucidate.

Ans. Mourad called out to the narrator who leaped onto the horse's back behind his cousin Mourad. In less than three minutes they were on Olive Avenue, and then the horse began to trot. The air was new and lovely to breathe. The feel of the horse running

was wonderful. Mourad who was considered one of the craziest members of our family began to sing, which sounded more like a roar. They let the horse run for as long as it felt like running. Mourad then told Aram to get down as he wanted to ride alone. Aram said that he too wanted to ride the horse alone. Mourad assured him that he could if the horse allowed him to do so. When Mourad returned after his ride and told him to go on a ride, Aram leaped on to the back of the horse and for a moment knew the most awful fear imaginable. The horse did not move. Mourad told him to kick into his muscles. When Aram did so, the horse once again reared and snorted and began to run. But instead of running across the field to the irrigation ditch, the horse ran down the road to the vineyard of Dikran Halabian where it began to leap over vines. The horse leaped over seven vines before Aram fell, and then it galloped away.

4. How did Uncle Khosrove react to John Byro's complaint?

Ans. Uncle Khosrove came to Aram's house for coffee and cigarettes. Soon another visitor arrived, a farmer named John Byro. The farmer, while having his coffee and cigarette, said with a sigh, that his white horse that had been stolen the previous month was still untraceable. Uncle Khosrove became very annoyed and shouted that it was no harm since they had all lost their homeland. Hence, it was no use crying over a horse.

John Byro said that without a horse his carriage could not be put to use. "Pay no attention to it," roared Uncle Khosrove. When John said that he had walked ten miles to get there, Uncle Khosrove shouted that he had legs. The farmer said that his left leg pained but Uncle Khosrove roared again, "Pay no attention to it." The farmer said that the horse had cost him sixty dollars. Uncle Khosrove said, "I spit on money". John Byro got up and walked out of the house, slamming the door.

5. How does John Byro behave when he sees the horse?

Ans. One morning, on the way to Fetvajian's deserted vineyard, where they would hide the white horse, the boys met John Byro who was on his way to town. They wished each other and the farmer studied the horse eagerly. He asked the boys the name of the horse. Mourad said it was called 'My Heart' in Armenian. John Byro said that he could swear it was his horse that was stolen many weeks ago. The farmer then looked into the mouth of the horse. He was even more certain that the horse was a replica of his. He said had he not known their family's fame for honesty, he would have claimed the horse to be his, and suggested that the horse was the twin of his horse. The next morning, the boys took the horse to John Byro's vineyard and left it in the barn, as they were affected by the attitude of the farmer.

6. What impression do you form of cousin Mourad?

Ans. Mourad is a young boy of thirteen. He belongs to the Garoghlanian family of Armenia. Their whole tribe was poverty-stricken. In spite of abject poverty, their family was famous for their honesty. Mourad was quite adventurous and had a crazy streak in him. He enjoyed being alive more than anybody else. Mourad loved horse riding. He had a way with horses. He had tamed the horse with patience and affection. John Byro vouches that the horse was no longer wild.

It obeyed Mourad faithfully. His love for the horse is evident in the last scene. While parting, he put his arms around the horse, pressed his nose into the horse's nose and patted it. He also had a way with dogs. The dogs of John Byro followed them around without making a sound. He was kind. He treated a young robin which had hurt its

wing. He was worldly-wise and knew how to talk to farmers. Though he loved horse-riding he was averse to keeping the horse for a long time, as he did not want to come across as a thief. He is proud of his family which is well known for their honesty and trust. In short, he is a lovable young lad.

7. Compare and contrast uncle Khosrove and cousin Mourad.

Ans. Uncle Khosrove and cousin Mourad have one very important point in common—their craziness. Mourad was considered the natural descendant of uncle Khosrove in this respect. The second similarity is their ability to command and dominate over the people around them. Both use pet words and phrases and roar aloud to quieten the listener. While uncle Khosrove says, “It is no harm; pay no attention to it,” Mourad boasts, “I have a way with horses/dogs/farmers.” Khosrove shouts at his son Arak, the barber and farmer John Byro. The narrator is a patient listener of Mourad’s assertions. The difference lies in their age groups and physical built. Uncle Khosrove, a middle-aged person is an enormous man with a powerful head of black hair and a very large moustache. Mourad is an athletic young boy of thirteen. Khosrove is irritable, impatient and furious in temper. Mourad is reasonable, witty and mature.

8. Comment on the role of Aram, the narrator, in the story.

Ans. Aram plays an important role in the story. Besides being the narrator, he is also a commentator. He not only narrates the various adventures, incidents and actions, but also provides useful information regarding the main characters and their behaviour. We see the story through his eyes. He gives a graphic description of the Garoghlanian tribe, its members, their traits and their economic conditions. Mourad’s father Zorab is described as a practical person, whereas Mourad and uncle Khosrove represent the crazy members of the tribe. Abject poverty of the family does not diminish their pride in being a part of a family which is famous for its honesty. He says, “No member of the Garoghlanian family could be a thief.” He makes a fine distinction between stealing a horse for a ride and stealing a horse to sell it off. He gives a fine description of the horse ride and the country side with its vineyards, orchards, irrigation ditches and country roads. He brings out the adventurous and curious nature of children of his age with precision.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

1. Every family has a crazy streak in it somewhere, and my cousin Mourad was considered the natural descendant of the crazy streak in our tribe. Before him was our uncle Khosrove, an enormous man with a powerful head of black hair and the largest moustache in the San Joaquin Valley, a man so furious in temper, so irritable, so impatient that he stopped anyone from talking by roaring, “It is no harm; pay no attention to it.”

(a) What does the word ‘furious’ mean?

(i) Calm

(ii) Composed

(iii) Angry

(iv) Soothing

- (b) What was uncle Khosrove's pet dialogue?
- (c) What superlative feature did uncle Khosrove have?
- (i) Largest head (ii) Largest hair
- (iii) Largest moustache (iv) Largest brain
- (d) What was the common feature between uncle Khosrove and Mourad?
2. I got down and my cousin Mourad kicked his heels into the horse and shouted, *Vazire*, run. The horse stood on its hind legs, snorted, and burst into a fury of speed that was the loveliest thing I had ever seen. My cousin Mourad raced the horse across a field of dry grass to an irrigation ditch, crossed the ditch on the horse, and five minutes later returned, dripping wet.
- (a) What does the phrase 'hind legs' mean?
- (i) Front legs (ii) Back legs
- (iii) Both (i) and (ii) (iv) Neither (i) nor (ii)
- (b) From where did Mourad get the horse?
- (c) What happened when Aram tried to race the horse?
- (d) Who was known for his dialogue "I have a way with..."?
- (i) Aram (ii) Khosrove
- (iii) John Byro (iv) Mourad
3. We were poor. We had no money. Our whole tribe was poverty-stricken. Every branch of the Garoghlanian family was living in the most amazing and comical poverty in the world. Nobody could understand where we ever got money enough to keep us with food in our bellies, not even the old men of the family. Most important of all, though, we were famous for our honesty.
- (a) For what was the Garoghlanian family famous?
- (i) Dishonesty (ii) Honesty
- (iii) Stealth (iv) None of these
- (b) What financial condition was the Garoghlanian tribe undergoing?
- (c) Why did no member of the Garoghlanian tribe steal?
- (d) What does the phrase 'keep us with food in our bellies' mean?
- (i) To stay hungry (ii) To stay thirsty
- (iii) To stay satiated (iv) To stay bewildered

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

1. Aram could not believe his eyes when he looked out of the window. Comment.
2. Should they have kept the horse? Share your views. (*Constructed Response Question*)
3. Were the boys able to prove the hallmarks of their tribe? Why/Why not?
4. How did the boys justify their act of stealing?
5. What conflicting thoughts passed through the narrator's mind on seeing Mourad on a beautiful white horse early one morning?

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

1. Fear and/or Conscience – what worked behind the boys’ decision of returning the stolen horse?
(Constructed Response Question)
2. Do you agree with the claim that Mourad is the crazy descendant of Khosrove?
(Constructed Response Question)
3. Could the children have satisfied their desire for horse riding in a different manner? Give your suggestion.
(Constructed Response Question)



2

The Address

— Marga Minco

Introduction

The story is about the human predicament that follows the pre-war and post-war periods. Mrs S was a rich Jewish lady, whereas Mrs Dorling was a non-Jew. The girl, daughter of Mrs S, had lost her house and her mother during the war and has now come back to take her possessions from Mrs Dorling, an acquaintance whose address was given by her mother years ago. When she reached the house, the woman treated her with a cold reception and didn't let her into the house. She decided to go back anyway and then she met her daughter who let her in and told her to wait inside. When she saw all the possessions in front of her, she couldn't connect with them and decided to leave the house.

THEME

'The Address' by Marga Minco revolves around the theme of crisis that we as an individual encounter in our daily life. War brings destruction, pain and loss of lives which impact humans in various ways. However, this story speaks about the narrator and her mother's life which were disrupted due to the war. It further reiterates that both past and future are illusions, and all we have with us is the present. The story sheds light on the importance of letting things go.

Summary

'The Address' begins with a victim of war going back to her native place. It is about a daughter who returns to her home in Holland. She goes there to search for her mother's belongings after the war. When she reaches her native place, she does not receive a warm welcome. She follows the address she has on her. It is House Number 46 in Marconi Street. A woman opens the door and refuses to recognize the girl outside the door. The author notices the woman wearing her mother's green knitted sweater. Thus, she became even surer that she was in the right place. However, the woman denied knowing her mother.

Despite the author's resistance, the woman did not entertain her and closed the door on her. The author was going back when she starts thinking about the bygone days. She got the address from her mother years ago. After returning to her home post-war, she notices a lot of things missing from the place. Thus, her mother gives her the address of Mrs Dorling. She learns that Mrs Dorling is an old acquaintance of her mother. Her mother had handed over all their valuable possessions to Mrs Dorling to keep them safe. After many years, the author thinks of going back to take back their possessions. After being told to go away by Mrs Dorling on her visit, she goes back once again. On her second visit, a fifteen-year-old answers the door.

We learn that the mother was not at home. The author told her about her wish to meet her mother. The girl takes her inside the house. To the author's surprise, she notices the room

full of things which belonged to her mother. The room was not similar but the things were all very familiar. She started to feel uncomfortable and lost the desire to possess her mother's belongings. Thus, she leaves the house and thinks of forgetting the address and the thought of ever getting those things back.

Marga Minco (pseudonym of Sara Menco; born on 31 March 1920) is a Dutch journalist and writer. Her real surname was Menco, but an official accidentally switched the first vowel. She was born to an Orthodox Jewish family. In 1957 Minco published her first book, 'Het bittere kruid' (The Bitter Herb).



Answers to NCERT Questions

READING WITH INSIGHT

1. **'Have you come back?' said the woman. 'I thought that no one had come back.' Does this statement give some clue about the story? If yes, what is it?**
2. **The story is divided into pre-War and post-War times. What hardships do you think the girl underwent during these times?**
3. **Why did the narrator of the story want to forget the address?**
4. **'The Address' is a story of human predicament that follows war. Comment.**

Ans. 1. Yes, this statement gives some clue about the story. It introduces the reader to the fact that someone was expected to be coming back to execute something specific. The statement indicates the greedy and covetous nature of the speaker. The story is about the wartime when Jews faced a lot of problems. It introduces us to the people who take undue advantage of those who are in distress. The narrator introduces us to her gullible mother and her cunning acquaintance.

During the early part of the war, Mrs Dorling had shifted all of Mrs S's valuable belongings to her own house: Number 46, Marconi Street. This was very tactfully done under the pretext of protecting Mrs S's belongings, lest they get lost if they were to go away because of the war. These included tables, silver wares, antique plates and other nice things such as the iron Hanukkah, candle-holder, woollen table cloth and a green knitted cardigan with wooden buttons, and any such thing she could lay her hands on. As many years had passed since the war was over, Mrs Dorling did not expect anyone from Mrs S's family to come back and claim their belongings. She did not open the door to the daughter of her former acquaintance nor did she show any signs of recognition. She did not as much as let the girl into her house. She refused to engage with her, saying it was not a convenient time for her to do so.

2. During the pre-war times, the narrator lived in some other city far away from her home and she visited her mother only for a few days. During the first half of the war, the narrator's mother was always afraid that they might have to leave the place and lose all their valuable belongings. The narrator lived in the city in a small rented room. Its windows were covered with black-out paper. She could not see the beauty of nature outside her room. The threat of death loomed large. After the liberation,

everything became normal again. Bread was getting to be a lighter colour. She could sleep in her bed without any fear of death. She could glance out of the window of her room each day. She was able to walk around familiar places for the first time since the war. However, she did not go further than was necessary, as she didn't want to upset herself with the sights of streets and houses full of memories from a precious time.

3. The narrator remembered the address that her mother had told her. It was Number 46, Marconi Street, where her mother's acquaintance Mrs Dorling lived. She had stored the valuable belongings of the narrator's mother there. After the war and her mother's death, the narrator had an urge to visit the place. She wanted to see those things, touch them and remember. She went to the given address twice. She was successful only during her second attempt when Mrs Dorling's daughter allowed her to enter the house. She found herself in the midst of things she had wanted to see again. She felt oppressed in the strange atmosphere. Everything was arranged in a tasteless way. The ugly furniture and the muggy smell that hung there seemed quite unpleasant. The objects evoked the memory of her familiar life of former times. But they had lost their value as they had been separated from her mother and stored in strange surroundings. She no longer wanted to see, touch or remember these belongings. She resolved to forget the address. She wanted to leave the past behind and move on.
4. War creates many difficult and unpleasant situations for human beings. Life is embroiled in uncertainties. The human predicament that follows war is amply illustrated through the experience of the narrator. The war had caused many physical difficulties as well as emotional sufferings to her. She had lost her dear mother. She was left all alone in the world. Her attempt to connect with the past, of touching and seeing her mother's belongings also ended dismally.

She went to Number 46, Marconi Street to see her mother's valuable possessions. The extent to which human beings can be greedy and callous is exemplified by the behaviour of Mrs Dorling. She had taken away all the valuable belongings of the narrator's mother, promising to keep them safe, but refused to even recognise, or engage in a conversation with the narrator, when she called upon her after several years. The presence of her mother's possessions in a strange atmosphere pained her. Now these valuables had lost all their importance for her as they had been separated from her mother. She could get no solace or comfort from them.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

(4 Marks each)

1. "Every time she leaves here she takes something home with her," said my mother. "She took all the table silver in one go. And then the antique plates that hung there. She had trouble lugging those large vases, and I'm worried she got a crick in her back from the crockery." My mother shook her head pityingly. "I would never have dared ask her. She suggested it to me herself. She even insisted. She wanted to save all my nice things. If we have to leave here we shall lose everything," she says.

- (a) What does the phrase ‘she suggested it to me herself’ suggest?
- (b) What can you infer from the line ‘If we have to leave here we shall lose everything’?
- (c) The extract suggests that the narrator’s mother was a:
- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| (i) foolish lady | (ii) cunning woman |
| (iii) gullible woman | (iv) witty person |
- (d) After reading the extract, how would you describe Mrs Dorling?
- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| (i) Materialistic | (ii) Selfish |
| (iii) Opportunist | (iv) All of these |

Ans. (a) The phrase ‘she suggested it to me herself’ suggests that the woman was eager and persistent to take the narrator’s mother’s belongings.

(b) One possible inference is that the narrator’s mother and the woman were living in a time or place of war or conflict, and that they faced the risk of being displaced or losing their property.

(c) (iii) gullible woman

(d) (iv) All of these

2. “There is my daughter,” said my mother. She beckoned to me. The woman nodded and picked up the suitcase under the coat-rack. She wore a brown coat and a shapeless hat. “Does she live far away?” I asked, seeing the difficulty she had going out of the house with the heavy case. “In Macroni Street,” said my mother. “Number 46. Remember that.”

- (a) List any two sensory details present in this extract.
- (b) Identify the line from the extract that indicates that the woman lived nearby.
- (c) Was the narrator convinced with her mother’s idea of letting Mrs Dorling take away their things?
- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| (i) Absolutely | (ii) Partially |
| (iii) Quite a bit | (iv) Significantly |
- (d) Which of the following best suggests the central idea of the extract?
- | |
|--|
| (i) A Woman’s Difficult Departure with a Heavy Suitcase |
| (ii) A Woman’s Suspicious Behaviour to a Stolen Suitcase |
| (iii) A Woman’s Friendly Visit to a Generous Friend |
| (iv) A Woman’s Unexpected Encounter with a Stranger |

Ans. (a) The two sensory details in this extract are “the difficulty she had going out of the house with the heavy case” and “she wore a brown coat and a shapeless hat”.

(b) The line from the text that bears evidence to the fact that the woman lived nearby is ‘In Macroni Street’.

(c) (ii) Partially

(d) (ii) A Woman’s Suspicious Behaviour with a Stolen Suitcase

3. “Won’t you sit down?” asked the girl. She held open the door of the living room and I went inside past her. I stopped, horrified. I was in a room I knew and did not know. I found myself in the midst of things I did want to see again but which oppressed me in the strange atmosphere. Or because of the tasteless way everything was arranged,

because of the ugly furniture or the muggy smell that hung there, I don't know; but I scarcely dared to look around me. The girl moved a chair. I sat down and stared at the wollen table-cloth. I rubbed it. My fingers grew warm from rubbing.

(a) Why does the narrator say, "I scarcely dared to look around me"?

(b) What was the narrator's reaction when she entered the living room?

(c) How does the author describe the living room?

(i) Muggy smell

(ii) Strange atmosphere

(iii) Sophisticated

(iv) Both (i) and (ii)

(d) "I was in a room I knew and did not know." What does the author mean by this?

(i) She saw familiar things but in unfamiliar surroundings.

(ii) She saw unfamiliar things but in familiar surroundings.

(iii) She did not recognize the things she saw.

(iv) She did not want to remember anything.

Ans. (a) The narrator says so because she was afraid of what she might see or find in the room.

(b) The narrator was horrified when she entered the living room.

(c) (iv) Both (i) and (ii)

(d) (i) She saw familiar things but in unfamiliar surroundings.

4. I had no need to follow her hand. I knew which things she meant. I just looked at the still life over the tea-table. As a child I had always fancied the apple on the pewter plate. "We use it for everything," she said. "Once we even ate off the plates hanging there on the wall. I wanted to so much. But it wasn't anything special." I had found the burn mark on the table-cloth. The girl looked questioningly at me. "Yes," I said, "you get so used to touching all these lovely things in the house, you hardly look at them any more..."

(a) What does the phrase 'we use it for everything' suggest?

(b) What can you infer from the line "you get so used to touching all these lovely things in the house, you hardly look at them anymore"?

(c) Which of the following best suggests the central idea of the extract?

(i) A Woman's Surprising Encounter With her Mother's Things

(ii) A Woman's Disgusted Reaction to a Tasteless Room

(iii) A Woman's Awkward Conversation with a Strange Girl

(iv) A Woman's Disturbing Discovery of a Burn Mark

(d) The narrator remembered that the table-cloth had:

(i) an ink mark

(ii) a defect

(iii) a burn mark

(iv) none of these

Ans. (a) The phrase 'we use it for everything' suggests that the woman and the girl did not value or appreciate the narrator's mother's things as much as she did.

(b) The narrator felt nostalgic and sentimental about her mother's things, and she wished she could see them again in their original state and place.

(c) (i) A Woman's Surprising Encounter With her Mother's Things

(d) (iii) a burn mark

5. She held her hand on the door as though she wanted to prevent it opening any further. Her face gave absolutely no sign of recognition. She kept staring at me in silence. Perhaps I was mistaken, I thought, perhaps it isn't her. I had seen her only once, fleetingly, and that was years ago. It was most probable that I had rung the wrong bell. The woman let go of the door and stepped to the side. She was wearing my mother's green knitted cardigan.

(a) What does the phrase 'her face gave absolutely no sign of recognition' suggest?

(b) What do you understand by the term 'fleetingly' in the given extract?

(c) Why had the narrator come to visit Mrs Dorling?

(i) Because Mrs Dorling had belongings of the narrator's mother

(ii) Because Mrs Dorling called the narrator

(iii) Because the narrator missed Mrs Dorling

(iv) None of these

(d) Mrs Dorling was _____ when the narrator visited her.

(i) warm and welcoming

(ii) cold and inhospitable

(iii) overjoyed and emotional

(iv) nostalgic and emotional

Ans. (a) The phrase 'her face gave absolutely no sign of recognition' suggests that she did not remember or acknowledge the narrator.

(b) The term 'fleetingly' indicates that the narrator's memory of the woman was vague and brief.

(c) (i) Because Mrs Dorling had belongings of the narrator's mother

(d) (ii) cold and inhospitable

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. How did Mrs Dorling react when the narrator said, "I'm Mrs S's daughter"?

Ans. Mrs Dorling held her hand on the door as if she wanted to prevent it from opening any further. Her face showed no sign of recognition. She kept staring at the narrator without uttering a word.

2. What two reasons did the narrator give to explain that she was mistaken?

Ans. She thought that perhaps the woman was not Mrs Dorling. She had seen her only once, for a brief interval and that too years ago. Secondly, it was probable that she had rung the wrong bell.

3. Why did the narrator go to Mrs Dorling's house?

Ans. The narrator went to Mrs Dorling's house to collect the valuable belongings which her mother had given to her during the war time. She wanted to renew her past memories.

4. Why was the narrator confident that she had reached the correct address?

Ans. The narrator remembered the house No. 46. She recognised her mother's green cardigan which Mrs Dorling was wearing. The wooden buttons on it were now rather pale from washing. She was confident that she had reached the correct address.

5. How did Mrs Dorling's daughter treat the narrator?

Ans. Unlike Mrs Dorling, the daughter treated her with great courtesy. She told the author

that her mother had gone on an errand and would be back soon. She invited the narrator inside her house and offered her a cup of tea.

6. Why did the narrator decide not to collect her belongings?

Ans. The narrator was disappointed after recognising her belongings in a strange environment. She didn't feel comfortable on seeing all those valuable articles in Mrs Dorling's house.

7. Why did the narrator's mother ask her to remember the address by heart?

Ans. The narrator's mother asked her to remember the address by heart because she had given a number of household and valuable articles to Mrs Dorling during the war time. She thought that her daughter could collect them after the war was over.

8. To what extent did life assume its normal self after the war for the narrator?

Ans. Life returned to normal again gradually. The bread became lighter in colour, and there was a bed where she could sleep unthreatened. But the loss of relations and possessions made her feel dejected about them.

9. Who had given the narrator the address, when, and under what circumstances?

Ans. The narrator's mother had given her the address, years ago during the first half of the war. The narrator came home for a few days and missed various things in the rooms. Then her mother told her about Mrs Dorling and told her to remember the address.

10. What did the narrator learn about Mrs Dorling from her mother?

Ans. Her mother told her that Mrs Dorling was an old acquaintance. The former had not seen her for several years. Then she suddenly turned up and renewed their contact. Every time she left their place she took something with her—table silver, antique plates, etc. promising to keep them safe.

11. What reason did Mrs Dorling give for taking away the precious belongings of the narrator's mother?

Ans. Mrs Dorling suggested to the narrator's mother that she should store her belongings at a safer place. She wanted to save all her nice things. She explained that they would lose everything if they had to leave the place.

12. What impression do you form of the narrator's mother based on her conversation with the narrator?

Ans. The narrator's mother was a kind-hearted, generous and liberal lady. She was fond of collecting valuable things. She is more worried about the physical risk to Mrs Dorling than of losing them to her. She thought it an insult to tell her friends to keep those things for ever.

13. Was the narrator convinced with what her mother had told her about Mrs Dorling? How do you know?

Ans. The narrator did not feel convinced about her mother's concern for Mrs Dorling. The latter was keen on removing the precious possessions of the narrator's mother to her own house. It seems that the narrator did not like Mrs Dorling's excessive interest in her mother's belongings. It is evident from the questions she puts to her mother.

14. What does the narrator remember about Mrs Dorling when she saw her for the first time?

Ans. Mrs Dorling was a woman with a broad back. She wore a brown coat and a shapeless hat. She picked up a heavy suitcase lying under the coat-rack and left their house.

15. Why did the narrator wait a long time before going to the address Number 46, Marconi Street?

Ans. Initially, after the liberation, she was not at all interested in her mother's belongings lying stored there. She was also afraid of being confronted with things that were hidden away in cupboards and boxes, and had belonged to her mother, who no longer existed.

16. When did the narrator become curious about her mother's possessions?

Ans. Gradually, as normalcy returned, the narrator became curious about her mother's possessions. She knew that those things must still be at the address her mother had mentioned to her. She wanted to see them, touch them and remember.

17. "I was in a room I knew and did not know," says the narrator in the story 'The Address'. What prompted her to make this observation?

Ans. The narrator found herself in the midst of things she was familiar with and which she did want to see again, as they oppressed her in the strange atmosphere. This was perhaps because of the tasteless way everything was arranged, the ugly furniture, and the muggy smell that prevailed in the room.

18. "I just looked at the still life over the tea-table," says the narrator in the story 'The Address'. What does she mean by 'the still life'? What prompted her to make this remark?

Ans. The reference to antique box and silver spoons by the young host prompted her to make this remark. By 'the still life', the narrator means the lifeless things that were over the tea table such as the table-cloth, tea pot, cups and spoons. She had always fancied the apple on the pewter plate as a child.

19. "You only notice when something is missing." What does the speaker exactly mean?

Ans. The speaker says that one gets used to touching one's lovely things in the house and then hardly look at them anymore. It is only when something is missing that it is noticed, either because it is to be repaired or it has been lent to someone.

20. When did narrator realise that the cutlery they ate off every day was silver?

Ans. Once the narrator's mother asked her if she would help her polish the silver. The narrator asked her which silver she meant. Her mother was surprised at her ignorance and replied that it was the spoons, forks and knives, i.e., the cutlery they ate off every day.

21. Why did the the narrator suddenly decide to leave?

Ans. The narrator had visited Number 46, Marconi Street for a specific purpose—to see her mother's belongings and touch them. However, these objects were linked to the memory of a familiar life in former times, and they instantly lost their value when severed from them. And worse, if they are seen in strange surroundings.

22. Why did the narrator decide to leave before Mrs Dorling returned and to forget her address?

Ans. The narrator realised that she could not have done justice to all her mother's belongings if she took them away from Mrs Dorling as she lived in a small rented room. The room still had shreds of black-out papers along the windows. The narrow table drawers could hardly hold a handful of cutlery. She therefore resolved to forget the address and move on in life.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. How did 'The Address' originate?

Ans. Years ago, during the first half of the war, the narrator went home for a few days to see her mother. After staying there for a couple of days, she noticed that something about the rooms had changed. She missed various things. Her mother told her about Mrs Dorling, who was an old acquaintance. She had suddenly turned up after many years. Now she came regularly and took something home with her every time she came. She suggested that she could save her precious belongings by storing them at her place. While talking to her mother about this, the latter mentioned Mrs Dorling's address, Number 46, Marconi Street, and told her to keep it in her memory. The narrator asked her mother if she had agreed with her acquaintance to keep everything. Her mother did not like that and found it to be rude and insulting to do so. She was on the contrary, worried about the risk Mrs Dorling faced every time she left the house carrying a full suitcase or bag. This is how 'The Address' originated.

2. The first visit in 'The Address'. Elucidate.

Ans. In the post-war period, when things returned to normal, the narrator became curious about her mother's possessions that were stored at Mrs Dorling's house. Since she wanted to see them, she took the train and went to Number 46, Marconi Street. Mrs Dorling opened the door a chink. The narrator came closer, stood on the step and asked her if she knew her. Mrs Dorling told her that she didn't know her. The narrator then introduced herself and told her that she was the daughter of Mrs S. Mrs Dorling kept staring at her in silence and gave no sign of recognition. She held on to the door as if she wanted to prevent it from opening any further. The narrator recognised the green knitted cardigan of her mother that Mrs Dorling was wearing. Mrs Dorling saw her looking intently at the cardigan and therefore half hid herself behind the door. She knew that she was at the right address, and asked the lady once more if she knew her mother. Mrs Dorling asked with surprise if they had come back. The author replied that only she had returned.

3. Describe the outcome of the narrator's second visit in 'The Address'.

Ans. The second visit of the narrator to Number 46, Marconi Street, was different from the first one. During the first visit, the narrator was stalled at the entrance of the house by Mrs Dorling. Whereas during the second one, she was led to the living room, by a young girl who was more courteous. This time she could see and touch some of the things that belonged to her mother. She had visited this place with a specific purpose—to see her mother's belongings. The touch and sight of familiar things aroused memories of her former life. These objects that were linked to her past had now lost their real value for her as they were severed from them, and worse so when she saw them in strange circumstances. Thus, her mission to see, touch and remember her mother's belongings was partly successful. However, she resolved to forget these objects and the address and move on.

4. Give a pen-portrait of the narrator.

Ans. The narrator comes across as a person with intense emotional and intellectual qualities. A devoted daughter, she loves and respects her mother. Though she does not approve

of her mother's trust in her acquaintance, Mrs Dorling, she does not challenge her mother's decisions, though she does ask her mother, "Have you agreed with her that she should keep everything?" The narrator has a keen power of observation. She notices during her brief stay at home that various things are missing from the rooms. It is evident that she has a sharp sense of memory. The address that her mother had told her to keep in mind stayed with her for several years, till the war was over and normalcy had returned. She made persistent efforts to remind Mrs Dorling of her own identity and the latter's relations with her mother. This was indeed a revelation of an indomitable spirit. She visits Number 46, Marconi Street twice to see, touch and remember her mother's belongings. She is a realist, who doesn't like to remain chained to the past. Her resolution to forget the address and move on shows her grit and forward-looking nature. She chooses to move ahead in life, instead of holding on to the sorrowful memories of the past.

5. Comment on the significance of the title of the story 'The Address'.

Ans. The title of the story 'The Address' is quite appropriate, and in keeping with the essence of the story. The address plays a significant role in the narration and appears at the beginning, middle and end of the story. Marga Minco invites the reader's attention to the essence of her narration by the introduction she makes of Mrs Dorling. The middle part of the story reveals how she was convinced that she had arrived at the right place. It was her mother who had given her the address of the place where Mrs Dorling lived and asked her to remember it. The story ends dramatically with the narrator's resolve to forget the address. She had remembered the address for so many years and now since the belongings of her mother stored there had lost their value, she realises that forgetting this address would be quite easy.

6. Give a brief note on Mrs Dorling.

Ans. Mrs Dorling appears as a mysterious woman with a greedy heart and a shrewd mind. She contacted Mrs S when the war in Holland was about to break. She convinced Mrs S to hand over all her possessions on the pretext of keeping them safe. Mrs S, a gullible lady, is taken in by the pretended concern of her acquaintance. She is too simple to question the appropriateness of the demand, and quite willingly allows Mrs Dorling to take away all her belongings. She would come early in the morning so that she could complete her 'errands', unnoticed by the neighbours. One by one she took away all the stuff from Mrs S's house. But she didn't keep those things 'safe'. She did not seem to have a knack for keeping her house and the things in it in a systematic and tidy manner. The callousness of Mrs Dorling was at its peak when she refused to acknowledge Mrs S's daughter when she saw her. When the narrator recognised the cardigan as her mother's, she was shrewd enough to hide herself behind the door. It was clear that she didn't want to return those valuables. Her queries to the narrator, "Have you come back?", and "I thought that no one had come back", makes her intentions of keeping her loot very clear.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

1. As I walked slowly back to the station I thought about my mother, who had given me the address years ago. It had been in the first half of the War. I was home for a few days and it struck me immediately that something or other about the rooms had changed. I missed various things. My mother was surprised I should have noticed so quickly. Then she told me about Mrs Dorling. I had never heard of her but apparently she was an old acquaintance of my mother, whom she hadn't seen for years. She had suddenly turned up and renewed their contact.
 - (a) What made the narrator turn up at the station?
 - (i) Mrs Dorling recognising her
 - (ii) Mrs Dorling abusing her
 - (iii) Mrs Dorling not recognising her deliberately
 - (iv) Mrs Dorling recognising her deliberately
 - (b) Where did the war take place?
 - (c) Why had Mrs Dorling renewed her contact with Mrs S?
 - (d) What does the word 'acquaintance' mean?
 - (i) Known one
 - (ii) Unknown one
 - (iii) Stranger
 - (iv) None of these
2. "Every time she leaves from here she takes something home with her," said my mother. "She took all the table silver in one go. And then the antique plates that hung there. She had trouble lugging those large vases, and I'm worried she got a crick in her back from the crockery." My mother shook her head pityingly. "I would never have dared ask her. She suggested it to me herself. She even insisted. She wanted to save all my nice things. If we have to leave here we shall lose everything, she says."
 - (a) Why did Mrs Dorling take all her belongings?
 - (b) What does the narrator mean by 'silver'?
 - (i) Silver spoons
 - (ii) Silver Hanukkah
 - (iii) Silver bed
 - (iv) All of these
 - (c) Why did Mrs S have to give everything to Mrs Dorling?
 - (d) What does the word 'lugging' mean?
 - (i) Carrying with ease
 - (ii) Carrying with difficulty
 - (iii) Carrying with comfort
 - (iv) None of these
3. My fingers grew warm from rubbing. I followed the lines of the pattern. Somewhere on the edge there should be a burn mark that had never been repaired. "My mother'll be back soon," said the girl. "I've already made tea for her. Will you have a cup?" "Thank you." I looked up. The girl put cups ready on the tea-table. She had a broad back. Just like her mother. She poured tea from a white pot. All it had was a gold border on the lid, I remembered. She opened a box and took some spoons out.

- (a) How did the author know there was a burn mark on the table cloth?
- (b) Which literary device has been used in 'Just like her mother'?
- (i) Simile (ii) Metaphor
(iii) Personification (iv) Alliteration
- (c) What did the narrator remember?
- (d) How was Mrs Dorling's daughter different from her?
- (i) She was more beautiful. (ii) She was more dominating.
(iii) She was more hospitable. (iv) She was more cruel.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

1. Why did Mrs Dorling refuse to recognise the narrator?
2. 'I resolved to forget the address. Of all the things I had to forget, that would be the easiest.' Comment.
3. 'The address was correct. But I didn't want to remember it anymore.' Why did the narrator say so?
4. What important lessons of life do we learn from the story 'The Address'?
(Constructed Response Question)
5. Write a short note on the pain the narrator experienced as she stood watching her mother's belongings in such strange surroundings. (Constructed Response Question)

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

1. Comment on the statement, 'The Address is a story of post-war human predicament'.
(Constructed Response Question)
2. 'It is not easy to let off past memories and possessions'. Comment.
(Constructed Response Question)
3. 'Bygones are bygones'. Explain with reference to the story 'The Address'.
(Constructed Response Question)



3

Mother's Day — J.B. Priestley

Introduction

The play written by J.B. Priestley reveals how a mother's efforts are ignored by her family. It narrates how the family members who work for eight hours a day look down on her, although she works for the whole day and all week. After all she does for them, they take her for granted. They make her feel obligated to provide for them and do not even appreciate her efforts. The play portrays the experience of a mother, Mrs Pearson. On a daily basis, her kids disrespect and disregard her. In her own home, she is treated as a slave. Thus, she feels ignored and embarrassed every day, not only from her daughter, Doris and son, Cyril but also from her husband, George Pearson who has completely turned a blind eye from his wife. The rest of the play revolves around how her friend, Mrs Fitzgerald, who is a fortune teller, helps her earn the place and respect that she deserves as the woman of the house.

THEME

'Mother's Day' is a play written by J. B. Priestley. It is a satirical and humorous depiction of the status of women, in particular, a housewife in a family. The author brings out the plight of a mother very realistically in the play. Mrs Annie Pearson, mother, is not treated well by her husband and children. With the help of her neighbour and a magic spell, which temporarily allows them to interchange their roles, she stands up for her rights. Mrs Annie Pearson's family is shocked at the change, but they learn to behave properly with her. So finally, she gets the respect that she deserves.

Characters

Mrs Annie Pearson

Wife of George Pearson, a loving wife and mother, fond of her husband and children, does her best to keep them happy, simple-hearted, gentle to a fault, too weak to protest, works day and night with no rest, submissive

George Pearson

Husband of Mrs Annie Pearson, about fifty, self-important and pompous, neglects his wife, club members backbite and make fun of him

Doris Pearson

Daughter of George Pearson, a spoilt girl of around 20, the elder. She is already in an affair with a young boy, named Charlie Spence

Cyril Pearson

Son of George Pearson, a spoilt child

Mrs Fitzgerald

A neighbour of Mrs Annie Pearson, a bold, talented, strong, liberated, dominating and aggressive woman, knows some magic, drinks, smokes and plays cards, lives life on her own terms

Summary

Mrs Pearson and Mrs Fitzgerald are neighbours. One afternoon Mrs Fitzgerald visits Mrs Pearson. The two women sit comfortably in the living-room. While taking tea, Mrs Fitzgerald tells Mrs Pearson her fortune with the help of cards. According to her, Mrs Pearson's problem is that she is excessively fond of her husband and children. She runs after them all the time, takes their orders as if she was the servant of the house, and stays at home every night while they go out enjoying themselves. They have come to believe that she is there simply to wait on them, so they take no notice of her. Mrs Fitzgerald advises her that she should assert her rights as the mistress of the house if she wants them to treat her properly.

Mrs Fitzgerald asks her to let them wait or look after themselves. Mrs Pearson says that she can't do it. At this, Mrs Fitzgerald tells her a plan and says that they would change their personalities with each other. She had learnt this art when she was in the East. Mrs Pearson hesitates. But Mrs Fitzgerald holds her hands, asks her to keep quiet and not to think about anything and look at her. The two women stare at each other. Mrs Fitzgerald recites a spell. Gradually, their personalities change bodies. Now Mrs Pearson is bold and domineering while Mrs Fitzgerald is nervous and agitated.

After a few moments, Doris Pearson enters the room violently and orders her mother to iron her yellow silk as she is to wear it that night. She is astonished to see her mother smoking. Mother has not got her tea ready. She is in no mood to iron her yellow silk for her. She is rather thinking of going out and getting a meal at the Clarendon. Doris is astounded at the unusual behaviour of her mother. Then she tells her mother that she is going out with Charlie Spence. Mother severely asks her whether she could not find anybody better than buck teeth and half-witted Charlie Spence. This is too much for Doris. She runs out of the room with tears in her eyes.

Then Cyril Pearson enters. She has not put his things out though she had promised that morning to look through them in case there was any mending. He wonders what is going on in the house. He stands aghast when she tells him that she wants stout to drink and moves to the kitchen. She takes a bottle of stout and a half-filled glass. Cyril and Doris are unable to control their laughter. Mrs Pearson looks at them with contempt and asks them to behave like grown-ups. With tearful eyes, Doris asks why she is talking like that and what wrong they had done. She asks mother whether she had fallen or hit herself with something. Mother rebukes her for asking such a silly question. Doris begins to cry. Mother coldly asks her to stop crying noisily like a baby.

Just then, George Pearson enters. He notices Doris's tears and asks why she is crying. Doris runs out of the room sobbing. He is astonished to see his wife sipping stout. He tells her that he doesn't want any tea as he would have supper at the club. Mrs Pearson tells him that there is no tea ready. He is annoyed to know that his wife didn't get tea ready for him. Mrs Pearson laughs at his childishness and remarks that if he behaved like that at the club they would laugh at him even more than they do now. George is surprised to know that they laugh at him at the

club. Mrs Pearson continues that he is one of their standing jokes. They call him Pompous-ompy Pearson because they think he is too slow and pompous. George is shocked. He staggers out of the room.

There is a knock at the door. Cyril hurries out and re-enters bringing in Mrs Fitzgerald. She asks Mrs Pearson whether everything is all right. Cyril remarks sulkily that everything is wrong. Mrs Pearson asks him sharply to keep quiet. Cyril walks out of the room. Mrs Fitzgerald is surprised at this turn of events and asks Mrs Pearson nervously what she had been doing. Mrs Pearson tells her calmly that she had just been putting them in their places, and they will be eating out of her hand soon. Just then, George enters the room. He is looking very sullen. Mrs Fitzgerald watches all this helplessly. She is utterly confused. She tries to stop Mrs Pearson in vain. George and Doris are bewildered at this turn of events. They stare at Mrs Fitzgerald. She requests them to leave her alone with Mrs Pearson and promises that everything will be all right. George and Doris leave the room. Mrs Fitzgerald urges Mrs Pearson that they should now regain their proper personalities.

Mrs Pearson wants to continue it a bit more but Mrs Fitzgerald would not listen to her. She says that they are already very miserable and she cannot bear it any more. She stretches her hands across the table eagerly. Mrs Pearson takes them. They stare at each other, and exactly as before Mrs Pearson recites the spell. They become their proper personalities. Mrs Fitzgerald advises Mrs Pearson not to go soft on them again, otherwise it will all have been wasted. Mrs Fitzgerald warns her that she must not start giving explanations or ask for apologies, otherwise she will be straight back where she was.

When Mrs Fitzgerald leaves the room, she finds George, Doris and Cyril standing in a row at the doorway. The family looks anxiously at Mrs Pearson. She smiles. They feel much relieved and they smile back at her. Mrs Pearson tells them what she thought they would do at night. They would have a nice family game of rummy. Then the children could get the supper ready while she has a talk with their father. Thus, Mrs Fitzgerald helps Mrs Pearson to become the boss of her family. When she goes out, the family lovingly clusters around the mother.

John Boynton Priestley was an English novelist, playwright, screenwriter, broadcaster and social commentator. His Yorkshire background is reflected in much of his fiction, notably in 'The Good Companions', which first brought him to wide public notice. He was born on September 13, 1894 in Manningham, Bradford, West Riding of Yorkshire, England and died on August 14, 1984 in Warwickshire, England. He is noted for his varied output and his ability for shrewd characterisation. His plays are more varied in tone than his novels.



Answers to NCERT Questions

READING WITH INSIGHT

1. **This play, written in the 1950s, is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the mother in the family.**
 - (i) **What are the issues it raises?**
 - (ii) **Do you think it caricatures these issues or do you think that the problems it raises are genuine? How does the play resolve the issues? Do you agree with the resolution?**

2. If you were to write about these issues today what are some of the incidents, examples and problems that you would think of as relevant?

3. Is drama a good medium for conveying a social message? Discuss.

- Ans.**
1. (i) The main issue that the play raises is that the lady of the house, who is just like an axis, is never given her due respect, especially, if she is a simple housewife. The family members take her for granted. She works like an unpaid servant. The second issue is that the mistress of the house should assert her position very firmly to the family members. She should be ready to put across her views with determination rather than surrender meekly.
 - (ii) The issues raised in the play are genuine even though they have been treated with satire and humour. The problem that we come across in our life has been depicted in the chapter very sensitively. The lady of the house should be the master of the house and she should make sure that all the family members give her the due respect and recognition that she deserves. The issue is convincingly resolved in the play. The transformation of the personalities is symbolic. The author has portrayed the fact that sometimes one has to put one's foot down.
 2. If I were to write about some of the relevant issues today, I won't have to go very far. The same incident happened in my house also. We are three brothers and sisters, all school-going children. My father works in an office. My mother gets up early in the morning to prepare four sets of breakfasts and tiffins. We take our time to get ready, but if there is a delay even of five seconds on the part of my mother, we all bring the roof down. The same ritual takes place in the evening as well. Mother gets up before all of us and goes to bed after everyone else. We had all taken her presence for granted. One day, my grandmother fell sick and mother had to go for two days. Without her, the entire house looked as if it was hit by a tornado. We all waited for her as if we were waiting for some miracle to happen. When, finally she came, we all heaved a sigh of relief and vowed never to take her lightly.
 3. Drama is a mode of representing something that is fictional through the medium of dialogue and performance. Since it consists of both visual and auditory elements, it is known to have a substantial effect on the minds of people. The effect is known to be better than something that is read or just simply heard. Thus, if a social message that holds a lot of importance is brought to life through drama, it holds immense potential to herald a change. The play 'Mother's Day' makes the viewers/readers hear what is unsaid, feel what is not explicitly mentioned and conclude what is right or wrong on their own. This motivates them to bring changes in their own lives. This is the power of drama. Hence, drama can be considered a medium good enough for conveying a social message.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

(4 Marks each)

1. [As she is about to rise, Mrs Fitzgerald reaches out across the table and pulls her down.]

MRS FITZGERALD: Let 'em wait or look after themselves for once. This is where your foot goes down. Start now. [She lights a cigarette from the one she has just finished.]

MRS PEARSON: [embarrassed] Mrs Fitzgerald—I know you mean well—in fact, I agree with you— but I just can't—and it's no use you trying to make me. If I promise you I'd really have it out with them, I know I wouldn't be able to keep my promise.

MRS FITZGERALD: Then let me do it.

MRS PEARSON: [flustered] Oh no—thank you very much, Mrs Fitzgerald—but that wouldn't do at all. It couldn't possibly be somebody else—they'd resent it at once and wouldn't listen—and really I couldn't blame them. I know I ought to do it—but you see how it is? [She looks apologetically across the table, smiling rather miserably.]

MRS FITZGERALD: [coolly] You haven't got the idea.

(a) About whom are the women in the extract talking?

(b) What is the contrast in the personalities of the two women in the extract? Choose the correct option.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| (i) Polite vs Assertive | (ii) Gentle vs Sensible |
| (iii) Scared vs Brave | (iv) None of these |

(c) Which of the following explains “This is where your foot goes down”?

- (i) To physically fix your foot down to the floor
- (ii) To restraint yourself against a strong person
- (iii) To adopt a firm policy when faced with opposition or disobedience
- (iv) To give into what is expected

(d) What does Mrs Fitzgerald mean by ‘let me do it’?

- Ans.** (a) The women are talking about Mrs Pearson's family and how they would not comply or even listen to her.
- (b) (i) Polite vs Assertive
- (c) (iii) To adopt a firm policy when faced with opposition or disobedience
- (d) When Mrs Pearson tries to clarify what her neighbour had meant, Mrs Fitzgerald says that Mrs Pearson had no idea. She is referring to her idea of exchanging their personalities.

2. MRS PEARSON: I might. Who d'you think?

DORIS: [staring at her] Mum—what's the matter with you?

MRS PEARSON: Don't be silly.

DORIS: [indignantly] It's not me that's being silly— and I must say it's a bit much when I've been working hard all day and you can't even bother to get my tea ready. Did you hear what I said about my yellow silk?

MRS PEARSON: No. Don't you like it now? I never did.

DORIS: [indignantly] Of course I like it. And I'm going to wear it tonight. So I want it ironed.

MRS PEARSON: Want it ironed? What d'you think it's going to do—iron itself?

(a) Why is Doris consistently reacting ‘indignantly’ towards her mother Mrs Pearson?

(b) Identify the tone in which Mrs Pearson talks.

- (i) Cool and incisive
- (ii) Flattering and apologetic
- (iii) Brave and strong
- (iv) Taunting and angry

(c) Choose the words that describe Doris's personality on the basis of the given extract.

- (1) Spoilt
- (2) Independent
- (3) Bad tempered
- (4) Kind
- (i) (1) and (2)
- (ii) (1) and (3)
- (iii) (2) and (4)
- (iv) (2) and (3)

(d) What does the extract reflect upon the relationship between Doris and Mrs Pearson?

- Ans.** (a) Doris is consistently reacting with anger towards her mother, Mrs Pearson, as she is acting unusual and is not complying to Doris's demands.
- (b) (i) Cool and incisive
- (c) (ii) (1) and (3)
- (d) Doris is a selfish child who only talks to her mother to get her work done. She takes her mother for granted and the extract reflects that.

3. MRS FITZGERALD: I did. Twelve years I had of it, with my old man rising to be Lieutenant Quartermaster. He learnt a lot, and I learnt a lot more. But will you make up your mind now, Mrs Pearson dear? Put your foot down, once an' for all, an' be the mistress of your own house an' the boss of your own family.

MRS PEARSON: [smiling apologetically] That's easier said than done. Besides I'm so fond of them even if they are so thoughtless and selfish. They don't mean to be...

MRS FITZGERALD: [cutting in] Maybe not. But it'd be better for them if they learnt to treat you properly...

MRS PEARSON: Yes, I suppose it would, in a way.

- (a) What does the phrase 'put your foot down' suggest?**
- (b) "Besides I'm so fond of them even if they are so thoughtless and selfish." In the given line, Mrs Pearson is trying to:**
- (i) defend her family members
 - (ii) defend her own disposition
 - (iii) blame her subservient personality
 - (iv) state that she won't be able to do anything

(c) How would you describe Mrs Pearson?

- (i) pleasant, unhappy, impatient, in her forties
- (ii) considerate, caring, worried, in her forties
- (iii) compliant, caring, worried-looking, in her forties
- (iv) pleasant, worried-looking, in her forties

(d) What do you infer from the line 'he learnt a lot, and I learnt a lot more'?

- Ans.** (a) The phrase 'put your foot down' suggests that Mrs Fitzgerald wanted Mrs Pearson to be more firm and assertive with her family.
- (b) (ii) defend her own disposition

- (c) (iv) pleasant, worried-looking, in her forties
- (d) From this line, we can infer that Mrs Fitzgerald was proud and confident of her own knowledge and experience gained from her husband's military career.

4. MRS PEARSON: [embarrassed] Mrs Fitzgerald—I know you mean well—in fact, I agree with you— but I just can't—and it's no use you trying to make me. If I promise you I'd really have it out with them, I know I wouldn't be able to keep my promise.

MRS FITZGERALD: Then let me do it.

MRS PEARSON: [flustered] Oh no—thank you very much, Mrs Fitzgerald—but that wouldn't do at all. It couldn't possibly be somebody else—they'd resent it at once and wouldn't listen—and really I couldn't blame them. I know I ought to do it—but you see how it is? [She looks apologetically across the table, smiling rather miserably.]

(a) How does Mrs Fitzgerald plan to help Mrs Pearson?

(b) Mrs Pearson was _____ about Mrs Fitzgerald's plan.

- (i) excited (ii) hesitant
(iii) sure (iv) envious

(c) Select the suitable option from the given statements, based on your reading of the extract.

(1) Mrs Pearson is not appreciative of the fact that Mrs Fitzgerald wants to teach her family a lesson.

(2) Mrs Fitzgerald wants Mrs Pearson to get respect from her family members.

- (i) (1) is false but (2) is true (ii) Both (1) and (2) are true
(iii) (2) is a fact but unrelated to (1) (iv) (1) is the cause for (2)

(d) What does the line 'I know I ought to do it — but you see how it is' indicate about Mrs Pearson?

- Ans.** (a) Mrs Fitzgerald plans to help Mrs Pearson by swapping personalities with her and then teaching the family a lesson.
- (b) (ii) hesitant
- (c) (i) (1) is false but (2) is true
- (d) The line indicates that Mrs Pearson felt guilty and conflicted about her inability or unwillingness to stand up for her family.

5. MRS FITZGERALD: [with Mrs Pearson's personality] Oh—it's happened.

MRS PEARSON: [complacently] Of course it's happened. Very neat. Didn't know I had it in me.

MRS FITZGERALD: [alarmed] But whatever shall I do, Mrs Fitzgerald? George and the children can't see me like this.

MRS PEARSON: [grimly] They aren't going to—that's the point. They'll have me to deal with—only they won't know it.

MRS FITZGERALD: [still alarmed] But what if we can't change back? It'd be terrible.

MRS PEARSON: Here—steady, Mrs Pearson—if you had to live my life it wouldn't be so bad. You'd have more fun as me than you've had as you.

- (a) What does the phrase “Didn’t know I had it in me” suggest?
- (b) In what endeavour does Mrs Fitzgerald help Mrs Pearson?
- (i) To see the future (ii) To make her family treat her well
(iii) To run errands (iv) None of these
- (c) Explain, ‘You’d have more fun as me than you’ve had as you’.
- (d) When do Mrs Pearson and Mrs Fitzgerald get back to their original selves?
- (i) When Mrs Pearson’s family gets to know about them
(ii) When they both get bored
(iii) When the situation goes out of hand
(iv) None of these

- Ans.** (a) The phrase ‘Didn’t know I had it in me’ suggests that Mrs Pearson (who has Mrs Fitzgerald’s personality) was surprised and impressed by her own ability or power to swap bodies with Mrs Fitzgerald.
- (b) (ii) To make her family treat her well
- (c) It means that Mrs Pearson (who has Mrs Fitzgerald’s personality) thought that the real Mrs Pearson would be able to have a more enjoyable and exciting life as Mrs Fitzgerald than she could have as herself.
- (d) (iii) When the situation goes out of hand

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. What was Mrs Fitzgerald’s opinion of Mrs Pearson’s attitude?

- Ans.** Mrs Fitzgerald felt that Mrs Pearson’s attitude did no good to her family members. Tending to their needs, taking their orders, and staying at home every night while they went out to enjoy themselves made them spoilt.

2. What does Mrs Fitzgerald offer to do for her?

- Ans.** Mrs Fitzgerald sensed that Mrs Pearson was far too gentle, submissive and generous to tackle her family. So, she offers to make them realise the error of their ways not as Mrs Fitzgerald but as Mrs Pearson. She offers to change their bodies and then return back.

3. What is the first reaction of Doris on seeing her mother? Why?

- Ans.** Doris was taken aback to see her mother smoking and playing cards. When Doris asked her what she was doing, she was startled to get the answer—‘whitewashing the ceiling.’ Moreover, her conduct was not nervous and apologetic but cool and incisive.

4. What did Doris want her mother to do? How did the mother react?

- Ans.** Doris wanted her mother to iron her yellow silk dress that she must wear that night. She also wanted her mother to make tea for her. But the mother refused to make her tea and iron her dress, telling her that she put in twice the hours Doris did but got neither wages, nor thanks for it.

5. What did Mrs Pearson say to Doris that really bothered her?

- Ans.** Mrs Pearson asked where Doris would wear her yellow silk dress. She said that she planned to go out with Charlie Spence. Mrs Pearson told her to find somebody better and insulted Charlie Spence by calling him buck-toothed and half-witted.

6. What did Mrs Pearson say to Cyril that shocked him?

Ans. When Cyril walked in and insisted on getting the tea and his clothes ready, he was stunned to hear that she didn't like mending. She went on to tell him that when he does not want to do something, he does not do it. So, she has planned to do the same. This shocked Cyril as he could not believe his ears.

7. What is Mrs Pearson's reaction on seeing her children giggling when she returns to the room?

Ans. When her children were giggling, Mrs Pearson asks them the reason for their amusement. Doris answers that she had never understood their jokes. To which Mrs Pearson retorts rudely, saying that she was bored at their jokes even before they were born. Doris gets tearful and Mrs Pearson blames them for being selfish about their needs.

8. What reason did she give Cyril for not making tea?

Ans. When Cyril asked for tea, as he had been working for eight hours in the day, Mrs Pearson replied saying that she had done her eight hours and henceforth, she would work only for forty hours a week. She declared that she would also want her two days off on the weekend, just like them.

9. What, according to Mrs Pearson, were her plans for the weekends?

Ans. Mrs Pearson tells her children that she would have her two days off for the weekends. She agreed to make beds and cook a little as a favour, conditional to how she was treated. She also tells her children that in case they did not like the arrangement, she would go elsewhere for the weekends.

10. What was the truth about Mr George Pearson that hurt him the most?

Ans. Mrs Pearson told George that he was one of the standing jokes in the club. He was called 'Pompy-ompy Pearson' because they thought that he was slow and pompous. She was surprised that he spent so much time at a place where people always ridiculed him, leaving his wife at home.

11. What were the two slips that could have let out the real identity of Mrs Fitzgerald?

Ans. Mrs Fitzgerald, in her nervousness, addresses Mr Pearson, as George. Mr Pearson is surprised to be called by his first name, but Mrs Pearson covers it up for Mrs Fitzgerald. Later, when Mrs Fitzgerald attempts to slap George, following an argument, the real Mrs Pearson exclaims and calls out to her 'Mrs Fitzgerald', which confuses George.

12. How was the experience for the two women after the change of bodies?

Ans. The real Mrs Pearson (now Mrs Fitzgerald) had not enjoyed the experience as she had to see her family being treated roughly and rudely by Mrs Fitzgerald. On the other hand, Mrs Fitzgerald had enjoyed the experience, as she had been able to teach Doris, Cyril and George Pearson a lesson to value Mrs Pearson.

13. How are Mrs Pearson and Mrs Fitzgerald contrasted?

Ans. The two ladies are sharply contrasted. Mrs Pearson is a pleasant but worried-looking woman in her forties. She speaks in a light, flurried sort of tone, with a touch of suburban Cockney. Mrs Fitzgerald is older, heavier and has a strong and sinister personality. She smokes. She has a deep voice, rather Irish perhaps.

14. Who is Mrs Fitzgerald?

Ans. Mrs Fitzgerald is Mrs Pearson's neighbour and good friend. She is also a fortune teller, an art which she had learnt and perfected when she was in the East. She played a significant role in changing the attitude of Mrs Pearson's family towards her.

15. What was the style of prediction used on Mrs Pearson?

Ans. Mrs Fitzgerald is quite equivocal in her predictions. While speaking about Mrs Pearson's future, she states categorically that it could be a good fortune or a bad one, and what follows would depend on Mrs Pearson herself now. It was for her to make up her mind and then everything will be there right in front of her.

16. What is the problem that is disturbing Mrs Pearson?

Ans. Mrs Pearson devoted all her time and energy to serve her husband, son and daughter. These thoughtless and selfish members of her family would go out every night to enjoy themselves, leaving Mrs Pearson alone at home. She was no better than a servant in her own home. Mrs Pearson herself was responsible for the ill-treatment, neglect and lack of concern shown to her, because she did not develop the skill of asserting herself. She bowed down to the demands of her family, and thus remained under everyone's thumb till the time she was advised by her friend to begin making changes.

17. What was the plan of action for bringing about 'change'?

Ans. Mrs Fitzgerald tells Mrs Pearson to decide firmly and stick to her decision. The two ladies were going to exchange their minds, making it easier for Mrs Pearson to execute Mrs Fitzgerald's plan. The changed Mrs Pearson's aggressive behaviour created the necessary drama, to make the members of the family understand the mistake they were making.

18. What difficulties does Mrs Pearson face while dealing with the various members of her family?

Ans. Mrs Pearson loves her husband and children too much. She found it difficult to muster the courage to discuss the problems she had experienced with them. She only keeps dropping hints. She hates any unpleasantness. She does not know where to start. She doesn't know how to begin a discussion with the other members of the family.

19. How does Mrs Pearson react to: "Then let me do it", suggested by Mrs Fitzgerald?

Ans. Mrs Pearson is flustered when Mrs Fitzgerald offers to deal with her family members and make them understand the need to treat her properly. She thanks her saying that it wouldn't do at all. They would resent being ill-treated by somebody else and wouldn't listen.

20. How does Doris react when she sees her mother?

Ans. Doris finds her mother smoking away—lighting a cigarette and laying out the cards on the table. She shoots her a query about ironing her yellow silk, but feels astounded on seeing her mother's changed and non-cooperative behaviour.

21. Why was Doris annoyed?

Ans. Firstly, Doris was annoyed that her mother had not ironed her yellow silk dress which she wanted to wear that night, whilst going on a date with Charlie Spence. More annoying was that when she had returned home after working hard all day, and her mother hadn't bothered to get her tea ready.

22. How does Mrs Pearson refute Doris's argument about working hard?

Ans. Mrs Pearson tells Doris that she has a good idea as to the number of hours of work Doris puts in every day. Mrs Pearson claims that she puts in twice the hours that Doris does, and gets no pay or gratitude for it.

23. Why was Cyril annoyed with his mother?

Ans. Mrs Pearson asks Doris if she could not find anyone better than Charlie Spence, whom she calls buck-teethed and half-witted and added that, personally, she wouldn't be seen dead with Charlie Spence. At her age, she would either have found somebody better than him or given herself up as a bad job.

24. Why was Cyril annoyed with Mrs Pearson's attitude?

Ans. Cyril was annoyed when his mother tells him that tea was not ready and that she couldn't bother about preparing it. He enquires if she was unwell and then orders her to be quick as he did not have too much time. His mother was not affected by any of his ramblings. Another problem that annoyed the lad was that his mother had not taken out his clothes for the night nor had she checked whether they needed mending. She was resolute on not doing any work.

25. "That's a nice way to talk. What would happen if we all talked like that?" says Cyril. Explain the situation.

Ans. These words were told by Cyril, when his mother says, "Well, now I've decided I don't like mending." She was supposed to take his clothes out and check if any of them needed mending. In response to his words, she tells him that they all talk to her in the same manner, and would refuse to do the work if they didn't like to do so. She follows it up by saying that if they were in the work place, their union would put a bar on workers doing extra work. She says that she has now joined the movement started by such unions.

26. What changes in the behaviour of Mrs Pearson startle Doris and Cyril? What possible reasons do they consider as being the cause?

Ans. Doris couldn't believe her eyes when she saw her mother smoking and playing cards. Cyril too noted the change and asked her if she was feeling ill. She looks just the same but her behaviour is suddenly different. Cyril wonders if she could be slightly mad, while Doris thinks that she might have had a concussion as a result of her head hitting on something.

27. How does Mrs Pearson announce her hitherto changed working pattern to her children?

Ans. Initially, she scolded them for their guffawing and giggling. Then she takes a dig at their lifestyle, their practice of just coming in, asking for something, going out again and then returning when there's nowhere else to go. When Doris and Cyril boast of doing work all day, Mrs Pearson tells them that she has also done her eight hours. She threatens them that henceforth, it's going to be a forty-hour-week for everyone. Also, that the two days of the weekend would be off for her too.

28. "But any of you forty-hour-a-weekers who expect to be waited on hand and foot on Saturday and Sunday, with no thanks for it, are in for a nasty disappointment," says Mrs Pearson. How has she planned to spend the weekends?

Ans. During the weekend, she says she might do a bit of cooking or make a bed or two as a

favour, but it would be done only if she was asked very nicely and thanked for it. The rest of the family have to pay attention to her and show her some care and concern. She adds that perhaps, she might go off for the weekend as it will provide her a change from the boredom of staying indoors all the time.

29. “Well, that ought to be a nice change for you.” says Mrs Pearson. What ‘change’ does she refer to and how does George react to it?

Ans. George finds his wife Annie (Mrs Pearson) drinking stout at the wrong time of the day. He has never seen her doing so before. This made him confused and surprised. When he remarked that he doesn’t like her drinking and it doesn’t look right, Mrs Pearson replies to his chauvinistic statement by saying that it was a nice change for him, as it had been quite a while since he was surprised at her.

30. How does the stern treatment reform the spoilt children?

Ans. The children look apprehensively at Mrs Pearson. However, they smile back at her as she smiles. Since they are not going out, she suggests having a nice family game of rummy. She tells the children to get the supper ready while she has a talk with their father. The spoilt children meekly obey her. The impact of the stern treatment was impressive.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. Write, in your words, about the conversation between Mrs Pearson and Mrs Fitzgerald in the beginning of the play. What is the outcome of the meeting?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Mrs Fitzgerald predicts her friend, Mrs Pearson’s fate and tells her that it was high time she asserted herself as the head of the family. Mrs Pearson says that it was not easy because she loves her family despite the fact that they are very thoughtless and selfish. But Mrs Fitzgerald insists that they ought to learn to appreciate her and treat her appropriately. She tells her not to run after them and oblige them. Mrs Pearson agrees with Mrs Fitzgerald, but wonders if anything would affect them. She is afraid of creating unpleasantness in the family. As Mrs Pearson is about to rush off to prepare dinner for her family, Mrs Fitzgerald comes up with an idea. She tells Mrs Pearson that they could exchange their bodies. She then holds her hand and asks her to keep quiet for a minute. They stare at each other and Mrs Fitzgerald mumbles ‘Arshatta dum—arshatta lam—arshatta lamdumbona...’ and they assume each other’s personality.

2. Describe Mrs Pearson’s conversation with Cyril when he walks in.

Ans. Mrs Pearson’s son, Cyril, walks in and insists on getting the tea and his clothes ready. He reminds her of the promise she made the same morning, to mend his clothes. He is surprised to hear that she does not like mending and that she would not do anything that she did not want to do. Cyril could not believe his ears. Cyril again asks for the tea, telling her that he had been working for eight hours, to which Mrs Pearson says that she had done her eight hours and henceforth, she would work for only forty hours a week. On weekends, she would also have her two days off. She might make a bed or two and do a bit of cooking as a favour, but that would be conditional on them asking her very nicely and thanking her for everything. Cyril and Doris are surprised and wait for their father to arrive.

3. Pick out the instances that bring out the element of humour in the play.

Ans. The play is a light-hearted comedy. A mother, Mrs Pearson, succeeds in changing the attitude of her family by exchanging her body with her friend, Mrs Fitzgerald, a bold and assertive woman, thus, introducing humour in the play. After their spirits change, Mrs Pearson notices the cigarette and snatches it off Mrs Fitzgerald, while the latter looks down at her changed body and screams out of fright. Mrs Pearson answers her daughter's query sarcastically, that she was whitewashing the ceiling. Mrs Pearson insults Doris's date, comically, calling him 'buck-toothed and half-witted'. Cyril is told that she does not 'like mending' his clothes, stunning him to silence. When Mrs Pearson walks out, Doris and Cyril laugh at the idea of her having gone crazy and decide to wait till their father comes. She tells George that he was a standing joke in the club and was called 'Pompy-Ompy-Pearson' because they thought that he was slow and pompous. She also mocks him saying that he was George, and not the Duke of Edinburgh.

4. What is the reaction of Doris and Cyril to the unusual behaviour of their mother?

Ans. Both Doris and Cyril are astonished at the unusual behaviour of their mother. She has always been very kind and affectionate, meek and submissive. But now she is very cold and indifferent, and seems to be in a defiant mood. She has not bothered to get tea ready for them and tells them to help themselves. When Doris asks her to iron her yellow silk, she refuses to oblige. She has not cared to put Cyril's things out, though she had promised that morning to look through them in case there was any mending. They are astonished to hear that mother, who has been running after them all the time taking their orders, now proposes to work forty hours a week and have two days off from household chores. They are against her drinking stout. As far as they know her, she has never tasted stout. They thought that they had done something wrong and that she was offended with them. But now they realise that there is something wrong with their mother. Doris thinks that she might have hit her head and got some violent shock, but her idea seems too far-fetched to Cyril. Nevertheless, they laugh to think how she would behave when Dad comes home.

5. Sketch the character of Mrs Pearson.

Ans. The character of Mrs Pearson can be best studied in three parts: (a) before she changes her personality with that of Mrs Fitzgerald; (b) after she changes her personality with Mrs Fitzgerald; and (c) after she becomes her proper personality. Before Mrs Pearson changes her personality with that of Mrs Fitzgerald, she is an ideal housewife. She spends all her time in looking after her family, waiting on them like a servant and meeting all their needs. She suffers in silence and does not express her resentment for fear of creating any unpleasantness in the house. After changing her personality with Mrs Fitzgerald, she is bold and defiant. She refuses to obey their orders. She speaks to them impudently and shows them their proper place in the family. After Mrs Pearson gets back into her original personality, we note a marked change in her behaviour. She is no longer meek and submissive and docile. She knows how to tackle them with just a look or a tone of voice. She is now the mistress of the house who could be tough with them if she wanted to be.

6. Write a note on the title of the play 'Mother's Day'.

Ans. The title of the play is quite appropriate. It sums up the theme and action of the play which revolve around a mother. The playwright confronts us at the outset with the

problems the mother faces from her grown-up children and their father. The technique employed to tackle the spoilt children and the grown-up man is quite amusing and thought-provoking. The bold and dominating mother acts tough with the children and makes them realise the need of proper attention towards their mother. They are made to learn lessons in courtesy and polite behaviour not only towards the mother but also towards the visiting neighbour as well. The mother certainly has her day as the children learn to treat her properly. The supper being prepared by the children, their stay at home and the family game of rummy, are rare gifts that the mother receives on that important day.

7. What has the author tried to convey in the play ‘Mother’s Day’?

Ans. The theme of the play is the status of women in their own household. The housewife serves the members of her family with complete devotion, sincerity and love. However, she is never given the regard, attention or thanks due to her. Her selflessness and eagerness to please everyone eternally, reduces her quite unfortunately to the rank of an unpaid domestic help. Instead of being politely spoken to, she is ordered or instructed to do things. She is never appreciated for the efforts she puts in to make everyone in her house safe, comfortable and happy. The author has presented this concern through the characters of the Pearson family. Mrs Pearson is the harassed mother. Her daughter Doris, son Cyril and husband George take her services for granted and they come across as thoughtless and selfish people. The author introduces a humorous twist in the story by causing an interchange of personalities and subjects the family members to harsh treatment. This was meted out to them by the personality of Mrs Fitzgerald (in the body of Mrs Pearson). The conclusion of the story is that the trick worked wonders and changed the Pearson family to a great degree.

8. “The shock treatment makes the thoughtless and selfish persons realise the real position of the lady of the house.” How far do you agree with the statement? Give reasons for your answer.
(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. This statement is certainly worth agreeing upon. Drastic measures need to be taken to solve stubborn problems. The thoughtless, selfish and spoilt members of the Pearson family do not understand the language of love and affection. When Mrs Fitzgerald’s spirit entered her body, Mrs Pearson imbibed her bold and dominating personality and toughness. This enabled to make the family realise their mistakes. Doris was the first to receive a lesson on civility and politeness. The criticism of her boyfriend was an unexpected experience which she found difficult to digest, compared to the issue with the yellow silk dress. Cyril is also told to help himself. The mother’s declaration that she too will henceforth work forty hours a week, have the weekends off and go somewhere to enjoy herself came as a bolt from the blue. The balloon of her husband’s ego was punctured by disclosing to him how people at the club made fun of him. In the end, all the three members come around and showed their willingness to obey, respect and appreciate the woman of the house.

9. Analyse the role of Mrs Fitzgerald in the play.

Ans. Mrs Fitzgerald plays a very important role in the play. She is introduced as a fortune teller and the next-door neighbour of the Pearsons. It is through the initial conversation between her and Mrs Pearson that we come to know the problems that Mrs Pearson faces. Mrs Fitzgerald analyses the situation quite objectively and becomes the playwright’s

mouthpiece. As Mrs Pearson does not have the guts to stand up for herself, Mrs Fitzgerald suggests a novel approach—an exchange of personalities. Now Mrs Pearson, with the personality Mrs Fitzgerald, puts the plan of reformation in action. She smokes, drinks and plays cards. All this unusual behaviour is noticed by the family. She further shocks them by being tough with them both in words and actions. She asks them to fend for themselves. She clearly tells them that she has already worked for more than eight hours that day. She is equally blunt with Mr George Pearson, who goes away every evening to the club, leaving his wife alone at home. She reveals to him how the people at the club make fun of him. In short, she makes them realise their responsibility towards the mother. In the end, she performs the exchange of personalities once again. Thus, Mrs Fitzgerald uses her powerful personality to transform the frustrating and insipid life of her friend, Mrs Pearson with ease.

10. How does the play ‘Mother’s Day’ end? Describe.

Ans. Mrs Pearson is reinstated as the matriarch of the family. This was accomplished by the efforts taken by her friend Mrs Fitzgerald. Left to herself, the passive, humble lady would have continued to live the life of a decorated maid. A few hours of planned drama changes the character of three rigid, selfish and opportunistic family members with amazing ease. This was made possible because of the acquired skills of Mrs Fitzgerald in fortune telling and exchanging spirits. She exchanged her spirit with her friend and actually made the day a Mother's Day. The events of the day were resolved to be kept as a secret between the friends. Mrs Fitzgerald leaves for her home with an advice to her friend to build up on the foundation of change that had been very strongly set. The play ends on a beautiful note, when the family decides to spend quality time in each other's company, with food and games.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

1. **MRS PEARSON:** Yes, thank you, Mrs Fitzgerald. I'm much obliged, I'm sure. It's wonderful having a real fortune-teller living next door. Did you learn that out East, too?

MRS FITZGERALD: I did. Twelve years I had of it, with my old man rising to be Lieutenant Quartermaster. He learnt a lot and I learnt a lot more. But will you make up your mind now, Mrs Pearson dear? Put your foot down, once an' for all, an' be the mistress of your own house an' the boss of your own family.

- (a) What does Mrs Pearson find so wonderful?
- (b) To whom does ‘old man’ refer to in the given extract?
- (c) Mrs Fitzgerald learnt the art of _____ in the East.
- (i) Ouija board (ii) fortune telling
- (iii) horoscope reading (iv) both (ii) and (iii)

(d) Which of the following has INCORRECT use of ‘once and for all’?

- (i) I have settled the dispute once and for all.
- (ii) I have sold my house once and for all.
- (iii) I have decided to study medicine once and for all.
- (iv) I have cooked my food once and for all.

2. MRS FITZGERALD: [alarmed] But whatever shall I do, Mrs Fitzgerald? George and the children can’t see me like this.

MRS PEARSON: [grimly] They aren’t going to—that’s the point. They’ll have me to deal with—only they won’t know it.

MRS FITZGERALD: [still alarmed] But what if we can’t change back? It’d be terrible.

MRS PEARSON: Here—steady, Mrs Pearson—if you had to live my life it wouldn’t be so bad. You’d have more fun as me than you’ve had as you.

(a) Who is George?

(b) Why would Mrs Pearson have more fun as Mrs Fitzgerald than she’d have as herself?

(c) In the first line of the extract, why is Mrs Fitzgerald addressing herself?

- (i) She is actually Mrs Pearson after switching her personality with Mrs Fitzgerald.
- (ii) She has become insane.
- (iii) She didn’t know what she was blabbering.
- (iv) She has split personality disorder.

(d) Which of the following means the same as ‘complacently’?

- (i) Considerately
- (ii) Cunningly
- (iii) Casually
- (iv) Alarmingly

3. CYRIL: Now you shouldn’t have told him that, Mum. That’s not fair. You’ve hurt his feelings. Mine, too.

MRS PEARSON: Sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt. The truth oughtn’t to hurt anybody for long. If your father didn’t go to the club so often, perhaps they’d stop laughing at him.

(a) “You’ve hurt his feelings.” Whose feelings are hurt?

(b) What was told to him to hurt his feelings?

(c) What possible solution did the lady give for George’s problem?

- (i) He should fight with his friends.
- (ii) He should call up his friends and ask for clarification.
- (iii) He should visit the club less often.
- (iv) He should work out to improve his personality.

(d) In the given extract, Mrs Pearson sounds:

- (i) wise
- (ii) humorous
- (iii) gloomy
- (iv) sincere

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

1. What social message does the play, 'Mother's Day' convey? How relevant is it in the present day context?
(Constructed Response Question)
2. Rationalise the theme of the play, 'Mother's Day'.
(Constructed Response Question)
3. Was it necessary for Doris to cry?
(Constructed Response Question)
4. What changes do you observe in the Pearson family by the end of the play?
(Constructed Response Question)
5. Does the ending of the play provide a feasible solution? Discuss.
(Constructed Response Question)

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

1. Do you think that the issues raised in the play have relevance to every generation of mankind? Give reasons.
(Constructed Response Question)
2. The play is an ironical portrayal of the status of the mother in a family. Do you agree? Give reasons.
(Constructed Response Question)
3. A mother's work is never ending. Explain with reference to the play and your own life experiences.
(Constructed Response Question)



4

Birth — A.J. Cronin

Introduction

‘Birth’ is an excerpt from “The Citadel” that revolves around Andrew Manson who just graduated from medical school. It is an account of how the newly graduated medical practitioner helped in bringing Joe and Susan’s child into this world despite going through a tough time with his girlfriend, Christine. The story begins with Andrew Manson, who has just begun his medical practice in the small Welsh mining town of Blaenelly. When he returns from a terrible evening with his girlfriend, Christine, Joe Morgan approaches him to help in the delivery of his wife. Dr Andrew Manson has to put in much labour in the delivery, as the mother requires much attention before she is revived. Moreover, the baby was not breathing at birth. Using all his knowledge and intuition, Dr Andrew Manson makes more efforts to revive the child. After almost half an hour of frantic efforts, he succeeds and gains a sense of achievement.

THEME

The chapter ‘Birth’ shows us that it is important to keep going, in order to accomplish every deed no matter what adversities we come to face. It is only when we do this that we are blessed with the realisation of the significance of the experience that has been given to us. A doctor has the capability of saving a life and if he lets his personal woes get the better of him, the life would be lost. Each and every birth is significant because each and every human being is special and different. We need to be aware of the gifts with which we have been blessed and live every day according to our potential.

Summary

Dr Andrew had recently graduated from medical college. He was practising as an assistant to Dr Edward Page in a small Welsh mining town named Blaenelly. One night, he was returning home when he found Joe Morgan waiting for him outside his home. He had been there for more than an hour. He looked relieved to see the doctor. He informed the doctor that he was needed at their home as his wife was expecting to deliver a baby after almost 20 years of their marriage. Dr Andrew asked him to wait for a few minutes. He went inside, got his medical bag, and set out for Joe Morgan’s house. Joe Morgan stopped outside the house and requested Dr Andrew to go inside alone. Through a narrow staircase, the doctor reached a small, clean but scantily furnished room. He found two women beside the patient—Susan Morgan’s mother, a tall, grey-haired woman of nearly seventy, and an elderly midwife. Susan’s mother offered him a cup of tea. So, Dr Andrew sensed that she didn’t want him to leave, as there would be a waiting period. Dr Andrew was tired but still decided to stay. An hour later, he went to check the patient and came down. The restless footsteps of Joe Morgan could be heard as he paced the street outside. Dr Andrew was so deep in his thoughts that the voice of the old lady (Susan Morgan’s mother) surprised him. She informed him that her daughter didn’t want him to give

her chloroform if it would harm the baby. Dr Andrew replied that it would do no harm. Just then, he heard the midwife's voice. It was half-past three and Dr Andrew perceived that it was time for him to start working on the delivery. After a harsh struggle for an hour, the child was born, a perfectly formed boy. Unfortunately, it was not breathing. A shiver of horror passed over Dr Andrew. He wanted to resuscitate the child, but the mother herself was in a very desperate state. He gave the child to the midwife and turned his attention to Susan Morgan, the mother, who was lying unconscious. Her pulse was slow and her strength was reducing. After a few minutes of continuous efforts, he stabilised her by giving her an injection. Then, he asked for the child. The midwife had kept the child under the bed, presuming him to be dead. Dr Andrew pulled out the child. His head was hanging loosely and the limbs seemed boneless. He concluded that the child was suffering from asphyxia pallida (an abnormal medical condition in a newly born baby). Dr Andrew recalled a case he had once seen in the Samaritan (a medical journal) and the treatment that was given. He asked the midwife to quickly get hot water and cold water in two bowls.

He started plunging the child once into the icy water and then into the steaming bath alternately. Fifteen minutes passed and nothing happened. Dr Andrew was getting frustrated. He could see the unbelieving faces of the midwife and the old lady, but he continued his efforts. Dr Andrew started rubbing the child's chest with a rough towel and thumping his little chest, trying to get breath into that limp body. Then, as if by a miracle, the child's chest began moving. Dr Andrew felt weak and nervous at the site of life springing under his hands. Life came to the child's limbs, his head became erect, the skin started turning pink and suddenly, the child cried. The midwife exclaimed with tears of happiness in her eyes that the child was alive.

After such a frantic effort and its success, Dr Andrew felt weak and speechless. The old woman, Susan's mother, was still standing against the wall, praying. Andrew went downstairs and said that he would fetch his bag later on. He found Joe Morgan still waiting with an anxious, eager face. Dr Andrew gave him the happy news that both the mother and the baby were all right. Andrew was really happy and exclaimed, "Oh God! I've done something real at last." He had achieved a feat in medical history which would certainly brighten his future.

A.J. Cronin was a Scottish physician, novelist, dramatist, and non-fiction writer. He was born on July 19, 1896 in Dunbartonshire, Scotland. In 1914, he entered Glasgow University to study medicine, but his studies were interrupted by World War I, in which he served in the British Navy as a surgeon sub-lieutenant. A.J. Cronin was one of the most renowned storytellers of the twentieth century. His best-known works are 'The Citadel' and 'The Keys of the Kingdom', both of which were made into Oscar-nominated films.



Answers to NCERT Questions

READING WITH INSIGHT

1. "I have done something; oh, God! I've done something real at last." Why does Andrew say this? What does it mean?
2. There lies a great difference between textbook medicine and the world of a practising physician. Discuss.
3. Do you know of any incident when someone has been brought back to life from the brink of death through medical help. Discuss medical procedures such as organ transplant and organ regeneration that are used to save human life.

- Ans.**
1. Andrew said that he had done something real at last because he had handled a tough situation. He had been successful in saving both – the mother and the child. It was a complicated delivery and having accomplished it successfully made him feel that he had done something worthwhile. Doing something real at last means that Andrew felt content and jubilant at his own efforts and the achievement.
 2. Textbook medicine gives knowledge about medicines, diseases, human anatomy and treatments. However, it does not teach you how to handle stressful situations. A practising physician has to work in various odd situations. His skills of endurance and medical expertise are tested in such situations. So, textbook medicine and the world of a practising physician are very different from each other.
 3. Yes, once my neighbour was in a critical condition. He had a heart attack and was rushed to the hospital. Timely medical help saved his life. He underwent a heart surgery and now, he is hale and hearty. Medical procedures like organ transplant and organ regeneration are very beneficial for people. Many people donate their organs also, so that these can be of help to others. Organ transplant has a good success rate and many people opt for it. The procedure gives them a new life and a needy person gets financial help in return. However, just like other things, the business of organ donation and transplant has become a money making industry with a lot of exploitation of people.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

(4 Marks each)

1. “Eh, Doctor, I’m glad to see you. I been back and forward here this last hour. The missus wants ye — before time, too.” Andrew, abruptly recalled from the contemplation of his own affairs, told Morgan to wait. He went into the house for his bag, then together they set out for Number 12 Blaina Terrace. The night air was cool and deep with quiet mystery. Usually so perceptive, Andrew now felt dull and listless. He had no premonition that this night call would prove unusual, still less that it would influence his whole future in Blaenelly.

(a) What is the name of the doctor?

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| (i) Andrew | (ii) Morgan |
| (iii) Blaina | (iv) Blaenelly |

(b) Why does Morgan say that the missus wants the doctor “before time”?

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| (i) She is in a hurry. | (ii) She is in labour. |
| (iii) She is in pain. | (iv) She is in danger. |

(c) What does the phrase ‘contemplation of his own affairs’ suggest about Andrew?

(d) Pick an evidence from the extract that shows that Andrew was not expecting anything unusual to happen during his night call.

- Ans.**
- (a) (i) Andrew
 - (b) (ii) She is in labour.
 - (c) The phrase ‘contemplation of his own affairs’ suggests that Andrew was preoccupied with his personal problems.

(d) The line “He had no premonition that this night call would prove unusual, still less that it would influence his whole future in Blaenelly” shows that Andrew was not expecting anything unusual.

2. An hour later he went upstairs again, noted the progress made, came down once more, sat by the kitchen fire. It was still, except for the rustle of a cinder in the grate and the slow tick-tock of the wall clock. No, there was another sound – the beat of Morgan’s footsteps as he paced in the street outside. The old woman opposite him sat in her black dress, quite motionless, her eyes strangely alive and wise, probing, never leaving his face.

(a) Who is ‘he’ in the extract?

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| (i) Andrew | (ii) Morgan |
| (iii) Blaina | (iv) Blaenelly |

(b) What does the phrase ‘noted the progress made’ imply about the situation upstairs?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (i) The situation was improving. | (ii) The situation was worsening. |
| (iii) The situation was unchanged. | (iv) The situation was unknown. |

(c) What does the sound of Morgan’s footsteps as he paced in the street outside suggest?

(d) What does the term ‘black dress’ indicate about the old woman?

- Ans.** (a) (i) Andrew
(b) (i) The situation was improving.
(c) The sound of Morgan’s footsteps as he paced in the street outside suggests that he was anxious or restless.
(d) The term ‘black dress’ indicates that the old woman was mourning or grieving.

3. As he gazed at the still form a shiver of horror passed over Andrew. After all that he had promised! His face, heated with his own exertions, chilled suddenly. He hesitated, torn between his desire to attempt to resuscitate the child, and his obligation towards the mother, who was herself in a desperate state. The dilemma was so urgent he did not solve it consciously. Blindly, instinctively, he gave the child to the nurse and turned his attention to Susan Morgan who now lay collapsed, almost pulseless, and not yet out of the ether, upon her side. His haste was desperate, a frantic race against her ebbing strength.

(a) What does the phrase ‘still form’ refer to in the extract?

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| (i) The child | (ii) The nurse |
| (iii) The mother | (iv) The doctor |

(b) What does the term ‘frantic race’ indicate about the doctor’s actions?

(c) What had Dr Manson promised to the Morgans?

(d) Which of the following best suggests the central idea of the extract?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (i) A Doctor’s Tragic Failure | (ii) A Doctor’s Difficult Choice |
| (iii) A Doctor’s Heroic Effort | (iv) A Doctor’s Ethical Dilemma |

- Ans.** (a) (i) The child
(b) The term ‘frantic race’ indicates that the doctor’s actions were fast and desperate.

- (c) Dr Manson had promised a safe delivery of the child and mother to the Morgans.
 (d) (ii) A Doctor's Difficult Choice

4. Snatching a blanket, he laid the child upon it and began the special method of respiration. The basins arrived, the ewer, the big iron kettle. Frantically he splashed cold water into one basin; into the other he mixed water as hot as his hand could bear. Then, like some crazy juggler, he hurried the child between the two, now plunging it into the icy, now into the steaming bath. Fifteen minutes passed. Sweat was now running into Andrew's eyes, blinding him. One of his sleeves hung down, dripping. His breath came pantingly. But no breath came from the lax body of the child.

(a) Which method was used by the doctor on the child?

- (i) Special method of respiration (ii) Mouth-to-mouth
 (iii) Oxygen mask (iv) Inhaler

(b) What does the phrase 'crazy juggler' imply about the doctor's actions?

- (i) He was throwing things in the air.
 (ii) He was moving things quickly and skillfully.
 (iii) He was doing something dangerous and risky.
 (iv) He was entertaining someone with his tricks.

(c) Which line from the extract shows that the doctor was exhausted?

(d) What does the term 'plunging' indicate?

Ans. (a) (i) Special method of respiration

(b) (ii) He was moving things quickly and skillfully.

(c) The line "Sweat was now running into Andrew's eyes, blinding him. One of his sleeves hung down, dripping. His breath came pantingly" shows that the doctor was exhausted.

(d) The term 'plunging' indicates the doctor's movements which were sudden and forceful.

5. Andrew handed her the child. He felt weak and dazed. About him the room lay in a shuddering litter: blankets, towels, basins, soiled instruments, the hypodermic syringe impaled by its point in the linoleum, the ewer knocked over, the kettle on its side in a puddle of water. Upon the huddled bed the mother still dreamed her way quietly through the anaesthetic. The old woman still stood against the wall. But her hands were together, her lips moved without sound. She was praying.

(a) Who is 'her' in the first sentence of the extract?

- (i) The child (ii) The nurse
 (iii) The mother (iv) The old woman

(b) What was the condition of the room?

(c) What does the term 'huddled bed' indicate about the mother's position?

(d) Which of the following titles best suggests the central idea of the extract?

- (i) A Doctor's Relief and Shock (ii) A Doctor's Joy and Pride
 (iii) A Doctor's Guilt and Shame (iv) A Doctor's Fear and Doubt

- Ans.** (a) (ii) The nurse
(b) The room was quite chaotic and messy.
(c) The term 'huddled bed' indicates that the mother's position was curled up.
(d) (i) A Doctor's Relief and Shock

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. Susan's mother was wise in experience. What hints did she give of her wisdom?

Ans. Susan's mother was a tall, grey-haired woman of nearly seventy. From her personal experience, she knew that the childbirth would take some time. She was wise enough to fear that Dr Andrew might not wait for long. So, she tried to make him stay by offering him tea and sitting beside him.

2. Dr Andrew faced the biggest dilemma of his life that night. How did he act and save two lives?

Ans. Dr Andrew was called to supervise the first and crucial delivery of Susan Morgan. He was tensed and short of sleep. Still, he decided to wait. He promised Joe and his wife that everything would go well. But he became nervous to find both the mother and her baby in trouble. He first gave an injection to Susan. Next, he lifted the stillborn baby, put him in hot and cold water alternately, and pressed the child's chest continuously. Luckily, he saved both of them.

3. Comment on the behaviour and role of the midwife attending on Susan Morgan.

Ans. The midwife attending on Susan showed lack of experience and professional attitude. She declared at once that the baby was stillborn. She pushed it under the bed. Even when Andrew was trying to bring back life into the baby, she showed disbelief and even discouraged him from making feverish efforts. The cry of the baby made her exclaim with joy.

4. What did Andrew do to restore life in the stillborn child?

Ans. Andrew recalled a similar case in the past. He gave the same treatment to the stillborn baby. He asked for warm and icy cold water. He placed the baby in cold and warm water alternately. He rubbed the child with a rough towel, pressed, and released the little chest with his hands. After trying hard for more than half an hour, the miracle happened. The baby's skin turned pink and it started to cry.

5. Describe the moment when the stillborn child gave a short heave and slowly revived.

Ans. Andrew, for a while, felt beaten and disappointed. But he made one last effort. He pressed the baby's chest gently and then released it. The technique was successful. He felt the little heart beating. A bubble of mucus came from one nostril. The child was gasping and then started crying.

6. Who was Joe Morgan? Why had he been waiting for Dr Andrew Manson?

Ans. Joe Morgan was a driller in Blaenelly, a mining town. He was a big, strong and heavy middle-aged man. Joe and his wife, Susan, who had been married for nearly twenty years, were expecting their first child. Joe was waiting for the doctor to help Susan in the delivery of the child.

7. Where did Joe lead Andrew? Why did he not go in with the doctor?

Ans. Joe Morgan led Andrew to his house, Number 12 Blaina Terrace. His wife was about to deliver their first child after being married for nearly twenty years. Joe was quite tensed. He refused to go inside the house. Even his voice showed signs of strain.

8. “Don’t fret, mother, I’ll not run away”. Why do you think Andrew said so?

Ans. Mrs Morgan’s mother offered to make a cup of tea for the doctor. The experienced woman had realised that there must be a period of waiting. She was afraid that the doctor would leave the case saying that he would return later.

9. Why did Andrew decide to remain there until everything was over?

Ans. Andrew had reached Bryngower at about midnight. He was very worried and upset. He needed some rest and sleep. He knew that he could not sleep even for an hour if he went home. Secondly, he knew that the case would demand all his attention. Though he felt lethargic, he decided to remain there until everything was over.

10. What did the stillborn baby look like when Andrew turned his attention to it?

Ans. The baby’s body was perfectly formed. His limp, warm body was white and soft. The head lolled on the thin neck. The limbs seemed boneless. His whiteness showed that he suffered from ‘asphyxia pallida’ which meant lack of oxygen in the blood.

11. Why did a shiver of horror pass over Andrew?

Ans. Dr Andrew struggled for more than an hour to help the mother Susan Morgan safely deliver the baby. But when the child was born he was lifeless. As Andrew gazed at the still born baby, a shiver of horror passed over him.

12. “Andrew now felt dull and listless.” Give two reasons.

Ans. On Joe Morgan’s call, Andrew, along with Joe, set out for Joe’s house. The night air was cool and deep with quiet mystery but Andrew felt dull and listless because it was past midnight and he was reflecting about his own relationship with Christine, the girl he loved.

13. What did Andrew notice as he entered Joe’s house?

Ans. As Andrew entered the door of Number 12, he saw a narrow stair which led up to a small bedroom, clean but poorly furnished, and lit only by an oil lamp. Here, Mrs Morgan’s mother, a tall, grey-haired woman of nearly seventy, and a stout, elderly midwife waited beside the patient.

14. What was the old woman’s fear? How did Andrew reassure her?

Ans. When the old woman returned with a cup of tea, Andrew smiled faintly. He noticed that the old woman, wise in experience, had realized that there must be a period of waiting. She was afraid that he would leave the case, saying that he would return later. But he assured her that he would not run away.

15. What were the only sounds that Andrew heard in the thick of the night?

Ans. As Andrew sat by the kitchen fire, he noticed that it was a still night. The only sound that he could hear was the crackle of embers in the fireplace, the slow tick-tock of the wall clock and Morgan’s footsteps as he moved to and fro in the street outside.

16. What was weighing on Andrew's mind as he waited with the patient?

Ans. Andrew's thoughts were heavy and muddled. The episode he had witnessed at Cardiff station still gripped him and made him gloomy. He thought of Bramwell, foolishly loyal to a woman who deceived him. He thought of Edward Page, tied to the shrewish Blodwen and of Denny, living unhappily, apart from his wife.

17. Why does the writer say that the old woman's 'meditation had pursued a different course'?

Ans. While Andrew was thinking about the futility of marriage and relationships, the old woman was thinking about her daughter. She was concerned about both the mother and the child. She said that her daughter, Susan, did not want chloroform if it would harm the baby. She really looked forward to the birth of the child.

18. What dilemma was Andrew caught in? How did he resolve it?

Ans. After an hour-long struggle, the child was born lifeless and the mother was in a critical state. Andrew was torn between his desire to save the child, and his obligation towards the mother. Instinctively, he gave the child to the nurse and turned his attention to Susan Morgan.

19. How did he revive the mother?

Ans. To revive Susan Morgan, who lay collapsed and almost pulseless, Andrew smashed a glass ampule instantly, and injected the medicine. Then he flung down the hypodermic syringe and worked ceaselessly to revive the almost lifeless woman. After a few minutes of intense effort, her heart strengthened and she was safe.

20. What did Andrew think was wrong with the child? What did he do?

Ans. Andrew saw that the child was a perfectly formed boy. The head lolled on a thin neck and the limbs seemed boneless. He knew that the whiteness meant asphyxia pallida. He remembered the treatment used for a similar case he had seen in the Samaritan. He applied the same to the stillborn child.

21. What was the treatment given to the child?

Ans. Andrew hurried the child from one basin filled with cold water to the one with warm water. He continued his efforts for half an hour, to no avail. Lastly, he rubbed the child with a rough towel, crushing and releasing the little chest with both his hands, till the child finally gave a cry.

22. Why was Andrew so serious and overwrought that particular evening?

Ans. That evening Andrew was tense and serious. He had a disappointing evening with his girlfriend Christine. Moreover, he had seen some painful incidents of husbands suffering at the hands of their wives. He was short of sleep as well.

23. Who was Joe Morgan? Why was he waiting anxiously for Dr Andrew that night?

Ans. Joe Morgan was in dire need of Dr Andrew's help. His wife Susan was in labour. She was going to deliver their first child after 20 years of marriage. Joe and Susan were keen to have the child delivered safely. So he stood waiting anxiously for the doctor.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

- 1. Why was Andrew feeling so dull and listless that evening? How did that evening influence his whole life and career?**

Ans. Andrew returned home after midnight. His experience with Christine that evening was not a happy one. Moreover, several episodes of unhappy married couples also saddened him. Outside his house was Joe Morgan, waiting anxiously for the doctor. He led Andrew to his house where his wife Susan was in labour. Andrew decided to wait and give medical aid. He had no idea that the incident of that night would give him not only supreme satisfaction but also name and fame. He worked very hard and intelligently saved the life of the mother as well as her stillborn child.

- 2. Why was Andrew Manson called in? How did he react to the call of duty?**

Ans. Andrew Manson had just begun his medical practice in the small Welsh mining town of Blaenelly. He was called in to attend to Susan Morgan, who was expecting her first child after being married for nearly twenty years. Her husband, Joe Morgan had been waiting for an hour outside the closed surgery. It was nearly midnight when Andrew reached there. As Joe informed Andrew of his wife's condition, Andrew forgot his own affairs and immediately left for the driller's place. Since his services were not immediately needed by the expecting mother, he decided to wait downstairs. He re-examined her after an hour. It was at 3:30 a.m. when the nurse summoned him. He struggled for an hour before the child was born. Then he worked feverishly to revive the weak mother and the stillborn child. He had to use all his knowledge and experience. He did not pay attention to his own physical tiredness or mental tension. Duty came first and he responded to it with single-minded devotion.

- 3. Give a brief account of the efforts made by Andrew to revive the stillborn baby.**

Ans. A shiver of horror passed over Andrew as he gazed at the still form of the newborn baby. Though it was a perfectly formed boy, its limp, warm body was white. The whiteness meant suffocation caused by lack of oxygen. Andrew remembered the treatment given to such a case in the Samaritan. Before the hot and cold water came that he had asked for, he laid the child upon a blanket and gave it artificial respiration. Then he dipped the child alternately in hot and cold water, and rubbed it with a rough towel. Then he pressed and released his chest till it heaved up. It was followed by other heaves. Andrew redoubled his efforts. The child started gasping. A bubble of mucus came from one tiny nostril. The pale skin turned pink. The limbs were no longer boneless. His head did not lie back spinelessly. The child gave a cry. It came alive.

- 4. Compare and contrast Andrew's emotional, mental and physical state at the beginning of the story and at the end.**

Ans. At the beginning of the story, Andrew is physically tired and emotionally upset. He has just returned from a disappointing evening with Christine, the girl he loved. His thoughts are heavy and muddled. The episode he had witnessed at Cardiff station still filled his mind with sadness. Though he thought of marriage as a blissful state, he couldn't help remembering the miserable failure of many marriages. At the end of the story, Andrew is physically exhausted but emotionally cheerful and mentally alert. His mind is filled with joy and self-satisfaction. He has performed an unusual feat, no less

than a miracle. He calls upon God as witness to the fact that he has done something real at last. This sense of achievement helps him overcome his physical fatigue. His sense of duty towards his patients helps him to attend to them whole-heartedly. He forgets his personal feelings and thinks only of reviving the patients.

5. What impression do you form of Andrew Manson on the basis of the story, 'Birth'?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. Andrew Manson is a young man who has recently qualified as a doctor and started his medical practice as an assistant to Dr Edward Page in a small Welsh mining town of Blaenelly. He is in love with Christine and thinks of marriage as an idyllic state. His heart is overflowing with love. His steady mind helps him see the marriages of many couples as dismal failures. Andrew is mature enough to keep his private and professional lives apart. Once confronted with his responsibility, he discharges his obligations to his utmost capacity. He is duty conscious and believes in practical approach. He is pragmatic and is not afraid to try unique methods. Andrew has a tender heart. He is aware of the feelings of others. He knows how deeply Susan loved her newborn baby. He has a polite and reassuring tone. On the whole, Andrew impresses us as a dedicated doctor.

6. "He had no premonition that this night call would prove unusual, still less that it would influence his whole future in Blaenelly." What was the unusual event in store for him?

Ans. At nearly midnight, when Andrew reached Bryngower, he found Joe Morgan waiting for him. Joe and his wife had been married for nearly twenty years, and were expecting their first child. He accompanied Joe to his place where after an hour-long harsh struggle, the child was born lifeless and the mother was in a critical state. Andrew was torn between his desire to save the child and his obligation towards the mother. After he revived Susan Morgan, he turned his attention to the child. It was a perfectly formed boy, but asphyxiated (unable to breath). He struggled to save the child and was finally successful. Having saved two lives in the course of the night, his future in Blaenelly seemed to hold promise.

7. Andrew's visit to the Morgan's gave him pleasure and satisfaction that he had not achieved earlier. Justify.

Ans. At half past three, after an hour's difficult struggle, the child was born lifeless. Andrew attempted to revive the mother who lay collapsed and almost pulseless. He injected the medicine and struggled to restore the lifeless Susan Morgan, and after a few minutes of intense effort, her heartbeat became steady. Andrew then turned his attention to the lifeless baby. He inferred that the condition was caused by lack of oxygen in the baby's blood. He initiated the artificially induced method of respiration. Pouring cold water into one basin and warm into the other, he rushed the child, from one basin to the next, for fifteen minutes. As his last resort, he rubbed the child with a rough towel, crushing and releasing the little chest with both his hands, trying to get breath into that limp body. Then miraculously, the tiny chest began to heave and they heard the child's cry. He had saved two lives and was eternally relieved at having 'done something real at last.'

8. Justify the title of the story, 'Birth'.

Ans. The title of this story is self-explanatory as the whole story revolves around the process of giving birth to a child. The story is about a young doctor, Andrew, dealing with a

critical birth case. The baby is born lifeless. He takes certain decisions that prove quite successful. Not only he succeeds in saving the mother, who is in a critical condition after the delivery, but also succeeds in reviving the child. The doctor first saves the mother who has delivered the baby and then goes on to save the baby, which was considered to be stillborn or dead. After many efforts by the doctor, the life of the stillborn child was saved. So, the baby born lifeless was born again owing to the efforts of the dedicated doctor. Hence, the title is perfectly appropriate and justified.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- As he gazed at the still form a shiver of horror passed over Andrew. After all that he had promised! His face, heated with his own exertions, chilled suddenly. He hesitated, torn between his desire to attempt to resuscitate the child, and his obligation towards the mother, who was herself in a desperate state. The dilemma was so urgent he did not solve it consciously. Blindly, instinctively, he gave the child to the nurse and turned his attention to Susan Morgan who now lay collapsed, almost pulseless, and not yet out of the ether, upon her side.

(a) How was the child born?

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| (i) Lively | (ii) Lifeless |
| (iii) Lame | (iv) Blind |

(b) Which difficult position was Manson caught in?

(c) Based on the given extract, classify the following as fact (F) or opinion (O).

(Competency-focused Question)

- The child was dead.
- Andrew should have tried to save the child first.
- Andrew decided to save Susan first.
- Andrew quickly gave an injection to Susan.

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| (i) F-1, 2; O-3,4 | (ii) F-1, 3, 4; O-2 |
| (iii) F-1, 3; O-2, 4 | (iv) F-1, 4; O-2, 3 |

(d) Pick an evidence from the extract that shows that the doctor had made a promise to someone.

- And then, as by a miracle, the pigmy chest, which his hands enclosed, gave a short, convulsive heave, another... and another... Andrew turned giddy. The sense of life, springing beneath his fingers after all that unavailing striving, was so exquisite it almost made him faint. He redoubled his efforts feverishly. The child was gasping now, deeper and deeper. A bubble of mucus came from one tiny nostril, a joyful iridescent bubble.

(a) What made Andrew turn giddy?

(b) What happened to the child in the end?

(c) What does the word 'pigmy' mean?

- (i) Small
- (ii) Green in colour
- (iii) Huge
- (iv) Black in colour

(d) What does the word 'striving' mean?

- (i) Working normally
- (ii) Working slowly
- (iii) Working tirelessly again and again
- (iv) Working smartly

3. "Susan said not to give her the chloroform if it would harm the baby. She's awful set upon this child, Doctor, bach." Her old eyes warmed at a sudden thought. She added in a low tone: "Ay, we all are, I fancy." He collected himself with an effort.

"It won't do any harm, the anaesthetic," he said kindly. "They'll be all right."

(a) Who is 'she' in the extract?

(b) What do you understand by the term 'anaesthetic'?

(c) Why did Susan's mother not want chloroform to be given to her daughter?

- (i) For the baby could die
- (ii) For it could harm her
- (iii) For it could harm the baby
- (iv) Both (ii) and (iii)

(d) Why were all the Morgan's worried?

- (i) They were expecting their first child after a short period.
- (ii) They were expecting their second child after a long period.
- (iii) They were expecting their third child after a long period.
- (iv) They were expecting their first child after a long period.

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

1. How did Andrew revive the stillborn child?
2. Why were Andrew's thoughts on marriage confused and resentful?
3. How do you conclude that the meeting between Andrew and Christine was an unpleasant one?
(Constructed Response Question)
4. Why did Susan not want to be injected chloroform?
5. 'As he gazed at the still born a shiver of horror passed over Andrew.' Explain.

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

1. What does the story highlight about the essence of true happiness and fulfillment through Dr Andrew's experience? Discuss with reference to the story.
(Constructed Response Question)
2. The greatest lesson, we can learn from Dr Andrew's life is, 'Never give up'. Do you agree? Give reasons in support of your answer.
(Constructed Response Question)
3. Describe at length how Andrew revived the stillborn child.



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The Tale of Melon City — Vikram Seth

Introduction

The poem 'The Tale of Melon City' narrates how the city found its new king, a melon. The story unfolds as their King orders to have an arch built which turned out to be too low. It hit the King's head resulting in the falling off of his crown. The King considers it a disgrace and orders for the chief of builders to be hanged. It is then followed by a series of events where they blame each other. Finally, a noose is built to determine the guilty and the only one to fit the noose, is the just and placid King. The new King is then elected by the first person to pass that arch.

THEME

'The Tale of Melon City' by Vikram Seth is a satire about a king, his ministers, and the kingdom. The king has been ironically called lawful. But in reality, he stretches justice too far. Due to this quality of his character, one day he himself is hanged. The ministers also are a group of fools who decide an odd way to choose the next king. An idiot announces that a melon should be the king and the people unhesitatingly crown a melon as their king. They do not bother about who their king is as long as they enjoy their freedom.

Characters

The King

He has been mockingly portrayed as just and quiet. But in reality, he was not an intelligent person, and did not have any decision taking ability. Because of his foolishness he had to lose his life.

The Architect

He was a smart person who is able to frustrate the king. When his turn came to be hanged, he pointed out something which put the king in a tricky situation and made him angry.

The Wisest Man

He is very old. He can neither walk properly nor see well. He is picked up by the council of ministers to give a wise decision to the king. But unfortunately, the decision given by him was not wise at all.

The Idiot

He is a man of low intelligence and does not act rationally. His advice is asked for choosing the king. Without thinking, he says that a melon should be made the king, as he was very fond of melons.

Summary

This poem is about a city whose king was lawful and gentle. He orders an arch (curved structure) to be built which would become a symbol of his triumphs and accomplishments. The arch would be constructed on the main road and it would inspire and motivate the people who would see it. As per the orders of the king, the arch was built. The king rode down the main road to inspire others.

The arch was built too low and the king's crown fell down when it struck the arch. It was a disgrace for him. He ordered that the chief of builders should be hanged for this mistake. The arrangements for the hanging were made. The chief of builders was called. He pleaded that it was not his mistake; it was rather the workmen's fault. So the king stopped the hanging of the chief of builders. He ordered that all the workmen must be hanged instead. The workmen claimed that the bricks used were not of the right size. So the masons were called. They were trembling in fear. The masons in turn blamed the architect for a wrong design.

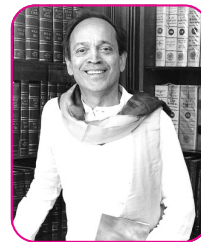
The architect was called. The king ordered that the architect must be hanged. The architect reminded the king that he himself had changed the original plan of the arch when it was shown to him sometime back. The king realised that the blame had shifted onto him. It was a tricky situation. The king withdrew for consulting some wise people. He asked for the wisest man in the country. The wisest man was chosen on the criteria that he should be very old. The person chosen could not walk or see properly and he was carried there by other people. The wisest man said in a shaking voice that the culprit should be punished. He announced that it was the arch which banged against the crown, so it should be hanged.

The arch was being taken for the hanging when one of the councillors said that the arch actually touched the royal head with respect. The king agreed, but the crowd was getting restless and wanted a hanging. Perceiving the situation, the king ordered that someone must be hanged, guilty or not. A loop of rope was set up quite high and each man was measured to its height. Only one was tall enough to reach it and that was the king himself. So the king was hanged. The ministers heaved a sigh of relief that someone was hanged or else the crowd might have turned against them.

The ministers now faced a dilemma as the country had no king. They followed their old custom and sent out messengers to proclaim that the next person who would pass the city gate would choose the next king. After some time, an idiot passed the gate and the guards stopped him. When they asked him to name the king, the idiot said 'a melon'. This was his standard answer to all the questions as he was very fond of melons.

After the answer was given by the idiot, a melon was made the king of the city. The ministers respectfully carried the melon to the throne and set it down on the king's throne. This happened long ago. If you now ask the people why their king appears to be a melon, they reply that it is a customary choice. It makes no difference to them if their king is a melon or not. They are happy because the king doesn't interfere in their lives. They live in peace and harmony.

Vikram Seth is an Indian novelist and poet. He was born on 20 June, 1952 in Kolkata. He has written several novels and poetry books. He has received several awards such as Padma Shri, Sahitya Academy Award, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman, WH Smith Literary Award and Crossword Book Award.



Explanation of the Poem

1. In the city of which I sing
There was a just and placid King.
The King proclaimed an arch should be
Constructed, that triumphally
Would span the major thoroughfare
To edify spectators there.
The workmen went and built the thing.
They did so since he was the King.
The King rode down the thoroughfare
To edify spectators there.

The poet says that he is going to talk about a justice-loving and peace-loving king who ordered to build an arch (a curved structure) that would cover a part of the road, so as to impress the spectators (who pass through). The workers built the arch. But when the king rode through the arch (in order to impress the people there) something happened.

2. Under the arch he lost his crown.
The arch was built too low. A frown
Appeared upon his placid face,
The King said, 'This is a disgrace.
The chief of builders will be hanged.'
The rope and gallows were arranged.
The chief of builders was led out.
He passed the King. He gave a shout,
'O King, it was the workmen's fault'
'Oh! said the King, and called a halt

According to the poet, the arch was a little short which made the crown of the king fall down. The face of the king grows red and he orders that the chief of builders should be hanged for his mistake. Note that the king was described as just and placid in the beginning. However, it was sarcastic because the king becomes angry at such a petty matter. The rope and gallows are arranged for hanging him and the chief of builders is taken to that place. However, he pleads to the king that it was the mistake of the workers. The hanging is stopped.

3. To the proceedings. Being just
(And placider now) he said, 'I must
Have all the workmen hanged instead.'
The workmen looked surprised, and said,
'O King, you do not realise
The bricks were made of the wrong size.'
'Summon the masons!' said the King.
The masons stood there quivering.
'It was the architect...', they said,
The architect was summoned.

Hearing the chief of builders, the king orders the hanging of the workers instead. However, the workers look surprised over the decision and tell the king that it was the mistake of the masons as they made the bricks of wrong size. The masons are summoned for hanging. However, the masons tell the king that it was the mistake of the architect. Now the architect is summoned.

4. 'Well, architect,' said His Majesty.
'I do ordain that you shall be
Hanged.' Said the architect, 'O King,
You have forgotten one small thing.
You made certain amendments to
The plans when I showed them to you.'
The King heard this. The King saw red.
In fact he nearly lost his head;
But being a just and placid King
He said, 'This is a tricky thing.

The king tells the architect that he is going to hang him (the architect) for his grave mistake. At this, the architect says that the king himself made changes to the plans made by the architect. The king grows red with anger but is unable to reach a conclusion. He sighs, saying that it is a tricky situation.

5. I need some counsel. Bring to me
The wisest man in this country.'
The wisest man was found and brought,
Nay, carried, to the Royal Court.
He could not walk and could not see,
So old (and therefore wise) was he —
But in a quavering voice he said,
'The culprit must be punished.
Truly, the arch it was that banged
The crown off, and it must be hanged'.

The king summons the wisest man in his country. The orders are followed and the wisest man who can neither walk nor see is taken to the Royal Court. He is old and shivering. He says that it was the mistake of the arch so the arch should be hanged.

6. To the scaffold the arch was led
When suddenly a Councillor said —
'How can we hang so shamefully
What touched your head, Your Majesty?'
'True,' mused the King. By now the crowd,
Restless, was muttering aloud.
The King perceived their mood and trembled
And said to all who were assembled —
'Let us postpone consideration
Of finer points like guilt.

The king agrees and the arch is taken for hanging. But soon, a counselor says that this arch has touched the head of the king, so it cannot be hanged. The king agrees. At this the crowd becomes eager. The king, seeing the mood of the public, announces that the matter should be postponed.

7. The nation
Wants a hanging. Hanged must be
Someone, and that immediately.'
The noose was set up somewhat high.
Each man was measured by and by.
But only one man was so tall
He fitted. One man. That was all.
He was the King. His Majesty
Was therefore hanged by Royal Decree.
'Thank Goodness we found someone,' said
The Ministers, 'for if instead

However, now that the crowd wants to hang someone, the king has to reach a conclusion. The noose (the rope for hanging) is set up in height. Every man is taken to the noose but nobody's height matches it except the king. Thus the king is hanged. The public finally feels relieved as someone is hung at last.

8. We had not, the unruly town
Might well have turned against the Crown'.
'Long live the King!' the Ministers said.
'Long live the King! The King is dead.'
They pondered the dilemma; then,
Being practical-minded men,
Sent out the heralds to proclaim

(In His [former] Majesty's name):
'The next to pass the City Gate
Will choose the ruler of our state,

The crowd says that it would be a bad omen if the hanging had not been done. They praise the king (who is no more). Now, they have to choose their new king. So, it is decided that the one who will pass through the City Gate first will choose the ruler of their country.

9. As is our custom. This will be
Enforced with due ceremony.'
A man passed by the City Gate.
An idiot. The guards cried, 'Wait!
Who is to be the King? Decide!'
'A melon,' the idiot replied.
This was his standard answer to
All questions. (He liked melons.) 'You
Are now our King,' the Ministers said,
Crowning a melon. Then they led

This is their custom to choose the king and hence it is decided that the new king will be chosen the same way with full ceremony. Soon, an idiot passes by the City Gate. The guards ask him who their new king should be. He answers, 'a melon', because he loves melons. The ministers agree.

10. (Carried) the Melon to the throne
And reverently set it down.
This happened years and years ago.
When now you ask the people, 'So —
Your King appears to be a melon.
How did this happen?', they say, 'Well, on
Account of customary choice.
If His Majesty rejoice
In being a melon, that's OK
With us, for who are we to say
What he should be as long as he
Leaves us in Peace and Liberty?'
The principles of laissez faire
Seem to be well-established there.

So, a melon is made the king. It is taken to the throne and crowned. According to the poet, it happened many years ago. Now the people often ask how a melon can become a king. The poet answers them that it was their customary choice. If the throne wants a melon to become a king then only a melon would become the king, as long as it lets the people live in peace and liberty. The poet further says that the principles of laissez-faire (minimal interference of government) were well established in Melon City.

Answers to NCERT Questions

READING WITH INSIGHT

1. Narrate 'The Tale of Melon City' in your own words.
2. What impression would you form of a state where the King was 'just and placid'?
3. How, according to you, can peace and liberty be maintained in a state?
4. Suggest a few instances in the poem which highlight humour and irony.
5. 'The Tale of Melon City' has been narrated in a verse form. This is a unique style which lends extra charm to an ancient tale. Find similar examples in your language. Share them in the class.

- Ans.**
1. The poem 'The Tale of Melon City' is about how the city found its new King, a melon. The story unfolds as their King orders to have an arch built, which would be a thoroughfare to edify the spectators there. While he went there after it was completed, the arch hit the King's head and his crown fell down. The King thought it was dishonourable and thus, commanded the chief of builders to be hanged. From here on, the blame game started. The chief of builders lay the blame on the workmen who in turn, blamed the bricks. The King ordered the execution of the mason who put the blame on the architect. The architect was brought to the Royal Court and indirectly blamed the King for being the person who had made changes to the design of the arch. The placid King now grows angry and demands for the wisest man in the country to be brought to the Royal Court. They brought the wisest man, who was so old that he could neither see nor walk. According to him, the arch must be hanged. When the arch is to be executed, one of the councillors argues that it would be a shame to punish something that had touched their mighty King's head. Everyone, along with the King, agreed. The crowd grew restless and the King promised them a hanging. Therefore, a noose was set-up and the one to fit it would be hanged. Everyone in the kingdom were measured one by one. But as fate would have it, the only one to fit the noose was the King. The foolish ministers heave a sigh of relief upon finding someone to execute, completely unconcerned about the fact that it was their king who was to be hanged. Thereafter, as part of yet another foolish custom of the kingdom, they sent out a proclamation that the next person to pass the city gate, would choose the successor to the dead king. Unfortunately, the first person to pass the gate was an idiot who, when asked about who the next king should be, uttered, 'A melon'. This was the only word he would say to any question put to him. The melon was then placed on the throne as the new king. The foolish kingdom continued to function following the laissez faire principles and the people were left to live in peace and liberty.
 2. Being 'just' means to treat everyone equally and to be fair in one's dealings, whereas being 'placid' means portraying a calm and composed behaviour or not losing one's cool easily. A state ruled by a 'just and placid' King must offer a safe space to its people. The people would have complete confidence in their King and the evil would get what they deserve. There would be equality and no one would be looked at with the sense of superiority. People of the state would be happy and no one would go to bed on an empty stomach. Therefore, a 'just and placid' King would

ensure quality living for all. The only condition being, that justice and placidness should not be under the facade of foolishness.

3. The poet here describes a picture of how peace and liberty cannot be maintained. The poet has shown various instances where the King kept ordering useless executions just for his ego. It did not matter to him if his order was justified or not. The poet wanted to suggest that to have peace and liberty in a state, the leader of the state needs to have a fair sense of justice. He also wants to suggest that a leader needs to have a great deal of intelligence, unlike the King of this poem who gets easily manipulated by other people.

4. 'The Tale of Melon City' is completely written in a satirical sense where the author has used irony to mean the opposite. The poet started his poem by mentioning the King as just and placid. However, later it is shown that he was the exact opposite. His crown fell off his head while he was passing under the arch and he felt embarrassed about it. He simply decided to execute the chief of builders, then the workmen, then the architect and finally the arch. An arch is an object, and nobody could execute it, but the way the author used this line created humour.

The next humour that came in the poem was when the king was hung because of his stupid law. It showed that, although the head of any state needed to have a great deal of intelligence, he was a stupid King. The stupidity of the King was complimented by the stupidity of the man who chose a melon to be the next King. The poet here created the final humour with this incident. He portrayed that it did not matter to the common people who the King was as they crowned the melon as their new King.

5. The poet Vikram Seth has written a narrative poem of an ancient tale by writing 'The Tale of Melon City'. It is written in verse form where every second line rhymes with the first line, which is known as rhyming couplets. This writing style gives the poem the impression of prose in a form of narrative style story-telling. The name of the poem is 'The Tale of Melon City', which in a literal sense means the story of Melon City. The poet here purposefully used the word 'tale' in the title, to make it similar to the verse-like structure of the poem.

Additional Questions

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

(4 Marks each)

1. Under the arch he lost his crown.
The arch was built too low. A frown
Appeared upon his placid face.
The King said, 'This is a disgrace.
The chief of builders will be hanged.'
The rope and gallows were arranged.
The chief of builders was led out.
He passed the King. He gave a shout,

(a) What does the term 'gave a shout' indicate about the chief of builder's emotion?

(b) What does the phrase 'placid face' imply about the king's personality?

(i) He was calm and peaceful.

(ii) He was angry and violent.

(iii) He was sad and depressed.

(iv) He was happy and cheerful.

(c) Complete the sentence appropriately.

The word 'disgrace' means _____.

(d) What happened when the king was going to edify the spectators?

(i) He had a tussle with his ministers.

(ii) His car's wheel got punctured.

(iii) His head collided with his chariot.

(iv) His head collided with an arch.

Ans. (a) The term 'gave a shout' indicates that the chief of builder's emotion was surprise or fear.

(b) (ii) He was angry and violent.

(c) loss of reputation or respect; or shame or dishonour.

(d) (iv) His head collided with an arch.

2.

'O King, you do not realise

The bricks were made of the wrong size.'

'Summon the masons!' said the King.

The masons stood there quivering.

'It was the architect...', they said,

The architect was summoned.

'Well, architect,' said His Majesty.

(a) Why did the king summon the masons?

(b) What were the masons' emotions?

(i) They were excited and eager.

(ii) They were scared and nervous.

(iii) They were angry and defiant.

(iv) They were bored and indifferent.

(c) Complete the sentence appropriately.

The word 'quivering' means _____.

(d) Which of the following sums up the central idea of the extract?

(i) A King's Ignorance and Arrogance

(ii) A King's Curiosity and Intelligence

(iii) A King's Forgiveness and Kindness

(iv) A King's Humour and Wit

Ans. (a) When the King learned that the bricks were of the wrong size, he summoned the masons.

(b) (ii) They were scared and nervous.

(c) trembling or shaking with a slight rapid motion

(d) (i) A King's Ignorance and Arrogance

3. He could not walk and could not see,
So old (and therefore wise) was he —
But in a quavering voice he said,
'The culprit must be punished.
Truly, the arch it was that banged
The crown off, and it must be hanged'.

(a) Who is 'he' here?

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|---------------------|----------------------------|
| (i) The king | (ii) The chief of builders |
| (iii) The architect | (iv) The wise man |

(b) What does the phrase 'could not walk and could not see' imply about his physical condition?

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (i) He was disabled and blind. | (ii) He was injured and sick. |
| (iii) He was tired and sleepy. | (iv) He was lazy and careless. |

(c) Complete the sentence appropriately.

The word 'culprit' means _____.

(d) What does the term 'banged' indicate?

- Ans. (a) (iv) The wise man
(b) (i) He was disabled and blind.
(c) a person who is responsible for a crime or other misdeed
(d) The term 'banged' indicates that the impact of the arch on the crown was strong and loud.

4. 'Long live the King!' the Ministers said.
'Long live the King! The King is dead.'
They pondered the dilemma; then,
Being practical-minded men,
Sent out the heralds to proclaim
(In His [former] Majesty's name):

(a) What was the dilemma that the ministers faced?

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (i) About the King's death | (ii) About the King's crown |
| (iii) About the King's successor | (iv) About the King's law |

(b) What does the phrase 'practical-minded men' imply about the ministers' attitude?

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| (i) They were realistic and sensible. |
| (ii) They were idealistic and creative. |
| (iii) They were pessimistic and cynical. |
| (iv) They were optimistic and enthusiastic. |

(c) Complete the sentence appropriately.

The word 'herald' means _____.

(d) What does the term 'proclaim' indicate about the ministers' intention?

- Ans.** (a) (iii) About the King's successor
(b) (i) They were realistic and sensible.
(c) official messengers bringing news; or signs that something is about to happen
(d) The term 'proclaim' indicates that the ministers' intention was to announce something publicly or officially.

5. Account of customary choice.
If His Majesty rejoice
In being a melon, that's OK
With us, for who are we to say
What he should be as long as he
Leaves us in Peace and Liberty?
The principles of laissez faire
Seem to be well-established there.

(a) What does the word 'laissez faire' mean in this context?

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|---------------------|------------------|
| (i) Let it be | (ii) Let it go |
| (iii) Let it happen | (iv) Let it grow |

(b) What is the tone of the extract?

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|--------------|-----------------|
| (i) Critical | (ii) Respectful |
| (iii) Amused | (iv) Worried |

(c) Fill in the blank with an appropriate word or phrase.

The phrase 'who are we to say' shows that the people are _____.

(d) Identify the line from the extract that shows that the people are happy with their new king.

- Ans.** (a) (i) Let it be
(b) (iii) Amused
(c) submissive
(d) The line from the extract that shows that the people are happy with their new king is "If His Majesty rejoice in being a melon, that's OK with us."

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words: 3 Marks each)

1. What do the words 'just and placid' imply?

Ans. The words 'just and placid' imply that the king was fair and mild, and a great believer of justice. He ensured that justice was meted out to his subjects. He was also mild mannered and rarely showed any displeasure. Even if he did frown, he quickly wiped it off his face.

2. What was the intention behind the building of an arch?

Ans. The king wanted an arch to be erected, that would extend over the main road. He felt the arch would edify the spectators and would improve the morals and knowledge of the onlookers there.

3. What angered the King?

Ans. After the arch was built, the king rode through the street. He wanted to edify the spectators there. But as he was crossing the arch, his crown fell off, as the arch was built too low. This angered the king.

4. What order did the king give when his crown was knocked off his head?

Ans. The king was angry that his crown had fallen off while he rode under the arch. A frown came over his face because the arch was built too low. The king said that it was disgraceful that this happened. In his anger, he ordered that the chief of the builders, responsible for building the arch, will be hanged.

5. How did the chief of builders escape the gallows?

Ans. When the chief of builders was led away to the gallows, he pleaded innocent. He claimed that it was the fault of the workers that the arch was built so low. He escaped the hanging as the king who was just and placid, spared the innocent man.

6. Were the workmen put to death?

Ans. The next to be blamed were the workmen. They were held responsible for building the low arch, by the chief of builders. The king had now ordered that they be hanged. The workmen shifted the blame onto the masons who had made bricks of the wrong size. Hearing their justification, the king pardoned them.

7. How did the blame eventually fall upon the King?

Ans. The masons blamed the architect for the poor design of the arch. Subsequently, the architect, who seemed to be in trouble at this stage, clarified his position by stating that he had acted on the instructions of the king. He thus, passed on the blame to the king who had made certain changes in the architectural plans of the arch.

8. What was the King's reaction to the architect's accusation?

Ans. When the king heard the architect's accusation, he was so angry that he almost lost his ability to reason. But as he was righteous and tolerant, he accepted that this was a difficult situation. The king now solicited the presence of the wisest man in the country as he was in need of some counsel.

9. What was the advice of the wise old man?

Ans. The wisest man was found and carried to the royal court, as he could neither walk nor see. He was an old and experienced man. He said in a trembling, feeble voice that the offender must be punished. He condemned the arch and declared it guilty of throwing the crown off the king's head. Thus, he said that the arch should be hanged.

10. Was the arch the one who reached the gallows?

Ans. The wise man declared that it was the arch that had thrown the crown off, and it must be hanged. A councillor objected to the arch being hanged; he called it a disgrace to hang something that had touched the honourable head of the king. The king agreed with the councillor and the arch was spared.

11. 'But only one man was so tall, he fitted. One man. That was all'. Who was this man?

Ans. The crowd grew restless and tired. They did not appreciate the fact that the offenders were escaping death, and they were not able to see a hanging. The king grew fearful of their agitation and decided that someone must be hanged. To satiate the wishes of his

people, he decided that the person who would fit the measurement of the noose set up on the gallows would be hung. For this purpose, all the people in the kingdom were measured one by one. Unfortunately, the only man who was tall enough and met the requirement for the hanging was the king himself.

12. How was the successor to the king decided?

Ans. After the king's execution, the ministers realised that they had to find a new king. They were in a dilemma as to what was to be done. They pondered upon the issue, and being practical-minded men, sent out announcements to proclaim that the next person who crosses the city gate would decide who the successor to the dead king would be.

13. Who proclaimed that a melon would be the heir to the throne?

Ans. The next man who crossed the city gate was entrusted with the task of choosing a successor to the throne of the kingdom. However, the man who came was 'an idiot'. The only reply he made to questions asked of him was, 'A melon'. Therefore, the word that came out of his mouth regarding the choice of a successor was melon. The ministers accepted the verdict and a melon was coronated as the king. They carried the melon respectfully and placed it on the throne.

14. How did the people of the kingdom react to their melon king?

Ans. The people of the kingdom were content with their melon king. They found no reason to criticize him as long as he lets them live in 'Peace and Liberty'. In that kingdom, the philosophy of 'laissez faire' (refusal to interfere) seemed to be well established.

15. The king was just and placid. Did he carry his notion of justice a bit too far?

Ans. The king was known to be cool-headed, fair and just. But he was, in fact, a fool with a wavering mind. He foolishly thought that an arch would improve the people morally and mentally. He lost his temper when his crown fell off his head due to the arch that was low in height. He at once ordered the hanging of the chief of builders, the workers, the masons and the architect. He carried his sense of justice a bit too far, and foolishly agreed to hang the arch itself. When this was opposed, to appease his people he himself was hanged. The story is humorous, satirical and ironical.

16. Which part of the poem do you find the most humorous?

Ans. In my opinion, the most humorous part is the selection of a new king. The incident where the ministers decide that the next person to pass the city gate would decide their future king, is hilarious. As luck would have it, the man who passed the gate was an idiot who answered every question posed to him with the word 'melon'. Thus, on asking who should be the king, he said, 'A melon'. So, it was! The ministers promptly put the melon on the throne and accepted it as their king. The 'Melon' becomes crucial to the story as the city was hitherto known as the 'Melon City.'

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words: 6 Marks each)

1. How did the 'just and placid king' get executed?

Ans. The arch, commissioned by the king, was built low and it knocked off the king's crown when he was passing below the arch. He sentenced the chief of builders to death for causing him the dishonour. With the blame game beginning, the chief of builders, to

save himself, passed the blame on to the workers. The workmen blamed the masons and the masons in turn, blamed the architect. The architect reminded the king that he had made certain changes in the plans himself when they were shown to him. This was the reason the arch was not of the appropriate height. The king was infuriated to hear that. Being righteous and tolerant, he called for the wisest man in the country, for counsel, who advised the king to hang the arch as it was the real offender. The arch had committed the crime of having thrown of the king's crown. A councillor objected to this ruling and declared it a disgrace to hang something that had touched the king's honourable head. The crowd that had gathered to witness the hanging became restless. The king, apprehensive of their mood, ruled for someone to be hanged immediately. The noose was at a height, and a suitable person was to be selected to be hanged. Every citizen of the kingdom was measured. Finally, the noose that hung high, fitted the king alone and he was hung as per the royal ruling.

2. How do the people fare under the melon king, in contrast to the human king?

Ans. The human king never applied his own brain and went by what others said. Instead of handling the issue with the arch in a sensible manner, he created a situation which embroiled him in a state of utter confusion. He declared that the person who wronged him would be hanged. The foolish country men gathered to see the 'event of the hanging'. They turned out to be as foolish as their king. When the people became restless and demanded that somebody be hanged, the king himself was taken to the gallows. He had to pay a heavy price for his foolishness. According to the state custom, the new ruler was to be chosen by the first person who passed by the city gate. That day, an idiot happened to pass by the gate who said 'melon' to any question that people asked him. And the ministers followed the custom mindlessly. They brought a melon and crowned it as their new ruler. The people raised no objection. They only wanted to live in peace and liberty. They accepted the melon king who followed the policy of non-interference in whatever the people did. The poet concludes that the kingdom followed the laissez faire principles and life moved along at a comfortable pace.

3. Discuss 'The Tale of Melon City' as a humorous as well as an ironical poem with the help of examples from the poem.

Ans. 'The Tale of Melon City' is truly a humorous and ironical poem. It is humorous that an arch was constructed to 'edify' the people. The oldest man of the city was considered to be the wisest, which is both ironical and humorous, because the solution he came up with was as foolish as the rest. The councillor's retort to the wise man's suggestion was equally ironical. The order that was passed by the king was funnier. It was ordered that whosoever fitted the gallows shall die. Then, it is highly funny and unbelievable that the king himself was hanged because the noose fit him.

The selection of the new king, a melon, is extremely humorous. It is highly ironical how one can order a death sentence for a minor offence. The King himself was so indecisive. Then, the process of selection of the new king adds both to the humour and irony. Finally, it is seen that people were living happily under a king who did not govern. The whole poem is a satire that projects the idiosyncrasies of incapable leaders. The irony is that the people who live under such rulers also turn out to be as foolish as the ruler himself. And funnily, they are willing to be governed by a 'melon' too.

4. Describe the events that led to the hanging of the king by his own order.

Ans. A king ordered an arch to be constructed to 'edify' the people. The arch was low and the king lost his crown when he passed under it. The king ordered the execution of the chief of builders, but the latter said that it was the fault of the workers. The workers laid the blame on the bricks because they were of the wrong size. So, the masons were called. They blamed the architect, but the architect said that the king himself had made some alterations. At this, the king sought the counsel of the wisest man in the country. The oldest man alive was brought and he advised that the arch should be hanged. The arch was not hanged because it had touched His Majesty's head. The king said that because the nation wanted a hanging, they will hang whoever fitted the gallows. Unfortunately, the king himself fit best and was hanged.

5. Do you think the poem echoes the misgovernance prevailing in the world at large?

(Constructed Response Question)

Ans. People all over the world experience difficulties due to the misgovernance and incapacities of the people at the helm of affairs. The evils of misgovernance are seen everywhere. Corruption, inflation, crime, sinking economy, exploitation of natural resources, etc. are the various faces of misgovernance and non-governance. This has to end sometime. People have had enough. Everyone wants a change. Every new face appears to bring hope, which is invariably belied. In a democracy, people get a chance to change their rulers and law makers every five years.

A change is seen on the horizon. People with a record of clean service are now entering politics, as candidates from political families have proved to be failures. The honest public servant gets the support of the common people. The judiciary stands for the right and the correct. Most powerful of all is the media. It spreads awareness among people. It would not be the wish of any human being to be governed by a 'Melon King' any more.

Questions for Practice

Extract-based Questions

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

1. In the city of which I sing
There was a just and placid King.
The King proclaimed an arch should be
Constructed, that triumphally
Would span the major thoroughfare
To edify spectators there.
The workmen went and built the thing.
They did so since he was the King.
The King rode down the thoroughfare
To edify spectators there.

(i) arrogant and selfish (ii) just and placid
(iii) egocentric and arrogant (iv) merciful, just and placid

(c) What happened when the King rode down the thoroughfare?

(i) abab (ii) aabb
 (iii) abaa (iv) none of these

- (i) That he was looking at red objects
- (ii) That he wanted a red-coloured gallow
- (iii) That he got nervous and scared
- (iv) That he wanted to cover his town with a red-coloured cloth

- (i) The architect to the king
- (ii) The chief of builders to the architect
- (iii) The architect to the chief of builders
- (iv) The masons to the builder

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The noose was set up somewhat high.
Each man was measured by and by.

(a) After all the considerations and discussions, the crowd was getting:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| (i) restless | (ii) amused |
| (iii) horrified | (iv) bored |

(b) What was the public demand that the King sought to fulfil?

(c) Do you think the King took his 'notion of justice' too far?

(d) The public demand was fulfilled by:

- (i) choosing the oldest man
- (ii) the King's discretion
- (iii) measuring their height one by one
- (iv) the councillor's decision

Short Answer Questions

(40-50 Words)

1. What was the criterion for the choice of 'the wisest man'. What was his verdict?
2. What message does the poet give through the use of irony and humour in the poem?
3. Describe the custom of the city to choose the king.
4. The poem portrays the principles of 'laissez faire'. Discuss.
5. How did the choice of the person 'to be hanged' become ironical for the king?

Long Answer Questions

(120-150 Words)

1. How has the poet made fun of the system of governance by using the phrase 'just and placid' for the king?
(Constructed Response Question)
2. As an odd man out, among a bunch of foolish people in the kingdom, give an account of the difficulties you face to survive in the Melon City. *(Constructed Response Question)*
3. Man does not need any one to govern him. Explain with reference to 'The Tale of Melon City'.
(Constructed Response Question)

