



FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNERS

LITERATURE COMPANION

FOOTPRINTS WITHOUT FEET
(Supplementary Reader)

- ◆ Summaries of Stories and Plays
- ◆ Discussions on Characters, Themes, Titles, Morals and Messages
- ◆ Extracts to Test Understanding of Different Literary Genres
- ◆ Short & Long Answer Type Questions

ENGLISH
Language & Literature





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Footprints Without Feet

1. A Triumph of Surgery

(James Herriot)

ABOUT THE STORY

Introduction

The story "A Triumph of Surgery" is a humorous account of an overfed dog who has become very fat and sick thanks to the excessive concern of his owner. The narrator, a veterinary surgeon, rescues the dog by taking him to his hospital after convincing the owner that the animal could not be cured at home. He treats the dog by putting him on compulsive fasting for two days. However, the owner mistakenly considers the pet's cure to be a triumph of surgery, least realizing that controlled diet and exercise were responsible for the pet's recovery.

Summary

The narrator of the story "A Triumph of Surgery" is Dr Herriot, a veterinary surgeon who gets really worried about Tricky, the pet dog of a rich woman Mrs Pumphrey. He is shocked to see the excessively fat dog with red eyes and lolling tongue walking with his owner in the street.

Mrs Pumphrey, who is foolishly indulgent, claims that Tricky's listlessness is an outcome of malnutrition. So, she overfeeds him with some 'extras' like malt and cod-liver oil. She also gives him a bowl of Horlicks at night to make him sleep well. In addition, she serves him cream cakes and chocolates in spite of the vet's advice to cut down on the dog's sweet intake. Dr Herriot concludes that the real problem

with the dog is his greed for food along with excessive pampering by his owner. To make things worse, Tricki is not being given adequate physical exercise.

The vet warns Mrs Pumphrey that if Tricki's diet is not modified and if he is not given exercise, he is bound to become seriously unwell. This prediction comes true within a few days. Tricki stops eating and lies panting all the time on the rug with intermittent bouts of vomiting. The vet had anticipated this situation and is ready with a plan. The foremost thing he does is to get Tricki away from his owner. So, he convinces her that the dog has to be hospitalized for a fortnight in order to cure him. This makes Mrs Pumphrey restless as she is certain that her dog would not be able to bear such a long separation from her. But the vet is determined to save the little dog and he takes him away, wrapped in a blanket, much against the wishes of his owner.

At the surgery, the other dogs get curious and gather round the vet. They sniff the motionless Tricki and find him to be an uninteresting object. They ignore him when he does not respond.

The doctor makes a comfortable bed for Tricki and places him in a loose box next to where other dogs used to sleep. He observes him closely for two days and does not give him any food except plenty of water. Towards the close of the second day, Tricki starts taking some interest in his surroundings and on the third day he starts making a feeble sound in response to the dogs in the yard. When the doctor opens the door, Tricki goes out slowly and is immediately surrounded by Joe, the greyhound, and other dogs. They inspect him, roll him over, and move off down the garden. Tricki follows them despite his surplus fat.

Later, at the feeding time on that day, the dogs rush headlong towards their bowls and start eating noisily and greedily. After the dogs finish their food, Tricki walks up to the shining bowls and casually licks into a couple of them. The next day, an extra bowl is kept and the doctor

feels happy on seeing Tricki jostling towards the bowls. From this point onwards, Tricki's recovery paces up. He starts taking interest in playing with other dogs who accept him as a member of their gang. Like them, he too starts fighting for food at meal time, and at night hunts for rats. Dr Herriot is pleased to see Tricki recover without any medication.

However, a worried Mrs Pumphrey keeps on ringing up the surgery at least a dozen times a day to inquire whether her pet dog's comfort is being taken care of. Dr Herriot smartly evades her queries and assures her that Tricki is out of danger and is improving gradually. This makes Mrs Pumphrey anxious and she begins to send abundant supply of eggs and wine to enrich her little dog's blood. This feast is used by the vet and his attendants since such a rich diet was not good for the dog.

After relishing these delicacies for a fortnight, the doctor overcomes the temptation of extending Tricki's stay. He informs Mrs Pumphrey that the dog has recovered fully and can be taken back home.

Within minutes of this call, Mrs Pumphrey arrives in her long gleaming car to collect Tricki. Dr Herriot fetches the cured dog who is now an agile, muscular and smart animal. Tricki surprises his owner by rushing through the chauffeur's open door, licking her face and barking out of sheer happiness. Mrs Pumphrey thanks the doctor and drives away with tears of joy, thinking that surgery saved her dog's life.

TITLE

"A Triumph of Surgery" is an apt title for the story. Tricki's speedy recovery is actually the outcome of appropriate diagnosis and accurate treatment. Such a recovery is usually obtained only after surgical intervention. But Dr Herriot's wisdom and initiative to keep Tricki away from his owner and bringing him to the surgery to cure him by

simply cleansing his system becomes a 'triumph' over Tricky's ailment in the real sense.

THEME

The story is based on the theme that over-indulgence can be life threatening, especially when the caretaker is ignorant. Tricky's life comes under threat because his owner, Mrs Pumphrey expresses her love for him by overfeeding him.

Another theme of the story is the tactfulness of a young and efficient veterinary surgeon. He cures Tricky without any medication by simply controlling his diet and giving him proper exercise.

MESSAGE

Through the story "A Triumph of Surgery", the author, who is a veterinary surgeon, wants to convey the message that our love for our pets should not be expressed by pampering them too much. Such over-indulgence can be life threatening for the poor animal who trusts his master completely. In fact, pets need a balance between indulgence and strictness. A restricted wholesome diet, supplemented with plenty of exercise is all that is needed to keep one's pet healthy. Excess of everything is bad, even of love.

HUMOUR

The story "A Triumph of Surgery" is full of situational humour, coupled with humour resulting out of interesting statements. Tricky's looking 'like a bloated sausage' or being able to 'tackle a meal at any hour of the day or night' is very amusing. Mrs Pumphrey's excessive concern for Tricky and sending an abundant supply of eggs and wine for him also makes things funny. The doctor and party having a feast at the cost of the rich lady is certainly enjoyable. Thus, the entire episode is replete with situations, incidents and statements that compel the reader to laugh.

CHARACTERS***Mrs Pumphrey***

Mrs Pumphrey is a very rich lady who is over-concerned about her pet dog Tricki. The excessive love of this over-indulgent woman for her pet robs her of her power of reasoning. She bows down to his demands and feeds him with a highly unsuitable diet. She gives him sweet things like creams and chocolates despite the doctor's orders to stop overfeeding. Besides, she is very casual about the dog's need for physical activity. However, she does get genuinely worried when Tricki becomes listless and even agrees to send him to the vet's surgery for the sake of his well-being. But her anxiousness for his recovery compels her to call up the surgery several times a day.

This woman is rather foolish in some ways since she sends eggs and wine to the surgery to improve her dog's condition. Earlier too, she used to give him things like horlicks to boost his health. Little does she realize that her over-indulgence is the precise cause of Tricki's ailment.

Mrs Pumphrey is also a show-off and never skips an excuse to flaunt her wealth. She reaches the surgery in a flashy car to bring back a recovered Tricki. Earlier, when Tricki is being taken away by Dr Herriot, she packs cushions, coats and other stuff for his comfort.

In sum, Mrs Pumphrey is a typical representation of an idle and rich woman who is so dumb that it nearly costs Tricki his life.

Dr Herriot

Dr Herriot is an efficient veterinary surgeon devoted to his profession. His concern for Tricki's well-being is genuine; that is why he does not mince his words while warning a rich woman like Mrs Pumphrey.

He is wise and a good judge of others' character. He knows well that Mrs Pumphrey's indulgent behaviour towards Tricki will further ruin the dog's health. Out of her love for the pet, she would never be able to restrict his diet. So, he plans in advance to move Tricki away from his owner and bring him to his surgery.

His skill as an accomplished vet is reflected by the fact that he cures Tricky without resorting to any complicated surgical interventions.

Dr Herriot is also an intelligent and a tactful man. He very smartly evades answering Mrs Pumphrey's queries regarding Tricky's ailment and treatment procedure. He wisely side-tracks the issue by telling her that the dog is out of danger and is gradually improving.

However, he is very considerate and does not take undue advantage of anyone's trust. He does not prolong the dog's stay simply to keep the supply of goodies sent by Mrs Pumphrey going. Earlier, instead of returning the delicacies sent by Mrs Pumphrey for Tricky, he shares them with his friends. In this tactful manner, he not only pleases Mrs Pumphrey but also keeps his friends happy.

On the whole, Dr Herriot is a capable veterinary surgeon, full of tact, commonsense, intelligence and worldly wisdom.

Tricky

In the beginning of the story, the roly-poly Tricky looks very comical owing to his obesity. His greed for food is insatiable and any time is meal-time for him. He is an overfed and pampered pet who falls ill due to excessive eating and lack of exercise.

Tricky is very adaptable and adjusts easily to new situations. Although he is pampered by his owner with luxuries and good food, he is very happy at the surgery where he has to make effort to eat his share of food. His golden body is adorned with flapping ears and he stands out as a well groomed dog amid the other dogs at the surgery, who are all shaggy.

Tricky is sociable, so the moment he gets well, he makes friends with other dogs. He is also a loving pet and showers love and affection upon his owner when he meets her after a fortnight's separation.

In the end, a two week's stay at the surgery transforms him into a lithe, hard-muscled animal.

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

I had pulled up my car when I saw him in the street with his mistress and I was shocked at his appearance.

(a) Who is 'I' in the above extract?

In this extract, 'I' is Dr James Herriot, a renowned veterinarian and the author of the story "A Triumph of Surgery".

(b) Whom did 'I' see and where?

Dr Herriot saw the unwell dog Tricky in his street with his rich owner, Mrs Pumphrey.

(c) Why was the speaker shocked at 'his' appearance?

The speaker, Dr Herriot, was shocked at the appearance of Tricky because he had become extremely fat, which was certainly dangerous for the dog's health.

(d) What was 'his' appearance like?

Tricky had become hugely fat, like a bloated sausage with a leg at each corner.

(II)

He had never been known to refuse food; he would tackle a meal at any hour of the day or night.

(a) Who is being described in this extract and by whom?

Tricky, the pampered dog of the rich woman Mrs Pumphrey is being described here by the renowned veterinarian Dr James Herriot.

(b) What makes the speaker conclude that 'he' had never been known to refuse food?

Dr Herriot concludes this from the fact that Tricki had become very fat as a result of overeating.

(c) Why could 'he' tackle a meal at any hour of the day or night?

Tricki could tackle a meal at any hour of the day or night because he was a very greedy dog.

(d) What was 'he' provided for meals?

Tricki was provided all sorts of goodies like cream cakes and chocolates for meals.

(III)

"Now I really mean this. If you don't cut his food right down and give him more exercise he is going to be really ill. You must harden your heart and keep him on a very strict diet."

(a) Who speaks these lines and to whom?

Dr James Herriot speaks these lines to Mrs Pumphrey, the owner of the unwell dog Tricki.

(b) Whose food does the speaker suggest to cut down on and why?

The speaker, Dr James Herriot, suggests cutting down on Tricki's food because overfeeding was now beginning to threaten his life.

(c) Who must harden his/her heart and why?

Mrs Pumphrey, Tricki's owner, must harden her heart because her soft attitude had made the dog obese and had put his life in danger.

(d) What, other than a 'strict diet', did the speaker advise to follow?

The speaker advised to give regular exercise to Tricki other than a 'strict diet'.

(IV)

Later that day I was present at feeding time. I watched while Tristan slopped the food into the bowls. There was the usual headlong rush followed by the sounds of high-speed eating.

(a) Who was present at the feeding time and why?

Dr Herriot was present at the feeding time of the dogs because he wanted to observe Tricki's behaviour after one day of fasting.

(b) Who was Tristan and why did he slop the food into the bowls?

Tristan was one of the partners of Dr Herriot. He slopped the food into the bowls of the dogs because they were hungry and impatient for food.

(c) What is the meaning of the phrase 'headlong rush'?

'Headlong rush' means everyone moving quickly towards the same place with their head jutting out.

(d) Why were there 'sounds of high-speed eating'?

The dogs were very hungry and were quickly finishing off their food. In the process, they made loud noises.

(V)

He became an accepted member of the gang, an unlikely, silky little object among the shaggy crew, fighting like a tiger for his share at mealtimes and hunting rats in the old hen-house at night.

(a) Who is being discussed here?

Tricki, the dog who had fallen ill due to overfeeding, is being discussed here.

(b) Which gang accepted him/her?

The gang of the household dogs at the surgery owned by Dr Herriot accepted Tricki.

(c) What made him/her an unlikely member?

Tricki was silky and small in comparison to the shaggy and large dogs at the surgery. This made him an unlikely member.

(d) How did 'he' behave after becoming part of the gang?

After becoming part of the gang, Tricki too hunted rats at night and fought for his share of food at mealtimes.

(VI)

I was able to tell her that the little fellow was out of danger and convalescing rapidly.

The word 'convalescing' seemed to do something to Mrs Pumphrey.

(a) Who speaks these lines?

Dr James Herriot speaks these lines.

(b) Who is the 'little fellow'?

Tricki, the pet dog of Mrs Pumphrey, is the little fellow.

(c) What is the meaning of the word 'convalescing'?

It means recovering gradually.

(d) How was Mrs Pumphrey affected by the word 'convalescing'?

Mrs Pumphrey started to send fresh eggs and bottles of wine to the surgery to improve Tricki's health, once she heard the word 'convalescing'.

(VII)

They were days of deep content, starting well with the extra egg in the morning, improved and sustained by the midday wine and finishing luxuriously round the fire with the brandy.

(a) Identify the speaker of this sentence.

The speaker of this sentence is the renowned veterinarian Dr James Herriot.

(b) Which days is the speaker talking about?

Dr Herriot is talking about the days when Tricki was undergoing treatment at his surgery.

(c) Why does the speaker say that, those days were 'days of deep content'?

The speaker, Dr Herriot, says this because while Tricki was recovering fast with the help of simple measures, he and his partners were relishing the delicacies sent by its owner.

(d) Who was sending the supply of eggs and wine and why?

The supply of eggs and wine was coming from Mrs Pumphrey to supplement the health of her darling pet Tricki.

(VIII)

In two weeks he had been transformed into a lithe, hard-muscled animal; he was keeping up well with the pack, stretching out in great bounds, his chest almost brushing the ground.

(a) Whose transformation is being talked about here?

The transformation of Tricki, the pampered dog of Mrs Pumphrey, is being talked about here.

(b) What was peculiar about the two weeks mentioned here?

The two weeks mentioned here were peculiar as they were spent by Tricki in the surgery of Dr Herriot away from his overindulgent owner Mrs Pumphrey.

(c) Why did the transformation take place?

The transformation took place because Dr Herriot put Tricki on a strict diet and allowed him enough scope to run about like normal dogs.

(d) What was 'his' condition before the transformation took place?

Tricki's condition was very bad before the transformation took place. He was listless, looked like a bloated sausage, moved with a lolling tongue and had dull looks.

(IX)

During the excitement, I helped the chauffeur to bring out the beds, toys, cushions, coats and bowls, none of which had been used. As the car moved away, Mrs Pumphrey leaned out of the window. Tears shone in her eyes.

(a) What is the 'excitement' being talked about?

Mrs Pumphrey's excitement is being talked about here. Tricki's

return to his home after getting fully cured at Dr Herriot's surgery has left her super-excited.

(b) Why hadn't the beds, toys, cushions etc been used?

These items had not been used because Tricky had been kept in the surgery like normal dogs. He had to fight for his share of food and play and live amongst the other household dogs.

(c) Why did Mrs Pumphrey lean out of the window of the moving car?

Mrs Pumphrey was overwhelmed to see the quick recovery of her pet and leaned out of the window of the moving car to express her gratitude to Dr Herriot.

(d) Why did tears shine in Mrs Pumphrey's eyes?

Tears shone in Mrs Pumphrey's eyes because she was both relieved at Tricky's recovery and touched by the help extended by Dr Herriot.

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SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 – 40 words each)

Q1. Who was Dr Herriot?

Dr James Herriot was a veterinary surgeon and the narrator of the story "A Triumph of Surgery". He ran a hospital where he treated Tricki, the pampered pet dog of Mrs Pumphrey, for listlessness and obesity.

Q2. Why was Dr Herriot really worried about Tricki? Or

How was Mrs Pumphrey's overindulgence a cause of concern for Dr Herriot?

Dr Herriot was really worried about Tricki because the latter had become very fat due to overeating. In addition, he was not given sufficient physical exercise by his overindulgent owner, Mrs Pumphrey. Had this situation continued, it could have spelt disaster for the hapless animal.

Q3. Why was Dr Herriot shocked at Tricki's appearance?

Dr Herriot was shocked at Tricki's appearance because overeating had made him excessively fat. His eyes were bloodshot and he suffered from a watery discharge. Moreover, he walked with great difficulty and panted while walking.

Q4. Why did Mrs Pumphrey think that Tricki was suffering from malnutrition? What did she do?

Mrs Pumphrey thought that Tricki was suffering from malnutrition because he had become listless. So, she gave him small portions of malt and cod-liver oil in between meals to build him up. She also gave him a bowl of Horlicks at night to make him sleep.

Q5. Why did the doctor suggest to cut down on Tricki's sweet intake? Was this advice followed? Why/Why not?

The doctor suggested to cut down on Tricki's sweet intake as it

would have helped in controlling his obesity. However, this advice was not followed because Mrs Pumphrey gave in to Tricky's love for cream cakes and chocolates.

Q6. What was Tricky's only fault? What was its outcome?

Or

What was the trouble, according to Doctor Herriot?

Or

"Tricky's only fault was his greed". How did it get him into trouble?

According to Dr Herriot, the only trouble with Tricky was his greed for food. As a consequence, he accepted every type of food at any time and in any quantity. This made him hugely fat with bloodshot eyes, and his tongue lolled from his jaws.

Q7. Give two reasons that made Tricky fat.

The first reason was the overindulgence of Tricky's owner, Mrs Pumphrey, who fed him cream cakes and chocolates. She also fed him food supplements like malt, cod-liver oil and Horlicks. The second reason was the greed of Tricky owing to which he never refused the food that was offered to him.

Q8. How can you know that Mrs. Pumphrey pampered Tricky ?

We know that Mrs. Pumphrey pampered Tricky because she used to give him cream cakes, chocolates, cod-liver oil and Horlicks in between meals. Besides, she always gave in to his demand for food in spite of the doctor's advice to restrict his diet. She didn't give him enough exercise either.

Q9. How do you know that Tricky had an affluent life? (Textual)

The affluent life of Tricky can be noted from the fact that he had a night bed, day bed, cushions, toys, rubber rings, breakfast bowl, lunch bowl, supper bowl and a wardrobe of expensive coats.

Q10. What did Mrs Pumphrey do to help Tricky? Is she wise in this?

Mrs Pumphrey always thought that Tricky was suffering from

malnutrition and thus tried to build him up by supplementing his food with malt and cod-liver oil. She also gave him Horlicks to let him have a sound sleep at night. However, it was an unwise gesture as overfeeding made the dog ill.

Q11. How did the 'little extras' between the meals affect Tricky?

The 'little extras' between meals had an adverse effect on Tricky's health. This overfeeding made him lethargic and listless. He looked like a bloated sausage with a leg at each corner.

Q12. What do you understand by the expression: "He would tackle a meal at any hour of the day or night."?

This expression indicates that Tricky's greed for food was insatiable. He would readily accept every type of food item at any time of the day or night. Thus, it was always a meal time for this glutton.

Q13. What were the 'possible things' not mentioned by Mrs Pumphrey to Dr Herriot and why did the doctor wonder about them?

Dr Herriot knew very well that Mrs Pumphrey pampered Tricky excessively. So, he was quite sure that she had not given the exact picture when she mentioned Tricky's diet. There must have been more sweet things and health boosters that she fed to Tricky.

Q14. What did Mrs Pumphrey tell Dr Herriot when he inquired about Tricky's exercise regime?

Mrs Pumphrey offered a lame excuse when Dr Herriot inquired about Tricky's exercise regime. She said that Tricky had his little walks with her because Hodgkin, the gardener, was down with lumbago, so Tricky was not getting the ring-throwing exercise.

Q15. "I tried to sound severe." How did Dr Herriot do this? Or

What advice did Dr Herriot give to Mrs Pumphrey, in order to keep Tricky fit?

The doctor advised Mr Pumphrey in a severe tone to cut down on Tricky's food and to give him plenty of exercise, if she wanted to avoid any serious health complication for her dog.

Q16. "Mrs Pumphrey wrung her hands". When did this happen and why?

Mrs. Pumphrey wrung her hands in response to Dr Herriot's 'severe' advice to restrict Tricky's diet. She did so because she was feeling guilty at having ignored Dr Herriot's instructions. Her negligence had resulted in Tricky's obesity and listlessness.

Q17. What did Doctor Herriot observe while watching the progress of Tricky and his owner?

Or

"I watched their progress with growing concern." Why does Dr Herriot think so?

Doctor Herriot observed with growing concern that Tricky could barely walk. Instead he tottered along in his little tweed coat and struggled on, drooping in his harness.

Q18. Why did Doctor Herriot expect to hear from Mrs Pumphrey?

Or

Why was Dr Herriot confident that Tricky would be in hospital soon?

Doctor Herriot expected to hear from Mrs Pumphrey because he knew that the rich woman would continue to interpret her dog's listlessness as a sign of weakness. She would still overfeed him and that would certainly make him so unwell that he would require hospitalisation.

Q19. Why did Mrs Pumphrey make a frantic call to Doctor Herriot?

Mrs Pumphrey made a frantic call to Doctor Herriot because Tricky had refused to eat even his favourite dishes. Besides, he had bouts of vomiting and spent all his time lying on the rug, panting. He didn't go for walks and didn't want to do anything.

Q20. What made Mrs Pumphrey 'distraught'?

Or

Why was Mrs Pumphrey worried about Tricki? (Textual)

Or

What was Tricki's ailment? How did it worry Mrs Pumphrey?

Tricki's listlessness, bouts of vomiting, lack of interest in food and activity gave Mrs Pumphrey the impression that her pet dog was seriously unwell. This was a cause of worry for her because she actually loved her dog dearly and could not bear to see him in pain.

Q21. "I had made my plans in advance." What plans did Doctor Herriot make and why?

Doctor Herriot made the plan to cure Tricki by shifting him to the hospital for about a fortnight, away from his overindulgent owner. He made this plan in advance because he knew that Tricki would eventually develop aversion to food and shall have to be put on strict diet.

Q22. How did Mrs Pumphrey react when Herriot told her that Tricki required hospitalisation? Why did she react in this manner?

Mrs Pumphrey almost swooned when Herriot told her that Tricki required hospitalisation. She reacted in this manner because she was sure that her darling pet would pine and die if he did not see her every day.

Q23. "But I took a firm line". What was the 'firm line' taken by Dr Herriot? Why?

The 'firm line' taken by Dr Herriot was that he did not offer any other way to cure Tricki than hospitalizing him for a fortnight. He took this stand because he knew that the chief cause of Tricki's ailment was over feeding by his owner.

Q24. Why was the entire staff roused by Mrs Pumphrey? Or

Why was the entire staff of Mrs Pumphrey at work when Tricki was being taken to the hospital?

The entire staff of Mrs Pumphrey was roused by her to pack the paraphernalia of Tricki that she felt he would require at the hospital. She made them run around and bring over his favourite cushions, toys, serving bowls, coats and other stuff.

Q25. Why did Dr Herriot drive away without the paraphernalia of Tricki?

Doctor Herriot drove away without the paraphernalia of Tricki because his car was small and could not hold all that stuff. Besides, he did not want Mrs Pumphrey to find any excuse to keep back Tricki and thus delay his treatment any further.

Q26. Why do you think Mrs. Pumphrey and her entire staff were in tears when Dr. Herriot took away Tricki?

Or

Describe the parting scene between Tricki and Mrs Pumphrey.

Mrs. Pumphrey and her entire staff were in tears at the time of Tricki's parting. This was so because Tricki was loved by all of them and the separation from him filled them with despair.

Q27. Mrs Pumphrey's love for her dog is exceptional. Do you agree/disagree? Give reasons.

Of course, Mrs Pumphrey's love for Tricki is exceptional. The manner in which she had bought things for his comfort like cushions, coats, toys, rubber rings and different feeding bowls show that she adored him. In addition, she fed Tricki with rich food like cream cakes and chocolates. However, when her excessive love ruined his health, she did not hesitate to get him medical help instantly.

Q28. Why was Doctor Herriot confident that he had a cure for Tricki?

Or

The doctor claimed that he knows the cure? What was it and did it work effectively?

The doctor claimed that he knew the cure because he had already identified overfeeding to be the cause of Tricki's ailment. He was confident that by restricting the dog's diet, he would make him well again. This cure was certainly effective because fasting for a couple of days made Tricki active and agile.

Q29. What was Tricki's state of health when the doctor brought him to the surgery?

Tricki's health was indeed worrisome when the doctor brought him to the surgery. The listless, lethargic and overweight dog had lost all interest in food to the extent that he did not show any interest even in his favourite dishes. He was panting for breath and had bouts of vomiting.

Q30. What do you think, had made Tricki listless ?

Tricki had been made listless by overfeeding and excessive pampering by his owner. In addition, lack of exercise and willing acceptance of rich food like cream cakes and chocolates also added to his already bloated body which made it difficult for him to remain active.

Q31. How was Tricki received at the surgery by other dogs?

Or

Why did the household dogs at the surgery consider Tricki to be an uninteresting object to start with?

When Tricki was brought to the surgery, the household dogs crowded round him. However, the new comer took no interest in their advances and lay motionless. So after a while, the other dogs ignored him considering him to be an uninteresting object.

Q32. How did the household dogs behave at feeding time?

The household dogs rushed to the feeding bowls as soon as food

was put in them. They made loud sounds while eating their portion quickly. They were in a rush because the food of slow eaters was likely to be snatched by those who finished their share early.

Q33. What immediate step did Mr Herriot take to save Tricki?

Or

What are the first few measures taken by Herriot to save Tricki?

In order to save Tricki, Doctor Herriot made a bed for him in a warm loose box next to the other dogs. He did not give him any food for two days and cleansed his system by giving him plenty of water. Besides, he kept an eye on him and observed closely the symptoms that marked his gradual return to normalcy.

Q34. What was Tricki's response to his surroundings at the surgery on the third day of his stay? *Or*

What was the first symptom of Tricki's recovery?

After two days of fasting, Tricki began to whimper when he heard the dogs in the yard on the third day. He trotted out to be with them when Doctor Herriot opened the door. This was the first symptom of his recovery.

Q35. What happened at the feeding time later on the third day of Tricki's stay at the surgery?

Or

On the third day after the dogs had finished their meal, what did Tricki do?

At the feeding time later on the third day of Tricki's stay at the surgery, Tricki examined the bowls of other dogs after they had finished eating. He casually licked inside one or two of them indicating that he was regaining his appetite.

Q36. Why was Doctor pleased by Tricki's behaviour when he licked casually inside the feeding bowls of other dogs?

The doctor was pleased by Tricki's behaviour because he did not want to resort to surgical procedure in order to cure him. The simple measure of fasting the dog and giving him plenty of water resolved his health problems.

Q37. What was Tricki's reaction on the fourth day when an extra bowl was added for him? Why was Doctor Herriot pleased at this reaction?

Initial starvation at the surgery made Tricki overcome his aversion for food (caused owing to over-feeding at home). On the fourth day, jostling with the other dogs, he rushed to the additional bowl of the food kept for him. This pleased the doctor because he was working to bring back precisely this kind of behaviour in Tricki.

Q38. What brought about the progress in Tricki's condition?

Running about with the other dogs at the hospital and joining them in their friendly scrimmages brought about the progress in Tricki's condition. This progress was rapid and had come about without medicinal treatment of any kind.

Q39. Why did Herriot find Tricki to be like an unlikely object at the surgery?

Or

How did Tricki become 'an accepted member of the gang' from an 'unlikely object'?

Tricki was a well groomed dog with a silky coat and this made him appear like an unlikely object amidst the shaggy bunch of dogs at the surgery. However, he was accepted as one of their own kind since they bowled over, tramped on and squashed each other every few minutes. Together, they hunted rats at night and fought for food at mealtimes.

Q40. What made Herriot conclude that Tricki had never had such a time in his life as he had at the surgery?

Herriot observed that Tricky too fought like a tiger with the dogs at the hospital for his share at mealtimes and hunted rats with them in the old hen-house at night. This fun-filled life of Tricky made Herriot conclude that the dog had never had such a time in his life.

Q41. How did Mrs Pumphrey hover in the background when Tricky was undergoing treatment at the hospital?

Mrs Pumphrey hovered anxiously in the background during Tricky's treatment by ringing up a dozen times a day for update on her pet's condition. She enquired whether his cushions were being turned regularly or his correct warm coat was put on him.

Q42. How did the doctor handle Mrs Pumphrey's persistent and anxious queries about Tricky?

Dr Herriot very intelligently side-tracked Mrs Pumphrey's persistent queries regarding the physical comfort enjoyed by Tricky at the surgery and told her that he was 'out of danger and convalescing rapidly'.

Q43. What was Mrs Pumphrey's reaction to the word 'convalescing'?

Or

How did Mrs Pumphrey respond on learning that Tricky was 'out of danger and was convalescing rapidly'?

Or

Why did Mrs Pumphrey started sending eggs and wine to the surgery?

The word 'convalescing' acted like magic for Mrs Pumphrey and she immediately thought of building up Tricky's strength. She started sending fresh eggs by dozens regularly which were later followed by bottles of wine to enrich Tricky's blood.

Q44. Why had breakfast and lunch become a happy period and a ceremonial occasion respectively for Herriot and his partners?

Breakfast had become a happy period because Herriot and his partners would relish two eggs each at this time. Lunch had become a ceremonial occasion because they now had two glasses of wine before, and several during the meal. These goodies were sent by Mrs Pumphrey for Tricky but were actually consumed by Herriot and his partners.

Q45. What made Herriot feel that his days were 'days of deep content'?

Herriot felt that his days were 'days of deep content' as he and his partners had an extra egg for breakfast to begin the day well, midday wine to improve and sustain this nourishment, and brandy at night. This luxury was all at the expense of Tricky's rich owner who was trying to pamper her dog even when he was at the hospital.

Q46. Why was Doctor Herriot tempted to keep Tricky as a permanent guest?

The doctor was tempted to keep Tricky in the surgery as a permanent guest because Mrs Pumphrey's generosity towards her dog was actually being relished by the doctor and his partners. They could enjoy the eggs, wine and brandy sent by her only till the dog was at the hospital.

Q47. What compelled Herriot to tell Mrs Pumphrey that Tricky had recovered and could be taken home?

Or

What made the doctor inform Mrs Pumphrey that the dog had fully recovered?

Though Tricky's presence in the surgery would have made the doctor's life luxurious, yet he informed Mrs Pumphrey about the dog's complete recovery because he knew that she loved her pet dearly and was missing him a lot. Doctor Herriot was an honest man who did not intend to shatter the trust of the lady.

Q48. What followed minutes after Herriot's call to Mrs Pumphrey? Why?

Minutes after Herriot's call to Mrs Pumphrey, the rich woman reached the surgery in her chauffeur driven thirty feet long gleaming black car. The lady arrived promptly because she had really been missing her pet badly and was eagerly looking forward to a green signal from the doctor.

Q49. Why was Mrs Pumphrey still worried when she came to the surgery to collect Tricki?

Mrs Pumphrey was still worried when she came to the surgery to collect Tricki because she had seen Tricki in a very bad shape prior to his arrival at the surgery. She could not believe the news that Tricki had actually come out of such a serious health issue in such a short time.

Q50. What transformations had taken place in Tricki after his two weeks' stay at the surgery?

Or

Describe Tricki's physique on the day he left the surgery.

A fortnight's stay in the surgery had transformed Tricki completely. He was no longer listless and lethargic. Now he was a lithe, 'hard-muscled' animal who competed well with the rest of the dogs. He stretched out in great bounds and his chest almost brushed the ground.

Q51. How did Tricki react when he saw his owner after a gap of two weeks?

Or

How did Tricki greet his owner when she came to fetch him?

What was Mrs Pumphrey's reaction?

On seeing his owner, Tricki jumped out of the doctor's arms and very comfortably 'sailed into Mrs Pumphrey's lap'. He swarmed over her licking and barking excitedly. Mrs Pumphrey too was

elated and felt overwhelmed with emotions on seeing him. Tears of joy rolled out of her eyes when she got Tricky back.

Q52. What was Tricky's paraphernalia? Why did it remain unused at the surgery?.

Tricky's paraphernalia was the numerous cushions, toys, coats, and feeding bowls that his rich owner had sent over to the hospital to make his stay comfortable. All this remained unused because Tricky was a dog who only needed a lot of physical exercise and rough games to revive his appetite.

Q53. Why did tears roll out of Mrs Pumphrey's eyes while leaving the surgery?

Tears rolled out of Mrs Pumphrey's eyes while leaving the surgery because she was overwhelmed to see her darling pet dog having recuperated fully and that too within a short period. This welled up emotions in her that she could not express in words and shed tears instead.

Q54. Why did Mrs Pumphrey think that her dog's recovery was a triumph of surgery?

Or

Is Mrs Pumphrey right in considering Tricky's cure to be a triumph of surgery? Give reason for your answer.

Mrs Pumphrey thought that her dog's recovery was a triumph of surgery because Tricky had regained perfect health within a span of few days only. Such a quick and complete cure is usually possible only after surgery. However, she was not right in this belief since Tricky had recovered through the simple process of strict diet and exercise.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

- Q1. Mrs Pumphrey's concern for Tricki was excessively indulgent and was nothing short of mania. Discuss.**

Mrs Pumphrey's concern for Tricki was nothing short of mania. She behaved like an overindulgent mother and made a very elaborate wardrobe for him. Tricki had different coats for winter and rainy days. His beds for day and night were also different. Similarly, he had separate bowls for breakfast, lunch and supper. He had a lot of toys and many rubber rings to play with. The food served to him at home was unimaginably varied and rich. He was even fed desserts like cream cakes and chocolates and was pampered with supplements like malt, cod-liver oil and Horlicks. Her mania for her pet's health was evident again when she started sending ample supply of fresh eggs, bottles of wine, and brandy at the hospital to tone up his health.

All this proves that Mrs Pumphrey's concern for Tricki was nothing short of a mania.

- Q2. How is an unduly kind attitude of Tricki's owner responsible for his ailment? Or**

Do you think Mrs Pumphrey is herself responsible for Tricki's illness?

Mrs Pumphrey is over-indulgent towards Tricki and thus has an excessively kind attitude for him. She dotes on him like an unduly kind mother. She is always worried about his health and thinks that he is malnourished. As a result, she overfeeds him with malt and cod-liver oil in addition to his already rich diet to make him strong. All these things make Tricki a glutton and he accepts food at every hour of the day or night. This makes him obese to such an extent that he looks like a 'bloated sausage'. Mrs

Pumphrey's over-indulgence makes her neglect the doctor's advice, too. Thus Tricky, an overfed creature, eventually becomes listless and lethargic and loses all appetite. He has to be ultimately hospitalized for administering a strict diet and exercise regime that could have easily been carried out at home. Thus, it can be said that Tricky's discomfort and ailment are due to Mrs Pumphrey's overindulgence.

Q3. Describe Tricky's first three days at the surgery.

Or

Describe Tricky's progress at the surgery.

Tricky's entry into the surgery on the first day drew over all the dogs to him. They were keen to befriend him but soon withdrew owing to his indifference and listlessness. Then Dr Herriot tried to make Tricky comfortable by putting him to bed in a warm loose box and placed it where the other dogs were to sleep. Keeping a vigilant eye on him, the doctor served him plenty of water but no food for the first two days. On the evening of the second day, Tricky started responding and showed interest in his surroundings. On the third day, he whimpered on hearing other dogs and on being let loose, he trotted out to join them. They too accepted him as a member of the gang after a thorough inspection. Then, they all played together, enjoyed friendly fights and squashed each other. Thus, within three days Tricky regained his normal agile self.

Q4. Compare and contrast Tricky in the beginning and in the end of the story.

In the beginning of the story, Tricky was excessively obese and walked with great difficulty. He looked like a 'bloated sausage' with bloodshot eyes and a lolling tongue from his jaws. In the words of Mrs Pumphrey, he was 'listless'. Owing to overfeeding

by his owner, he had become a glutton who never refused food. His physical mobility was too little and he wasn't given any regular exercise either. Thus he fell ill, lost all interest in food and suffered bouts of vomiting. The situation became so bad that he had to be hospitalised. However, a fortnight's supervision by the expert veterinary surgeon, Doctor Herriot, and a strict diet with exercise regime eventually cured him of his ailment. He began to behave like a normal dog and started participating in all the activities like the other dogs. This made him agile, strong muscled and healthy in the end.

Q5. "Excess of everything is bad". Discuss the truth of this statement with reference to Mrs Pumphrey's love for Tricki.

"Excess of everything is bad" is a statement that stands absolutely true with regard to Mrs Pumphrey's love for Tricki. She was a very rich woman who could afford every possible comfort for her pet. To show her love for Tricki, she always depended on things that her money could buy. In the process she overlooked the need of a strict diet and ample exercise regime.

The ill-effects of her overindulgence made Tricki excessively fat and he began to look like a 'bloated sausage'. He walked with great difficulty and lost all interest in things around him. Still, Mrs Pumphrey failed to realise the seriousness of the matter and kept on giving him 'little extras between meals'. She loaded him with cream cakes and chocolates simply because she couldn't bear to refuse him. On top of it, the dog wasn't given any exercise to stay fit. This worsened the dog's health.

If Dr Herriot had not intervened at the right time, Mrs Pumphrey's love would have possibly led to Tricki's death. Therefore, excess love of Mrs Pumphrey for Tricki was certainly bad both for the dog and herself.

Q6. What would you have done if you were in the narrator's place?

(Textual)

Had I been in the narrator's place, I would have treated Tricky exactly in the same manner as Dr Herriot does. However, I would not have feasted on the delicacies sent by Mrs Pumphrey for Tricky. This is unprofessional and unethical. I would have sternly told her that pets were not to be given such things and warned her that after Tricky goes back home, such an indulgence would make him ill again.

I would have told her in detail the ill effects of giving wine or brandy to pets. In fact, I would have given her a menu for Tricky with strict instructions that the dietary chart was to be followed religiously. I would also have stressed on the need to give regular physical exercise to the pet. To sum up, I would not have minced words to tell the rich lady that she herself was to be blamed for her dog's ill health.

Q7. Do you think, this is a real-life episode or mere fiction? Or is it a mixture of both?

(Textual)

James Herriot, the author of the episode "The Triumph of Surgery," is a renowned veterinary surgeon. During his professional career he must have come across incidents where pets had fallen ill due to over-feeding and pampering by their indulgent masters. However, the surgeon is also a good author and has authored quite a number of books. As an author, he must have been tempted to add some spice to facts. The episode depicted in "The Triumph of Surgery" is the outcome of one such real life episode experienced by Doctor Herriot and blended with elements of fiction. This blending does not dilute the factual aspect of the story, instead it makes it a more interesting piece of reading. The details about Tricky and his owner are too minute to be purely

fictitious. These are just an exaggerated presentation of reality to make the incident an inviting story.

Thus, the story "The Triumph of Surgery" appears to be a mixture of both fact and fiction.

Q8. What would you have done if you were (i) a member of the staff in Mrs Pumphrey's household (ii) a neighbour? What would your life have been in general? (Textual)

- (i) Had I been a member of the staff of Mrs Pumphrey's household, I would have pleaded with her to be a little strict with Tricki's diet and in the absence of the gardener would have volunteered to give some extra physical exercise to the dog.
- (ii) As a neighbour, I would have tried to find out an authentic dietary chart for pet dogs and would have presented it to Mrs Pumphrey, with the suggestion that she should cut down on his rich diet, not to over feed him and to arrange to give him plenty of physical exercise, too.

In general, as a member of the staff, and as a neighbour, I would have felt pity for the helpless mute creature. His condition would have constantly pained me. I would have prayed for his owner to get some good sense and allow the dog a normal life.

□□□

2. The Thief's Story

(Ruskin Bond)

ABOUT THE STORY

Introduction

"The Thief's Story" deals with the reformatory power of trust. A young thief's conscience is awakened by his employer's complete trust on him. It is the positive impact of the faith that Anil has in Hari Singh that leads to the victory of virtue over vice.

Summary

The narrator, Hari Singh (not his real name), is a fifteen-year-old boy who earns his living by thieving. One day he spots Anil, a tall and lean twenty-five-year-old man, watching a wrestling match. Hari Singh has the ability to assess the character of others. He cleverly engages Anil in a conversation to judge whether he can be cheated. After a brief interaction, he concludes that Anil can be his next target.

Hari puts on his best smile and uses flattery to win over Anil. But he hides his actual name from him because he believes that by adopting a new name every month he can keep the police and his former employers at bay.

Anil is ignorant about the intentions of Hari, so he moves on after a casual conversation. Hari Singh does not relent and follows Anil requesting him to employ him as his domestic help. On being asked if he can cook, Hari Singh again lies that he can. Still Anil employs him on the condition that he will not be paying him any wages as he could not afford it. Then he takes Hari to his room over the Jumna Sweet Shop.

Hari's miserable cooking skills are revealed on the first night itself. Anil does not complain and feeds the terrible food cooked by Hari to

stray dogs. Later, he pats him on his head and tells him that he would teach him to cook. After sometime, he also teaches Hari to write his name and promises to teach him to write whole sentences and addition of numbers as well. Hari feels grateful to Anil for this and imagines a future when he would do wonders as a thief after becoming educated. A few days pass and Hari Singh works happily for Anil. The work he does is quite light as he makes tea in the morning and then goes out for buying the daily essentials. In the process, he manages to pocket a rupee or so. Anil knows about this cheating but he simply ignores it. A trusting Anil gives Hari the key to his room which makes it easy for the thief to come and go freely.

After some days, Hari makes out that Anil is a freelance writer and does not have any regular source of income. At times he even needs to borrow. However, whenever he makes substantial money, he squanders it.

One evening Anil comes home with a small bundle of notes. He tells Hari that a publisher has bought his book. At night, Hari sees him tuck the money under the mattress. The thief then starts thinking that he has been working for Anil for almost a month but has not yet stolen anything. He realises that Anil's trusting nature has stopped him from doing so. He feels that it is easy to rob a greedy man but difficult to rob a careless one because he would not even notice that he has been robbed. This takes away the entire pleasure of robbing.

Hari finally decides to steal the money and justifies his decision by telling himself that if he does not steal it, Anil would waste it. At night, while Anil enjoys his sound sleep, Hari Singh weighs the entire situation again and finally decides to take the money and leave the town by the 10.30 Lucknow Express. After carefully taking out the notes hidden under the mattress, Hari leaves the room. He tucks the notes in his pyjama-string and counts them later to find that they are

six hundred rupees in the denomination of fifty. He feels that with so much money he could live like a rich Arab for almost a week.

When Hari Singh reaches the railway station, he dashes to the platform without bothering to buy any ticket, for he does not believe in buying tickets. He sees that the train for Lucknow has just started moving, but for some unexplainable reason, he hesitates and does not board it.

After the train leaves, he whiles away some time on the deserted platform. He has no idea where to go. He thinks that prolonging his stay would raise suspicion and staying in a nearby hotel too would be risky. He has no friends because in his profession friends could be more of a trouble. Anil, the man he has just robbed, is the only person he knows in the town. So, he leaves the station and walks slowly through the bazaar. While walking, he contemplates that he can study human faces and tell that a greedy man is full of fear on being robbed; a rich man gets angry; and a poor man shows resignation. However, he realises that on finding the theft Anil would feel sad. Not because he has suffered a loss, but because of the breach of trust.

He reaches a *maidaan* and sits down on a bench. In the meantime, a drizzle starts which shortly turns into a heavy rain. The early November night is quite chilly and Hari's face and clothes become wet. He goes back to the bazaar and sits down in the shelter of the clock tower. When the clock displays the midnight hour, he feels the damp notes hidden in his pyjama-string.

Hari's conscience begins to prick him. He thinks that had he not stolen the money, Anil would have perhaps given him two or three rupees in the morning to go to the cinema. Although he now has all the money, he would no longer be able to learn to write. Education could have made him a great, clever and respected man, whereas stealing would not lead him anywhere. He decides to go back to Anil to learn reading and writing.

He hurries back nervously to the room and finds Anil still fast asleep. He cautiously slips the bundle of notes under his mattress and goes off to sleep. Next morning, he gets up late and finds that Anil has already made tea. He comes to Hari Singh with a fifty rupees note in his outstretched hand. He gives it to him saying that he had made some money the previous day. He also assures to pay him his wages regularly. Hari feels happy and takes the note which he notices was still wet from the night's rain.

Anil tells Hari that they would begin writing sentences. Hari understands that his master is aware about the theft of the previous night but chooses to ignore it.

A reformed Hari smiles in his usual way but this time the smile is effortless and spontaneous. There is no deceit in it.

TITLE

The title "The Thief's Story" is a very apt one because the story is a first person account of Hari Singh, a juvenile thief. It is told from his perspective, and details of his experiences thus become credible, otherwise who easily trusts a swindler? The story is a candid admission of a thief of how he tried to dupe his unsuspecting and benevolent employer but could not, because his conscience prevailed upon him not to do so. We need to remember that this story by Ruskin Bond has another narrative, that of Hari, the protagonist, in the main narrative by the author. Moreover, since it is the thief that undergoes a change of heart and shuns his evil ways and becomes a good man, the title only accentuates this fact and makes the whole narrative a very effective one. Using a title like 'A Thief's Reformation', for example, would have made the story sound too didactic. I think the chief purpose of Ruskin Bond is to capture the psychological turmoil of a guilt-stricken conscience, which the current title helps achieve.

THEME

"The Thief's Story" deals with the theme of juvenile delinquency that can mar a young person's character and career. It explores the effective role of benevolence, forgiveness, love and large-heartedness in dealing with young people who show tendencies to go astray. Another undercurrent of the theme is that education is a powerful tool for bringing about a positive change in society. Yet another streak of theme is temptation to do evil and the means of self-redemption. All these strains of theme are interwoven into the narrative of how a 15 year old boy Hari, who ought to be attending school, has a thriving career as a petty thief and how, in trying to swindle his unsuspecting, kind and generous employer, his conscience is hit by guilt and remorse and brings about his transformation.

A sub-theme of the story can be how our attitude determines who we are and what kind of life we lead. Both Anil and Hari undergo struggle to make both ends meet. While Anil chooses creative writing to make money, which he puts to good use, Hari, on the other hand, takes to stealing to earn his livelihood.

MESSAGE

"The Thief's Story" delivers a very simple and straightforward message - "Do not take what belongs to someone else" and "Shun your evil ways and embrace the good." The story shows that even bad people have some inherent good in them and that right circumstances, together with scruples of conscience and forgiveness can transform the evil into the good.

Another message the story gives is "Do not shatter the trust people place in you, for if once snapped, the bond of trust can never be restored and that will have consequences of its own on your relationships."

Yet another message that the story so powerfully delivers is that people have it in themselves to be good or evil and that there is

something noble about being good, a realisation that dawns on Hari, the protagonist of the story.

HUMOUR

"The Thief's Story" includes instances of subtle but grim humour that springs up from the statements and situations in the story and serves the purpose of comic relief in an otherwise serious narrative. Take for example, the instance in which Hari and Anil talk about wrestling. Although Anil is a lean fellow, Hari says 'You look bit of a wrestler' and Anil retorts, 'So do you' even though the narrator was rather thin. The situation becomes a bit more humorous when Hari modestly says, 'I do wrestle a bit.'

Then there is black humour in Hari's statement that robbing a careless man "takes all the pleasure out of the work." References to thievery in such expressions as "being out of practice", "doing some real work" and "...friends were more trouble than help..." generate grey humour. Then there are examples of humour borne out of foolishness. For example, although Hari was quite happy making some money by pilfering money from the daily expenses, but he decides to make it big, but fails and ends up giving up stealing once and for all. Equally foolish and laughable is Hari's idea that he could become a better thief. No less funny is Hari's justification for stealing - "If I don't take the money, he'll only waste it on his friends. After all, he doesn't even pay me." We know that Hari has been keeping some money that Anil gives him for daily expenses to himself.

But the darkest instance of humour is the beguiling but disarming smile that Hari uses as a weapon to strike down his victims.

CHARACTERS

Anil

Anil is a tall and lean young man of twenty five. He is 'easy-going', simple and kind-hearted and can be won over very easily. Hari

Singh's 'appealing smile' softens him and he agrees to keep him as his domestic servant. He is helpful by nature and he teaches Hari Singh to cook and to write his name.

Anil is a freelance writer and earns money by 'fits and starts.' However, he is not very possessive about his earnings. Whenever he gets a cheque, he celebrates with his friends and spends away everything.

He is very credulous and trusting and gives the key to his room to Hari Singh, a boy he knows only casually. He is forgiving too and that is why he does not express his knowledge about the theft.

In short, Anil is honest, large-hearted, affectionate and helpful by nature.

Hari Singh

Hari Singh, a lad of fifteen, is an experienced and successful thief. He has acquired a lot of knowledge about human behaviour through his sharp observation. He knows how to impress people and rightly says "a little flattery helps." His assessment of Anil being 'easy-going, kind and simple ...' is also correct. He knows when to smile appealingly to win over people like Anil.

He is good at face-reading and his analysis about the greedy, the poor and the rich man's reaction on being robbed is astonishingly accurate. However, his habit of deliberation leads to his transformation. In the end, after he robs his benefactor Anil, he feels guilty and puts back the stolen money. He pledges to learn reading and writing in order to lead an honourable life.

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

"You look a bit of a wrestler yourself," I said. A little flattery helps in making friends.

(a) Who speaks these words and to whom?

Hari Singh, the thief, speaks these words to Anil, a writer whom he intended to cheat because he appeared to be a soft-target.

(b) Why does the speaker tell the listener that he looks like a wrestler?

Hari tells Anil that he looks like a wrestler because he wants to win his confidence by making sweet talk.

(c) Why was the speaker trying to make friends with the listener?

Hari was trying to make friends with Anil because he intended to cheat him.

(d) Why did the speaker use flattery?

Hari used flattery to win the confidence of his victims and steal once they were off-guard.

(II)

Later, he patted me on the head and said never mind, he'd teach me to cook.

(a) Who is the narrator and who patted his head?

Hari Singh, the thief, is the narrator and his employer Anil patted his head.

(b) When did 'he' pat the head of the narrator?

Anil patted the head of Hari when the latter cooked a miserable meal.

(c) Why did 'he' say 'never mind'?

Anil was a kind hearted man and said 'never mind' to make the young Hari feel comfortable.

(d) What else did 'he' teach the narrator besides cooking?

Anil taught Hari reading and writing in addition to cooking.

(III)

One evening he came home with a small bundle of notes, saying he had just sold a book to a publisher.

(a) Who is 'he' in these lines?

In these lines 'he' is Anil, Hari Singh's employer.

(b) How did he get the money?

Anil got the money by selling one of his books to a publisher.

(c) Where did he put the money? Why?

Anil tucked the money under the mattress to keep it safe.

(d) Why did 'he' tell the narrator that he had got money?

Anil told Hari that he had got the money because he was a simple and trusting fellow.

(IV)

Anil was asleep. A beam of moonlight stepped over the balcony and fell on the bed. I sat up on the floor, considering the situation.

(a) Who was Anil?

Anil was Hari Singh's kind-hearted and trusting employer.

(b) Why did the narrator sit up on the floor when Anil was asleep?

The narrator, Hari Singh, sat up on the floor when Anil was asleep because he was waiting for an opportune time to steal the money kept safely under the mattress by Anil.

(c) What was the situation being considered by the narrator?

The situation being considered by Hari Singh was the right moment when he could steal the money without getting caught.

(d) What was the narrator's plan?

Hari Singh's plan was to run away with the stolen money by catching the 10:30 express to Lucknow.

(V)

When the train had gone, I found myself standing alone on the deserted platform. I had no idea where to spend the night. I had no friends...

(a) Which train had gone?

The 10:30 Express train to Lucknow had gone.

(b) Who stood at the deserted platform?

Hari Singh, the fifteen year old thief, stood at the deserted platform.

(c) Why did the narrator stand at the platform?

Hari Singh stood at the platform because his dilemma had prevented him from running away after having stolen Anil's money.

(d) Why didn't the narrator have any friends?

Hari did not have any friends because he believed that for a thief, friends caused more trouble than give help.

(VI)

I found myself in the maidaan and sat down on a bench. The night was chilly – it was early November – and a light drizzle added to my discomfort.

(a) Who is the narrator here? Why did he find himself in a maidaan?

Hari Singh, the thief, is the narrator here. He was in the *maidaan* because he did not have any place to go after having stolen Anil's money.

(b) Why did the narrator sit down on a bench?

Hari sat down on a bench to do some self-introspection and resolve his dilemma after having robbed a kind employer who trusted him.

(c) What was the discomfort to which the light drizzle added?

The discomfort was the pricking-conscience of Hari Singh that stopped him from running away with Anil's money.

(d) How else did the rain affect the narrator?

The rain drenched Hari's clothes, and even the bundle of notes hidden in his pyjama-string became wet.

(VII)

In the morning he would probably have given me two or three rupees to go to the cinema, but now I had it all.

(a) Who is 'I' in these lines?

In these lines, 'I' is Hari Singh, the narrator of "The Thief's Story".

(b) From whom did 'I' expect to get money in the morning?

Hari Singh expected to get the money from Anil, his kind employer.

(c) Where had the money come from?

The money had come as a payment from a publisher who had bought Anil's book.

(d) '...but now I had it all.' How much was 'all' that 'I' had now?

It was six hundred rupees in all that Hari Singh had.

(e) Was 'I' happy to have it all?

No, Hari Singh was not happy to have it all because he was feeling guilty after having breached Anil's trust.

(VIII)

I crept to the head of the bed, and my hand came up with the notes. I felt his breath on my hand. I remained still for a minute.

(a) Who is narrating this incident? When?

Hari Singh, the thief, is narrating this incident when he was trying to put back the stolen money.

(b) From where did the narrator's hands come up with the notes?

Hari Singh's hands took out the notes from his own pyjama-strings where he had hidden them.

(c) Whose breath did the narrator feel on his hand?

Hari Singh felt Anil's breath, who was sleeping peacefully.

(d) Why did the narrator remain still for a minute after feeling the breath?

Hari remained still for a minute because he wanted to ensure that Anil was still asleep.

(IX)

He knew. But neither his lips nor his eyes showed anything. I smiled at Anil in my most appealing way.

(a) Who is 'he'? What did he know?

'He' is Anil, Hari Singh's employer. He knew that Hari Singh had attempted to run away with his money.

(b) Why didn't 'he' show anything?

Anil did not show anything because he was a kind-hearted man who was trying to reform a young boy through forgiveness and kindness.

(c) Who is 'I'? Why did he/she smile at Anil?

'I' is Hari Singh. He smiled at Anil to express his gratitude for having ignored his follies.

(d) What was unique about the smile?

The smile was unique because it was not used as a tool of flattery. It was sincere, genuine and straight from the heart.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 – 40 words each)

- Q1. Who was Hari Singh? Why did he approach Anil at the wrestling match?**

Hari Singh was a young boy of fifteen, who made his living by stealing and cheating people. He approached Anil at the wrestling match because he seemed to be easy-going, kind and simple enough to be targeted as his next victim.

- Q2. "I was an experienced and fairly successful hand." Why does Hari Singh say so?**

Hari Singh admired himself for his talent as a thief. He did not consider that his profession was bad in any way. Rather he felt that his ability to cheat and steal was perfect.

- Q3. What was Anil doing when Hari Singh spotted him? What were Hari Singh's impressions about him?**

Or

What did Hari think about Anil when he first saw him?

Or

Why did Hari Singh feel that Anil was a man 'simple enough for his purpose'?

Hari Singh spotted Anil when the latter was watching a wrestling match. Anil was about twenty-five years of age, tall, and lean. Hari thought that he was easy-going, kind and simple enough to be cheated and befooled without any difficulty.

- Q4. Why does Hari Singh flatter Anil?**

Or

How does Hari Singh try to flatter Anil? Why does he do so?

Or

How does Hari Singh try to win over Anil's confidence? Why?

Hari Singh tries to flatter Anil by telling him that he is quite

strong and looks like a wrestler. Hari Singh does so, because he knows that, flattery is a very powerful weapon and helps to win confidence and build friendships.

Q5. Why did Hari Singh assume a new name every month?

Hari Singh would steal in order to make his living. This exposed him to the danger of getting caught by the police. So he would assume a new name every month to escape the vigilant eyes of the police and also to befool his former employers.

Q6. Why did Hari Singh give his 'most appealing smile' to Anil?

Hari Singh's experience had made him shrewd, intelligent and worldly wise. He knew that whenever a favour is sought one has to behave pleasingly. He gave his most appealing smile to Anil in order to win his confidence.

Q7. On what conditions did Anil agree to employ Hari Singh?

Or

What did Hari Singh get from Anil in return for work?

Anil was a poor writer and could not afford to give any wages to Hari Singh. So, he agreed to employ Hari on the condition that he would give him food and a place to stay in return for his services.

Q8. Which two lies did Hari Singh tell Anil? Why?

Or

Why did Hari Singh lie to Anil?

Or

Hari Singh was a habitual liar. Give two instances from the story.

Hari Singh lied to Anil about his name. He also lied that he could cook. If he had given his real name, the police would have traced him and if he had told the truth about his cooking ability, Anil would not have employed him. Hari told these two lies because his real intention was to rob Anil.

Q9. Where did Anil live? Why? Where did he put up Hari Singh?

Anil lived in a small room over the Jumna Sweet Shop. He lived here because he was a struggling writer and could not afford a big place. He put up Hari Singh in the balcony of this room.

Q10. Why did Anil feed the food cooked by Hari Singh to stray dogs?

Or

What made Hari Singh realise that he had cooked horrible food?

Anil fed the food cooked by Hari Singh to stray dogs because he was a compassionate person and did not want to hurt Hari for cooking terribly. However, this made Hari realize that the food cooked by him was horrible.

Q11. Why do you think Anil patted Hari Singh even after the latter had cooked really bad food?

Anil was a kind-hearted man who was compassionate towards the thin, fifteen year old Hari, so desperate to work for him. He encouraged Hari by the gesture of patting and promised that he would teach him how to cook.

Q12. Why was Hari Singh grateful to Anil for teaching him to write?

Hari Singh was grateful to Anil for teaching him to write because he knew that with the help of education he would be able to make a lot of money in his line of work as a thief.

Q13. Hari states 'I was grateful'. Still, he decides to rob Anil. Why does he do so?

Hari was an experienced thief; so the temptation to steal Anil's money was too strong to be overcome. Hari hadn't robbed for a month and he thought he would be out of practice if he lets go an easy target like Anil.

Q14. How did Hari Singh make 'profit' of a rupee a day? What was Anil's reaction to this?

Or

Do you think Anil knew that Hari Singh was cheating him while buying daily necessities?

Hari Singh made a profit of a rupee a day when he bought daily necessities for Anil since Anil trusted him completely. Anil certainly knew that Hari Singh was cheating him but being a kind-hearted man, he chose to ignore.

Q15. Did Hari Singh enjoy working for Anil? Why/Why not? Or

What kind of work did Hari do for Anil?

Hari Singh certainly enjoyed working for Anil because there was hardly any work to do. After preparing the morning tea, he would go out shopping for the day's needs where he made a profit of a rupee or so every day.

Q16. What was Anil's occupation? Or

What was Anil's profession? Did he make much money? How do you know?

Anil was a freelance writer who wrote for magazines. He did not earn regularly and made money by 'fits and starts'. Very often he had to borrow money and was also unable to pay any wages to Hari Singh. Besides, he was always worried about his next cheque.

Q17. Why did Hari Singh find Anil's occupation a 'queer' one?

Hari Singh found Anil's occupation a queer one because the latter's earnings were irregular. In addition, Hari himself was illiterate and failed to understand how one could earn by writing for magazines.

Q18. How did Anil get the money that he showed to Hari Singh one evening?

Anil had been able to sell his book to a publisher. In this way he had managed to get a bundle of six hundred rupees notes in fifties which he showed to Hari Singh one evening.

Q19. Why did Hari Singh conclude that Anil was a trusting person?

Hari Singh concluded this because Anil gave him a key to his door which facilitated his coming and going. This was done in spite of Anil's knowledge about Hari Singh's habit of stealing money while buying daily necessities for him.

Q20. Why did Hari Singh find it difficult to rob Anil?

Hari Singh believed that the thrill of robbing a person lay in the victim's feeling the pinch of it. Since, a careless person like Anil did not even notice that he had been robbed, Hari Singh found it difficult to rob him.

Q21. How did Hari Singh justify to himself the act of stealing Anil's money?

Or

What prompts Hari Singh to steal Anil's money?

Hari Singh justified to himself the act of stealing Anil's money on three counts. Firstly, he was gradually losing his skill of stealing. Secondly, had he not stolen it, Anil would have wasted the money on his friends. Lastly, Anil did not pay him any wages.

Q22. When and how did Hari Singh steal Anil's money?

Hari Singh stole Anil's money at night when Anil was fast asleep. He stole it by slipping his hand stealthily under the mattress where the money was hidden. He carried out this theft like a thorough professional.

Q23. What did Hari Singh plan to do after stealing Anil's money?

After stealing Anil's money, Hari Singh planned to go to the railway station and board the 10.30 p.m. express to Lucknow. He intended to go out of the reach of police and Anil as fast as possible before the discovery of theft.

Q24. Why did Hari Singh begin running on the road after stealing the money?

Hari Singh was overpowered by both fear and guilt after stealing Anil's money. Hence, he began running on the road to escape being caught either by Anil or by the police.

Q25. Why didn't Hari Singh stop at the ticket office at the station?

Hari Singh did not stop at the ticket office at the station because he had never bought a ticket in his life. Besides, he was in a hurry to catch the 10:30 Lucknow Express and run away from the police as well as Anil.

Q26. How and why did Hari Singh lose the chance to get away?

Or

Why did Hari Singh not board the train, although he could easily do so?

Or

Did Hari catch the Lucknow Express? Why/Why not?

Rush of blood and force of habit made Hari Singh steal the money. But by the time he reached the station, a sense of guilt overpowered him. His conscience pricked him for having robbed his benefactor. In this dilemma, he missed the train.

Q27. 'I had no idea where to spend the night.' Why did Hari say so?

Hari Singh was a lonely creature, without a guide or a guardian. Perhaps he was an orphan. So, he did not know where to spend the night. Moreover, he did not have faith in the idea of keeping friends.

Q28. What are Hari Singh's views about the reaction of different people on being robbed?

Hari Singh tells us that people have a variety of reactions on being robbed. A rich man shows anger and annoyance when robbed. A greedy man looks fearful, while a poor man resigns himself to his fate.

Q29. What are Hari Singh's views about Anil's reaction regarding the theft?

Hari Singh believed that when Anil would learn about the theft, he would feel sad. He would react so not because of having lost his money but because of breach of trust.

Q30. Describe the weather at night after Hari left the station.

The night when Hari left the station was an early November chilly night. There was first a light drizzle which was followed by quite a heavy rain. This was accompanied by a cold wind that blew the rain across Hari's face.

Q31. Did Hari Singh regret having stolen Anil's money? How do you know?

Or

'Sitting drenched under the clock tower, stark reality stared Hari in the face.' What was this realisation?

Hari Singh regretted having stolen Anil's money because his conscience pricked him for betraying the trust of a kind-hearted employer. The realization dawned upon him that he had sacrificed the opportunity to become educated merely for six hundred rupees.

Q32. Why did Hari Singh decide to go back to Anil?

Or

Why did Hari Singh finally return to the man he had just robbed?

Hari Singh decided to return to the man he had just robbed because his conscience pricked him for betraying a simple and kind hearted man like Anil, who had given him food, shelter and education. He realized that by returning to Anil, he would get the opportunity to lead a decent life. This was a more profitable proposition than stealing six hundred rupees.

Q33. Why was Hari Singh nervous when he returned to Anil's room after attempting to run away with the latter's money?

Hari Singh was nervous when he returned to Anil's room after attempting to run away with the latter's money because he

knew that it was easier to steal something than to return it undetected.

Q34. Why did Hari Singh get up late on the morning that followed the night when he had attempted to steal Anil's money?

Hari Singh got up late because he wanted to sleep over the unpleasant happenings of the previous night. In addition, he did not want to face Anil in case he had found out that Hari had attempted to rob him.

Q35. Why does Hari Singh say, "My heart sank," when he saw a fifty-rupee note in Anil's outstretched hands?

Hari Singh's heart sank because he thought his theft had been discovered. In this case, he did not know how to face his employer who had trusted him completely. In addition, he feared that he could be handed over to the police, too.

Q36. Does Anil realise that he has been robbed? (Textual)

Or

"He knew." What does Hari Singh imply by this observation?

Yes, Anil does realise that he has been robbed. Hari's observation 'He knew' implies that the theft had been discovered since the notes were still wet from the last night's rain. However, Anil's pretended ignorance about the matter was perhaps a chance he had given to Hari Singh to reform himself.

Q37. Do you think people like Anil and Hari Singh are found only in fiction? Are there such people in real life also? (Textual)

People like Anil and Hari Singh are found in fiction as well as in real life. However, one has to concede that in this self-centred world there are very few people who have the sensitivity of Anil's heart and it is equally true that not many thieves reform themselves.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

- Q1. Hari Singh talks about his special 'appealing smile' thrice in the story. How would you differentiate between the first two smiles in the beginning and the last smile towards the close of the story?**

Hari Singh gives his special appealing smile for the first time when Anil, after having a talk about wrestling and wrestlers, quietly walks away. Hari Singh follows him and requests him with an 'appealing smile' to keep him as a domestic help. Again, when Anil curtly tells Hari Singh to leave, he hangs around and smiles in his most appealing way. On both occasions his special smile bears fruit and melts Anil's tender heart. However, there is an element of dishonesty and selfishness in these smiles. Hari Singh's real intention on both these occasions is to win Anil's confidence and then rob him.

However, the last 'appealing smile', towards the close of the story, is full of gratitude and there is no guile, dishonesty and selfishness in it. It is an effortless smile full of sincerity. It is Hari Singh's way of expressing thankfulness towards Anil's magnanimity for retaining him as his domestic help even after knowing that he had made an attempt to rob him.

- Q2. Though Hari Singh is a young boy of fifteen, he has a deep understanding of human psychology. Discuss.**

Hari Singh's experiences as a thief has made him wiser for his age. He understands human psychology fully well. He correctly assesses Anil as an 'easy-going' person who can be won over. He is very right when he says that, 'a little flattery helps in making friends'. He makes use of his 'appealing smile' to an advantageous effect and succeeds in his mission of impressing Anil twice. He also knows well when and how to use his smile as a weapon.

Again, his analysis regarding varying effects of robbery on different types of people, speaks volumes about his knowledge of human nature. His observation that in his profession friends can be more of a trouble than help is also quite practical. In short, Hari Singh deserves to be commended for his deep understanding of human psychology at a young age of fifteen.

Q3. Love is a powerful force that can transform a criminal into a responsible citizen. Justify the statement from your study of "The Thief's Story".

Love is a potent force that can transform even a habitual criminal into a responsible and law-abiding citizen. The balm of love can make ineffective, even the most venomous elements. "The Thief's Story" is a salient example of an experienced and 'fairly successful' thief turned into a sensible person driven to lead life as an educated man. Hari Singh knows only the unethical and antisocial ways of surviving. He very successfully and efficiently robs Anil. Although he could conveniently board the train to Lucknow and decamp with the loot, he cannot. The love, kindness and sympathy that Anil had earlier shown to Hari Singh chains him and forces him to return to his compassionate employer. Thus, love comes out to be a winner in the long run and Hari Singh turns to the path of honesty, sincerity and loyalty.

Q4. Why does Anil not hand the thief over to the police? Do you think most people would have done so? In what ways is Anil different from other employers? (Textual)

Anil is a learned, observant and kind hearted young writer who knows well that if Hari Singh is handed over to the police, he will be doomed for life. He is aware that, when such adolescents come out of jail, they turn out to be hardened criminals who are

hard to reform. He does not want Hari Singh to undergo this trauma. So, he does not hand him over to the police. If Hari Singh had become a confirmed criminal on his release, Anil would have considered himself responsible for it and would have felt guilty throughout his life.

However, most people do not think along these lines. They focus on their personal well-being and panic at every little episode that threatens their security. Any common person would have certainly handed over Hari Singh to the police under such circumstances. Anil, in this respect, is different from most employers as he treats his employee Hari in a selfless, kind, forgiving, large-hearted and caring manner.

Q5. Describe the events that took place on the night of the theft.

Or

How did Hari Singh commit the theft? Why did he return to Anil?

On the night of the theft, Hari Singh carefully took out the notes hidden under the mattress on which Anil was sleeping and left for the station to depart by the 10.30 Lucknow Express. He tucked the notes in his pyjama-string and counted them later to find the six hundred rupees in the denomination of fifty.

On reaching the railway station, Hari dashed to the platform without buying any ticket. He saw that the train for Lucknow was just leaving, but his dilemma stopped him from boarding it. After the train had left, he spent some time on the deserted platform as he did not have any place to go to. He did not have any friends either and the only person he knew was Anil whom he had just robbed.

So, he left the station and walked slowly through the bazaar to reach a *maidaan* and sat down on a bench. In the meantime, a drizzle started which shortly turned into a heavy rain. Hari's

face and clothes were drenched, so he went back to the bazaar and sat down in the shelter of the clock tower. There he felt the damp notes hidden in his pyjama-string. Hari's conscience began to prick him. He thought that although he now had all the money, he was deprived of the opportunity to get education and become great, clever and respectable. So he decided to return the money and nervously hurried back to Anil.

- Q6. What are Hari Singh's reactions to the prospect of receiving education? Do they change over time? What makes him return to Anil?** *(Textual)*

Hari Singh has a positive attitude to the prospect of receiving education. However, his reaction undergoes a change over time. In the beginning, when he starts his education, he believes that once he is able to write like an educated man, he can work wonders as a thief and achieve a great deal of success in life. His attitude towards life at this stage is still materialistic and he thinks only about earning a lot of money with the help of education.

However, later on, his attitude matures. He does not attach much importance to money. Now, he thinks in terms of becoming a great, clever and respectable man in society. He believes that Anil is a right guide for him and thus chooses to return to him and grow under his tutelage as an educated person in the real sense. He now perceives education as a means to gaining recognition and respect in society.

- Q7. What are Hari Singh's views about Anil as a man and as an employer?**

Hari Singh finds Anil to be a simple, 'easy-going', kind-hearted, forgiving do-gooder. He also finds him to be a just man, for he gives fifty rupees to Hari Singh as wages the moment he comes by six hundred rupees through the sale of his book. He also

promises to pay regular wages to Hari after that. In addition, Hari Singh thinks that Anil can be won over with a bit of tact, flattery and a pleasant 'appealing smile'. He also observes that Anil is an indulgent, kind and forgiving man who believes in over-looking minor flaws in others.

Hari Singh finds Anil to be a trusting employer as he gives him the key to his room after a very brief acquaintance itself. Hari Singh also finds Anil to be a helpful and encouraging employer. He teaches Hari Singh how to cook and also how to write his name. On the whole, Hari Singh finds Anil to be a very sympathetic and kind employer who rightly deserves respect.

Q8. How far do you think Anil himself is responsible for tempting Hari Singh to commit the crime?

Or

How does Anil treat Hari Singh? How does it influence Hari Singh's life?

Anil is very kind, considerate and sympathetic towards Hari Singh. He trusts him fully and gives him a key to his door. He ignores minor follies of Hari Singh and keeps quiet even though he knows that the lad pinches some money during routine shopping. Actually, Anil is a writer and does not have conventional views. He believes in reforming rather than punishing. To some extent, this makes Anil responsible for tempting Hari Singh to commit the theft. As an educated man, he should have known that keeping exposed a large sum of six hundred rupees is sure to tempt a young boy to steal.

However, Anil does not hand over Hari to the police even when he knows that he has tried to rob him. This act of kindness and forgiveness brings about a change of heart in the lad. He feels guilty for his misdeed and decides to study to become a

respectable man. Thus Anil's large-heartedness transforms Hari Singh completely.

Q9. Do you find some significant details in the story that tell that Anil is a struggling writer? Does this explain his behaviour in any way? (Textual)

The text includes certain details that prove that Anil is a struggling writer. Anil has a meagre, irregular and uncertain income. He is always worried about his next cheque and does not have any definite work-profile. He plainly tells Hari Singh that he wouldn't be able to pay him any wages in return for the services rendered by the young boy. Hari Singh too finds Anil's work to be a queer one. This position of Anil as a struggling writer explains his behaviour in some ways. He pardons Hari Singh for having cooked a terrible meal because he could relate to the boy's desperation to find work. On getting a bulk payment of six hundred rupees, he at once shares the news with Hari Singh. Hari Singh makes an observation that Anil would spend money on his friends whenever he had some. This large heartedness comes usually to those people who do not have any means to accumulate wealth.

Q10. Where do you think the story is set? Which language / languages are spoken in these places? Do you think the characters in the story spoke to each other in English? (Textual)

The story appears to have been set in some town in Northern India, most probably Delhi. The name 'Jumna Sweet Shop', where Anil's room is situated, suggests that the city is on the banks of the river Yamuna and Delhi is one such city. Names like Anil and Hari Singh too are commonly found in Northern India. Besides, nights in Delhi are quite chilly in the month of November as described in the story. Reference to Lucknow

Express leaving the station at 10.30 p.m. also has a bearing with the town being mentioned and even today there is a mail train that leaves Delhi for Lucknow around that time. Delhi has always been a favourite haunt for upcoming and struggling writers like Anil. In this part of the country, primarily Hindi is spoken and the characters, Anil and Hari Singh, too spoke to each other in Hindi and not in English. Mentioning a word like *maidaan* suggests that the two characters speak to each other in Hindi.

Q11. Have you met anyone like Hari Singh? Can you think and imagine the circumstances that can turn a fifteen-year-old boy into a thief?

(Textual)

Although I haven't met anyone like Hari Singh, yet from the information gathered via newspapers I can imagine the circumstances that can turn a fifteen-year-old boy into a thief. Adolescent boys like Hari Singh have no means of sustenance or family support. Driven by poverty, they are compelled to turn to crime for survival. Crime is the easiest way to earn their livelihood since education is elusive to them. Another reason for their taking to crime is the absence of proper guidance and counselling with protection. Such young children are soft targets of anti-social elements. They are exploited and pushed on the road to crime at a tender age. Once into this mire, these young boys do not know the way out and eventually get trapped. Even the social welfare organisations find it difficult to rescue such boys.

□□□

3. The Midnight Visitor

(Robert Arthur)

ABOUT THE STORY

Introduction

The story "The Midnight Visitor" is a convincing account of the thrill and excitement involved in the field of espionage. It also highlights the risks entailed in this profession and exhibits the dangers encountered by secret agents. The key to survival for these people rests on their wit, agility of mind, quick thinking and perfect planning.

Summary

Ausable is a secret agent, but he hardly looks like one. Fowler, a young writer, wants to prepare a write-up on espionage and thus gets in touch with him but is a bit disappointed to meet a fat spy. A peculiar thing about Ausable is that he speaks French and German with an American accent that he has not been able to shed even after twenty years of his stay in France. In addition, he does not live in style as expected by Fowler. Instead he is lodged in a French hotel room, which is situated on the top sixth floor of a modest and gloomy hotel. This place hardly presents a romantic setting for any type of adventure. Ausable is himself conscious about his simple and boring appearance but assures Fowler that some important papers would reach him soon that could possibly affect the course of history.

It is midnight and the duo reaches the room where Ausable is staying. Ausable opens the door to his room and stands aside to let Fowler in. Continuing the conversation about the important papers, Ausable switches on the light. This illumines the first real thrill that Fowler experiences. He and Ausable find a man standing half way across the room with a small automatic pistol in his hand. Surprised and

shocked, Ausable addresses the man as Max and wonders how he is in town, for he is supposed to be in Berlin.

Max is slender, of medium height and has a fox-like face. He tells Ausable that he is there to grab the papers on new missiles being brought to him that night. Ausable quickly employs his presence of mind to assess the entire situation. As he sits in the chair, he concocts a story about a balcony outside the window of his room. He tells Max that a man had entered his room earlier through that balcony and Max's entry confirms that the hotel staff did not take serious note of the previous intrusion. He claims that he would raise hell with the hotel management for not plugging the route.

Fowler looks through the window but cannot see anything as it is pitch dark outside. Max tells Ausable that he is not aware about the balcony and has entered the room with the help of the passkey. Ausable keeps Max's attention engaged by expressing wonder at the leakage of information about the 'missiles' report.

Just then, a tap at the door startles Max and he gets nervous. Ausable tells the midnight visitor, Max, that he had tied up with the police to safeguard the report that was expected to reach him and the knock on the door indicated that the men in uniform were in time. He further tells that the door being unbolted, the police can enter even when their knocking is not answered. This meant that the police would barge in and shoot Max.

Meanwhile, the knocking is repeated and a nervous Max turns to the window with his pistol still pointed towards Ausable and Fowler. He tells Ausable to send away the police while he himself shall wait in the balcony. He warns that if the police is not sent away, he shall shoot and take his chances. Saying this, Max crosses over the window-sill and frees his hand to drop on to the balcony. A loud and shrill scream is heard.

The door opens and a waiter stands there with a tray. His name is Henry and he brings in a bottle and two glasses as ordered earlier by Ausable.

A visibly shocked Fowler stammers as he cannot understand how Henry stood at the door in place of the police. Ausable tells him coolly that the story about the police and a balcony outside his room's window was a creation of his swift thinking. It was this presence of mind that had saved him and Fowler. He clarifies that Max actually jumped on to a non-existent balcony from the sixth floor, meeting his end eventually.

TITLE

"The Midnight Visitor" is an appropriate title for the story and befits acts of espionage which are performed under the cover of midnight darkness. The visitor in the story comes at midnight adding to the element of surprise that makes this spy story intriguing. Max's uninvited visit at the midnight hour is sudden and shocking even for Ausable. The unexpected turn of events and the competence of Ausable's calibre as a spy are revealed only because of the surprise midnight arrival of the visitor. Thus "The Midnight Visitor" is a suitable title for this spy story.

THEME

The story "The Midnight Visitor" deals with the theme of mental agility as an indispensable trait of secret agents. This agility helps spies to outwit their opponents. The theme is told to the reader in an artistic way describing a secret agent as a vigilant, alert, master-planner, cool-headed and quick-thinker.

Running parallel to the main theme is a sub-theme that proves the sayings 'appearances are deceptive' and 'never judge a book by its cover'. Ausable's dull and boring appearance misleads Fowler in guessing the former's efficiency as a spy.

MESSAGE

Through the story "The Midnight Visitor," the author wants to convey that quick-wit, presence of mind and out-smarting others are the cardinal rules of successful espionage. Absence of vigilance and credulity are fatal for this profession. If Max had not taken Ausable's words at their face value and had tried instead to verify the presence of a balcony before jumping on to it, he could have saved his life and succeeded in his mission. Thus, survival in espionage depends on a spy's mental alertness. It also conveys the message that appearance of a secret agent has nothing to do with his success in espionage.

CHARACTERS

Ausable

Ausable is a renowned secret agent. He is a sloppy fat man and his appearance is very ordinary. He speaks French and German with an American accent as he originally belongs to Boston. He is very good at reading faces and minds of others. He correctly assesses that Fowler is disappointed at meeting him.

He is capable of immediately coming back to normalcy after a rude shock. The presence of Max in his room jolts him, but he quickly composes himself. On learning about the intentions of Max, he is quick-witted enough to weave a plan. In fact, the secret of his success as a spy lies in his speedy master-planning. The story about the presence of the balcony is just off the cuff and yet a part of his perfect planning. He utilises the non-existent balcony a little later when Henry knocks at the door. He tells Max that the police are at the door and succeeds in making him panic. The result is that Max hastily jumps to the non-existent balcony and falls to his death.

In short, Ausable is an alert, agile, cool-headed, intelligent, resourceful agent and has a great deal of presence of mind.

Fowler

Fowler is a young upcoming writer keen on writing about espionage. His choice of topic suggests that like all young men, he is romantic by nature and loves thrill and excitement. However, he is not a good judge of character and is disappointed initially on meeting Ausable. He gets carried away by people's appearances. He forms a poor opinion about Ausable's calibre as a spy solely from his unimpressive physique and an ordinary lodging place. This shows that he lacks maturity.

He is so weak hearted that a sudden knock at the door startles him. He is too naive to understand the intricacies of espionage and so fails to see through the masterly game of Ausable. Even after having heard Fowler's shrill scream and having seen the waiter instead of the police, he is white-faced with fear.

In short, Fowler is too inexperienced to face the challenges encountered in his occupation as a writer.

Max

Like Ausable, Max too is a secret agent, but he belongs to a rival institution. As a spy, he is quite active as he is able to catch off guard an efficient spy like Ausable. He even manages to keep him under the illusion that he is in Berlin on that night. He is resourceful and is therefore successful in procuring information about the vital secret papers that were to reach Ausable. His ability to arrange a passkey to Ausable's room speaks highly about his resourcefulness.

However, as far as intelligence, composure and presence of mind are concerned, he is no match to Ausable. He is gullible and takes Ausable's words on their face value without verifying the truth of his opponent's claim about the balcony outside the window. However, since the writer had presented this character in contrast to the protagonist Ausable, his sudden and shocking death brings relief to the reader.

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

Ausable was, for one thing, fat. Very fat. And then there was his accent.

(a) Who was Ausable?

Ausable was a secret agent who used to live in France.

(b) Why does the narrator mention that Ausable was fat?

The narrator mentions that Ausable was fat because this appearance was in contrast to the one associated with spies *i.e.*, they are slim and agile people.

(c) What was Ausable's accent?

Ausable's accent was American. He spoke passable French and German in this accent.

(d) Why did the narrator find Ausable's accent to be peculiar?

The narrator found Ausable's accent to be peculiar because Ausable had been living in Paris for the last twenty years but still spoke in an American accent.

(II)

And as the light came on, Fowler had his first authentic thrill of the day. For halfway across the room, a small automatic pistol in his hand, stood a man.

(a) Who was Fowler?

Fowler was a young and upcoming writer keen on writing about espionage.

(b) Where did the light come on?

The light came on in Ausable's room in the hotel where Fowler had accompanied him.

(c) What was Fowler's first authentic thrill?

Fowler's first authentic thrill was to see a man in Ausable's room with a pistol pointed towards him and Ausable.

- (d) **Who was the man who stood halfway across the room? Why did he hold a pistol in his hand?**

Max, another secret agent belonging to Ausable's rival group stood halfway across the room. He held a pistol in his hand to control any unwanted moves that Ausable could make.

(III)

"This is the second time in a month that somebody has got into my room through that nuisance of a balcony!"

- (a) **Who speaks these words to whom and when?**

Ausable speaks these words to Max when he finds him inside his room in spite of the locked door.

- (b) **Why is the speaker feeling upset here?**

Ausable is feeling upset because he is expecting the arrival of some secret papers and an intruder is there to thwart his plan.

- (c) **Why is the balcony a 'nuisance' for the speaker?**

Ausable claims that the balcony is a 'nuisance' because it has been used twice to intrude into his room.

- (d) **Was the balcony really a 'nuisance'?**

No, the balcony was not a nuisance since it was non-existent. In fact Ausable had concocted the story about the balcony as part of his plan to eliminate Max.

(IV)

"I did not know about the balcony. It might have saved me some trouble had I known."

- (a) **Who speaks these lines and to whom?**

Max, the secret agent, who sneaks in Ausable's room at midnight, speaks these lines to his opponent, Ausable.

(b) Why does the speaker say that he did not know about the balcony?

Max says that he did not know about the balcony because he had not used it to get into Ausable's room.

(c) Which balcony is the point of discussion over here?

The imaginary balcony concocted by Ausable is the point of discussion over here. According to him, this balcony belonged to the next apartment and extended under his room's window.

(d) Why does the speaker say that if he had known about the balcony, it would have saved him trouble?

Had Max known about the balcony, he would have been saved from the trouble of arranging a passkey to Ausable's room.

(V)

"If I do not answer the door, they will enter anyway. The door is unlocked. And they will not hesitate to shoot."

(a) Who is telling whom that the door needs to be answered?

Ausable is telling the midnight intruder Max that the door needs to be answered.

(b) Who are 'they' at the door?

According to Ausable, 'they' at the door are the police whom he had informed to be ready in case of emergency.

(c) Who is actually at the door?

Henry, the waiter, who had come to deliver Ausable's order, is actually at the door.

(d) Why wouldn't 'they' hesitate to shoot?

As per Ausable, the police wouldn't hesitate to shoot because he had already sounded them about the expected danger to him due to the missile document that was to reach him that night.

(VI)

Max's face was black with anger as he backed swiftly towards the window. He swung a leg over the sill. "Send them away!" he warned.

(a) Why is Max angry?

Max is angry because his plan to take away the missile papers from Ausable at gunpoint is disturbed by the police knocking at the door of Ausable's room.

(b) Why did Max go to the window sill?

Max went to the window sill to jump off to the balcony and wait there till the police left.

(c) Who are 'them' here? Why does Max want them sent away?

'Them' are the police at the door. Max wants them to be sent away because he intends to snatch the missile papers from Ausable.

(d) What happens to Max soon after he gives the warning?

Soon after giving the warning, Max jumps off to his death since the balcony on which he intends to wait till the departure of the police is non-existent.

(VII)

Keeping his body twisted so that his gun still covered the fat man and his guest, the man at the window grasped the frame with his free hand to support himself.

(a) Who is the man with the gun? On whom does he point his gun?

Max is the man with the gun and he points it towards Ausable and Fowler.

(b) Why does the man with the gun grasp the window frame?

Max grasps the window frame to maintain balance as he was hanging between the window-sill and the non-existent balcony.

(c) What does the man do next? Why?

Next, Max swings over the window sill to get out of the view of the 'police' that he thought was about to enter the room.

(d) What happens to the man with the gun?

Max jumps off to the non-existent balcony and meets his end by falling from the sixth floor.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 - 40 words each)

Q1. Who is Ausable? How is he different from other secret agents?

Or

Why does Ausable not fit the description of a secret agent?

Ausable is a secret agent who is supposed to be dealing in espionage and danger. Unlike other secret agents, who are smart and agile, he is a sloppy fat man who speaks French and German with an American accent and lives in a nondescript hotel in Paris.

Q2. Where does Ausable hail from? What is peculiar about his accent?

Ausable originally belongs to Boston, U.S.A. He speaks with an American accent which is peculiar because he had come to Paris about twenty years ago and made it his permanent headquarter.

Q3. Who is Fowler? Why was he disappointed to see Ausable?

Or

Why does Fowler say that Ausable does not fit into "any description of a secret agent"?

Fowler is a young writer who has romantic views about secret agents. The fat and sloppy Ausable does not fit his description of a secret agent because according to Fowler secret agents are tall, smart, agile, dashing and alert people who are surrounded by mysterious darkness, pistols and drugs in the wine.

- Q4. Why does Ausable say that Fowler has been bored and disillusioned?** Or

**What makes Ausable comment to Fowler "You are disappointed"?
What does this tell you about Ausable?**

Ausable says that Fowler has been bored and disillusioned because Ausable is very observant and can interpret the state of mind of a person through his behaviour. He knows that his young and inexperienced guest is disappointed because he has unrealistic views about secret agents.

- Q5. What makes Fowler think that Ausable's room is not suitable for a secret agent of his fame?** Or

Where does Ausable stay in Paris? Why was it an unsuitable place for a secret agent, according to Fowler?

Ausable stays in a small and unimpressive room on the sixth floor of a gloomy French hotel. Fowler does not find this to be a suitable place because he expects a secret agent of Ausable's fame to live in an elegant place in a sprawling room.

- Q6. Why does Ausable say, "In that thought is drama, is there not?"** Or

How does Ausable try to cheer up Fowler?

Ausable senses Fowler's disappointment and shares with him the information regarding the secret and significant papers expected that night. He does so to cheer up the young writer and assure him that he will soon experience the thrill of a drama as anticipated.

- Q7. What is Fowler's 'first authentic thrill of the day'?** Or

What happens when Ausable switches on the light of his room?

Fowler has his 'first authentic thrill of the day' when Ausable switches on the light of his room. As the light comes on, they

both see a man standing halfway across the room with a small automatic pistol pointed at them.

- Q8. Does Ausable know his midnight visitor? Why does he blink a few times on seeing him in his room?**

Or

Do you think Max and Ausable knew each other? If so, why?

Or

Ausable and Max belong to the same profession. Do you think they are members of the same organisation? If not, why?

Ausable knows his midnight visitor because he addresses him as Max and tells Max that he had thought him to be in Berlin. Max too knows where Ausable lives and when he is expecting the important missile papers. Ausable blinks a few times on seeing Max because this unexpected visit is made by his rival.

- Q9. Who is Max? What makes him menacing?**

Max is a secret agent like Ausable but belongs to a rival organisation. He is not very tall and his features suggest that he is 'crafty' and fox-like. However, he is resourceful as he manages to procure the passkey to Ausable's room and dig out information about the arrival of important papers. The only menacing thing about him is the pistol that he points at Ausable and Fowler.

- Q10. What is the bone of contention between the two secret agents?**

Why?

Or

Why had Max come to Ausable?

Or

Someone is expected to bring some valuable document to Ausable's room. How is it important? How do you think Max comes to know about it?

The vital report on the new missiles that Ausable is going to receive that night is the bone of contention between the two

secret agents. The report is important because it is capable of changing the course of history. Max, being a secret agent, keeps a track of his opponent and comes to grab this report.

Q11. Why does Ausable sit down on an armchair even while Max has his pistol aimed at him?

Ausable is a cool-headed secret agent who is not afraid to see Max with his pistol aimed at him. He sits down on an armchair to give Max an impression that his visit is not worrisome.

Q12. How does Max get into Ausable's room? How does Ausable say Max got in?

Max enters Ausable's room in the latter's absence with the help of a passkey which he manages to get with great difficulty.

However, Ausable 'conjectures' that Max must have managed to enter through the balcony of the adjacent apartment that extended below his window.

Q13. What does Ausable tell Max about the 'balcony'?

Or

What details does Ausable give Max about the balcony?

Ausable tells Max that the balcony belonged to the next apartment. His room used to be part of a large unit and the next room used to be a living room. So, the balcony now extends under his window which is a nuisance for his security.

Q14. "I'm going to raise the devil with the management this time, and you can bet on it." Why does Ausable say so?

Ausable says so because he finds that Max has intruded into his room. He tells Max that the extended balcony of the next apartment was used a month before to sneak into his room. The hotel management had promised to block it off but Max's intrusion indicates that the hotel staff had not done its duty.

Q15. At what time did Max expect the missile report to reach Ausable? Was he right?

Max expected the missile report to reach half an hour after midnight. He was certainly right because when Max tells Fowler to wait for half an hour, Ausable teasingly corrects him to wait for thirty-one minutes, till 12:30.

Q16. What does Ausable tell Max about the knocking at the door?

Or

What story does Ausable frame about the police?

Ausable frames a story that the knocking at the door was by the police. He tells Max that keeping in view the importance of the missile papers, he had asked the police to check on him as a little extra precaution.

Q17. Who actually knocked at the door? How did Ausable take advantage of the knocking?

Henry, the waiter at the French hotel where Ausable stayed, actually knocked at the door as he had come to deliver the drink-order placed by the secret agent. Ausable took advantage of this timely knocking by telling Max that the police are at the door and thus made him nervous.

Q18. What was the effect of the repeated knocking at the door on Max?

Or

How does timely knocking at the door save Ausable and Fowler?

Repeated knocking at the door makes Max nervous and he ends up taking a hasty decision that costs him his life. On the other hand, this timely knocking saves Ausable and Fowler who would have otherwise been shot dead by Max.

Q19. How does Max meet his end?

Or

Max screams 'shrilly' just once. Why?

Anxious by the repeated knocking, Max loosens his grip on the window frame and moments later jumps on to the non-existent balcony. This sudden shift does not give him any time to correct his wrong action and he manages to scream 'shrilly' just once before falling sharply to his death.

Q20. Who is the 'midnight visitor'? What is the purpose of his visit?

The 'midnight visitor' is Max, a secret agent like Ausable but from a rival organisation. The purpose of his visit is to grab the papers on missiles expected to reach Ausable by 12:30 on that night.

Q21. Do you think Max is outsmarted by Ausable? Give reasons for your answer.

Max is certainly outsmarted by Ausable because he wins the situation from a pistol-wielding man by way of quick-thinking. He uses his presence of mind and concocts the story about the balcony and the arrival of the police to conveniently get rid of his opponent.

Q22. How do Fowler, Ausable and Max react when there is a knock at the door?

On hearing the knock at the door Fowler jumps with surprise, Ausable remains calm and just smiles whereas Max gets nervous because Ausable tells him that it is the police. Max's face also turns black with anger because the arrival of police threatened to jeopardise his plan to get the missile papers.

Q23. How does Ausable manage to save two lives?

Ausable manages to save Fowler's as well as his own life by making up the story about a balcony under the window of his hotel room and by pretending that the knocking at his door was being done by the police. Both these tricks make Max nervous and he takes a wrong decision to jump on to the non-existent balcony.

Q24. At the end of the story, Ausable tells Fowler that Max will never come back? Why does he say so?

Once Ausable succeeds in making Max jump out of the window, he knows that Max will never come back as he has suffered a fall from the sixth floor and has certainly met his end. So he tells Fowler that Max will never come back.

Q25. Whom do you consider to be the midnight visitor? Give reason for your answer.

Max is certainly the midnight visitor because he 'visits' Ausable in the latter's room around midnight. Fowler has been with Ausable since the evening of that fateful night and Henry had been 'called' by Ausable. The only visitor at midnight was Max.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

Q1. Why does the fiction writer Fowler want to meet Ausable, a secret agent? What is his initial reaction on meeting him?

Fowler, a young and romantic fiction writer, perhaps wants to write about espionage. Thus he seeks an appointment with Ausable known to be a sharp-witted and intelligent secret agent, quite adept in his profession. Fowler has romantic illusions about spies. He believes them to be smart and gun-cracking individuals receiving secret messages from dark-eyed beauties. However, on seeing Ausable, he is disappointed because Ausable is sloppy and fat. In addition, all through their stay in the French music hall, Ausable receives just one prosaic telephone call. Fowler's illusion about the grand lifestyle of spies is shattered further when Ausable leads him to his room on the sixth floor of a 'gloomy French hotel'. Thus, his initial

meeting with Ausable is contrary to expectations and thoroughly disappoints Fowler.

- Q2. Fowler feels disappointed and bored, sitting with Ausable in the French music hall. But "his first authentic thrill of the day" awaits him in Ausable's room. Discuss.**

Having spent a dull and disappointing evening in a French music hall with an uninteresting, obese and boring Ausable, devoid of all romance, Fowler is thoroughly disillusioned. Absence of gun-cracking and stealthily passing of secret messages to Ausable by "dark-eyed beauties" at the music hall further adds to his frustration. The nondescript, gloomy French hotel and its sixth floor room, where Ausable lives, dejects him all the more. Fowler finds all his romantic illusions about spies and espionage completely shattered and he is completely bored. However, the moment Ausable opens the door of his room and switches on the light, Fowler's boredom and disappointment turn into a rude shock when he finds a man standing in the middle of the room pointing a small automatic pistol at them. Thus Fowler's "first authentic thrill of the day" awaits him in Ausable's room.

- Q3. Who is Max? How and why does he enter Ausable's room? Does he succeed in his mission? If not, why?**

Like Ausable, Max is a spy. He belongs to a rival organisation. He gets hold of the information that Ausable is going to receive an important report on missiles that can "affect the course of history." He plans to grab the report for his organization and he enters Ausable's room in his absence, with the help of a passkey. He patiently awaits Ausable's return which happens at midnight in the company of Fowler, a young and romantic writer. His presence shocks Ausable as he had expected Max to

be in Berlin at that time. Max tells Ausable about the purpose of his visit. However, he fails to keep this winning situation in his hands for long. Ausable succeeds in building situational pressure on Max under which he takes the wrong decision of jumping on to the non-existent balcony eventually meeting his death.

Q4. One needs intelligence more than physical strength in a difficult situation. How does the author prove it in the story "The Midnight Visitor"?

Physical strength may become effective occasionally but by and large, in the battle between brain and brawn, it is the brain that comes out as a winner. The most critical situations can be resolved with the help of intelligence, quick-wit and cool head. "The Midnight Visitor" is a clear-cut proof of Ausable's intelligence bringing the pistol-wielding Max, down on the mat. Had Ausable faltered and not planned intelligently and quickly, Max would have taken away the vital report on 'missiles' with the help of the added advantage of his pistol. However, the two timely master-strokes of Ausable – the lie about the presence of a balcony under his window and the claim that the knocking at his door was being done by the police – upset Max's plan. He becomes nervous, takes a wrong decision in haste and meets his end after falling off the sixth floor thereby leaving the more intelligent Ausable as the winner.

Q5. How does Ausable turn Fowler's initial disappointment into a thrilling experience in the end?

Young and romantic Fowler meets Ausable the spy, to get material for his write-up on espionage. However, Ausable's prosaic style of functioning disappoints him and shatters his illusions about spying. But, his entry into Ausable's room gives him his first authentic thrill of the day, which is followed by a

series of thrills. The gun-toting man in the room and Ausable's addressing him by name adds to the mystery. From then on everything that transpires is breathtaking. Ausable's blaming the balcony for Max's entry into the room and the latter's denial further grips Fowler. The sudden knocking and Ausable's claim that it is the police adds to the excitement. The fall of Max from the sixth floor confounds the situation even further. Thus Fowler's initial disappointment turns into mind-blowing thrill in the end.

- Q6. "Do not judge a book by its cover" or "Appearances are often deceptive". Discuss the relevance of these two sayings with reference to the story "The Midnight Visitor."**

Generally people judge others on the basis of their outward appearance. Opinions formed in this manner are not always right. This is true particularly with regard to the story "The Midnight Visitor".

Fowler feels disappointed on meeting Ausable because he finds him to be unlike the secret agents about whom he had gathered knowledge via films or stories. Finding a fat and sloppy man in a dull hotel in place of an agile figure surrounded by mystery, crack of pistols, drugs in wine and dark-eyed beauties, he concludes that Ausable is not the exciting spy he is looking for.

However, Fowler later discovers that Ausable's appearance was certainly deceptive. The manner in which he outsmarts Max and gets rid of him without much trouble proves that although his 'cover' is not attractive, 'the book' inside is certainly worth studying in detail. Ausable possesses the real qualities that a secret agent should have. He may not be charming to look at, but he is an intelligent and quick-witted agent, capable of handling tricky situations in a calm manner.

- Q7. Max has the upper hand in the beginning, but Ausable succeeds in turning the tables on him. Discuss. Or**

Though Max is very shrewd and cunning, yet he is no match to Ausable. Elaborate. Or

Max is no match to Ausable as a secret agent. Justify giving examples from the text.

Ausable receives a jolt when he enters his room and sees Max, a rival secret agent, menacingly flaunting a pistol at him. Max wants to take the coveted report on missiles by force. He uses the pistol as an advantage to warn Ausable and deter him from making any counter moves.

However, Ausable composes himself and shows great presence of mind by concocting the story about the presence of a balcony under the window of his room. He plans to eliminate Max in such a way that soon tables are turned and Max seems to be no match to him. Ausable uses the knocking at his door by the waiter Henry to generate panic in Max. A nervous Max believes that it is the police and takes a hasty decision jumping on to the non-existent balcony and meeting his death. Thus, Ausable succeeds in outsmarting the pistol-wielding Max through his superior intelligence.

- Q8. What does your reading of the story "The Midnight Visitor" tell you about Ausable as a secret agent? Or**

The sloppy, obese and lethargic Ausable is in reality a very efficient secret agent. Elaborate.

Or

Write in your own words a character sketch of Ausable.

Or

Ausable is not only a secret agent but a psychologist also, who can read others' minds correctly. Give reasons to prove it.

Ausable is a psychologist, adept at mind reading. He correctly reads Fowler's mind and comes to the conclusion that Fowler's opinion about secret agents is influenced by the romantic images projected in media. He tells him too that he must be disappointed after having met a fat and sloppy secret agent like him.

However, Ausable's abilities as a secret agent cannot be questioned. His unimpressive physical appearance with an obese and stodgy body, his Americanized accent while speaking French and German, his small and unnoticeable place of living - all fail to hold back his competence.

He is capable of regaining his calm immediately after an unexpected event. The presence of Max in his room startles him but he quickly normalizes again. On learning about the intentions of Max, he quickly weaves an intelligent plan and gets rid of him without much difficulty. His ability to think quickly and to concoct details to convince Max about the balcony and the presence of police at the door prove that his physical appearance too is perhaps his style of misleading people about his abilities.

In short, Ausable is an alert, agile, cool-headed and intelligent agent who shows a great presence of mind.

- Q9. How does Ausable manage to make Max believe that there is a balcony attached to his room? Look back at the detailed description of it. What makes it a convincing story? (Textual)**

Ausable gives the impression of being calm and composed and talks to Max in a relaxed manner although he initially blinks a few times with surprise on seeing Max in his room. He sits coolly on the armchair even when Max has his pistol pointed towards him. He tells him in a relaxed and convincing tone the story about the balcony under his window.

Ausable gives minutest details regarding the balcony in an unperturbed manner. He tells Max that the balcony belonged to the next apartment and his room used to be part of a large unit. The next room used to be the living room which had the balcony that now extended under his window. It could be got onto from the empty room two doors down. Ausable claims that this was done by someone the previous month. Unruffled, he goes on to add that he would give hell to the management for this lapse. Such details convince even a smart spy like Max and he believes that there is a balcony attached to Ausable's room.

Q10. Looking back at the story, when do you think Ausable thought up his plan for getting rid of Max? Do you think he had worked out his plan in detail right from the beginning or did Ausable make up a plan taking advantage of events as they happened? (Textual)

Ausable had no idea about the presence of Max in his room till he saw him. We know this because he initially blinks a few times on seeing Max and then tells him that he had thought him to be in Berlin at that time. So he does not have any reason to make plans in advance. However, Ausable is an intelligent secret agent who knows how to use situations to his advantage. So, he pretends that he expected such an intrusion and concocts the story about the balcony and a man having entered his room earlier through it. He knows that the waiter would be arriving soon with his drink-order and he creates this environment of panic for Max before the order is delivered. He plans in advance how he would use the knocking at the door and pressurize Max to act in haste and commit a folly. Thus, he takes advantage of the situation and gets rid of Max.

Q11. In this story, Ausable shows great 'presence of mind', or the ability to think quickly and calmly and wisely, in a situation of

danger and surprise. Give examples from your own experience, or narrate a story, which shows someone's presence of mind.

(Textual)

On Saturday night, my friend Bala Raju, a manager in a multinational company, was sleeping. He was alone as the other members of his family had gone to Hyderabad to attend a wedding. A couple of thieves broke into his bungalow at the dead of night. They overpowered him and tried to gag him. He was ruffled and felt stupefied for a short while. Soon, he recovered his 'presence of mind' and had a brain wave. He wriggled out of the thieves' grip and started shouting names to give the intruders an impression that he was calling for help and there were about five to six more people in the bungalow at that time. This upset the thieves and they made a hasty retreat lest they be caught and handed over to the police. Thus, my friend's ability to remain calm and think quickly in a critical situation saved him and his family from being robbed.

□□□

4. A Question of Trust

(Victor Canning)

ABOUT THE STORY

Introduction

The story "A Question of Trust" is an account of two thieves who happen to be together in the same place for stealing. One of them is an occasional thief driven by his urge to collect rare and expensive books while the other is a scheming crook. This crook is a lady who deceives the other thief and tricks him into opening a safe without his gloves. She smartly gets the entire loot leaving him to rot in jail. Thus, she belies his faith in the adage 'honour among thieves' and proves that a thief's sole aim is to steal.

Summary

Horace Danby, an unmarried man of fifty, has a reasonably well-established business of lock-making and is able to afford two helpers and a housekeeper. He usually keeps good health but gets attacks of hay fever in summers. He is considered to be a respectable and good citizen but is not completely honest. Some fifteen years ago he had undergone a sentence and had served a term in a prison library.

Danby has a weakness for collecting rare and expensive books – a hobby he cannot afford to pursue with his limited resources. So, he indulges in a meticulously planned robbery once every year in order to procure money to buy books. He gathers enough money to last him for one year and uses it to buy books secretly through an agent.

The action of the story takes place in the month of July when Horace plans to break open the safe of a house at Shotover Grange. He carefully studies his target and finds out that the family is on a holiday in London for a month, and two servants look after their place in their absence. One particular afternoon, the servants are away to

watch a movie and are not likely to return before four hours. Horace Danby decides to break open the safe during this time.

He expects to find jewellery worth fifteen thousand pounds in the safe. He thinks that if he sells the different pieces of jewellery one by one, he would earn sufficient money. Then, he would be able to buy the three books that he cherishes.

Horace had noticed the housekeeper hanging the key by the kitchen door on a hook outside. He is always careful about not leaving behind any fingerprints, so he wears his gloves and takes the key to open the door of the house. He knows that the safe is in the drawing room behind a painting, as he has read about the details of the house published in a magazine. As he enters the drawing room, the flowers arranged in a bowl tickle his nose and he sneezes. He controls himself, arranges his tools systematically and then proceeds to the hall and cuts the burglar-alarm. On returning to the drawing room, he sneezes again. This time loudly. He realises that he is allergic to the flowers kept there and so covers his face with a handkerchief. Just then he hears a female voice from the doorway asking him, if he is suffering from cold or hay fever. As a reflex, Horace answers 'hay fever' and sneezes again. The female voice then advises a cure and warns that sneezing is not good for his profession.

The voice is kind but firm. Horace looks up and finds a young and pretty woman dressed in red at the doorway. Sherry, the house dog, is rubbing lovingly against her. She walks down to the fireplace and orders Sherry to sit. She tells a surprised Horace that her long absence could be easily known to anyone but thankfully she has returned in time to catch this burglary. The woman's kind manner of speech gives some hope to Horace and he admits that he did not expect anyone from the family to be home at that time. Politely but determinedly, the lady tells him that she will foil his attempt to run away by informing

the police. Horace tries to persuade her to let him go but she rejects all his proposals. She refuses to let him go saying that society should be protected from men like him.

Horace then pleads that he is not a threat to society and that he steals only for a very good reason. She laughs at this and he persuades her to let him go promising never to repeat his actions. However, when she says that she has always liked the wrong kind of people, it puts Horace at ease.

The smart lady casually picks up a silver box from the table and takes out a cigarette. Horace, eager to please her, takes off his gloves and gives her his lighter and again pleads with her to let him go. She promises to do so, on the condition that he would open the safe for her, as she needs to wear the jewels kept in it for a party in the evening. She reveals that she has forgotten the numbers to open the safe.

Horace Danby willingly agrees but tells the lady that he would have to break the safe to take out the jewellery. She assures him that her husband would not return before a month and she would have the safe mended by that time. Within an hour, Horace opens the safe but forgets to wear his gloves while doing so. He gives the lady her jewels and merrily walks out of the house.

For two days, Horace keeps the promise made to the lady of not carrying out any robbery. However, on the third day's morning he is once again overpowered by his desire to buy books and thinks of opening another safe. But, he never gets a chance to do so as he is nabbed by the police for the robbery at Shotover Grange. They had found his fingerprints all over the room. No one believed him when he told them that the wife of the owner had asked him to open the safe. The gray-haired, sharp-tongued lady, who is the actual mistress of the house, ridicules his story as nonsense.

Danby had actually been outsmarted by the young lady-thief and he

is now undergoing a sentence as the assistant librarian in prison. No wonder, he feels irritated when anyone talks about 'honour among thieves'.

TITLE

The vital issue in the story is whether there is actually any trust among thieves and criminals. The way the story ends and the manner in which the events turn, the reader is not left with any doubt that the author is highly critical of the lady-thief's betrayal of Horace's trust. Horace had been carrying on his annual stealing with success till he trusts a woman and gets trapped. Had he not trusted the lady's story and had explored the veracity of her claim to have forgotten the numbers to open the safe, he could have gone scot-free one more time. Horace trusted the lady and opened the safe without wearing his gloves. This error cost him dearly and the police traced him with the help of his fingerprints that they found all over the place of crime. In this sense, the title "A Question of Trust" stands fully justified.

THEME

The story is based on the theme that crime never pays. If circumstances come to the rescue of a criminal, it does not guarantee his innocence forever. Horace indulges in theft every year without getting caught and becomes overconfident about his safety. Eventually, he gets trapped by one of his own kind and languishes in jail as a proven criminal.

Another theme is that no crime is justifiable. Horace begins to believe that he is not a threat to society and the cause behind his crime is good. Every act that causes harm to another person is a crime. Horace should have saved money to buy books. Stealing from other people's safe is indeed a crime for which he rightly gets punished. The lady in red too is a criminal and sooner or later she too will get caught.

MESSAGE

Through the story "A Question of Trust," the author wants to convey the message that 'honour' is a value of the righteous. Any person who indulges in stealing cannot respect this value. An adage like "honour among thieves" is the figment of imagination created by fiction and cinema. Horace learns this bitter reality after getting back-stabbed by another thief whom he presumes would uphold the 'honour'. A thief is a crook by all standards and must not be trusted. Stealing is a crime and all those who indulge in it are devoid of the values that govern a civil society. Therefore, the story reinforces the message that there is no honour among thieves.

CHARACTERS

Horace Danby

Horace Danby is a middle-aged unmarried man of about fifty. He runs a reasonably well-established business of lock-making. Barring attacks of hay fever during summer months, he is hale and hearty. He has an unusual hobby of collecting rare and expensive books, which he finds difficult to buy out of his honest income. In order to satisfy his desire for books, he steals once every year. Thus, though a respectable man, he is not completely honest.

Horace is a meticulous planner and goes through the minutest details before executing the robbery. That is why he has been successful in most of his robbing exploits. However, at Shotover Grange robbery, despite perfect planning, he gets trapped because he forgets to wear gloves as a precaution. He trusts an unknown woman and believes every word that she tells him. He tries to please her by opening the safe for her. As a result, he not only gets caught by the police but also loses faith in the concept of 'honour among thieves'.

The Lady in Red

The lady in red is a young, pretty woman. She is a thief by profession

but projects herself as the mistress of the house at Shotover Grange. She is very confident and bold. She shows an uncanny presence of mind. She is so shrewd and crafty that she easily convinces Horace Danby that the jewellery inside the safe belongs to her and that she has forgotten the numbers to open the safe. She plays this role with perfection and selects appropriate words that suit the tricky situation in which she meets Horace. Her statement that she "came back just in time" assures Horace about her identity. The manner in which she befriends the dog, Sherry, is commendable and speaks a lot about her calculated planning.

However, she is an unscrupulous thief and decamps with the entire jewellery leaving Horace to bear the entire brunt of the action.

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EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

Each year he planned carefully just what he would do, stole enough to last for twelve months, and secretly bought the books he loved through an agent.

- (a) Who is 'he' in these lines?

Here 'he' is Horace Danby.

- (b) What did 'he' carefully plan each year?

Each year, Horace carefully planned to rob a safe.

- (c) What kind of books did 'he' love?

Horace loved rare and expensive books.

- (d) Why did 'he' buy the books secretly?

Horace bought the books secretly because he bought them with stolen money.

(II)

He had seen the housekeeper hang the key to the kitchen door on a hook outside. He put on a pair of gloves, took the key, and opened the door.

- (a) Who is being talked about over here?

Horace, the thief, is being talked about here.

- (b) Whose housekeeper had he/she seen?

Horace had seen the housekeeper of the house at Shotover Grange.

- (c) Why did he/she put on gloves?

Horace put on gloves because he was very cautious not to leave behind any fingerprints at the crime-scene.

- (d) Where did he/she go after opening the door?

Horace went inside the drawing room of the house after opening the door.

(III)

A magazine article had described this house, giving a plan of all the rooms and a picture of this room. The writer had even mentioned that the painting hid the safe!

(a) Which 'house' is being referred to over here?

The house at Shotover Grange, that Horace intended to rob, is being referred to over here.

(b) Why did the magazine give details of the house?

The magazine gave details of the house as the house belonged to a rich man and he considered it a matter of pride to flaunt his affluence through the magazine article.

(c) How was the information about the safe important for Horace?

This information was important because Horace now knew the location of the safe, making it simpler for him to rob it.

(d) What did Horace think after looking at the painting?

After looking at the painting, Horace got the idea that he could collect paintings instead of books.

(IV)

"I think you'd better see the doctor, if you're serious about your work. I heard you from the top of the house just now."

(a) Identify the speaker of this conversation. Whom is she/he talking to?

The speaker is the lady in red whom Horace meets in the house at Shotover Grange. She is talking to Horace.

(b) Why is the speaker suggesting the listener to see the doctor?

The lady is suggesting Horace to see the doctor because he is sneezing due to an attack of hay fever.

(c) What 'work' is the speaker talking about?

The lady is talking about Horace's work as a thief.

(d) Why was the speaker in the top of the house?

The lady was in the top of the house as she too was there to steal and must have been searching upstairs for something.

(V)

"Down, Sherry," she said. "Anyone would think I'd been away for a month!" She smiled at Horace, and went on, "However, I came back just in time, though I didn't expect to meet a burglar."

(a) Who is Sherry?

Sherry is the house dog of Shotover Grange.

(b) Who is 'she' and why did 'she' smile at Horace?

'She' is the lady in red and she smiled at Horace to trap him into believing that it was her house.

(c) What does 'she' mean by "I came back just in time..."?

She means that she was relieved to have returned in time to save the burglary attempt by Horace.

(d) Why didn't 'she' expect to meet a burglar?

She did not expect to meet a burglar because she was actually a thief and had broken into the house believing that it was vacant.

(VI)

The voice was suddenly sharp. "Why should I? You are going to rob me. If I let you go, you'll only rob someone else. Society must be protected from men like you."

(a) Whose 'voice' was sharp?

The sudden sharp voice was of the lady thief who was already in the house where Horace had entered to steal money.

(b) To whom was the speaker talking?

The lady in red was talking to Horace.

(c) Why was the voice of the speaker 'sharp'?

The voice of the lady in red was sharp because she wanted to scare Horace for his attempt to rob her.

(d) What did the speaker mean by 'men like you'?

The lady in red meant that thieves like Horace were a threat to the society.

(VII)

"Before we left for London, I promised my husband to take my jewels to our bank; but I left them here in the safe."

(a) Who is the speaker and whom is she/he talking to?

The speaker here is the pretty and young woman dressed in red whom Horace meets at the Shotover Grange robbery and she is talking to Horace.

(b) Where had the speaker left her jewels?

The woman had left her jewels in the safe of her house at Shotover Grange.

(c) Why had the speaker left her jewels there?

The lady in red claimed that she had left her jewels in the safe because she wanted to wear them to a party that night.

(d) Why does the speaker tell the listener about her jewels?

The lady in red tells Horace about the jewels because she wants to convince him that the jewels belong to her.

(VIII)

On the morning of the third day, however, he thought of the books he wanted and he knew he would have to look for another safe.

(a) Who is 'he' in these lines?

Here, 'he' is Horace Danby.

(b) Which books did he think of on the morning of the third day?

On the morning of the third day, he thought of the three very interesting books coming up for sale in the autumn.

(c) Why did he wait till the third day?

Horace waited till the third day because for two days he was keeping his promise of not stealing that he had made to the lady in red.

(d) Did he get a chance to look for another safe? Why/Why not?

No, Horace did not get a chance to look for another safe because the police caught him soon after for the jewel robbery at Shotover Grange.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 - 40 words each)

Q1. Who was Horace Danby? What did people think about him?

Horace Danby was a middle-aged unmarried man of about fifty. He ran a reasonably well-established business of lock-making. People considered him to be a good and respectable man but not all that honest.

Q2. What did Horace Danby like to collect? What did he do to fulfill his desire? Or

What was Horace Danby's passion? How did he sustain it?

Or

Why and how did Horace Danby rob safes?

Horace Danby liked to collect rare and expensive books. To fulfill his desire, he planned carefully and robbed a safe once every year to steal enough money that enabled him to buy books secretly through an agent.

Q3. Why did Horace Danby steal every year? Or

Why was Horace Danby compelled to commit robbery once every year?

Though Horace Danby was a reasonably successful businessman, yet he was compelled to commit robbery once every year

because he loved to own rare and expensive books which he could not afford to buy out of his modest business income.

Q4. Why did Horace Danby study the house at Shotover Grange?

Danby studied the house at Shotover Grange because he intended to rob the safe of this house. He was a meticulous planner and prepared the minutest detail before committing any theft. He never left behind even the slightest clue after the crime.

Q5. What are the precautions Horace Danby used to take before committing a robbery?

Before committing a robbery, Danby used to make a thorough survey about the rooms, electric wiring, paths and gardens of the building that was his target. He would also try to get information regarding the number of people in the house and their routine. In addition, he always put on gloves to avoid leaving behind any fingerprints.

Q6. What did Horace Danby expect from the robbery at Shotover Grange? How did he plan to spend it?

Or

What was the actual value of the jewellery in the house at Shotover Grange? How much did Horace expect from his loot?

Or

What did Horace Danby expect to make from the Shotover Grange robbery? What did he want to use the money for?

The actual value of the jewellery in the safe at Shotover Grange was about fifteen thousand pounds. However, Horace expected a gain of about five thousand pounds after selling each piece one by one. He planned to use this money to buy the three very interesting books that were coming up for sale in the autumn.

Q7. Why was Horace Danby confident of his success in the Shotover Grange safe robbery?

Or

Why was Horace Danby sure that he was going to succeed in that year's robbery at Shotover Grange?

Horace was sure of his success at Shotover Grange firstly because he believed that the house was vacant and secondly because he had read all details about the house, including the location of the safe, in a magazine.

Q8. How did Horace manage to tackle the house dog, Sherry?

Or

Why didn't the dog bark when Horace entered the kitchen?

The pet dog of the house did not bark because Horace addressed it by its name - Sherry. He also showed love to the dog. According to the author, these are sure ways of winning over a pet dog's confidence.

Q9. Why did the servants leave the house? Where was Horace hiding at that time?

The servants left the house as they had a plan to see a movie. At that time Horace was hiding behind the garden wall of the house.

Q10. Where did Horace find the key? How did he know about it?

Horace Danby found the key to the kitchen door hanging on a hook outside the door. He knew about it as he had personally seen the housekeeper leave the key there.

Q11. Where was the safe at the Shotover Grange? How did Horace Danby come to know about its location? *Or*

How did the article in a magazine help Horace plan the robbery at Shotover Grange?

The safe was in the drawing room, behind a rather poor painting. Horace Danby came to know about its location from an article in a magazine. This article contained a detailed description of the house with a plan of all the rooms and a

picture of the drawing room. The writer had also mentioned that the painting hid the safe.

Q12. Why didn't Horace Danby collect pictures?

Horace Danby did not collect pictures because he felt that pictures took up too much room. His small house was more suitable for storing books that required lesser space.

Q13. "The safe was not going to be hard to open." Why does the writer make this observation about Horace Danby?

The writer observes that the safe was not going to be hard to open for Horace Danby because locks and safes were his profession. The burglar alarm too was poorly built, so opening the safe was going to be easy for him.

Q14. Why did Horace think that the owners of Shotover Grange were foolish?

Horace considered the owners of Shotover Grange foolish because they had thoughtlessly given permission to a magazine to publish details about their house and its safe. This made them an easy target for burglars.

Q15. Why did Horace plan the robbery at Shotover Grange in spite of having 'a little tickle of hay fever' in his nose'?

Horace planned the robbery at Shotover Grange in spite of having 'a little tickle of hay fever' because he knew that the servants of that house had gone to see a movie and nobody could have interrupted him for four hours.

Q16. Why were the flowers in the room a hindrance for Horace? What did he do to shield himself from their ill effect? Or

What hindered Horace in his work? How?

Horace suffered from hay fever and started sneezing as he was allergic to the flowers kept in the room. This hindered his

opening of the safe. To shield himself from the ill effect of the flowers, he covered his nose with a handkerchief.

Q17. What advice did the young lady give Horace about his sneezing? Was she really concerned about his health?

The young lady advised Horace to find out the plant he was allergic to. She also suggested consulting a doctor about hay fever. However, her concern was not sincere. She was merely trying to distract Danby.

Q18. Where was the young lady when Horace Danby entered the house? When and where did he see her?

When Horace Danby entered the house, the young lady was at the top of the building. He saw her standing at the doorway after he had sneezed a second time.

Q19. How did the lady in red trap Horace?

The 'lady in red' trapped Horace by convincing him that she was the mistress of the house. She did so by talking to Horace in a commanding and authoritative tone. She also controlled the house dog, Sherry, which misled Horace into believing her lies.

Q20. What lies did the 'lady in red' tell Horace about the jewels?

The 'lady in red' told Horace that before leaving for London, she had promised her husband to take her jewels to their bank. But she had left them in the safe as she wanted to wear them at a party that night. However, she had forgotten the numbers to open the safe.

Q21. Why and how did the young lady convince Horace to break open the safe?

Or

What story did the lady concoct to convince Horace to break open the safe?

Posing to be the mistress of the house, the 'lady in red' told

Horace that she had promised her husband to take her jewels to their bank, but had actually left them in the safe as she wanted to wear them to a party that night. However she had forgotten the numbers to open the safe.

She convinced Horace to break the safe by assuring him that she would get it repaired before her husband's return, which was a month away.

Q22. Why did Horace remove his gloves? What was the result of this folly? Or

What did Horace do to please the lady after she took out a cigarette from the silver box?

Horace wanted to please the lady so that she would let him go. He removed his gloves and handed over his lighter so that she could light her cigarette. The result of this folly was that he left his fingerprints all over the place of crime leading to his arrest three days later.

Q23. Why did Horace Danby walk merrily out of the house after handing over the jewels to the lady?

Horace was convinced that the lady was the mistress of the house. So, after handing over the jewels to her, he felt relieved since she had allowed him to go without informing the police. He thus walked off merrily.

Q24. What promise did Horace make to the 'lady in red'? Did he stick to his promise?

Horace promised the lady that he shall never commit robbery again. However, he did not really stick to his promise as after two days itself he started thinking of committing another robbery.

Q25. When and how was Horace Danby nabbed by the police after the robbery at Shotover Grange?

Horace Danby was nabbed by noon on the third day after he had attempted robbery at Shotover Grange. The police got him through the fingerprints that he had negligently left behind all over the place of the crime.

Q26. Who was the wife of the owner of the house? Why did she refute the statement of Horace Danby?

The owner's wife was a sharp-tongued, sixty year old, grey-haired lady. She refuted Horace Danby's statement regarding handing over jewellery to her since she was not the person to whom Horace had handed over the loot.

Q27. When did Horace Danby realise that the 'lady in red' had befooled him? How did he feel then?

After meeting the grey-haired lady, who was the real mistress of the house, Horace realised that the 'lady in red' had befooled him and taken away the entire jewellery. He felt cheated, hurt, and angry at this breach of trust.

Q28. Who is the real culprit in the story? Why do you think so? (Textual)

The real culprit in the story is the 'lady in red,' who poses to be the mistress of the house. She is the real culprit because she not only tricks Horace into breaking open the safe and managing to decamp with the jewels but also breaks his trust.

Q29. Did you begin to suspect, before the end of the story, that the lady was not the person Horace Danby took her to be? If so, at what point did you realise this and how? (Textual)

The moment the young lady talks to Horace Danby, one starts wondering, why she is talking in such a friendly manner and is even advising him about his ailment. Otherwise, the spontaneous reaction of any person under such circumstances would have been to shout for help.

Q30. Do you think Horace Danby was unfairly punished, or did he deserve what he got? (Textual)

Horace Danby was not unfairly punished. He deserved to be punished for every robbery committed by him. It is a different matter that his masterly planning always saved him from the law. However, in this robbery, he was outsmarted and got arrested.

Q31. How was Horace different from other thieves?

Horace Danby was different from other thieves because he would steal only once a year. Besides, he earned his livelihood by running a reasonably good business of lock-making and not with the stolen money. He used the stolen money only to buy rare and expensive books.

Q32. What significance do you attach to the lady's statement "I have always liked the wrong kind of people"?

The 'lady in red' was a crook and had worked with a lot of other criminals. Moreover, she seemed to be fond of catching people like Horace on their wrong foot, and then exploited them to commit robberies on her behalf. This would get her the booty without getting caught. So, the wrong kind of people were right for her.

Q33. Comment upon the ending of the story "A Question of Trust".

The ending of the story is superb as it culminates the action in an anticlimax for the reader. In addition, it also brings home an important lesson for Horace that there is no concept of trust among thieves. This is hard-earned wisdom that he would remember for the rest of his life.

Q34. Why does Horace get very angry when anyone talks about 'honour among thieves'?

Honour among thieves makes Horace angry because he has

experienced the bitter truth that no one can be trusted. Every thief is a criminal who does not have any principles. There is no honour and no truth. The lady thief whom he trusted, betrayed him in the name of this 'honour'.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 - 150 words each)

- Q1. What are the subtle ways in which the lady manages to deceive Horace Danby into thinking she is the lady of the house? Why doesn't Horace suspect that something is wrong? (Textual)**

Or

How did the 'lady in red' manage to deceive Horace into thinking that she was the mistress of the house?

The confident manner in which the lady addresses Horace Danby is the first subtle way in which she deludes him. Her calm and composed way of talking to Horace also helps her to deceive the 'annual thief'. The manner in which she handles and commands the dog, Sherry, who rubs against her lovingly, is another ploy which assures Horace that she is the mistress of the house. When she tells him that, "society must be protected" from people like him, it further gives him the impression that she is a respectable lady. The young lady's coming to know that Horace is afraid of going to prison emboldens her even more. The authoritative manner in which she tells him that he has not been able to frighten her, once again sways Horace to believe that she is the mistress of the house. Her story about having forgotten the numbers to open the safe convinces him completely and he does not suspect that something is wrong.

- Q2. "Horace Danby was good and respectable – but not completely honest". Why do you think the description is apt for Horace? Why can't he be categorised as a typical thief? (Textual)**

There is no doubt that Horace Danby was a good and respectable citizen as he used to run a successful business of lock-making and did well enough to engage two helpers and a housekeeper. However, he cannot be considered completely honest as he indulged in stealing, even though only once in a year. His integrity merits suspicion as he had served a sentence in a prison library fifteen years ago. Hence his description as a man who is not completely honest is true. However, it will be wrong to consider him a typical thief because he would steal only from rich people and just once a year. He did not earn his livelihood out of it and took to stealing to be able to afford his costly hobby to collect rare and expensive books, which he could not have managed out of his modest income as a maker of locks.

- Q3. Horace Danby was a meticulous planner, but still he faltered. Where did he go wrong and why? (Textual)**

Or

How did Horace ensure that he was never caught for his robberies? What mistakes did he commit at the Shotover Grange robbery which had him nabbed by the police?

Horace Danby was a meticulous planner. This can be known from the fact that all through the long period of annual thieving he had never been caught. However, in the Shotover Grange robbery case, although his planning was foolproof, his plans got upset when he met a lady who was more than a match to him. He started faltering the moment he heard her confident voice and felt that he had been caught red-handed. This guilt put him on the defensive and he became absolutely nervous. His excessive

fear of the prison added to the confidence of the lady-thief and she started frightening him further. Another great blunder that he committed was to have removed his gloves while offering his lighter to the lady. He became so careless that he broke open the safe with bare hands thus leaving behind his fingerprints all over the room through which the police nabbed him.

- Q4. Do intentions justify actions? Would you, like Horace Danby, do something wrong if you thought your ends justified the means? Do you think that there are situations in which it is excusable to act less than honestly? (Textual)**

Or

Do ends justify means? Express your opinion on whether dishonest actions are excusable in certain situations. Why/Why not?

Intentions do not necessarily justify actions nor do ends justify means. A crime is a crime and that is the end of it. Horace Danby's intention of justifying his crime to buy rare books with his booty does not absolve him of the crime. However, in the last robbery, one must concede that he is more sinned against than sinning. He certainly broke open the safe but did not get anything other than imprisonment.

Horace's hobby to collect rare and expensive books is not wrong. It is the source, which he uses to fulfill his desire that is wrong. He should have bought whatever books he liked out of his honest earnings instead of indulging in occasional stealing.

No crime is justified as it violates the rights of others. Horace's stealing is a dishonest action even if it is done only once a year and with the motive to buy books. Every time that he steals, he actually infringes upon another person's right to safety and security. This is unpardonable and deserves punishment.

- Q5. Horace Danby lands himself into trouble because he does not know how to cut his coat according to the cloth. Discuss with reference to the story, "A Question of Trust".**

Horace Danby owns a reasonably well established business of lock-making. However, his hobby of collecting rare and expensive books is too costly for him to afford with his limited resources. Since he has not learnt the lesson of cutting 'his coat according to the cloth', he cannot resist the temptation of possessing books unaffordable and too costly for him. In order to satisfy his yearning for such out of reach books, he resorts to thieving once a year. He succeeds in his mission for quite a few years but this particular summer he meets a thief smarter than him. She lures him into breaking open a safe at Shotover Grange without his gloves. The smart lady-thief grabs all the loot and poor Horace has to languish in jail as his fingerprints are discovered by the police all over the place of crime. Therefore, Danby's overreaching his means lands him in trouble.

- Q6. Who is the 'lady in red'? How does she prove that she is smarter than Horace Danby?**

Or

Horace may have been a clever thief but the 'lady in red' is cleverer. Do you agree? Why/Why not?

The 'lady in red' is a thief and has come over to Shotover Grange to steal. She is quite intelligent and knows how to keep her cool in a tricky emergency. The presence of another thief in the house does not upset her. Instead, she conducts herself with authoritative confidence, misleading Horace into believing that she is the mistress of the house. Her picking up a cigarette is the smartest stroke. She induces Horace to make the mistake of removing his gloves before offering her his lighter. This eventually

traps the man as he mistakenly leaves behind fingerprints at the crime that help the police to nab him in three days.

The 'lady in red' thus proves that she is smarter and cleverer than Horace because he does not suspect her true identity even once. He trusts all her lies to such an extent that had he not seen the real mistress after his arrest, he would have never come to know that the lady was a thief like him.

Q7. How did Horace Danby plan and carry out robbery in a house at Shotover Grange? What trouble did he run into there?

Horace Danby watched closely the house at the Shotover Grange where he intended to commit robbery. He studied its rooms, its electric wiring, its paths and its garden. He also monitored the people coming in and going out of the house. He even gathered information about the interior of the house from a magazine that had published a plan of all the rooms and a picture of the drawing room along with the location of the safe behind a rather poor painting.

On the fateful day, Horace executed his plan when he got the opportunity to break-in the house while the servants were away for around four hours to see a movie. He easily picked up the key to the kitchen door from the hook outside where he had seen the housekeeper hanging it.

However, he ran into trouble inside the house as he met a thief who was smarter than him. This lady outwitted Horace and exploited his fear of arrest to make him nervous. She cleverly fabricated her image as the mistress of the house and the gullible Horace trusted her. He made the mistake of opening the safe for her without wearing his gloves, leaving behind fingerprints that ultimately landed him in jail.



5. Footprints Without Feet

(H. G. Wells)

ABOUT THE STORY

Introduction:

"Footprints Without Feet" is an excerpt from the novel "The Invisible Man" written by H. G. Wells. This episode unfolds the suspense behind the invisibility of Griffin, the scientist who misuses his ability to make himself invisible. The episode describes the misdeeds of Griffin and the numerous ways in which he causes troubles to others. It also describes the reaction of innocent people of Iping to the strange phenomenon of invisibility of a human being.

Summary:

Two boys were surprised to see fresh muddy impressions of a pair of feet. They were the imprints of a barefooted man in the middle of London. The boys followed the footprints but could not see the person who was leaving them behind. Still they kept following till the muddy impressions grew fainter and eventually disappeared. These astonished boys were actually following a scientist named Griffin who had made a series of experiments that had led to the invention of some drugs which could make a man's body invisible.

Griffin was a brilliant scientist but a lawless person. His landlord did not like him and wanted to get rid of him. To take revenge, Griffin set fire to the house, swallowed the rare medicine for invisibility and became transparent and solid like a sheet of glass. He then undressed himself because the medicine could not make his clothes invisible. Having done that, he rushed out of the house to escape being caught.

Griffin now was a wanderer without any clothes, belongings or money. Invisible and transparent, he was walking down the streets of London in the bitterly cold weather of mid-January.

In order to escape the chill, he walked into a big London store. After the store was closed in the evening, he clothed himself fully by breaking open the boxes and wrappers and taking all that he liked. He then had a hearty meal followed by sweets and wine that he stole from the grocery. After this, he dozed off to sleep on a heap of quilts.

He got up late in the morning after the assistants' arrival in the store. On seeing the employees, Griffin rushed out and removed all his clothes to escape successfully under the cover of invisibility. However, without clothes he was again exposed to the biting winter cold. He rushed down to the Drury Lane, the hub of London's theatrical world, to get some clothes from a theatrical company that would cover up his face. He entered a shop, went upstairs and soon came back with a bandaged face and forehead. He wore glasses, whiskers, and a false nose to give his invisible face a shape. He also wore a large brimmed hat to cover his head. In order to get money, he attacked a shopkeeper from behind and made good his escape after robbing all his money.

Griffin wanted to avoid the London crowd, so he boarded a train to a village called Iping. He went to an inn and rented two rooms. Soon, his strange and uncommon appearance made him the talk of villagers. Mrs Hall, the landlady of the inn, tried to be friendly with Griffin but he brushed her aside by telling her that he wanted to be alone as he had a lot of work to do. He also told her that he had recently suffered an accident and did not want to be disturbed.

The lady did not bother much about her strange guest after that, as he had paid her money in advance. She left him alone believing that he was a strange fellow with a vicious temper. However, very soon, Griffin ran out of the money that he had stolen in London but extended his stay by telling Mrs Hall that he was expecting a cheque anytime.

One day, very early in the morning, the clergyman of the village and

his wife heard some noise and chink of money coming from their study. Arming himself with a rod, the clergyman crept downstairs and ordered the intruder to surrender. However, to his surprise, he found the room empty. The clergyman and wife both searched everywhere but did not find anyone in the room. Surprisingly, their desk had been opened and there was no money in it.

Meanwhile, the owners of the inn, who were early risers, were surprised to find the door of the strange man's room wide open. Ordinarily, it used to remain locked and bolted all the time because their strange guest would lose his cool if anybody entered his room. The open door at this hour made the owners curious and they entered the room to investigate. They found that the bed sheet was cold which suggested that the bed had not been used for quite some time. In addition, the clothes and bandages of their strange guest lay scattered all over the room.

Suddenly, there was commotion and Mrs Hall heard something pass by her ear. All of a sudden, the hat on the bedpost sprang and hit her on the face. Then the chair flung towards her. She and her husband rushed out in panic and the door behind them suddenly shut with a slam. Mrs Hall was certain that some spirit was haunting the room. The news spread very fast and the villagers suspected that the strange scientist was the culprit and some magic was involved in the entire affair. Suspicion about the theft at the clergyman's house also fell on the scientist as he had just paid his entire dues in cash.

The village constable was informed secretly about the matter but Mrs Hall did not wait for his arrival. She rushed into the strange man's room and demanded an explanation from him about her chair. She also asked him to explain how he had suddenly sprung out of the locked empty room.

The infuriated scientist startled all the villagers who had gathered to

confront him. He suddenly removed his bandage and makeup sending shock waves to the people who were stunned to find a headless man. Jaffers, the constable, who had an arrest warrant in his hands, tried to arrest the headless body. However, he could not do so because the scientist had removed all his clothes as well and had thus become invisible.

All efforts of the constable to nab the invisible man failed and whoever tried to help him was charged with fists and blows punched from the air. The constable fell down unconscious and nobody could catch Griffin who took advantage of his invisibility to escape.

TITLE

The story, "Footprints Without Feet", is about an invisible scientist whose footprints can be seen but his feet are unseen. The element of mystery inherent in the invisibility of the scientist is aptly conveyed by the title. It arouses the curiosity of the reader regarding the occurrence of footprints without feet. Thus it encourages the reader to read the story and find out the mystery of the missing feet.

The title also builds the gripping, mysterious and interesting environment of the story that follows it. Thus, the title "Footprints Without Feet" justifiably conveys the chief elements of the story.

THEME

The theme of the story "Footprints Without Feet", is that power without responsibility can be disastrous. The power of invisibility came to a selfish and ill-tempered Griffin who misused it by breaking law. He stole clothes, food, money, and hurt innocent people to escape when they tried to catch him. Hence, the story develops the idea that a man of science can have immense potential but it can be chaotic if it is put to destructive use. All inventions must therefore be monitored and developed for the good of society and not for the benefit of any specific individual.

MESSAGE

Through the story "Footprints Without Feet", H. G. Wells wants to convey the message that absolute power corrupts and should always be given to the responsible ones only. Besides, every achievement should be accompanied by a deep sense of responsibility and commitment. The writer describes the life of Griffin to tell that scientists can make life easier and better with the help of their inventions. But, if these intelligent minds fall on the destructive path, the damage caused would be immense.

CHARACTERS

Griffin

Griffin is a brilliant and hard-working scientist who carries out endless experiments to discover the formula of invisibility. He finally succeeds in finding a rare drug to achieve this end. However, he is a lawless man without any conscience. As a result, he misuses his discovery to scare and rob people. He commits thefts in London and in the remote town of Iping. He has little regard for rules and regulations. He is short-tempered, eccentric, irritable and callous in his behaviour towards others. He burns his landlady's house out of revenge and is sternly rude to Mrs Hall, the landlady of the inn at Iping. He does not hesitate to pounce blows at villagers in Iping and also commits theft at the clergyman's house. These evil aspects of his character make him a villain who is hated by everyone.

Mrs Hall

Mrs Hall is the landlady of an inn at Iping. She is a sociable and talkative person, very keen to befriend strangers. She is a reasonably good judge of other's character. In her first meeting with the scientist, she correctly understands that her guest is eccentric and has an irritable temper. She gracefully allows him privacy when he demands it. However, she is inquisitive by nature and the moment she finds the

scientist's door open, she does not hesitate to enter his room with her husband. But, the strange happenings in the room make her hysterical and her superstitious belief convinces her that the strange experiences in her guest's room are because of the presence of spirits. She is aggressive too and does not hesitate to demand an explanation from Griffin about the flinging of chair in his room. In short, she is a simple, good at heart, lovable, and courageous woman.

Mr Jaffers

Mr Jaffers is a duty-conscious and courageous constable. The strange and uncanny sight of a headless person does not terrify him. He is determined to carry out the task assigned to him. He has a single track mind and focuses all his energy to arrest Griffin. He keeps on fighting bravely to arrest the invisible man and does not give up till he is knocked down.

Mr Jaffers is indeed an epitome of dedication and commitment towards duty.

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

The boys followed, fascinated, until the muddy impressions became fainter and fainter, and at last disappeared altogether.

(a) What were the muddy impressions?

The muddy impressions were the footprints of the absconding invisible scientist Griffin which were followed by the boys.

(b) Where did the boys follow the muddy impressions?

The boys followed the muddy impressions in the middle of London.

(c) **Why were the impressions muddy?**

The impressions were muddy because Griffin had stepped in mud while trying to escape without clothes and shoes.

(d) **Why did the impressions first become fainter and then disappear?**

The muddy feet impressions grew fainter and eventually disappeared because the mud around the feet had dried up after walking some distance.

(II)

But his adventures were by no means over. He had chosen a bad time of the year to wander about London without clothes.

(a) **Who is 'he' in these lines? Why was he in London?**

'He' in these lines is the scientist Griffin. He was in London because he used to live in a rented place in this city.

(b) **Why was 'he' without clothes?**

Griffin was without clothes because although his body was invisible, he could be spotted by the clothes if he wore any.

(c) **What were the 'adventures' and why were they not over?**

The adventures were Griffin's odd experiences owing to his mysterious invisibility. They were not over because Griffin was going to remain invisible and it was certainly going to lead to many more confusion.

(d) **Why was it a bad time of the year?**

It was a bad time of the year since it was the month of January, which is bitterly cold in London.

(III)

He soon found a suitable shop. He made his way, invisible, upstairs and came out a little later....

(a) **Who is 'he' in these lines? Which shop did he find?**

'He', in these lines, is Griffin, the scientist who was trying to escape by taking advantage of his invisibility. He found the shop that provided theatrical materials.

(b) Where did he find the shop?

He found the shop in the Drury Lane in London.

(c) Why did he make his way into the shop?

Griffin made his way into the shop to get some things that he could use to give shape to his invisible face and body.

(d) What was 'he' wearing when he came out of the shop a little later?

Griffin was wearing bandages round his forehead, dark glasses, false nose, big-bushy whiskers, and a large hat when he came out of the shop a little later.

(IV)

Satisfied that her guest was an eccentric scientist, and in view of the fact that he had paid her in advance, Mrs Hall was prepared to excuse his strange habits and irritable temper.

(a) Who was Mrs Hall? Who was her guest?

Mrs Hall was the landlady of an inn at Iping. Her guest was the eccentric scientist Griffin.

(b) Why was Mrs Hall satisfied that her guest was an eccentric scientist?

Mrs Hall was satisfied that her guest was an eccentric scientist because he discouraged her friendly approach by telling her curtly that he was in Iping for some solitude and did not wish to be disturbed. Moreover he had an uncommon appearance due to his completely bandaged face and dark glasses that covered his eyes.

(c) What were the 'strange habits' of Mrs Hall's guest?

Mrs Hall's guest had the strange habit of keeping the door of his room shut and locked. He would be furious if anyone entered his room.

- (d) **Why did Mrs Hall excuse her guest's strange habits and irritable temper?**

Mrs Hall excused Griffin's strange habits and irritable temper because he had paid her in advance for his stay in her inn. Besides, she did not get many guests in the harsh winters and did not wish to lose an occasional guest like Griffin.

(V)

Usually it was shut and locked, and he was furious if anyone entered his room. The opportunity seemed too good to be missed.

- (a) **What was usually shut and locked?**

The door of the room occupied by Griffin in the inn run by the Halls was usually shut and locked.

- (b) **Who was 'he'? Why was he furious if anyone entered his room?**

'He' was Griffin, the eccentric scientist who had come to stay in the inn run by the Halls. He was furious if anyone entered his room because he did not want anyone to know about his mysterious invisibility.

- (c) **What was the 'opportunity'?**

The 'opportunity' was to enter the room of Griffin in his absence since the usually locked door was open that day.

- (d) **For whom was the 'opportunity' too good to be missed. Why?**

This opportunity was too good to be missed for Mr and Mrs Hall because by exploring Griffin's room, they could have found out the true identity of their strange guest.

(VI)

"I want to know what you have been doing to my chair upstairs," she demanded.
"And I want to know...."

- (a) **Who is the speaker of these lines? Whom is he/she talking to?**

Mrs Hall, the wife of the landlord of the inn at Iping, speaks these

lines. She is talking to her eccentric scientist-guest, Griffin.

(b) What had happened to the speaker's chair?

Mrs Hall's chair had mysteriously flung on to her when she had gone to the scientist's room in the morning.

(c) Why is the speaker demanding an explanation from the listener about the chair?

Mrs Hall is demanding an explanation from the scientist about the chair because she believes that the scientist is a dubious man and has acquired some magical control over her chair.

(d) What is the other query of the speaker?

Mrs Hall's other query is about the mysterious manner by which the scientist had come out of an empty room and had entered a locked room.

(VII)

It took him only a minute to do this. The horrified people in the bar found themselves staring at a headless man!

(a) Who is 'him'? What was done by him in a minute?

'Him' is Griffin, the invisible man. He threw off bandages, whiskers, spectacles, false nose and other things in a minute that he had wrapped around to give his invisible face some shape.

(b) Who are the horrified people?

The horrified people are the villagers of Iping.

(c) Where was the bar? Why were the horrified people in the bar?

The bar was at the inn run by the Halls. The horrified villagers were in the bar because they had gathered to see the strange guest of the Halls after the news about him had spread.

(d) Who was the 'headless man'? Why was he 'headless'?

Griffin was the headless man. He was headless because he had removed the bandages etc that had given a shape to his invisible head.

(VIII)

But this was easier said than done. Griffin had shaken himself free, and no one knew where to lay hands on him.

(a) What is 'this'? Why was 'this' easier said than done?

'This' is the attempt to hold an invisible Griffin. It was easier said than done because no one knew where or whom to hold.

(b) From what had Griffin shaken himself free?

Griffin had shaken himself free from the grip of constable Jaffers and the villagers of Iping.

(c) Why couldn't anyone know where to lay hands on him?

No one knew where to lay hands on Griffin because he was completely invisible and as transparent as a glass in the absence of clothes.

(d) What did Griffin do next?

Next, Griffin made good his escape taking advantage of his invisibility.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 - 40 words each)

Q1. How did the two boys in London react when they saw fresh muddy impressions? Why?

The two boys were surprised and fascinated to see fresh muddy impressions. They reacted so because the impressions were made by a pair of human feet without a body. These impressions were descending down the steps of a house and advancing down the street.

Q2. What was the mystery behind the muddy footprints? Or

To whom did the muddy footprints belong?

The mystery behind the muddy footprints was that they belonged to Griffin, a scientist who had discovered how to make

the human body transparent. He had swallowed these rare drugs himself and had become totally invisible.

- Q3. Who was Griffin? What experiments did he carry out and with what outcome? Or**

Who was Griffin? Why did he carry out experiments? Did he succeed?

Griffin was a brilliant scientist, but had scant regard for the dictates of law. He carried out a number of experiments to prove that human body could become invisible. The outcome of this was that he succeeded in discovering some rare drugs which could make one invisible and transparent like glass.

- Q4. Why does the writer term Griffin as a 'lawless' person?**

The writer terms Griffin as a lawless person because he had set fire to the house of his landlord who wanted to eject Griffin from the house. It was an unwise and irresponsible act that proves Griffin's short-tempered and revengeful nature.

- Q5. Why did Griffin become a homeless wanderer? Or**

Why was Griffin forced to become a wanderer in the streets of London?

Griffin became a homeless wanderer in the streets of London because he had to run away after setting fire to the house of his landlord. The landlord wanted to eject him and he took it as an insult. To escape punishment for burning the house, he swallowed his invisibility drug and wandered aimlessly.

- Q6. Why does the author say that Griffin's "adventures were by no means over"?**

The author says so because although Griffin had been able to get rid of the curious boys who followed his muddy footprints, he was feeling cold in the absence of clothes. This led to more

misadventures that made him steal and scare people for the sake of survival.

Q7. Why did Griffin decide to step into the big London store?

Griffin stepped into the London store to escape the fury of the chilly January weather and to get some warmth. Earlier, he had to become absolutely naked so that he could take advantage of his invisibility and escape after having burnt down the house of his landlord.

Q8. How did the London store prove to be a blessing in disguise for Griffin? Or

Describe the things Griffin did in the London store.

Griffin entered the London store to escape the winter chill. It proved to be a blessing in disguise for him as he was able to cover himself with warm clothes, take a hearty meal of cold meat and coffee followed by sweets and wine, and also got a pile of quilts to sleep on.

Q9. Who discovered Griffin in the London store? What happened after the discovery? Or

What blunder did Griffin commit in the London store and with what effect? Or

What happened when Griffin did not wake up in time in the London store? Or

Why did Griffin find himself naked on the streets of London for the second time?

Griffin overslept at the London store and was discovered by the assistants who arrived in the morning. This blunder threatened his arrest but he removed all his clothes and ran out to roam naked on the streets for a second time. So, he escaped being caught but was once again exposed to the winter chill.

Q10. What did Griffin do in a shop in Drury Lane? Or

Why did Griffin go to Drury Lane? What was this lane famous for?

Griffin went to Drury Lane to get some material to enable him to change his appearance and avoid being recognised. Drury Lane was the centre of the theatre world and had a number of shops selling theatrical material. Griffin took from here some clothes, wore a bandage round his head, dark glasses, a false nose, a hat and fixed large whiskers.

Q11. Describe Griffin's appearance after he came out of Drury Lane.

When Griffin came out of Drury Lane, he looked a changed man. He was wearing bandages round his forehead and dark glasses covered his eyes. He had a false nose with big bushy side-whiskers, and a large hat over his invisible head.

Q12. Give two reasons why Griffin attacked the shopkeeper in Drury Lane from behind?

Griffin attacked the shopkeeper in Drury Lane from behind because he wanted to escape unseen. In addition, he was penniless and wanted to steal money from the shop.

Q13. Why did Griffin bandage his forehead and wore other objects like dark glasses, false nose, side-whiskers and a hat?

Griffin was under the influence of the rare drugs that had made his body as transparent as a sheet of glass. He covered his invisible body with clothes but still looked like a headless man. So, to camouflage his headless appearance, he wore bandages, dark glasses, false nose, big bushy side-whiskers, and a hat.

Q14. Why did Griffin leave London? Where did he go?

Griffin left London because he found it difficult to survive there after his encounter at the London store and the Drury Lane. He had aroused suspicion of the people and was under threat of

being discovered. So he left London and went to a small village called Iping.

Q15. Who was Mrs Hall? Why did she try to be friendly to her scientist-guest?

Mrs Hall was the landlady of the inn at Iping where Griffin stayed. She tried to be friendly to her scientist-guest because as the owner of the inn she was doing her duty by being hospitable. In addition, Griffin was a rare guest who had come to stay at her inn that did not have enough visitors in the harsh winter season.

Q16. Why did Griffin's arrival in Iping set the villagers' tongues wagging?

Griffin's arrival in Iping set the villagers' tongues wagging because a stranger visiting the village in mid-winter was a rare and uncommon sight. Moreover, Griffin had a very odd appearance and strange behaviour.

Q17. How did Griffin react to Mrs Hall's efforts to be friendly with him?

Or

What reasons did Griffin give to Mrs Hall for his visit to Iping?

Griffin gave a cold shoulder to Mrs Hall when she made efforts to be friendly to him. He told her curtly that he had come to Iping for some solitude and did not wish to be disturbed in his work. Besides, an accident had affected his face.

Q18. Why was Mrs. Hall prepared to excuse Griffin's strange habits and irritable temper?

Mrs Hall was prepared to excuse Griffin's strange habits and irritable temper because she could judge that her guest was an eccentric scientist. Moreover, he had made the payments in advance and was a rare guest in the harsh winters. As a shrewd businesswoman, she did not want to lose this opportunity to make some money.

Q19. Why do you think, Griffin booked two rooms at the inn in Iping?

Being a scientist, Griffin needed two rooms – one to be used as his living room and the other for his laboratory. Moreover, whenever he went invisible, he could delude the visitor to believe that he was in either of the rooms.

Q20. Why did Griffin tell Mrs Hall that he was expecting a cheque soon?

Griffin told Mrs Hall that he was expecting a cheque soon because he wanted to prolong his stay at the inn. However, there was no truth in the cheque-story. He concocted it to pacify the Halls not to press him for more money after the advance paid by him had got finished.

Q21. What 'curious episode' occurred in the study of the clergyman?

Or

What 'extraordinary affair' took place at the clergyman's house one night?

The curious episode that occurred in the study of the clergyman was that even though the money from the desk was missing, still there was no one in the room. It was a quaint case of robbery without a robber who could be heard but could not be seen.

Q22. Describe the experience of the Halls in the room of their eccentric scientist-guest.

The Halls had a weird and frightening experience in the room of their eccentric scientist-guest. Mrs Hall felt something suddenly whizz past her ear. Then the hat on the bedpost leapt up and dashed into her face and the chair sprung into the air and charged at both of them. It pushed them out of the room, slamming and locking the door after them.

Q23. Why did Mrs Hall become hysterical after her weird experiences in the scientist's room?

Or

What made Mrs Hall think that the room where Griffin was staying was haunted?

Her weird experiences in the scientist's room made Mrs Hall hysterical because it was strange and unnatural to have the hat and chair rise up on their own. When she saw the bedroom chair springing into the air and charging straight at her, she was convinced that the room was haunted by ghosts and spirits.

Q24. After the burglary at the clergyman's house, why was the finger of suspicion pointed at Griffin? Or

Why was the strange scientist suspected of having a hand in the robbery at the clergyman's house?

The finger of suspicion was pointed at Griffin because he had been telling about the expected arrival of a cheque but had made the payment in cash only after the burglary. Besides, the strange incidents in his room confirmed that he was a suspicious figure.

Q25. Who was Jaffers? Why was he sent for secretly?

Jaffers was the village constable at Iping. He was sent for secretly because nobody wanted the strange scientist to know about the plan to get him arrested. The people did not want to give Griffin any chance to escape.

Q26. Why did Mrs Hall confront Griffin before the arrival of Mr Jaffers?

Mrs Hall confronted Griffin before the arrival of Mr Jaffers, the constable, because she was furious at Griffin for using witchcraft on the chair on which her mother used to sit. She was aghast that the chair rose up against her. She was also astounded to see that Griffin had come out of an empty room and had entered a locked room.

Q27. What difficult task was Jaffers called upon to do?

Jaffers was called upon to do the difficult task of arresting Griffin. It was a difficult task because he had to nab a man

without a head, who was gradually "becoming more and more invisible," and was raining blows indiscriminately.

Q28. Why was Jaffers keen to arrest the scientist?

Jaffers was a duty-conscious constable. He had with him the magistrate's warrants for the scientist's arrest. So he considered it to be his prime duty to detain him and dutifully discharge the task assigned to him.

Q29. How did Griffin escape from the Inn?

Griffin discarded all his clothes including the bandages on his face, glasses, whiskers, hat and even nose to become completely invisible after Mrs Hall, the villagers and constable Jaffers cornered him. He used his invisibility to his advantage and escaped from the inn after punching blows at all those who tried to 'hold on' to him.

Q30. How would you assess Griffin as a scientist? (Textual)

Griffin is an intelligent scientist and has successfully discovered rare drugs that make a person invisible. However, he is not a morally good man because he misuses his discovery. A true scientist utilises his inventions or discoveries for the good of humanity.

Q31. What makes glass or water transparent (What is the scientific explanation for this)? Do you think, it would be scientifically possible for a man to become invisible, or transparent? (Keep in mind that writers of science fiction have often turned out to be prophetic in their imagination.) (Textual)

Scientific explanation for glass or water being transparent is that light can pass through them. I think it is scientifically possible for man to become invisible. Quite a few science fiction fantasies have proved to be true and scientists might also invent drugs in future that can make a person invisible.

Q32. Griffin was an intelligent and an efficient scientist. Do you think he had learnt to plan his life properly?

Griffin was an intelligent and efficient scientist as he had successfully discovered a drug for invisibility. However, he had not learnt how to lead a planned life because he indulged in thieving and other lawless activities for survival.

Q33. Towards the close of the story, Griffin defeats all efforts of law to nab him, yet he is not a winner. Discuss.

Though Griffin successfully foils all efforts of constable Jaffers to nab him, yet he is not a winner because he is once again left to face the winter chill without clothes. He has to roam aimlessly in the lanes of Iping, penniless and without destination.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

Q1. "Griffin was a rather lawless person." Comment.

Or

Give instances from the story to prove that Griffin was a rather lawless person.

The story has five different instances to prove that Griffin was a lawless person. Griffin set his landlord's house on fire merely out of revenge. This was an illegal act and totally condemnable. The house did not belong to him and the landlord had every right to get it vacated. Next, he stole clothes and food from a London store. Neither did he take permission, nor did he pay for those things. He then indulged in stealing money twice. First, he hit a shopkeeper in Drury Lane from behind and robbed him and then at Iping village, he broke open a clergyman's house and stole money from a desk in the study. Another illegal act committed

by Griffin was when he hit Jaffers, the policeman on duty, to escape arrest. These instances prove that Griffin did not care for rule of law and broke it every time he was obliged to obey it.

Q2. Though an intelligent scientist, Griffin did not work for the welfare of society. Comment? Or

Griffin was not a true scientist as he misused his discovery. Discuss. Or

Discoveries of science can be used for welfare as well as for destruction. How is this statement applicable for Griffins' scientific discovery? Explain with examples from the text.

Or

How would you assess Griffin as a scientist? (Textual)

Scientific discoveries are expected to benefit mankind and scientists are supposed to work for the betterment of society. However, scientists like Griffin, show little regard for society and use their discoveries to gain their own ends. Such scientists are not true and genuine in any way.

Griffin discovered a drug that could make a man invisible but he misused this power for his own selfish good. He misused his invisibility to take revenge upon his landlord by burning his house. He committed theft at a London store under the garb of invisibility. He also burgled a shop at Drury Lane and robbed the shopkeeper of his money because he could not be seen. Again, he stole money from the clergyman's study at Iping and terrorized the Halls in their own inn. Thus, in place of using the power of invisibility to help the needy or to check evils like crime, Griffin indulged in breaking the law. Although intelligent, Griffin's potential as a scientist was certainly harmful.

Q3. Give a detailed account of the night spent by Griffin in the big London store. Or

Describe Griffin's brief stay in the big London store.

Griffin spent an interesting night in a big London store. He entered this place when he was trying to escape being caught after having burnt down the house of his landlord. He was naked, homeless and penniless when he got in this store to escape the winter chill. After the closing time, he behaved like the owner of the store. First of all, he enjoyed the pleasure of clothing himself fully. Then, without any regard for the expenses, he enjoyed cold meat and coffee, which were supplemented by sweets and wine. Thus feeling fully satisfied he dozed off to sleep on a pile of quilts. However, the morning did not prove to be that enjoyable. He overslept and was discovered by the incoming assistants. He ran away to escape them and had to discard his clothes once again in order to become invisible.

Q4. "Mr Jaffers is a duty conscious constable, dedicated to his work."

Discuss.

Or

Mr Jaffers's efforts to nab the culprit make a 'remarkable scene.'

Elaborate.

Or

How can you say that Mr Jaffers was a dutiful cop?

Mr Jaffers was a duty conscious constable who was dedicated to his work. He was fearless and focussed about his responsibilities as a cop. When he saw a headless man, he was not deterred and made sincere efforts to nab the erring culprit. The headless Griffin became more and more invisible as he removed his clothes one by one. This made Jaffers's task difficult but he still did not give up efforts to hold the criminal. When Griffin punched blows at the people who tried to hold him, Jaffers withstood the onslaught courageously till Griffin knocked him down.

The manner in which the villagers tried to help Jaffers in arresting Griffin shows that his commitment as a cop was respected and

valued by others. Thus, Jaffers showed his true character of a fearless and dutiful cop, who reached the inn to arrest the invisible Griffin.

Q5. Give instances from the story to prove that Griffin is a habitual thief.

Or

Narrate instances of theft committed by Griffin.

In a short span of time, Griffin committed three thefts. He first stole clothes and food from a London store. He escaped being caught under the guise of invisibility and ran to Drury Lane 'to try the stock of a theatrical company'. There he stole not only clothes but also bandages for his face and forehead, dark glasses to cover his blank eye sockets, false nose, big bushy whiskers and a large hat to camouflage himself completely. He did not desist from attacking the shopkeeper from behind and robbed him of all his money before departing from London. At Iping, he went to the village clergyman's study under the cover of darkness and invisibility. There he stole money from the desk in the study.

All these misadventures prove that Griffin was a habitual thief who resorted to stealing money to meet his expenses.

Q6. How does Griffin's invisibility become a blessing as well as a curse for him?

Griffin's ability to become invisible proved to be a blessing for him on many occasions. He went scot-free even after having committed the crime of burning his landlord's house. The boys who sighted his muddy footprints too failed to grab him as he was invisible at that time. He entered the big London store unnoticed and at the closing time too, nobody could notice his presence owing to his invisibility. He enjoyed the warmth and luxuries of the store like a lord and managed to escape the next morning solely on account of his power to remain invisible.

Similarly, his invisibility helped him at Iping too and he was able to evade arrest at the hands of a dutiful Jaffers.

However, the curse of facing the freezing England winter chill without any clothes undid all the blessings enjoyed by him because of invisibility. He could use invisibility only at the cost of complete nakedness which was life-threatening. Besides, the ability to become invisible led him astray on the path of evil. He became a habitual criminal and had to run from one place to another in order to escape the law.

Q7. How did Griffin make good his escape from Iping?

When Mrs Hall confronted Griffin for having used witchcraft on her chair, he lost his temper and began to shout. In a fit of anger, he suddenly threw off bandages, whiskers, spectacles, and even nose, all within a minute. The villagers who had gathered in the bar were horrified to see a headless man. Mr Jaffers, the village constable too had arrived by this time and was equally surprised to find that he had to arrest a man without a head. However, this did not prevent him from doing his duty. He was determined to carry out the orders as per the magistrate's warrant. It was immaterial for him whether the person to be arrested had a head or not.

This was followed by a real commotion when the policeman tried to get hold of Griffin who threw off one garment after another and thus gradually became invisible. Finally, Griffin threw his shirt into the air and the constable could see nothing at all. The people who tried to help Jaffers were hit by blows that the invisible Griffin punched at them. In the end, Jaffers too was knocked down and became unconscious. Excited and nervous, people shouted to hold Griffin but he had shaken himself free and no one knew where to lay hands on him. Thus, Griffin used his weapon of invisibility to escape from Iping.

Q8. Mrs Hall tried her best to please Griffin when he reached Iping but she got furious with him later. Why and how did this change come about?

Mrs Hall was the landlady of the inn where Griffin had come to stay while in Iping. His arrival was a matter of delight for this businesswoman as there were hardly any guests in that cold season. In addition Griffin had paid the room rent in advance. Mrs Hall did not wish to lose such a guest at any cost so she tried her best to be friendly with him. However, when he rebuffed her moves, she excused his strange habits and irritable temper thinking that he was an eccentric scientist.

One morning, she and her husband were surprised to see the door of Griffin's room open. Usually it remained locked and shut because Griffin would get furious if anyone entered his room. On investigating she found that the scientist had been up for some time as the bedclothes were cold. Even stranger was that his clothes and bandages were lying about the room. All of a sudden she heard a sniff close to her ear and soon the hat on the bedpost leapt up and dashed itself into her face. Then the bedroom chair became alive and it charged at her. It pushed her and her husband out of the room banging and locking the door behind them. A hysterical Mrs Hall almost fell down the stairs. She was convinced that Griffin had done some witchcraft to her furniture. This made her furious at him and she returned to the room after a while demanding an explanation.

Q9. Describe the burglary committed by Griffin at the clergyman's house.

Griffin had paid Mrs Hall in advance at the time when he checked-in at her inn. He had paid her with the money that he had stolen in London. This money did not last long and so Griffin was under pressure to pay Mrs Hall in order to stay longer at the

inn. He committed a burglary at the clergyman's house to solve this problem. One day the clergyman and his wife were awakened by noises in the study very early in the morning. Creeping downstairs, they heard the chink of money being taken from the desk. The clergyman picked up a poker firmly in his hand and suddenly flung open the door of his study. He ordered the intruder to surrender but was amazed to see that the room was empty. He and his wife looked under the desk, and behind the curtains, and even up the chimney. They could not find anyone but the desk had been opened and the housekeeping money was missing. The clergyman kept wondering at this 'extraordinary affair' that had been carried out by Griffin under the guise of invisibility.

Q10. Would you like to become invisible? Why? What advantages and disadvantages do you foresee, if you did? (Textual)

I would certainly like to become invisible as it involves a great deal of romance and thrill. One can see the truth in its absolute form without being noticed by anyone. Invisibility can also help one in indulging in a variety of child-like pranks. The fun one can have with friends while keeping oneself invisible is exciting to even think of. However, the ability to become invisible has certain social and moral advantages, as long as this power is in the hands of good, moral and well-meaning people. In that case, crimes like robberies, murders, deceptions, frauds, treacheries can be secretly noticed, and the evil-doers can be punished. However, if this power becomes a marketable commodity, it will become nearly impossible to nab the criminals and 'jungle-rule' will prevail. Hence, the power of invisibility should come only to those who have a strong sense of responsibility.

6. *The Making of a Scientist*

(Robert W. Peterson)

ABOUT THE CHAPTER

Introduction:

The chapter "The Making of a Scientist" is a biographical sketch of a renowned scientist, Richard H. Ebright, who excelled in his research on butterflies. His work on the hormones from the spots on a monarch pupa and his resultant findings about the chemical structure of the hormones came out as an answer to one of biology's major puzzles.

Summary:

A former 'scout of the year', Richard H. Ebright, surprised the scientific world with his theory on how cells work. He published a paper on this finding in the journal "*Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*" with the help of his college room-mate. Ebright was twenty one at that time. It was as rare an achievement for a scientist as is for a player of baseball when he makes the big leagues at fifteen or scores a home run at the time of maiden batting appearance. Although, Ebright earned many achievements later in life, but his career in science actually started with his interest in butterflies.

Ebright, the only child of his parents, grew up in Reading, Pennsylvania. As he did not have much company in this place, he started taking interest in collecting things. In his kindergarten days, Ebright enthusiastically collected butterflies. Apart from that he also collected rocks, fossils and coins. He was fond of star-gazing, too.

His mother understood her son's aspirations and encouraged him in his learning. She took him on trips and bought him equipment like microscopes, telescopes, cameras, mounting materials and the like. Until Ebright went to school, his mother was his sole companion. After the death of his father, when Ebright was still in grade three, this

companionship strengthened further. His mother ensured that Ebright was always busy as she knew that her child wanted to learn. By the time the young boy reached second grade, he had collected all the twenty-five varieties of butterflies that were found near his hometown. He was a good student and always earned top grades in school.

The mother, ever keen for her son to continue his interest in butterflies, bought a book titled "*Travels of Monarch X*". The book taught Ebright about migration of monarch butterflies to Central America and sharpened his eagerness about butterflies. This book also made a request to the readers to tag butterflies for research by Dr Frederick A. Urquhart of Toronto University. The butterfly collecting season in Reading lasted six weeks only and collecting them one by one did not lead the collector anywhere. So, Ebright caught hold of a female monarch and raised her eggs in his basement. He tried to raise as many monarchs as possible, tagged them and let them go. However, soon he lost interest in tagging butterflies as it was not a very rewarding job. Of all the butterflies he had tagged, only two could be recaptured.

In his seventh grade, Ebright came to know of the county science fair. His entry was 'slides of frog tissues,' which he wanted to show under a microscope. Here, he learnt that a neat display of object is not of much importance and if one wanted to win prizes one had to perform actual experiments. The competitive spirit urged him to pledge that for next year's fair he would do some real experiment. So he decided to work on 'insect', a subject he was really conversant with. He wrote to Dr Urquhart for ideas and Ebright got many suggestions in return. These suggestions kept him busy all through the high school and also won him many county and international science fair prizes.

For the eighth grade project, Ebright worked to find the reason behind the viral disease that caused the death of nearly all monarch

caterpillars every few years. He thought that the disease was carried by a beetle. So he raised the caterpillars in the presence of beetles. Although he did not get any results from this experiment, but he won the prize for experimenting itself.

Next year, he tried to verify and test the theory that the viceroy butterfly copies the monarch. It was believed the monarchs didn't taste good to birds, so viceroys tried to waylay the birds by giving the impression of being monarchs. However, Ebright's efforts resulted in finding that starlings did not like ordinary food, but ate Monarchs greedily. His project won him the first prize in zoology division and an overall third in the county science fair. However, Ebright tells us that later research by other scientists showed that viceroys do copy monarchs.

Ebright's project during his second year high school resulted in the discovery of an unknown insect hormone which led to his new theory on the life of cells. In this project he wanted to find out the purpose behind the twelve gold spots on a monarch pupa. It was believed that the gold spots were just ornamental. However, Ebright, along with another budding science student, showed that the spots produced hormones which helped the butterfly to develop properly and completely. Ebright bagged the first prize in the county fair which earned him an entry into the International Science and Engineering fair where his project was placed third in the zoology department. During summer, he got the chance to work at the entomology laboratory of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

The next year, Ebright grew cells from monarch's wings and showed that these cells divide and develop into grown up butterfly wing scales provided they were given the hormone from the gold spots. After his freshman years at Harvard University, Ebright went back to the Department of Agriculture laboratory to do more work on hormones from the gold spots and was able to identify the chemical structure of the hormone.

A year-and-a-half later, Ebright got an idea for his new theory about cell life while looking at the X-ray photo of the hormone's chemical structure. Examination of the photo gave him an answer to one of biology's puzzles about how the cell can read the blueprint of the DNA which controls heredity. Later, the entire theory was published as a paper that explained it in detail with the help of pictures and plastic models prepared with the help of his college room-mate James R. Wong. Ebright surprised everybody by graduating from the Harvard University with the highest honour. He later joined the Harvard Medical School and continued research and experiments to test his theory. If the theory proves to be true, it will be a great stride in ridding the world of a variety of diseases.

Apart from his interest in scientific research, Ebright has other interests also. As a young student, he was an excellent debater and an orator. He took keen interest in outdoor activities and was a good canoeist as well. He was a good photographer too and took pictures of natural objects and scientific exhibits. Richard Ebright was a straight-A student and was a great fan of his social studies teacher, Richard A. Weiherer. Weiherer opened many new ideas for the young Ebright whom he liked and had high regard for his capabilities.

Ebright has all the qualities of a good scientist. He is the right mix of a first-rate mind, curiosity, and the will to win - qualities that have made him a great scientist.

THEME

The central theme of the chapter "The Making of a Scientist" is that gifted people are "precocious." When a person attains distinction in life, the roots can be traced in his childhood. An untiring will to succeed, a curious mind, and a dedicated effort combine to groom an individual into a genius. The author aims at instilling this thought in the minds of the reader by describing the making of Ebright as a scientist.

MESSAGE

"The Making of a Scientist" conveys the message that if one wants to succeed in life and reach great heights like Ebright, one must have sincerity of purpose, single-minded devotion and determined will. One needs to put in extraordinary and consistent efforts to achieve rare distinctions. In addition, one must be keen to learn and also have a 'driving curiosity' to utilize the potential of a bright mind. The desire to work for the right cause, supplemented with a healthy competitive spirit, are added qualities that help a genius to gain recognition.

SUB-MESSAGE

An undercurrent that runs parallel to the main theme is the importance of the role of mother in the early stages of an individual's life. It is the mother whose interest and influence during the formative period of an individual really shape his or her destiny. Ebright achieved great heights in his life because his mother was encouraging, co-operative, understanding, loving, caring, helpful & above all his closest companion.

TITLE

No other title could have suited this biographical chapter better than "The Making of a Scientist". Throughout the chapter the author gives details about the stages of Ebright's growth as a scientist. His keenness to achieve something great in the field of science and his untiring efforts are the key areas of focus of this chapter. In addition, the author also talks about the qualities that an upcoming successful scientist must have. Thus, the title under reference is an aptly chosen one.

CHARACTERS

Ebright

Ebright was a promising child who always used his time well. As a little boy, he had nothing to do in his home-town Reading, so he started collecting things, particularly butterflies. He also collected

rocks, fossils and coins. Besides, he was an avid astronomer and did star-gazing at nights. Determination and hard work marked all his activities throughout his life. He was a brilliant student and always did well in his examinations. He believed in doing his work with single-minded devotion. Ebright's mother was always a guiding influence for him. He learnt from his failures which never deterred him. He performed very well in the science fair experiments. He always performed his experiments without much fuss and remained modest in spite of his great success. He exhibited complete devotion and dedication towards his aim when he grew up. He was a good debater and a public speaker. He took a keen interest in outdoor activities like nature photography and canoeing. He had a keen and healthy spirit of competition coupled with a curious mind.

To sum up, Ebright had all the qualities that make a great scientist and a good human being.

Ebright's Mother

Ebright's mother was an important driving force behind him who laid the foundation of his success. Ebright was her only child whom she affectionately called 'Richie'. After her husband's death, her son who was in third grade was her whole life.

She would encourage his interest in learning and would take him to trips, buy him telescopes, microscopes, cameras, mounting materials, and other equipment. She was his only companion until he started school. After that she would bring home friends for him and at night be with him to do things together. She would spend almost every evening at the dining room table with her son 'Richie'. When he did not have things to do, she would find work for him that would help him learn things. This support, guidance, care and concern of Ebright's mother helped the growth of a curious child into an accomplished scientist.

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

From the first he had a driving curiosity along with a bright mind. He also had a mother who encouraged his interest in learning.

(a) **Who is 'he' in this extract?**

In this extract 'he' is Richard Ebright, a renowned scientist who gave the world a theory on how cells work.

(b) **Which two qualities did 'he' possess, as mentioned in the extract?**

'A driving curiosity' and 'a bright mind' were the two qualities that Ebright possessed.

(c) **How did his mother encourage his interest in learning?**

His mother encouraged his interest in learning by taking him on trips and buying him scientific equipments like telescopes, microscopes, cameras, mounting materials and other equipment.

(d) **What did 'he' get interested in most?**

Ebright got interested most in butterflies and the matters related to them, like their migration pattern.

(II)

"That probably would have been the end of my butterfly collecting," he said. "But then my mother got me a children's book called The Travels of Monarch X."

(a) **Identify the speaker of these lines.**

The speaker of these lines is Richard H. Ebright, a renowned scientist who gave the world a theory on how cells work.

(b) **What does 'that' refer to in the opening sentence of the extract?**

'That' in the opening sentence refers to the collection of all twenty-five species of butterflies by Ebright around his hometown when he was in his second grade.

- (c) **What was the book *The Travels of Monarch X* about?**

This book discussed the migration pattern of monarch butterflies to Central America.

- (d) **How did the gifted book affect the speaker?**

Ebright developed a deep eagerness regarding the world of science after reading the gifted book.

(III)

For several years his basement was home to thousands of monarchs in different stages of development.

- (a) **Whose basement was home to monarchs?**

Ebright's basement was home to monarchs.

- (b) **What were the monarchs?**

Monarchs were a species of butterflies.

- (c) **Why were there thousands of monarchs in the basement?**

Ebright had undertaken the project to tag monarch butterflies for a research by Dr. Urquhart. Since, the number of monarchs in his vicinity was not enough, he decided to raise them through their life-cycle in his basement. This resulted in thousands of monarchs.

- (d) **What were the different stages of the development of the monarchs?**

Monarchs developed through the stages of egg, to caterpillar, to pupa, and finally to adult butterfly.

(IV)

The next year his science project was testing the theory that viceroy butterflies copy monarchs.

- (a) **Who is being talked about in these lines?**

The renowned scientist Richard Ebright is being talked about in these lines.

- (b) **What was the science project in the previous year?**

Ebright's science project in the previous year was to find the cause of a viral disease that kills nearly all monarch caterpillars every few years.

(c) What did the theory about viceroy butterflies say?

The theory said that viceroys look like monarchs because monarchs don't taste good to birds and copying them saved the viceroys from falling prey to birds.

(d) Was this theory correct?

It was later found by some scientists that viceroys probably do copy the monarch.

(V)

"Everyone assumed the spots were just ornamental," Ebright said. "But Dr Urquhart didn't believe it."

(a) Who is Ebright?

Ebright is a renowned scientist who gave the theory on the working of cells.

(b) Which spots were assumed to be just ornamental?

The twelve tiny gold spots on a monarch pupa were assumed to be just ornamental.

(c) Who was Dr Urquhart?

Dr Frederick A. Urquhart was a scientist in the University of Toronto, Canada.

(d) What did Dr Urquhart believe?

Dr Urquhart believed that the gold spots on a monarch pupa had some role in the development of the butterfly.

(VI)

"Richard would always give that extra effort," Mr Weiherer said.

(a) Who is Mr Weiherer?

Mr Richard A. Weiherer is Ebright's high school social science teacher and adviser to the Debating and Model United Nations clubs.

(b) Why is he talking about Richard?

He is talking about Richard Ebright because as a teacher he admired this exceptional student.

(c) What was the 'extra effort' being referred to by Mr Weiherer?

The extra effort was Ebright's well balanced passion for butterflies as well as his interest in debates.

(d) How did the 'extra effort' help Richard?

The 'extra effort' helped Richard Ebright to pursue and manage varying interests with effective dedication and sincerity.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 – 40 words each)

- Q1. At what age and through which platform did Ebright give his theory on cells? Or**

When Richard H. Ebright was twenty-two, what did he and his college room-mate do that excited the scientific world?

At the age of twenty-two, Richard E. Bright and his room-mate excited the world of science with a new theory on the working of cells through an article that was published in the journal, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*.

- Q2. What does the author compare publishing of Ebright and his room-mate's article in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* to and why? Or**

What was so special about the article published by Ebright in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*? Or

To what does the author compare the publication of Ebright's article in a scientific journal?

The publishing of Ebright's article by a prestigious scientific journal was rare because it was for the first time that the journal had published the work of college students. The author considers it to be as special and as rare as making the big leagues at the age of fifteen or hitting a home run in the game of baseball, while batting for the first time.

Q3. Why didn't Ebright have much to do at Reading? What did he do there as a child? Or

How did Ebright use his time when he was in Pennsylvania?

As a child, Ebright lived in north of Reading, Pennsylvania. He did not have any company in this place, so he took to collecting things like butterflies, rocks, fossils and coins. Sometimes he even did star-gazing at nights.

Q4. How did Ebright's mother help him to further his interest in learning?

Although Ebright had a driving curiosity and a bright mind, his mother played a great role in furthering his interest in learning. She took him on trips and bought him telescopes, microscopes, cameras and other equipments that helped the young scientist in many ways. Her gift of a book titled "*The Travels of Monarch X*" opened the world of science to Ebright and deepened his interest in learning.

Q5. What type of relationship did Ebright share with his mother?

Ebright, 'Richie' to his mother shared a very special relationship with her. The two of them were like companions. When Ebright was still in third grade, his father died and after that he was like a 'whole life' to his mother. She would encourage his interest in learning, bring home friends for him and spend every evening at the dining room table with her son doing things together.

Q6. What had Ebright achieved by the time he was in second grade?

Ebright had developed interest in butterflies and started collecting them. By the time he was in second grade, he had collected all the twenty-five species available around his home town.

Q7. Which book became a turning point in Richard Ebright's life?

How?

Or

How did the book *The Travels of Monarch X* open the world of science for Ebright?

Travels of Monarch X, a book presented to Ebright by his mother, became a turning point in his life. The book told him how monarch butterflies migrate to Central America. This new knowledge opened fresh vistas of science for the young and curious boy.

Q8. Why did Richard Ebright start tagging butterflies? What did he do after tagging them?

An invitation was extended to the readers at the end of the book "*The Travels of Monarch X*" to tag butterflies for research by Dr Frederick A. Urquhart. So, Ebright attached light adhesive tags to the wings of monarchs. The tag asked the person who found it to send the butterfly to Dr Urquhart.

Q9. Why and how did Ebright raise thousands of monarchs?

Or

How did Ebright use the basement of his home to raise monarch butterflies? Why?

Ebright raised thousands of monarchs in the basement of his house because it was a challenge to collect enough butterflies in the short collecting season that lasted only six weeks. So, he would catch a female monarch, take her eggs, develop them through their entire life cycle and finally tag them and let them fly away.

Q10. Why did Ebright lose interest in tagging butterflies?

Ebright lost interest in tagging butterflies because it was a very tedious and cumbersome job. Besides, there was very little feedback. All through his tagging exercise, only two butterflies had been recaptured.

Q11. Why did Ebright not win any prize in the county science fair when he was in seventh grade? What lesson did he learn from this experience?

Ebright's seventh grade project did not win any prize in the county science fair because he showed slides of frog tissues under a microscope, whereas the students who won prizes worked on real experiments. This experience taught Ebright that mere neat display of slides and tissues under a microscope was not enough. He would have to conduct real experiments if he wished to win.

Q12. When and why did Ebright choose to do insect work?

After having lost the chance to win a prize at the science fair, Ebright's competitive spirit pushed him. He then chose to do insect work because that was a field he had been working on in the past several years.

Q13. How did Dr Urquhart help Ebright to win prizes? Or

What made Ebright write to Dr Urquhart and with what result?

Ebright's failure to win any prize in the county science fair in his seventh grade made Ebright write to Dr Urquhart for ideas. Dr Urquhart had conducted intensive research on insects and his suggestions helped Ebright to make many prize winning projects in county and international science fairs.

Q14. What was Ebright's eighth grade project about? What was its outcome? Or

What was the project on 'viral disease' that was undertaken by Ebright? What did it lead to? Or

What did Ebright try for his eight grade project that won him a prize at the science fair?

For his eight grade project, Ebright tried to find reasons for the spread of a viral disease that caused death of almost all monarch caterpillars after every few years. Ebright thought the disease might be carried by a beetle, so he tried raising caterpillars in the presence of beetles. The result of this project was inconclusive, still Ebright won prize for having tried the experiment.

Q15. What was the theory about viceroy butterflies? What were Ebright's findings on this project? Or

What was Ebright's project on viceroy butterflies about? How did this project fare at the county science fair?

The theory about viceroy butterflies said that they copy monarchs to escape being eaten by birds because monarchs don't taste good to eat. Ebright's project was to see whether birds actually eat monarchs. He found that a starling bird would eat all the monarchs it could get and not the ordinary bird food. This project won him a first prize in the zoology division and third overall in the county science fair.

Q16. What led Ebright to his new theory on the life of cells? Or

What is the importance of Ebright's research during his second year in high school?

During his second year in high school, Ebright's research on butterflies resulted in the discovery of an unknown insect hormone. This eventually directed him to his new theory on the life of cells – a theory that excited the scientific world.

Q17. What was the real purpose of the twelve tiny gold spots on a monarch pupa? Or

Were the twelve tiny gold spots on a monarch pupa merely ornamental? Why/Why not? Or

Which project won Ebright the third place for zoology at the International Science and Engineering fair?

The twelve tiny gold spots on a monarch pupa were not merely ornamental. Ebright, along with another efficient science student, took up a project and built a device which proved that these spots produced hormones needed for the butterfly's complete development. This project won Ebright the third place for zoology at the International Science and Engineering fair.

Q18. What progress did Ebright make on his theory on the life of cells in his senior year at the high school? Or

Which project won Ebright the first prize for zoology at the International fair?

In his senior year at the high school, Ebright grew cells from a monarch's wing in a culture and showed that the cells would divide and develop into normal butterfly wing scales only if they were fed the hormone from the gold spots. This project won him the first prize for zoology at the International fair.

Q19. What was Ebright's achievement after his freshman year at Harvard University?

After his freshman year at Harvard University, Ebright went back to the Agriculture Department for further research on the hormone from the gold spots on monarch pupa. Using sophisticated laboratory equipment, he identified the chemical structure of the hormone.

Q20. When and how did Ebright get the idea regarding cell life?

Ebright got the idea regarding cell life when he was in his junior year at the Harvard University. He got this idea while he was looking at X-ray photos of the chemical structure of a hormone.

Q21. How did Ebricht react after looking at the photos of the chemical structure of a hormone?

Ebricht did not shout an excited "Eureka!" or "I've got it!" after looking at the photos of the chemical structure of a hormone. He knew that he had found additional information about how a cell can read the blueprints of its DNA, a substance that controls heredity.

Q22. Why is DNA called the blueprint for life?

DNA is the substance in the nucleus of a cell that controls heredity. It determines the form and function of the cell. Thus DNA is the blueprint for life.

Q23. Who was Ebricht's college room-mate? How did the two of them work on the cell theory?

Ebricht's college room-mate was James R. Wong. After getting an answer to the puzzle on how the cell can read the blueprint of its DNA, they both toiled all through the night, drew pictures and constructed plastic models of the molecules to ascertain how the whole thing could really happen. Later on, they wrote a paper to explain the cell theory.

Q24. What could be the advantages if Ebricht's theory on cell life is proved correct?

Or

If the theory of Ebricht and his college mate proves true, how is it going to help the scientists and the common man at large?

If Ebricht's theory is proved correct, it will be a big leap towards understanding the processes of life. It will help both the scientists and the mankind as it will lead to new ideas that can be used for preventing some types of cancer and other diseases.

Q25. What outdoor and indoor activities did Ebricht take interest in? Why?

Or

Besides science, what were the other interests of Ebricht?

Ebright was not only a science researcher but also a keen and brilliant student. At high school, he was a straight-A student, a champion debater and an orator. He was also an avid reader of books. He took keen interest in public-speaking, was a canoeist par excellence and also an expert photographer of nature.

Q26. Who was Richard A. Weiherer? What were his views about Ebright?

Richard A. Weiherer was Ebright's social studies teacher at school. He was all praise for Ebright and felt that his young student always put in extra efforts in all the activities. He was also pleased with Ebright's zeal to put in three or four hours at night doing debate research in addition to all his research with butterflies and his other interests. He also found him to be competitive in a healthy sense since he won because he wanted to be the best for the right reasons.

Q27. What are the 'ingredients' or 'qualities' that go into the making of a scientist? Did Ebright possess these qualities?

The necessary 'ingredients' or 'qualities' that go into the making of a good scientist are a first-rate mind, curiosity, and the will to win for the right reasons. Ebright had all of these qualities. He never lost the quality of scientific curiosity.

Q28. How can one become a scientist, an economist, a historian? Does it simply involve reading many books on the subject? Does it involve observing, thinking and doing experiments? (Textual)

Excelling in any field does not involve merely reading many books on the subject. One must have a 'first-rate' mind that is alert, observant and curious. In addition, one must develop a knack for thinking new ideas and a skill to carry out experiments around those ideas to explain natural phenomenon in a rational and scientific way. Besides, one must have a strong desire to succeed by putting in sincere and committed efforts.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

Q1. From your reading of "The Making of a Scientist", what idea do you form about the childhood days of Ebright?

Richard H. Ebright was the only child of his parents. He grew up north of Reading, Pennsylvania, where he did not have any company. This kept him restricted to activities that did not require any team work as is required in games like football or baseball. So, he took to the activity of collecting varied things like rocks, fossils and coins. He also became an eager astronomer and sometimes star-gazed all night. Along with other things, he also collected butterflies and by the time he was in grade two, he had collected all the twenty-five species that were found around his home town. He was like a companion to his mother, and after having lost his father when he was in grade three, he became her 'whole world'. His mother became his best guide and philosopher who encouraged his scientific curiosity that helped him grow into a renowned scientist.

Q2. How far do you think, Ebright's mother was responsible for turning him into a successful scientist? Or

What role did Ebright's mother play in his career as a scientist?

Ebright's mother was a source of great encouragement for him right from his childhood. She took keen interest in his activities and kept a vigilant eye on his areas of interest. She gave him as much company as possible and kept him busy by finding work for him and taking him on trips. In her own words she "was his only companion until he started going to school". After the death of her husband, Ebright became her entire world. She would spend almost every evening with her son at the dining room table and found such work for him that helped him learn things. Noticing his interests, she bought for him telescopes,

microscopes, mounting materials, cameras and other equipment which helped her young son in many ways. When she found that her son had collected all the butterfly species in the vicinity, she bought him a book titled *Travels of Monarch X*. This book proved to be a turning point in the life of this future scientist. He developed a keen interest in insect life after reading this book.

In sum, Ebright's mother did everything possible to nourish and groom her son's scientific temperament.

Q3. Ebright's mother had a major role to play in his career as a scientist. What other factors contributed to his success as a scientist?

Ebright's mother was the primary and the most vital source who inspired and encouraged him since his childhood itself. However, there were other factors too that were responsible for shaping his career as a scientist. The book, *The Travels of Monarch X*, opened a whole new world of knowledge to Ebright. He developed a deep sense of understanding regarding the migration pattern of monarchs after reading this book. Another influencing factor was Dr Urquhart, an eminent scientist who had studied insects deeply. Ebright developed an informal contact with Dr Urquhart when he undertook the project of tagging butterflies for research by this accomplished scientist. Later, Ebright took help from Dr Urquhart when he ran out of ideas for the county science fair. Dr Urquhart wrote back "a stack of ideas" to Ebright that won him many prizes. Another influence was his college room-mate, James-R-Wong, who helped Ebright a great deal. In addition, his social studies teacher at school, Richard A. Weiherer, too opened a variety of new ideas for Ebright.

Q4. Do you agree with the statement that Ebright had all the ingredients that make one an expert scientist?

I certainly agree with the statement that Ebright had all the ingredients that make one an expert scientist. In order to become

an efficient scientist, one must have a healthy competitive spirit. One must also be able to work untiringly. A scientist must possess the will to learn from failures and the will to win by the dint of hard work. A potential scientist must also have a first-rate mind coupled with curiosity to explore the unknown areas of knowledge. He must also be calm and composed enough not to be distracted or discouraged by failures. The biographical sketch "The Making of a Scientist" reveals that Ebright had all these qualities. He displayed a curious temperament and a determined inclination right in his childhood. His ability to collect all the varieties of butterflies found around his vicinity when he was a second grade student, is an example that proves this statement. Thus, Ebright's final growth as an exceptional scientist was due to the fact that he possessed all the ingredients necessary to make one an expert scientist.

Q5. "Hobbies are a stepping stone to innovative ideas." Elaborate with reference to "The Making of a Scientist".

"The Making of a Scientist" gives an extensive account of the journey of Richard Ebright as a scientist. The foundation of Ebright's scientific temperament lay in the hobbies that he pursued during his childhood. Since he was the only child who grew up in a small place where much could not be done, he developed the hobby of collecting things. This hobby shaped his interest in a variety of fields like rocks, fossils, coins and even stars. He would spend entire evenings in the company of his mother who would find such work for him through which he could learn things. This interesting use of time developed in him a liking for knowledge and he started learning more and more. His hobby to collect things helped him in the various projects that he took up like collecting and tagging butterflies for an eminent scientist like Dr Urquhart. These hobbies gradually led to Ebright's innovative ideas about the theory on the life of cells.

Q6. Which different experiments/projects of Ebright in high school won him prizes in the county and international science fairs?

When in High School, Ebright undertook different projects on insects at the suggestion of Dr Urquhart that won him many prizes at the county and international science fairs.

For his eighth grade project, Ebright carried out experiments to find out the reason behind the viral disease that caused the death of nearly all monarch caterpillars every few years. Although he did not get any results from this experiment, but he won the prize for having tried the experiment.

Next year, Ebright took up a project to verify and test the theory that the viceroy butterfly copies the monarch. Ebright's efforts resulted in the finding that starlings did not like ordinary food, but ate monarchs greedily. This project won him the first prize in the zoology division and an overall third in the county science fair.

Ebright's project during his second year in high school was to find out the purpose behind the twelve gold spots on a monarch pupa. Ebright and a fellow student conducted experiments to show that the spots produced hormones which helped the butterfly in its proper and complete development. This project won him the first place in the county fair and an entry into the International Science and Engineering fair where he was placed third in the zoology department.

As a high school junior, Ebright continued his advanced experiments on the monarch pupa and his project won first place at the International science fair. In his senior year, he grew cells from a monarch's wing in a culture to show that cells would divide and develop into normal butterfly wing scales only if they were fed the hormone from the gold spots. This project won him the first place for zoology at the International Fair.

7. The Necklace

(Guy De Maupassant)

ABOUT THE STORY

Introduction

"The Necklace" describes the unfortunate disaster that befalls a lower middle class woman who was never content with who she was and what she had. She always felt sad at the absence of a lavish lifestyle and succumbed to this urge one day. She borrowed a diamond necklace from a rich friend in order to attend a ball. Unfortunately, she lost this piece of jewellery and had to undergo a difficult struggle to compensate this loss.

Summary

Madame Matilda Loisel is a very pretty and charming woman. She feels that she is born to enjoy all delicacies and luxuries of life. Unfortunately she is too poor to afford her rich dreams, so she suffers constantly, lamenting her destiny.

Married to Loisel, a clerk at the Board of Education, Matilda makes her life more miserable by comparing her humble reality with her dream to live a life of affluence and luxury. She dreams of adorning herself with exquisite dresses but in reality she has "neither frocks nor jewels, nothing".

Her husband cares for her and tries to cheer her up by admiring the little blessings of their ordinary life. One day, he brings to her an invitation to a party from the Minister of Public Instruction. But Matilda feels even more miserable on getting this invite. She fumes as she does not find any of her dresses suitable enough for the grand occasion. Her husband does not wish to miss this opportunity, so he readily parts with 400 francs that he had saved for a hunting gun, so that Matilda could buy herself a party dress.

A few days before the ball-party Loisel notices that Matilda has a gloomy appearance. He asks her the reason and she reveals that she does not have a decent piece of jewellery to match the gown. He advises her to wear some natural flowers but Matilda does not like this advice. Her husband then suggests that she can borrow the jewellery from her rich friend Madame Forestier. Finding this to be a good idea, Matilda goes to her friend the next day and shares her problem. The good Madame Forestier offers the entire box of jewels to Matilda so that she may take a piece of her choice. After examining and admiring the collection, Matilda finally borrows a superb necklace of diamonds.

An elegant, gracious, smiling and joyful Matilda reaches the ball dressed in her new dress adorned by the diamond necklace. Her charm and beauty draws the attention of everyone in that party. Matilda enjoys all the attention while her husband waits patiently in one of the little salons. The couple leaves for home at four o'clock in the morning. They have difficulty in finding a carriage for the homeward journey and are really tired by the time they reach home. When Matilda prepares to go to bed, she notices to her horror that her necklace is missing.

A dismayed Loisel looks all over for the lost piece of jewellery but to no avail. Finally, he advises Matilda to write to her friend that she has broken the clasp of the necklace and that she would have it repaired. Loisel wanted to buy some time to replace the loss. At the Palais-Royal, he finds a replica of the lost piece, valued at forty thousand francs but available for thirty-six thousand. He borrows money and pools it with the eighteen thousand francs that he had inherited from his father. Then he goes and gets the new chaplet of diamonds. Matilda returns the jewellery to her friend and is relieved that the 'change' remains hidden.

However, a long and difficult period of struggle begins for the Loisel

couple. They drastically cut down their expenses and adopt an economical lifestyle to repay the debt. They send away the maid, change their lodgings, and rent some rooms in an attic. The next ten years, Matilda spends in utter poverty, want and misery. Her wrinkled face, unkempt hair and untidy clothes give her an ugly look.

One day, she happens to meet her old friend Mme Forestier. Years of hard work reflects in Matilda's appearance. Mme Forestier finds it difficult to recognize her and asks her the reason behind such a drastic change. Matilda accuses her for the hard times that she had seen and discloses the truth about the lost necklace. Then comes a rude shock of fate. A deeply touched Madame Forestier tells Matilda that the diamond necklace that she had lent her was actually a piece of cheap imitation jewellery worth not over 500 francs.

THEME

The first part of the story deals with the theme, 'If wishes were horses, beggars would ride'. Fate plays such a vital role in our lives that those who try to spend beyond their means, land up in deep trouble. Unrealistic aspirations bring frustration and discontentment. The latter half of the story brings out how adversity shapes an individual into a stronger and a mature human being. The choice to uphold her dignity motivates Matilda to repay the debt and live a hard life. But this experience makes her develop a sense of pride about her abilities and enhances her self-esteem.

MESSAGE

The story conveys the message of contentment. It is advisable to count one's blessings instead of yearning for false glory. Unreasonable desires can prove to be disastrous as it did in the case of the Liosels. Matilda had enough to live with dignity but her desire for the excesses and extravagance deprived her even of the little that she had. Therefore, her story gives us a message that one should live within one's means.

TITLE

The story revolves around the necklace that brought a drastic turning point in Loisels' life. Matilda's urge to look beautiful made her borrow the necklace from her friend. Its loss robbed her and her husband of their peace of mind. The loss of the necklace not only helped Matilda become a more sensible person but also made her stronger and more patient. The necklace is at the centre of action in the end also when Madame Forestier reveals to Matilda that her necklace was a fake one. A necklace that was supposed to give Matilda immense happiness proved to be a source of immense suffering for her. Hence "The Necklace" is the central point of the story and is an apt title.

CHARACTERS

Matilda Loisel

Pretty as a picture, Matilda is very graceful. Suitable for an affluent household but born into a family of clerks, she often sulks at her fate. Further, she is married to a petty clerk, M. Loisel who works in the office of the Board of Education and has modest earnings with which he is unable to fulfill the rich dreams of his wife. Indulging in self-pity, Matilda feels that life has been very unkind to her and circumstances have cheated her of what she deserves. She is simple but is unhappy because she is dissatisfied with what life has offered her.

This complaining nature controls all her actions. She constantly grumbles about her poverty and craves for riches, luxury, comfort and attention. Her dissatisfaction and self-pity makes her and her husband's life miserable.

However, she has some good traits too that get revealed during adverse circumstances. Once humbled and humiliated, Matilda bears her loss and misery heroically. Though unused to daily chores, she takes upon herself all the drudgery without complaining. She courageously bears the responsibility of helping her husband pay off

the debt and therefore tries her level best to make her contribution. Her quality of self-respect eventually makes her a very strong and tenacious woman.

Mr Loisel

A humble clerk in the Board of Education, Loisel is a contented person. He is quite happy being what he is - an ordinary, middle class man. He does not believe in putting up appearances and enjoys his simple food and has no shame in accepting his low position or meagre means. He is at peace with himself, his surroundings and life. He has simple desires and joys which he can afford to have within his limited resources. He is thankful for all the little graces, even the 'good potpie'.

A loving, caring and sacrificing husband, he adores his wife very much and gives up his desire to own a gun so that she may buy a new party dress. He even brings home for her a rare invitation to a ball at the Ministry. Practical and wise, he cuts his coat according to his cloth. He suggests to his wife to borrow some jewellery to wear for the party. He is very understanding and sets his priorities right. When the necklace is lost, he frantically searches for it without holding Matilda's vanity, immaturity or negligence responsible for the entire mess. A gentleman and a good human being, Loisel silently suffers for ten years without complaining even once.

Hence, Loisel comes out as an ideal man, who contributes wholeheartedly to his married life.

Madame Forestier

Madame Forestier was a comfortably rich lady but wealth had not made her arrogant. She was large-hearted and had retained her relationship with her school friend Matilda even though the latter was married to a clerk. The gap in their social and financial status never once made her feel the need to sever her friendship with Matilda. So much so, that she opened her entire jewellery box in front

of Matilda and asked her to take anything of her choice. Though rich, she did not flaunt her wealth. However, this clear-hearted person could be blunt if the other person took undue liberty. That is why, she coldly tells Matilda that she could have taken care to return her necklace in time. Later, her meeting with Matilda in the park shows her to be a well-mannered person as she addresses the 'plain good wife' (who is actually Matilda) politely. This tender-hearted person is deeply moved on realising that she was indirectly responsible for her friend's plight. Feeling genuinely bad for her friend, she instantly tells her the truth about the worth of the necklace.

Madame Forestier hence proves to be a true friend and a nice human being.

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

She was one of those pretty, young ladies, born as if through an error of destiny, into a family of clerks.

(a) Who is 'she' in these lines?

'She' here is Matilda Loisel, the chief character of the story "The Necklace".

(b) Why does the author call her birth 'an error of destiny'?

The author calls her birth 'an error of destiny' because Matilda was a charming and delicate young woman who ought to have been born in riches, whereas she was born into a poor family of clerks.

(c) What had destiny given her?

Destiny had given her a modest but respectable life as the wife of a clerk.

(d) Was she happy with her destiny? Why/Why not?

No, Matilda was not happy with her destiny because she aspired for a life of affluence and luxury.

(II)

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation spitefully upon the table murmuring, "What do you suppose I want with that?"

(a) Identify the husband and wife mentioned in these lines.

The husband mentioned in these lines is M. Loisel, the clerk at the Board of Education, and his wife is Mme. Matilda Loisel.

(b) Why had the husband hoped his wife to be delighted?

The husband had hoped his wife to be delighted because she now had an invitation to a grand party where she could enjoy herself in the company of the rich and affluent.

(c) Where had the invitation come from?

The invitation had come from the Minister of Public Instruction and his wife Madame George Ramponneau.

(d) Why did the wife throw the invitation at the table?

Matilda threw the invitation at the table because she felt that she would have to miss the occasion since she did not have an appropriate dress to wear to the party.

(III)

She reflected for some seconds thinking of a sum that she could ask for without bringing with it an immediate refusal and a frightened exclamation from the economical clerk.

(a) Who is 'she'? Who is the 'economical clerk'?

'She' is Matilda and the 'economical clerk' is her husband Mr Loisel.

(b) Why did 'she' need money?

Matilda needed money to buy a nice dress for the party.

(c) Why was she worried that she might get an immediate refusal?

Matilda was worried that she might get an immediate refusal because her husband's income was meagre and he could not afford to part with a big amount.

(d) What 'sum' did she finally ask for?

Matilda finally asked for a sum of four hundred francs.

(IV)

Finally she said, in a hesitating voice, "I cannot tell exactly, but it seems to me that four hundred francs ought to cover it."

(a) Who is 'she' in this extract?

'She' in this extract is Matilda.

(b) Why was 'she' hesitant?

Matilda was hesitant because she knew that the amount she was about to ask her husband to give her for buying a dress might be difficult for him to give.

(c) What couldn't she tell exactly?

Matilda couldn't tell exactly how much her new dress would cost.

(d) What is 'it' that 'she' wanted to cover with four hundred francs?

Matilda wanted to cover the cost of her new dress with four hundred francs.

(V)

When they were in the street, they found no carriage; and they began to seek for one, hailing the coachmen whom they saw at a distance.

(a) Who are 'they'?

'They' are Matilda and her husband M. Loisel.

(b) Why were 'they' in the street?

They were in the street because they were returning home after the ball had got over.

(c) Why didn't 'they' find any carriage?

They did not find any carriage because it was an odd time, four o'clock early in the morning, to find one.

(d) When and what type of carriage did they finally get?

They finally got an old carriage that one sees in Paris after nightfall. They got it after having walked some distance from the venue of the ball.

(VI)

He said, "Write to your friend that you have broken the clasp of the necklace and that you will have it repaired. That will give us time."

(a) Who is the speaker of these lines? Who is he talking to?

The speaker here is M. Loisel. He is talking to his wife Matilda.

(b) Name the friend being talked about here.

The friend being talked about here is Mme Forestier, Matilda's friend from her school days at the convent.

(c) Which 'necklace' did he wish to get repaired?

Loisel wished to get repaired the necklace that his wife had borrowed from her friend, Mme Forestier.

(d) Why did the speaker want time?

M. Loisel wanted time because the original necklace was lost and he required time to either find it or to get its replacement.

(VII)

Her friend did not recognise her and was astonished to be so familiarly addressed by this common personage. She stammered, "But, Madame – I do not know – you must be mistaken –"

(a) Who is the 'friend' and whom did she fail to recognize?

The friend is Mme Forestier and she failed to recognise Matilda.

(b) Why did the 'friend' stammer?

She stammered because she was confused about the identity of the person who had addressed her with such familiarity.

(c) Why did the 'friend' fail to recognise the other person?

Mme Forestier failed to recognise Matilda because hard work and a tough life of ten years had taken its toll on her appearance.

(d) How did the other person react when he/she was not recognised?

Matilda reacted with confidence and self-pride when she was not recognized by Mme Forestier.

(VIII)

"I returned another to you exactly like that. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it."

(a) Who is the speaker here and whom is he/she talking to?

The speaker here is Matilda Loisel and she is talking to her rich friend Mme. Forestier.

(b) What does 'that' refer to in the above extract?

'That' refers to the diamond necklace which had been borrowed by Matilda from Mme. Forestier to wear at the minister's ball.

(c) Who are 'us'? What did they have to pay for?

'Us' are Matilda and her husband M. Loisel. They had to pay for the debt of eighteen thousand francs which they had taken to buy the replica of the diamond necklace to be returned to Mme. Forestier.

(d) Why did it take ten years for them to pay?

It took ten years for Matilda and her husband to pay the debt because it was a huge amount for a middle class couple like the Loisels who struggled to pay it slowly.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 – 40 words each)

Q1. What kind of a person is Mme. Loisel? Why is she always unhappy?

Or

'She was simple, but she was unhappy'. Why was Matilda so unhappy?

Matilda was the kind of person who was not content with what life had given. She felt that her beauty and grace deserved delicacies and luxuries. She was unhappy to live a simple life within the limited means provided by her husband, who was a petty clerk.

Q2. "All these things tortured and angered her." What all tortured and angered Matilda?

Matilda had a general dissatisfaction with life. She expected a life of affluence and luxury but had to live in want and poverty. Her poor apartment, shabby walls and worn chairs tortured and angered her all the time and made her suffer incessantly.

Q3. How was Matilda different from the women of her rank? What sort of dreams did she have?

Unlike the women of her rank, Matilda looked very pretty, elegant and graceful. She dreamt of elegant dinners, shining silver, exquisite food served in marvellous dishes, jewels, dresses and every other luxury that money could buy.

Q4. Why did Matilda marry a petty clerk although she felt that she was born for delicacies and luxuries?

Matilda married a petty clerk although she felt that she was born for delicacies and luxuries because she was born into a family of clerks. With her humble family background, she did not have any means of becoming known, or getting dowry, or any chance of marrying a rich or a distinguished person.

Q5. Why did Madame Loisel avoid visiting her friend Madame Forestier?

Or

Why did Matilda not like to visit her former schoolmate?

Or

Why did Matilda suffer every time she met Mme Forestier?

Madame Loisel avoided visiting her friend Madame Forestier because her riches made her experience despair and disappointment over her own mediocre life. Every visit to her rich friend's place made her unhappy and she wept on returning home.

Q6. Why do you think Matilda's husband was elated to get the invitation to the Minister's ball?

Or

What did Matilda's husband bring home one evening? Why was he greatly elated?

Or

What surprise did Matilda's husband give her one evening?

Matilda's husband brought home one evening a surprise invitation to a prestigious ball-party at the Minister's house. This invitation made him elated because only a few selected employees were invited and he thought that it would make Matilda happy to attend such a grand party.

Q7. How did Matilda react to the invitation to the ball party? Why did this reaction upset her husband?

Matilda was so irritated and annoyed to see the invitation to the minister's ball party that she angrily threw away the invitation card and began to sob unconsolably. This impulsive reaction of her wife astonished her husband Mr Loisel, who had expected Matilda to be extremely happy at having been invited to such a grand party. He stood in silence, absolutely shocked at the sight of his weeping wife.

Q8. Why was Matilda reluctant to go to the ball?

Matilda was reluctant to go to the Minister's ball party because she felt that none of her dresses were suitable enough to be worn at such a fine occasion. She feared that absence of an appropriate costume would reveal her poor status and cause embarrassment.

Q9. How did Loisel react on learning that Matilda needed four hundred francs for a new dress?

Loisel turned a little pale on learning that Matilda needed four hundred francs for a new dress. Nevertheless, he agreed to give her the money that he had saved to buy a gun to be able to join some hunting parties the following summer.

Q10. Why did Matilda seem disturbed and anxious even after having bought a new dress for the ball?

Despite getting a pretty dress, Matilda was dissatisfied as she now wanted suitable jewellery to wear with it. So her behaviour was strangely disturbed, stressed and sad. She did not wish to go to the ball with a poverty-stricken look.

Q11. Why did Matilda reject her husband's suggestion to wear natural flowers to the party?

Matilda rejected her husband's suggestion to wear natural flowers to the party because she was not convinced by this suggestion. She believed that wearing flowers would make her appearance shabby and she would be humiliated in the midst of rich women.

Q12. Why did Matilda utter a cry of joy when her husband suggested Mme. Forestier's name? Or

What suggestion made by Loisel did Matilda like? Why?

Matilda was anxious because she did not have a suitable piece of jewellery to match her new dress. So, when her husband

suggested her to borrow some jewels from her childhood friend Mme Forestier, Matilda uttered a cry of joy. She was confident that her rich friend would gladly lend her some fine jewellery.

Q13. From whom did Matilda borrow a necklace and why?

Matilda borrowed a necklace from her childhood friend Mme. Forestier. She borrowed it because she wanted to wear it with her new dress and project herself as a wealthy woman.

Q14. How did Mme. Forestier respond to Matilda's request to borrow her jewellery?

On reaching Mme Forestier's house, Matilda related her story of distress to her friend. A generous Mme. Forestier responded by going to her closet, taking out a large jewel-case and offering Matilda to choose what she liked.

Q15. Which jewel did Matilda finally choose from Mme Forestier's jewel-case? Did she like it?

Matilda took a superb necklace of diamonds from Mme Forestier's jewel-case. She was ecstatic to take it because her hands trembled as she took it out from its black satin box and placed it about the throat.

Q16. How do you know that Matilda was a great success at the ball?

Matilda was a great success at the ball as she looked prettiest of all in her new dress and a diamond necklace. She looked elegant and graceful when she smiled with joy. All the men noticed her and she was sought after by everyone.

Q17. What did M. Loisel do while Matilda enjoyed the ball?

M. Loisel waited half asleep in one of the little salons after midnight with three other gentlemen whose wives were enjoying at the party. He waited there till four o'clock in the morning when Matilda returned to him after the ball.

Q18. As her husband covered her with the wrap after the ball, Matilda wanted to escape immediately. Why?

Or

Why did Matilda hurry away not waiting for her husband to call a cab for returning home?

Matilda's wrap was an ordinary one that contrasted with the elegance of her ball dress and revealed her actual social status. She did not wish the rich women at the ball to notice it, so she hurried away and did not wait for her husband to call a cab for returning home.

Q19. When did the Loiseles discover that the borrowed diamond necklace had been lost?

Or

In spite of being a great success at the ball, Matilda could not enjoy her success for long. Why was it so?

After returning from the ball, Matilda stepped into her house and stood before the mirror to have one last look at her glorious self. When she removed the wraps from her shoulders, she discovered that she had lost the borrowed diamond necklace. This shocking discovery instantly ruined Matilda's success at the ball.

Q20. After the Loiseles discovered that they had lost the necklace, they were thunderstruck. How did they handle this situation?

Or

Describe the efforts made by the Loiseles to try and find the lost necklace.

After losing the necklace, the Loiseles searched for it frantically in the dress, folds of the cloak and the pockets. Mr. Loisel then searched it over the track where they had gone on foot. Then he went to the police, the cab offices and put an ad in newspapers offering a reward.

Q21. What did M. Loisel suggest to his wife after all efforts to find the lost necklace failed?

When all efforts to find the lost necklace failed, Loisel suggested his wife to write to her friend that she had broken the clasp of the necklace and that she would have it repaired. He suggested this in order to buy time to replace the borrowed piece.

Q22. How were the Loisels able to find a similar necklace? How much did it cost? Or

Where did the Loisels finally find a replacement of the lost necklace? How much did it cost?

The Loisels were able to find a replacement of the lost necklace in a shop of the Palais-Royal. Here they found a chaplet of diamonds which seemed to them exactly like the one they had lost. The cost of this new piece was forty thousand francs but they could get it for thirty-six thousand francs.

Q23. How did the Loisels arrange for the money to replace the lost necklace?

The Loisels required thirty-six thousand francs to buy the replica of the lost necklace. Although an enormous amount for them, they pooled eighteen thousand francs, which Mr. Loisel had inherited from his father, with eighteen thousand, borrowed from usurers and many other lenders.

Q24. What did Matilda fear while returning the necklace to Mme Forestier?

While returning the necklace to Mme Forestier, Matilda feared that her friend would open the jewel-box and might notice the substitution. She might say something unpleasant to her and think of her to be a robber.

Q25. How long did it take the Loisels to repay the debt? How did Matilda face the adverse times? Or

How did Matilda spend ten years of her life since the day she returned from the ball?

It took the Loisels ten long years to repay the debt. During that time Matilda faced adversity heroically. She sent away the maid, did all the household chores herself and rented some rooms in an attic. She dressed modestly and saved every little bit of money haggling with the grocer and butcher to help her husband repay the debt.

Q26. What did M. Loisel do to repay the debt?

M. Loisel worked overtime to repay the debt. He put the books of some merchants in order in the evenings and often copied at night at five sous a page. He did this for ten years and repaid the entire debt.

Q27. Briefly describe the condition of Mrs. Loisel, ten years after she had lost the necklace. Or

What effect did ten years of hardship and poverty have on Matilda's appearance?

Ten years of hard work and toiling changed Matilda from a pretty, graceful, well dressed lady into a rough woman with badly dressed hair, away skirts, red hands and a loud voice. She lost all her charm and could not be recognised easily.

Q28. What type of changes marked the emotional status of Matilda after ten years of hard work?

Ten years of hard work made Matilda a strong woman emotionally. Now, she neither indulged in any self-pity nor had any grudge against fate. Rather, she felt proud of having survived the crisis. She got over her complexes and carried herself with an air of self-respect.

Q29. Why did Mme. Forestier not recognise her friend Matilda towards the end of the story?

Excessive and endless drudgery of ten years had robbed Matilda of all her charm, beauty and sophistication. She got transformed from an elegant and pretty woman to a coarse and old housewife. This radical change was so pronounced that Jeanne Forestier could not recognise her friend Matilda.

Q30. Why was Matilda moved when she saw Madame Forestier in the Champs-Elysees?

The sight of Madame Forestier looking still young, pretty and attractive probably reminded Matilda of what she had lost in terms of her own youth and beauty. This affected her as she had once dreamt of a similar life for herself.

Q31. Where did Matilda meet Mme Forestier ten years later? What did she confess to her?

Ten years later Matilda met Mme Forestier on a Sunday as she was taking a walk in the Champs-Elysees. She confessed to Mme Forestier that she had lost the diamond necklace which she had borrowed from her. The one she had returned was a replica of the original.

Q32. At the end of the story, why did Matilda smile with pride while talking to Mme. Forestier?

Matilda smiled with pride while talking to Mme. Forestier as she was happy at having been able to pay back the huge debt. She was pleased at her new found confidence and strength with which she had countered her struggle.

Q33. What is the twist at the end of the story "The Necklace"?

The story "The Necklace" ends with a twist about the real worth of the lost necklace. Matilda had believed that the exquisite piece was worth thousands of francs while her friend revealed to her that the necklace was actually a fake one and was not worth over five hundred francs.

Q34. What could have happened to Matilda if she had confessed to her friend that she had lost the necklace?

A confession to Mrs. Forestier might have put Matilda in a very awkward and embarrassing position. However, since the true worth of the necklace could have been easily paid by the Loiseles, they would have been spared ten years of drudgery.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

Q1. Compare the kind of life Matilda aspired for and the kind of life she was forced to live.

Delicacies and luxuries were what Matilda felt she had been born for. She yearned for riches and a life of luxury where elegant dinners and shining silver would be part of her life. She thought of exquisite food served in marvellous dishes.

However, Matilda's real life was ordinary and middle class. It was as if fate had cheated her and had deprived her of an affluent life. She was born into a family of clerks and was married to a petty clerk. Her dwelling was a modest place with bare walls, shabby furniture and limited means. She was compelled to eat simple food served in ordinary dishes. It was a sad, unfulfilled and dissatisfied life for someone like Matilda who always yearned for wealth and comfort.

Q2. The intoxicating success of one night cost Madame Loisel drudgery for ten years. Discuss.

Or

"We should be content with what life gives us." Discuss this statement in light of the story "The Necklace."

Matilda was not content with what life had given her. She aspired for a life of riches and luxury. So, determined to shine at

the ministerial ball, she borrowed a diamond necklace from her friend Mme Forestier. This brought her a brief moment of glory when she was the centre of attraction at the ball. As desired by her, she was noticed and sought after by everyone.

However, her dream was abruptly shattered with the discovery that the borrowed necklace had been lost. All efforts to find it failed and finally she and her husband were forced to take huge debts in order to purchase a similar necklace. The repayment of the debt took ten long years of backbreaking labour which cost Matilda her youth, beauty and grace.

Hence, the intoxicating success of one night cost Madame Loisel ten long years of drudgery. Had she been content with what life had given her, she would have been spared of the trauma.

Q3. "Vanity comes before a fall." Elaborate on this statement with reference to Matilda Loisel.

Matilda Loisel was a woman who took great pride in her looks. As a result, she felt that fate had cheated her and that she actually deserved a life of luxury and wealth, matching her beauty and grace. It was this dissatisfaction with her economic status that drove her to borrow a valuable necklace from a friend to wear to a ball. She was not content to use natural flowers. Her vanity demanded some real jewels to adorn her. The subsequent loss of the necklace and her vanity that refused to let her face humiliation at the hands of a friend, led to a life of poverty and drudgery. Ten years of hard work and worry followed which deprived her of the very looks and grace that she had once prided herself in. The irony in this situation leads one to agree with the saying, "Vanity comes before a fall".

Q4. How did the Loisels arrange money to buy the replica of the lost diamond necklace?

Matilda discovered the loss of necklace minutes after reaching home from the ball. She and her husband searched frantically for it for a week and then lost all hope. However, M. Loisel decided to replace it. The couple found a chaplet of diamonds in a shop of the Palais-Royal, which seemed to them exactly like the one they had lost. This piece was valued at forty thousand francs but they could get it for thirty-six thousand. Loisel had eighteen thousand francs which his father had left him. He took that money and borrowed the rest eighteen thousand francs from usurers and money lenders. He then paid that money to the jeweller and got the new necklace. This new piece was returned by Matilda to Mme. Forestier without revealing the truth about the original necklace.

Q5. Madame Loisel played her part heroically in the face of adversities.

Comment.

Or

How did the Loisels face the challenge of repaying the debt?

Or

What changes occurred in the Loisels' lifestyle after the necklace was lost?

In the face of adversity, Madame Loisel rose to the occasion. From being a dissatisfied dreamer, she became a hardworking woman. She gave up the services of a maid and moved with her husband into some rented rooms in an attic. She took upon herself all the backbreaking housework. She cooked, cleaned dishes, washed the soiled linen, carried refuse to the street each morning and brought up the water. She gave up fine dressing and did her own shopping, bargaining hard for every sou that she could save.

M. Loisel, on his part, worked hard in the evenings making up tradesman's accounts. At night, he even copied manuscripts for a mere five sous a page.

This remarkable transformation in Matilda was indeed heroic. Her behaviour during this tough time in life revealed that she had humbly accepted her fault and was determined to rise again with dignity. She did not grudge or grumble even once and took the challenge of repaying the debt with all her might.

Q6. Matilda's husband earns the respect and sympathy of the reader through his quiet, unassuming nature. Explain.

Mr. Loisel is a quiet, unassuming, and a warm person who tolerates the tantrums of his wife without getting annoyed. Kind, considerate and affectionate, he tries to please her and brings home an invitation for the ministerial ball. He readily parts with the money that he had saved to buy himself a gun, so that his dear wife can buy a new dress to wear to the ball. This generosity and maturity endears him to the reader. He earns even more respect and sympathy of the readers when he waits patiently in the salon while Matilda enjoys the party. Above all, he never once shouts at his wife for the loss of the necklace or the subsequent life of hardships. Instead, he readily contributes eighteen thousand francs towards the payment of the necklace and raises loans at exorbitant rates to arrange the exact price of the diamond necklace. Later on, he does odd jobs to earn extra to repay the loans. All these qualities win over the reader's respect and admiration for Loisel.

Q7. What role does fate play in the story "The Necklace"?

Fate plays a significant role in the story "The Necklace." The first stroke of irony is played by fate when a pretty and charming Matilda, who is worthy of palaces, riches, luxury and comforts is born in a family of clerks.

Fate strikes again when on growing up she gets a petty clerk for a husband. But the worst stroke of fate is yet to come. The

'diamond' necklace she borrows for a moment's glory at the ball is lost and she and her husband are forced to live a lifetime of poverty, want and misery as they repay the loans they had to raise to make good the loss. Yet again, fate has the last laugh when Madame Forestier reveals to her that the necklace for which the couple ruined ten precious years of their life was imitation jewellery worth not more than five hundred francs.

- Q8. Do you think telling the truth to her friend would have saved Matilda and Loisel from a lot of physical and mental pain?**

Or

What would have happened to Matilda if she had confessed to her friend that she had lost her necklace? *(Textual)*

Of course, telling the truth to her friend would have saved Matilda and Loisel from a lot of physical and mental pain. It was quite likely that Mme. Forestier, who was a very kind and understanding person, would not have let her school-time friend to undergo distress. She would have allowed her a comfortable period of time to repay the loss. Besides, confession would have led to the revelation of the true cost of the lost necklace.

Another possibility could have been that Madame Forestier would have refused any further help to Matilda. She could also have developed mistrust for her middle class friend. Still, it would have been better than having undergone an arduous life that cost Matilda her youth and gave her husband back-breaking struggle. Therefore, being honest would have been the best policy in this case.

- Q9. What was the cause of Matilda's ruin? How could she have avoided it?**

The cause of Matilda's ruin was her desire to live beyond her means. She may not have got a luxurious life but she had dignity

and respect within the modest income of her husband. The delicacies that she yearned for brought her immense suffering and unhappiness. Her aspiration to be rich blinded her to the genuine love of her husband. She sought happiness in expensive dresses and exquisite diamonds.

She could have avoided all this by staying content with what destiny had given her. Had she followed her husband's advice to wear fresh flowers to the party, her life would have been different. She would not have to undergo backbreaking hardships to repay the debt taken for buying the replica of the lost diamond necklace. She would have also saved her husband the misery of working overtime. Her health, beauty and charm too would have remained with her for a longer time.

Q10. Imagine you are Madame Forestier. Today evening you happened to come across Matilda who is totally changed beyond recognition. She gave you an account of how she and her husband had sacrificed ten precious years of their lives to make up for the loss of your necklace that they had thought to be a real diamond necklace. Write a diary entry describing your reaction.

Friday, March 20, 1913

8.30 p.m.

Dear Diary

Today, I was taken by surprise when a crude, strong, hard and rough woman of a poor household with badly dressed hair and red hands approached me in Champs-Elysees where I had gone for a walk. She addressed me in a familiar tone calling me 'Jeanne'. When I tried to recognise her, to my great shock and disbelief, she told me that she was Matilda. I stood there dumbfounded. How poor and miserable she looked!

Poor Matilda narrated to me how ten years of her and her

husband's lives had to be sacrificed in order to substitute the necklace that she had borrowed from me and had lost after the ball. Mistaking that fake necklace for a real one, they had spent thirty-six thousand francs to buy its replacement! The loan that they raised to buy the replacement took ten years to be repaid. A life of poverty and the back-breaking labour during this period robbed Matilda of her youth, vitality, joy and grace.

I felt tremendously sorry for my dear friend and was deeply moved by her plight. When I told her that my necklace was fake and was not worth more than five hundred francs, she stood shocked like a stone. I had no words to console her.

However I have decided to return the diamond necklace to her the first thing in the morning. Of course, I cannot reverse the pain and suffering she has seen but by selling the real diamond necklace, she can certainly have some comfort in the years to come.

Jeanee

□□□

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8. The Hack Driver

(Sinclair Lewis)

ABOUT THE STORY

Introduction:

The story "The Hack Driver" is an account of a master-trickster, Oliver Lutkins, who isn't educated but can give the highly educated a run for their money. It's a hilarious tale that puts a city man against a country man and shows that academic degrees do not guarantee smartness. Lutkins easily befools the lawyer, earns profit out of him and packs him off empty-handed. His tactfulness can be seen in the way he makes the young lawyer believe him. He does not let the lawyer doubt even once that Lutkins and Bill is the same person.

Summary:

The narrator, a law-graduate with honours, works as a junior assistant clerk in a distinguished law firm. Here he undergoes the unpleasant training period where his work is restricted to serving summons on people. This reveals the unpleasant side of city life to him and he even considers returning to his native town where he can work as a real lawyer.

One day, he is sent to New Mullion, a village some forty miles away, to serve summons on a man called Oliver Lutkins. This fellow is required as a witness in a case but has been ignoring letters of the law firm.

On reaching the railway station, the narrator is disappointed to see the muddy streets and ill-maintained rows of wooden shops in New Mullion. The only saving grace is a delivery man who is about forty, red-faced, cheerful, a bit plump and dressed in "well-worn" clothes. The narrator finds him to be a friendly and likeable fellow. He tells him the purpose of his visit and tries to sound secretive about it. This delivery man claims that he knows Lutkins very well and offers to

drive the narrator round the village in his hack to help in locating Lutkins. A bargain is struck at two dollars an hour and the narrator discloses his plan to board the afternoon train back to city.

The delivery man brings his hack, which is more of a black box on wheels. The narrator is instantly touched by the hack-driver's friendly warmth and reveals to him that he is there to serve summons to Lutkins. The hack driver proposes to begin their search from Fritz's shop where Lutkins might have gone to try his hand at a game of poker. He very proudly tells the narrator that his business is called "William Magnuson Fancy Carting and Hacking," and that people in the village call him Bill Magnuson. As the hunt for Lutkins progresses, Bill keeps talking about Lutkin's skill at being dishonest and gradually impresses upon the narrator that it is going to be extremely difficult to find him.

Bill leads the narrator first into Fritz's and instructs him to stay behind, lest Lutkins should become suspicious and escape. Bill inquires about Lutkins from Fritz who glances at the narrator and answers that Lutkins was at his shop a little while ago, but has probably gone over to Gustaff's for a shave. At Gustaff's too, the narrator lingers at the door but they do not find Lutkins. The owner is annoyed at Lutkins as the latter owes him a dollar and thirty-five cents. However, one of the customers tells the hack driver and the narrator that he has seen Lutkins walking down the Main Street.

Bill guesses that Lutkins has probably gone to Gray's for a shave, where he is again missed by only five minutes. They look for him at the poolroom where they are told that Lutkins had just gone to buy a packet of cigarettes. Thus, every time they are very close to getting Lutkins, but miss him by inches.

After some time, the narrator feels hungry and suggests having lunch at a restaurant. Bill turns down the offer and convinces the narrator to

bring lunch for him from his house. He charges him half a dollar for that. The duo sits atop Wade's Hill and enjoys the view while having lunch. The narrator understands that Bill was making some money in this manner but does not mind it as he too was going to bill his firm for all this expenditure. As they enjoy their lunch at the hill side, Bill gives details of the people of New Mullion and makes fun of a few of them. Such a lively description of the countryside catches the narrator's fancy and he virtually falls in love with it.

Once the lunch is over, they again resume their hunt for Lutkins. A friend of Lutkins believes that Lutkins has gone over to his mother, three miles north. Bill warns the narrator to be wary of Lutkins' mother whom he describes as "about nine feet tall and four feet thick," rough tempered woman, fully trained in the art of 'swearing'.

Lutkins' mother denies having any knowledge of her son's whereabouts. Bill then demands to search the house and claims that they have a legal right to do so. The woman goes to the kitchen and comes out with a hot iron rod and frightens both the men forcing them to beat a hasty retreat. However, they succeed in peering at all the windows as the house is only single storey high. They also search for Lutkins in the barn and the stable but do not find him. All the while, the woman, with murder in her eyes, laughs at them.

By this time, the narrator's return journey is due and he and Bill head towards the railway station. The narrator is so overwhelmed by this visit that he keeps thinking about the simplicity and friendliness of the people of New Mullion. He thinks he has found a treasure and has discovered a new way of life. He also views the possibility of settling down there to practice law and is not at all sorry for not having found Lutkins.

The next morning everybody in the office is annoyed with the narrator and he feels that his "legal career has come to an end", even before

commencing. He is again sent back to New Mullion and a person, who knows Lutkins, accompanies him. The narrator feels sorry as the presence of another man with him would deprive him of the opportunity to loaf around the village one more time.

At New Mullion station, the narrator notices Bill standing near his cart, talking and laughing with Lutkins' mother. He finds this strange but anyhow points out 'Bill' to the man who accompanies him. He tells him that Bill is the person who had helped him in looking for Lutkins. His colleague exposes the narrator's foolishness by instantly telling him that 'Bill' was none other than Lutkins himself. When the narrator serves summons to Lutkins, the latter laughs at him. He mockingly tells the narrator to have coffee with their neighbour because that was the only family that had missed meeting the 'city-boy' the previous day.

THEME

Through the story "The Hack Driver," Sinclair Lewis wants to dismiss the commonly held belief that the illiterate villagers are innocent, simple and unintelligent as compared to city people. He conveys that deception and smartness are as much a part of villagers as of city dwellers. These seemingly simple looking folks can outsmart and outwit even the highly educated and qualified intelligent men from the cities. The entire story revolves round the idea that one can find all kinds of people at all places. Villagers can have tricksters like Lutkins and cities can have simpletons like the narrator.

A subtheme of the story highlights the view that what really matters in life is experience, which is a great teacher. The simple looking and uneducated Lutkins proves to be smarter than the narrator since the former has more experience.

MESSAGE

"The Hack Driver" gives us the message that appearances are

deceptive and fully endorses Shakespeare's view that "a man may smile and smile and yet be a villain." However, the writer conveys the message very subtly and artistically.

The seemingly simple, innocent and helpful villagers in the story are actually too crafty for the narrator to handle. The young city lawyer forms a very positive opinion about the villagers when he meets them first. He even decides to move to New Mullion and begin practicing law in this small place inhabited by wonderful people. However, he later discovers that all those he had met had befooled him. Thus, the story clearly imparts the message that one should not form opinions about others based on their face value.

ENDING OF THE STORY

The story "The Hack Driver" has the typical "sting in the tail" ending. The final revelation for the young narrator that the hack driver is Lutkins himself, must have hit him hard. However, the sting is very deep for Lutkins also as the trickster never dreamt of being discovered the very next day in such an abrupt manner. However the manner in which the climax about Lutkins' identity unfolds is hilarious and amusing.

TITLE

"The Hack Driver" is an apt title for the story as it is the hack driver around whom the whole story revolves and who remains the centre of all action and attraction through the narrative. He is the first person whom the narrator encounters on reaching New Mullion. He is the one who offers to take him around the town in his hack. He successfully lures the simpleton narrator away from Lutkins in his hack and befools him easily. Thus, it is the hack driver and his tricks that are at the helm of the story. So, "The Hack Driver" is a befitting title.

HUMOUR

Sinclair Lewis has a knack of creating humour out of ordinary situations. He employs a peculiar and uncommon manner of description to generate this type of humour. While describing the delivery man, the author's observation that he was "thick about the middle" evokes laughter. Likewise the reader feels amused by the expression "large box on wheels" for the hack. Bill's comment about Lutkins that "he had a talent for dishonesty" too is an uncommon yet humorous expression. Again, the expression that Bill would have arrested Lutkins "respectfully, and jailed him with regret," make the reader smile.

The peculiarities of the people of New Mullion have also been described with a similar punch that forces the reader to laugh. The minister's wife singing the loudest at the church, when most in debt, and the lawyer not being able to "put on both a collar and a tie on the same day," in spite of his wife's best efforts, evoke laughter. The description of Lutkins' mother too is funny. Here the author takes the help of exaggeration to create humour. He describes the woman as 'nine feet tall and four feet thick'.

The last laugh of Lutkins at the young lawyer makes the reader laugh pityingly. Finally, when the entire confusion about Lutkins' identity is resolved, one really feels like having a hearty laugh at the manner in which an educated man is fooled by a country man.

CHARACTERS

Oliver Lutkins (Bill Magnuson)

Lutkins works as a delivery man at New Mullion station. He is about forty, red-faced, and rotund around the middle. He has a friendly and cheerful nature. He is good at winning strangers' confidence and, thus, very easily befriends the narrator. He is a shrewd and an intelligent man and very conveniently makes the narrator reveal to him the purpose of his visit.

He is quick-witted and on learning that the stranger has come to serve summons on him that he doesn't want to receive, he immediately makes a plan of hoodwinking him and sending him back empty-handed.

He is very sociable. Wherever he goes asking about Lutkins, everybody conspires with him and joins him in befooling the narrator. He is a master trickster as well as a perfect businessman. He masterminds the plan of the narrator's failure in his mission, and yet takes him on a ride around New Mullion charging two dollars an hour. He is fond of gambling and plays poker. In his own words, he is a very bad paymaster. In short, Lutkins is adept in the art of trickery and easily outsmarts an educated lawyer from a city.

The Narrator

As a student, the narrator was a hard working young man who graduated in law with honours. He is fresh from the college and is unfamiliar with the ways of the world. Currently, he is working as a trainee in a law firm of repute. He has been assigned the unpleasant task of serving summons on people in the city, which has made him conversant with the unpleasant side of city-life. He is occasionally beaten up by the people on whom he serves summons. That is why he does not like his job and very often thinks like a romantic idealist to flee to his home town to practise law.

During his visit to New Mullion, he exhibits his ignorance and lack of understanding about people. He trusts the first person he meets at the railway station and hires his services to trace Lutkins without cross-checking with anyone else. He is so inexperienced that he believes every lie that Bill tells him. He does not sense even once that missing Lutkins by few minutes at every point could not be a chance occurrence. He fails to see through Bill's plan and ends up becoming an object of ridicule.

However, his visit to New Mullion surely makes him a wiser man and he learns the basic lesson of not believing in appearances. Unfortunately, he learns it the hard way and thus earns the pity and sympathy of the reader.

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

I hated this unpleasant work, and the side of city life it revealed to me. I even considered fleeing to my hometown,...

(a) Identify the narrator of these lines.

The narrator of these lines is a young law graduate.

(b) Which work did the narrator find as 'unpleasant'?

The young lawyer found the work of serving summons to people in shady parts of the city as 'unpleasant'.

(c) Why did the narrator find his work to be 'unpleasant'?

The narrator found his work to be 'unpleasant' because his clients beat him up at times for serving summons to them.

(d) Why did the narrator consider fleeing to his hometown?

The young lawyer considered fleeing to his hometown because he wanted to actually practice law and not remain confined to doing unpleasant clerical tasks like serving summons.

(II)

He was so open and friendly that I glowed with the warmth of his affection. I knew, of course, that he wanted the business, but his kindness was real. I was glad the fare money would go to this good fellow.

- (a) **Who is the narrator here and whom does he call 'open and friendly'?**

The narrator here is a young law graduate and he calls the hack driver Bill Magnuson as 'open and friendly'.

- (b) **Was the kindness of the person being discussed 'real'?**

The kindness of Bill was not real because he was befooling the young lawyer by pretending to be friendly.

- (c) **What 'business' is being referred to here?**

The 'business' being referred to here is the fare that Bill was going to charge from the narrator for driving him around the place in his carriage.

- (d) **How much fare money was agreed upon?**

The fare money that was agreed upon was twelve dollars at the rate of two dollars an hour for six hours.

(III)

I loved him for this. By myself, I might never have found Lutkins. With the hack driver's knowing help, I was sure of getting my man.

- (a) **Who is 'him' in this extract?**

'Him' in this extract is the hack driver, Bill Magnuson.

- (b) **Why was the narrator not confident about finding Lutkins by himself?**

The narrator was not confident about finding Lutkins by himself because he had never seen Lutkins.

- (c) **What was the 'knowing help' offered by the hack driver?**

The 'knowing help' offered by the hack driver was his insightful views on Lutkins and his whereabouts.

- (d) **Did the narrator get his man with the help of the hack driver? Why/Why not?**

No, the narrator did not get his man with the help of the hack driver because the hack driver had befooled him into believing that Lutkins was a very difficult person to get hold of. Whereas, the hack driver himself was Lutkins.

(IV)

Fritz looked at me, hiding behind Bill. He hesitated, and then admitted, "Yes, he was in here a little while ago. Guess he's gone over to Gustaff's to get a shave."

(a) Who is Bill?

Bill is the hack driver who befools the narrator when he comes to New Mullion to serve summons on Oliver Lutkins.

(b) Why was the narrator hiding behind Bill?

The narrator was hiding behind Bill because the latter had instructed him to do so, lest Lutkins should become suspicious on seeing him and flee.

(c) What did Fritz admit?

Fritz admitted that Oliver Lutkins had been in his shop a little while ago.

(d) Why did Fritz hesitate before admitting?

Fritz hesitated before admitting because it took him a while to understand Bill's game who himself was Lutkins, but was still inquiring about Lutkins.

(V)

But he was no more dishonest than I. I charged the whole thing to the firm. But it would have been worth paying him myself to have his presence.

(a) Who is the narrator here? Who was 'no more' dishonest than himself?

The narrator here is the young lawyer from the city. Bill, the hack driver, was no more dishonest than the lawyer himself.

(b) Why does the narrator consider himself to be dishonest?

The narrator considered himself to be dishonest because he was charging unfairly from his law firm.

(c) Why would the narrator charge the whole thing to the firm?

The narrator would charge the whole thing to the law firm because he was in New Mullion on a task assigned to him by the firm.

(d) Why did the narrator think that it would have been worth to pay him out of his own pocket?

The narrator thought that it would have been worth to pay Bill out of his own pocket because he was deeply touched by Bill's helpful nature.

(VI)

She's about nine feet tall and four feet thick and quick as a cat, and she sure can talk. I'll bet Oliver heard that somebody's chasing him, and he's gone on there to hide behind his mother's skirts.

(a) Who is 'she' in this extract?

'She' is the mother of Oliver Lutkins.

(b) Who is giving this description and why?

Bill is giving this description to warn the narrator about the kind of person Lutkins' mother is.

(c) Who is Oliver and where does his mother live?

Oliver is the person the narrator is looking for to serve summons. His mother lives at a farm three miles north of New Mullion.

(d) Why does the speaker say that Oliver has gone to hide behind his mother's skirts?

The speaker Bill says this to mock Oliver's desperate attempt to escape from the young lawyer.

(VII)

I pictured an honest and happy life beyond the strict limits of universities and law firms. I was excited. I had found a treasure. I had discovered a new way life.

- (a) **Who is the narrator here? Where did he picture a new way of life for himself?**

The narrator here is the young lawyer from the city. He pictured a new way of life for himself in New Mullion.

- (b) **Who or what inspired the narrator to picture a 'new way of life'?**

The deep and richly human hack driver, Bill Magnuson and his slow-spoken, simple and wise neighbours along with the scenic beauty of New Mullion inspired the young lawyer to picture a new way of life.

- (c) **What was the 'treasure' found by the narrator?**

The 'treasure' found by the young lawyer was the prospective wealth of an honest and happy life in New Mullion amid simple and helpful people.

- (d) **Did the narrator finally discover a 'new way of life'?**

No, the young lawyer did not discover a new way of life because the true face of the conniving people of New Mullion was revealed to him on the next day itself.

(VIII)

I was ordered back to New Mullion, and with me went a man who had worked with Lutkins.

- (a) **Who was ordered back to New Mullion and by whom?**

The young lawyer was ordered back to New Mullion by the Chief of his law firm.

- (b) **Why was the speaker ordered back to New Mullion?**

The young lawyer was ordered back to New Mullion to serve summons on Lutkins because next morning the case was coming up in the court.

(c) Who was Lutkins?

Lutkins was a resident of New Mullion. He was required by the narrator's law firm as a witness in a case.

(d) Why was a man sent with the speaker to New Mullion?

A man, who had worked with Lutkins, was sent with the young lawyer to New Mullion to help in identifying Lutkins.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 – 40 words each)

Q1. What is the narrator's field of study? What type of work did he do after graduating?

The narrator's field of study is law. He graduated in law with honours and then worked as a junior assistant clerk in a reputed law firm. His work included the unpleasant task of serving summons, like a cheap private detective, in the dirty and shadowy corners of the city.

Q2. What were the narrator's views about his job? Or**Why did the narrator call his work as 'unpleasant'?**

The narrator didn't like his job as a junior assistant clerk in a law firm. This was so because there he was not taught to prepare any legal briefs but had to perform the cheap and unpleasant task of serving summons to people, who even beat him up at times.

Q3. Why did the narrator want to run away to his hometown?

The law firm that the narrator had joined for training gave him the unpleasant task of serving summons on people. On several occasions he was even beaten up by such people. So he considered fleeing to his hometown and practise like a real lawyer without undergoing the harsh training regime.

- Q4. Where was New Mullion? Why was the narrator happy to go there?**

New Mullion was a town, forty miles in the country. The narrator was happy to go there because he found his current job to be unpleasant while New Mullion offered him a promising change from the drudgery of his work in the city.

- Q5. Why was the lawyer sent to New Mullion? Or**

Why did the narrator have to go to New Mullion?

The lawyer was sent to New Mullion to serve summons to a person called Oliver Lutkins. This man was needed by the law firm as a witness in a case, but he had been ignoring all letters sent by the firm in this regard.

- Q6. How was New Mullion contrary to the narrator's expectations?**

Or

Why was the narrator disappointed on reaching New Mullion?

The narrator expected New Mullion to be a 'sweet and simple country village'. However, contrary to his expectations, he encountered 'rivers of mud' in its streets, with rows of wooden shops, either painted a sour brown, or bare of any paint at all.

- Q7. What was the only agreeable sight for the lawyer about New Mullion? Or**

How did the lawyer describe the delivery man's appearance?

Or

Describe the hack driver as the narrator first saw him.

The only agreeable sight for the lawyer about New Mullion was a delivery man at the station. This man later introduced himself to the narrator as the hack driver. He was about forty years old, red-faced, cheerful, and thick about the middle. His working clothes were dirty and well-worn. His demeanour was friendly and likeable.

- Q8. What did the hack driver tell the lawyer about Lutkins?**

The hack driver told the lawyer that Lutkins was a difficult man

to catch as he was always up to something. He also informed that Lutkins was not a bad man but he was a bad paymaster and cheated people. He further told that Lutkins was probably trying to start up a poker game in the back of Fritz's shop.

- Q9. Why did Bill offer to take the lawyer on a ride around New Mullion in his hack? Or**

How did the delivery man propose to help the lawyer? What were the charges?

Bill alias Lutkins was a seasoned trickster. He wanted not only to avoid being served the summons but also to take advantage of the lawyer's ignorance to make some money. So, he proposed to take the lawyer on a ride in his hack at two dollars an hour to all the places Lutkins was supposed to be hanging around.

- Q10. What was the narrator's first impression of the delivery man? Or**

Why was the narrator glad that the fare money would go to the delivery man?

The narrator found the delivery man to be so open and friendly that he glowed with the warmth of his affection. He found his kindness to be real and felt good that the fare money would go to such a good fellow.

- Q11. Why did the delivery man suggest that the lawyer keep out of sight at the Fritz's?**

The delivery man suggested that the lawyer keep out of sight at the Fritz's because, according to him, the lawyer was dressed in fancy clothes and this could make Lutkins suspicious and get away from him.

- Q12. Why did the narrator take the delivery man into confidence? What did he tell him?**

The narrator took the delivery man into confidence because he trusted his 'knowing help' and believed that he might never find

Lutkins on his own. He told him that he wanted to serve summons on Lutkins as he had refused to be a witness and give information to quickly settle the case.

Q13. What did the hack driver intend when he said, "Well, we'll give Brother Lutkins a little surprise"?

The hack driver's intention at this time was to mock the narrator's motive of finding Lutkins with the help of Lutkins himself. The surprise was actually meant for the narrator who was hoodwinked by Lutkins who impersonated as a hack-driver. While the man he wanted to serve summons to was all the time with him, he failed in his mission to recognise him.

Q14. What happened at the Fritz's? Or

What did Fritz tell the narrator and Bill about Oliver?

At the Fritz's, Bill inquired cheerily whether Fritz had seen Oliver Lutkins that day. Fritz looked at the lawyer hiding behind Bill and hesitatingly told that Lutkins had been to his shop a little while ago but had perhaps gone to Gustaff's to get a shave.

Q15. Why did Bill take the lawyer to Gustaff's? What information did they get there about Lutkins? Or

What did Gustaff tell about Lutkins?

Bill took the lawyer to Gustaff's because Fritz had told them that Lutkins had possibly gone there for a shave. At Gustaff's barber shop they got the information that Lutkins had been seen walking down Main Street, to the side of the hotel.

Q16. Where did Bill conclude Lutkins might have gone after they had left Gustaff's and why?

After Bill and the narrator had left Gustaff's, Bill concluded that Lutkins had probably gone to Gray's for a shave since he had exhausted all his credit at Gustaff's.

Q17. Why did the lawyer and Bill fail to find Lutkins at Gray's barber shop and at the poolroom?

The lawyer and Bill failed to find Lutkins at Gray's barber shop because he had left the place just five minutes ago. At the poolroom, he had bought a pack of cigarettes and gone out before Bill reached there with the lawyer.

Q18. Why did the lawyer not bother much about finding Lutkins?

The lawyer did not bother much about finding Lutkins because he had thoroughly enjoyed Bill's rustic country opinions about his neighbours. He found this experience more rewarding than his duty to find Lutkins.

Q19. Why did Bill suggest getting the lunch packed from his home? What was his real intention? Or

Why did Bill advise the narrator against taking lunch at the restaurant?

Bill suggested getting the lunch packed from home by his wife as it was a healthier option compared to the greasy restaurant food. He also proposed to enjoy this food while sitting atop Wade's Hill and enjoying the view. His real intention, however, was to make some money as he charged half a dollar for the lunch.

Q20. What did the lawyer mean when he said that "he was no more dishonest than I"?

The narrator was aware that Bill's helpful services were not merely out of brotherly love. It was his way of making money. However, since the writer was going to get the expenses reimbursed by his firm, he considered himself to be equally dishonest like Bill.

Q21. Where did the lawyer have his lunch and why?

The lawyer had his lunch atop the Wade's Hill while enjoying the view and the hack-driver's gossip for company. He went

there because the hack-driver had convinced him that home-cooked food was a cheaper and better option to the greasy restaurant food.

Q22. How did the lawyer come to know New Mullion better than the city?

The lawyer came to know New Mullion better than the city by listening to the interesting descriptions that Bill gave him about the people of New Mullion. Bill described the foolishness of people, the pretensions of boys and many other things which made the place appear live.

Q23. What, according to the narrator, had Bill learnt from his adventures?

According to the narrator, Bill had learnt a philosophy of simplicity and laughter from his adventures. Although he noticed everything and laughed at people, he also understood and forgave their foolishness.

Q24. Where did Bill's mother live? Why did Bill take the lawyer to her?

Bill's mother lived at her farm three miles north of the town of New Mullion. Bill took the lawyer to her because one of Lutkins' friends was made to admit by Bill that Lutkins could perhaps be at his mother's farm.

Q25. How did Bill describe Lutkins' mother?

Bill described Lutkins' mother as an enormous and cheerful old woman who was about nine feet tall, four feet thick and quick as a cat. She lived in a farm three miles north of New Mullion. He told the lawyer that she was a terror, as she was very talkative, quarrelsome and adept at swearing.

Q26. What happened at the farm of Lutkins' mother? Or

How did Lutkins' mother react when Bill told her that they had a legal right to search for Lutkins?

At the farm of Lutkins' mother, the old woman denied outrightly

any knowledge about the whereabouts of her son. She frightened away Bill and the lawyer with a red-hot iron rod from her kitchen, and warned them to be ready to get burnt before searching her house for Lutkins.

Q27. Why did the lawyer consider returning to New Mullion to settle down? Or

What were the narrator's thoughts, when he was being driven to the station for his return journey?

While going back, the narrator was not worried about his failure to serve summons on Lutkins. He was so enamoured of New Mullion and its people that he even considered returning there and practising law.

Q28. How did the lawyer's Chief react to his returning empty-handed from New Mullion? Or

How did the Chief react to the narrator's failure to serve summons on Lutkins?

The lawyer's Chief reacted angrily when the lawyer returned empty-handed from New Mullion. He told him in a murdering tone that he deserved to dig ditches and not to get trained as a lawyer.

Q29. Why was the lawyer sorry about being accompanied by his colleague when ordered back by his Chief to New Mullion?

The lawyer was sorry about being accompanied by his colleague when ordered back to New Mullion because this would deprive him of another opportunity to loaf all over New Mullion with Bill.

Q30. What did the lawyer see when he returned to New Mullion? Or

What strange sight did the narrator see at the New Mullion station on his second visit?

The lawyer saw Bill and Lutkins' mother at the New Mullion station platform talking and laughing together. He found this

strange because the day before this woman had scared the wits out of Bill when he had taken the lawyer to her farm to search Lutkins.

Q31. What hurt the lawyer most when he served summons to Lutkins?

The narrator felt hurt most when he served summons to Lutkins because he had trusted Lutkins completely while the latter had breached his trust. He had spoken so well about Lutkins to his colleague but had been laughed at by him as if he were a school boy. Lutkins had also mocked the lawyer by asking him to have coffee with the only neighbours who had missed seeing him.

Q32. When the lawyer reached New Mullion, did 'Bill' know that he was looking for Lutkins? When do you think Bill came up with his plan for befooling the lawyer? (Textual)

'Bill' knew that the lawyer was looking for Lutkins as soon as the latter reached New Mullion since this was the first thing the lawyer told the friendly deliveryman Bill. So Bill came up instantly with his plan to befool the lawyer.

Q33. Why do you think Lutkins' neighbours were anxious to meet the lawyer? (Textual)

The lawyer had become a laughing stock of the entire village because he was an educated man but was deceived so easily by a country bumpkin. Lutkins' neighbours were anxious to meet the lawyer since they were the only family that had missed seeing him the previous day.

Q34. After his first day's experience with the hack driver, the lawyer thinks of returning to New Mullion to practise law. Do you think he would have reconsidered his idea after the second visit? (Textual)

After the first visit to New Mullion, the narrator was highly impressed as he found the people there to be simple and helpful. But, his second visit gave him a rude shock, when he discovered that everybody he met had befooled and ridiculed him. Hence,

he would have certainly reconsidered his idea after the second visit.

Q35. Do you think the lawyer is gullible? How could he have avoided being taken for a ride? (Textual)

The lawyer is definitely gullible and his behaviour is thoroughly unprofessional. Being a lawyer, he should have been secretive about the purpose of his visit. He should have used his acumen to sense that missing Lutkins every time was not a mere chance.

Q36. Who is a 'con-man' or a confidence trickster? (Textual)

A 'con-man' is one who tricks others usually for money. He is a confident trickster also as he lures others into falling prey to his game by tricking, cheating, outsmarting others and misusing their confidence.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

Q1. As a lawyer what blunders does the narrator commit after reaching New Mullion?

Secrecy and suspicion are the basic principles that a successful lawyer must follow religiously. The narrator, a novice to this profession, commits the blunder of trusting a stranger blindly and revealing the purpose of his visit to New Mullion to him. Thus, he not only ends up getting tricked but also becomes the laughing stock of the villagers.

After alighting from the train at New Mullion, he encounters a delivery man and instantly takes fancy to him. He gets impressed by his friendly demeanour and follows him like a gullible novice. He commits a blunder by trusting this man completely and staying behind him at every place that he takes him to in search of Lutkins. He does not suspect even once that every time falling

behind Lutkins by a few minutes could not be a mere chance. He readily accepts all the lies that Bill tells him about the people of New Mullion. Therefore, he returns to his firm without completing the task assigned to him despite the fact that he had spent an entire day with the very person whom he was supposed to serve summons.

Q2. What picture of the villagers did Bill paint to the narrator while the two of them had lunch at Wade's Hill?

Bill was a perfect master at describing people in appropriate and well chosen words. As he relished lunch on top of Wade's Hill with the narrator, Bill painted amusing pictures in words of some people of New Mullion. He made pin-pointed observation about the minister's wife who sang the loudest in church when she was most in debt. He commented on the boys coming back from college strutting about in fancy clothes. He gave a lucid picture of the lawyer whose wife could never put on him a collar and a tie together. The details given by Bill were so vivid that the lawyer felt as if these characters were live before him. Bill added interesting details to his descriptions and did not simply make fun of these people. He even pardoned them for their follies with a magnanimous heart.

Q3. What idea do you form about the people of New Mullion from your understanding of the story? Do you think they are really simple village-spun simpletons?

The people we come across in New Mullion are sharp-minded, witty, fun-loving and joyful. They are adept in tricking and befooling strangers. The hack driver, who is Lutkins himself, goes about various places asking many people about Lutkins' whereabouts. Not a single person falters or fumbles to let the cat out of the bag. Every one of these village men understands in a split second that Lutkins is having fun at the cost of the new-

comer. Instantly, they become part of the team that befool the city-bred educated boy. Fritz, Gustaff, his customers, Gray, the man at the poolroom, Lutkin's friends, his mother - everybody is smart enough to understand the game without any prior instructions. Surely, people of New Mullion are not village-spun simpletons but an intelligent lot, who are a bit too smart for the narrator.

Q4. What are the various places the hack driver takes the narrator to look for Lutkins? Do they succeed in finding him?

The hack driver takes the narrator to five different places to find Lutkins. First of all, he drives him to Fritz's shop. On reaching there, they are told that Lutkins had left the place a little while ago and had perhaps gone to Gustaff, the barber. At Gustaff's, nobody has any idea about Lutkins' whereabouts. The hack driver then concludes that Lutkins has gone to Gray's barber shop for a shave after having exhausted his credit at Gustaff's. At the Gray's, Lutkins is missed just by five minutes. Then the hack driver drives the narrator to the poolroom where they learn that Lutkins had just bought a packet of cigarettes and had gone away. Finally, the hack driver takes the narrator to the house of Lutkins' mother. However, they fail to find him there too since Lutkins' mother denies having any knowledge about her son's whereabouts. In addition she does not let Bill and the lawyer search her house and scares them away with a hot iron rod.

Q5. What opinion did the narrator form about country life at New Mullion in his first visit? How did it change in its second visit?

Or

What are the narrator's views about New Mullion and its people on his first visit? Why does he change his views on the second visit?

After his first visit to New Mullion, the narrator is all praise for the town and its people. On his way back to the station, after

having spent the day in the company of Bill, he thinks of Bill Magnuson and all the people he had met while searching for Lutkins. He pictures Bill and everybody else as simple, honest, really human, kind and helpful beings. He believes that they all led a happy and contented life. In fact, he thinks about settling in New Mullion on a permanent basis and setting up law practice over there.

However, his second visit jolts him out of his ignorance and naivety. Although the story does not describe his views in explicit words, but his feelings are hurt at the reaction of Lutkins and his mother, which shows that he knew that the country-bred lot is too much for him to handle. He seems to have realized that he has misjudged the book by its cover. The village folks are not as simple as he had thought them to be. Also, Bill has not been helping him but has befooled him and the villagers have considered him to be nothing more than a bright boy of seven.

Q6. The narrator was an inexperienced young man who looked at the world as an idealist. Discuss.

The narrator was a young law graduate who was presently working as a junior assistant clerk in a magnificent law firm. He was an inexperienced young man who lacked worldly wisdom and therefore was not a good judge of people. He was a simple and gullible young man who took everything at its face value. He believed every word that the hack driver said to him and did not use his intelligence or professional acumen even once to sense that something was amiss about Lutkins' disappearance from every place that he went to. His approach to life was rather idealistic. That is why he hastily thought of giving up his job and settling down in New Mullion. He easily got impressed with the hack driver and put down his guard at once. He decided within minutes that the hack driver was his best possible guide. He

promptly revealed to him the purpose of his visit and followed him all over the town, obeying all his instructions. In spite of his university education, he appears to be a fool when compared to the rustic yet smarter Bill.

Q7. The hack driver says that Lutkins' mother is a 'terror'. Is he right in his assessment? Why/Why not? Or

How does the hack driver describe Lutkins' mother? How does she treat the narrator and the hack driver when they go to her house to serve summons to Lutkins? Or

What kind of treatment does the narrator and Bill get at Lutkins' mother's house?

Bill, the hack driver describes Lutkins' mother as a terror – a woman who had once almost taken his skin off because he had not treated her trunk as a box of eggs. He claims that she is nine feet tall and four feet thick, quick as a cat and very talkative.

When the narrator comes face to face with the woman, he finds her enormous and cheerful. However, he gets a rude shock when she shouts, "I don't know anything about Oliver, and I don't want to" on hearing that the narrator has come in search of her son Oliver.

She is impressed when she learns that the narrator is a representative of a court in the city and has a legal right to search all her properties. But suddenly, she retreats into the kitchen and the two young men follow her. In the kitchen, she seizes an iron from the stove and marches on them shouting, "You search all you want to – if you don't mind getting burnt first." The two men beat a hasty retreat and she laughs at them.

This disrespectful treatment is enough to convince the narrator that Lutkin's mother is indeed a terror.



9. Bholi

(K. A. Abbas)

ABOUT THE STORY

Introduction:

The story of Bholi alias Sulekha takes the readers through the complicated social structures of a section of Indian families that are biased in their attitudes towards daughters. The manner in which Bholi is victimized by the patriarchal mindset of her family and the people around her, evokes both pity and anger. In addition, the ill-treatment meted out to differently abled children as depicted in the story compels the readers to think about such silent evils that plague our society. However, the courageous defiance by Bholi in the end, assures a ray of hope.

Summary:

Bholi is born a fair and pretty child as the fourth daughter of Numberdar Ramlal. Unfortunately she falls off the cot at the age of ten months and a part of her brain gets damaged. Named Sulekha at birth, she comes to be known as 'Bholi' (Hindi for 'simpleton'). To make matters worse, she gets an attack of small-pox at the age of two and her face gets disfigured with deep black pock-marks. Till the age of five, she is unable to speak and finally when she does, she begins to stammer. The other children make fun of her when she talks, so Bholi begins to talk very little.

Bholi is the youngest child among seven children (three sons and four daughters). Her father is a prosperous farmer and all his children except Bholi are healthy and strong. Her brothers are first sent to schools and then to colleges in a city but the sisters of Bholi are not given any education, as sending girls to schools was not considered proper by the villagers. Bholi's eldest sister, Radha, is already married

and Mangla, the next, is engaged. Her third sister, Champa, too is good-looking, so their father is not worried about her, as he knows it won't be difficult to marry her off. However, he is worried about Bholi as she is dull, ugly and stammers while talking.

When Bholi turns seven years old, a primary school for girls is started in the village. The 'Tehsildar' of the area, who comes to perform the opening ceremony, urges Ramlal to set an example for villagers by sending his daughters to school. Ramlal discusses the matter with his wife, who objects strongly to this idea. Actually, in those days it used to be difficult to marry off educated girls. But, Ramlal being the 'Numberdar,' cannot afford to annoy the Tehsildar. Something has to be done; so it is decided that Bholi can be sent to school as nobody would marry an ugly and unintelligent girl like her.

The following day, Ramlal catches Bholi by hand to take her to school. This frightens the little girl because she believes that she too is being turned out of the house and sold like their cow, Lakshmi. Ramlal tells his wife to give some decent clothes to Bholi so that the teachers and schoolgirls do not gather a bad impression about them when they see her. Bholi is not given anything new but is made to wear a clean dress that no longer fitted her elder sister Champa. She is also given a bath and oil is rubbed into her dry-matted hair. This kind of attention makes Bholi believe that she is being taken to a place better than her home.

Ramlal hands over the fear-stricken Bholi to the headmistress who takes her to a classroom and asks her to sit in a corner. Bholi is glad to be amidst so many girls of her age. Although, she does not understand anything that the teacher says in the class, she is fascinated by the coloured pictures hanging on the walls of the room. While she is busy admiring the animals depicted in the pictures, she suddenly finds her teacher standing beside her and smiling lovingly at her. The teacher very lovingly asks Bholi her name. This unexpected query scares Bholi and she fumbles. Managing to stammer just half her name, she

starts crying as all the girls in the room laugh at her. When the bell rings, the other girls hurry out but Bholi remains glued to her seat in the corner. The kind teacher again urges her to speak-up her name. The soothing tone of her teacher encourages Bholi and she is able to tell her complete name. At this, the teacher pats her lovingly and advises her to throw out all her fears. She also assures her that very soon she would be able to speak normally. The teacher then gives her a book, having coloured pictures of dogs, cats, horses, parrot, tigers and cows etc. She promises that with the passage of time Bholi would be able to read bigger books and everybody would look at her with respect. The teacher's words prove to be prophetic in the long run.

Time passes and the village transforms into a small town. Facilities like a high school, a tin-shed cinema hall, and a cotton ginning mill come up. Bholi also grows up into a young woman.

One night, after dinner, Bholi overhears a conversation between her parents regarding a marriage proposal for her. This proposal was of Bishamber Nath, a fifty year old, well-to-do grocer from another village. He was a rich man with a bank balance of a few thousand rupees. But he limped, was a widower, and had grown up children from his first wife. Although an absolutely unsuitable proposal, Bholi's parents give their consent, for they believe that no one else would marry their ugly daughter. Ramlal, however, is worried that Bholi might not accept the proposal but his wife spurns his doubts by telling him that a dim-wit, dumb-cow-like Bholi has no opinion of her own.

On the day of the marriage, a procession comes to Bholi's town with such pomp and show that everybody is impressed. Bholi's elder sisters even begin to feel envious of the grandeur. Bholi is dressed up in red silk as a bride and is brought to the garlanding ceremony. When Bishamber Nath is allowed a glimpse of Bholi before the garlands are exchanged, he withholds the event objecting to Bholi's pock-marks. As compensation, he demands five thousand rupees

from Bholi's father. Ramlal pleads with the arrogant groom, but all requests fall on deaf ears. A teary-eyed Ramlal brings a bundle of notes and places it at the groom's feet. After this, when Bishamber advances to garland Bholi, she angrily throws away the garland and valiantly declares that she would not marry a greedy man like Bishamber Nath. Her action startles everybody and the elderly women in the gathering begin to criticize Bholi for her defiance. Bholi, however, silences everybody by announcing that she is no longer a dumb-cow. The marriage is called off and the wedding-party has to beat a hasty retreat.

Bholi assures her worried parents that she would serve them in their old age and would join her school as a teacher one day. Her affectionate teacher, who had been watching this drama, approves of Bholi's decision and looks lovingly at her as if this master-piece created by her was now complete.

THEME

The story "Bholi" is based on the theme that love, encouragement and sympathy can strengthen even the most tormented souls whereas bias in every form can wreak havoc in a person's life. Bholi is a victim of gender-bias, physical disability, and a not-so-pretty appearance. However, compassion and support groom her into a confident individual capable of accepting challenges. With the desired assistance from her teacher, Bholi empowers herself with knowledge and stands up for her dignity. Her rise from a 'dumb-cow,' who is suppressed both at home and by the society, to a 'lightning thunder' is inspiring. Hence, the theme of love and support stands validated.

MESSAGE

"Bholi" imparts a clear message that certain evils in the Indian social system must be rooted out. The writer, K. A. Abbas, voices his displeasure about the discrimination between sons and daughters

that is practised in rural middle class families. In his own inimitable style, he is critical of the practice of keeping the daughters illiterate. He also brings to light the inhuman reaction of people towards those who are differently abled. This shatters the self-confidence of those affected and pushes them further into darkness. The evil of dowry system is also criticized in the story to convey the message of equality for women and men. Thus, through the story, the author gives the message to build a society where girls will be at par with boys.

TITLE

"Bholi" is a compact and well-suited title for a story that deals with the transformation of an ugly simpleton into an educated, enlightened and assertive young woman. The major part of this story describes the misfortunes that befall a 'fair and pretty' Sulekha, the neglect and ridicule that she has to face due to her misfortunes, her courageous struggle against the ill-treatment meted out to her, and the final victory of Bholi as a woman who makes her choice. The word 'Bholi' has a range of connotations in Hindi, where it conveys the idea of 'being retarded' as well as 'being simple'. In this story, Sulekha is given the name Bholi because she is not as active and alert as other children of her age. However, she is always pure and simple at heart, a quality that wins her the admiration and support of her kind teacher. Therefore, "Bholi" is the most appropriate title for this story.

THE ENDING OF THE STORY

Khawaja Ahmad Abbas's story "Bholi" has a dramatic ending. Contrary to the general expectation of readers, Bholi, the protagonist, does not cry herself to death when her marriage fails to get solemnised because of a demand of dowry by her prospective bridegroom Bishamber Das. Instead, she takes the bold step of refusing to be garlanded as Bishamber Das's wife. In doing so, she courageously refuses to be exploited by a greedy man. Her decision to stay with her

parents to serve them in their old age by taking up a job in her own alma-mater makes the ending meaningful. Thus, the ending of the story offers education as the most potent solution for the emancipation of and equality of women. Education alone can bring an end to the discrimination and stigmas that women have to bear in a patriarchal society just because they are women.

Thus, the ending is very dramatic but very powerful.

CHARACTERS

Bholi

Bholi is the central figure of the story and her character matures as she grows up from a neglected and shy child to a strong and assertive woman. She is born fair and pretty and gets a meaningful name, Sulekha. But misfortunes befall her early in life and she suffers a head injury at the age of ten months. This slows down her reflexes and she is unable to talk like normal children. To make matters worse, she has a severe attack of small-pox at the age of two which disfigures her face and leaves deep black pock-marks. Eventually when she begins to learn talking by the age of five, she stammers a lot and has to bear the ridicule of others. This inhibits her personality and she becomes a withdrawn child with inferiority complex. Nicknamed Bholi, which means a 'simpleton', this promising young girl grows up in an environment where even her family does not care for her. This develops in her a sense of fear and insecurity.

A positive change comes to her life when she begins her education at the village primary school. Although she is ill-at-ease in her class, she gradually overcomes her complexes under the loving guidance of her teacher. The Bholi that the reader encounters in the end is a compassionate, intelligent and self-respecting young girl justifying her name Sulekha. She commands respect by asserting herself and by

refusing to succumb to social pressures. This inspiring character earns both love and respect of the readers.

Ramlal, the 'Numberdar'

Ramlal is a middle-aged, prosperous farmer, who is also the 'Numberdar' of the village. Although a representative of the government, he is conservative and does not believe in literacy of girls. He spends money only on the education of his three sons and sends his youngest daughter Bholi to school just to appease his superior, the *Tehsildar*.

Ramlal is very cautious about his social status and urges his wife to dress up Bholi properly so that the teachers and students of school do not question his position. He is also afraid of annoying his wife and therefore consults her on all vital issues. Often, he agrees to her suggestions even if he is not fully convinced. He agrees to marry off Bholi to an elderly widower only because his wife insists so. He submits to social pressures and agrees to give dowry at his daughter's wedding at the insistence of the groom because he feels ashamed to send away the wedding-party without solemnizing the marriage.

On the whole, he is a typical middle-class man who conforms to patriarchal practices without trying to analyse the pros or cons of age old traditions.

The Teacher

The teacher appears very briefly in the story, but her appearance is of such vital importance that it changes the entire course of Bholi's life. She is a patient, loving, caring and considerate person and has all the qualities of a good teacher. She understands the psychology of children, particularly of those children who are differently-abled and slow-learners like Bholi. She helps Bholi to overcome her fears and slowly instills confidence in her. It is under her guidance that Bholi learns to talk without stammering.

The teacher is sensitive like an artist, and treats her students as pure mediums through which she can express her valuable thoughts. Thus she admires Bholi towards the end of the story as if she were her masterpiece. In short, she is an ideal teacher, devoted to her students and is responsible for Bholi's transformation.

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

When she was ten months old, she had fallen off the cot on her head and perhaps it had damaged some part of her brain. That was why she remained a backward child...

(a) Who is 'she' in the above extract?

'She' in the above extract is *Numberdar* Ramlal's fourth daughter, Sulekha.

(b) How was 'she' affected by the fall off the cot?

Sulekha was a ten month old baby when she fell off the cot and this damaged a part of her brain. As a result she began to stammer on growing up.

(c) What does the writer wish to convey by the expression 'backward child'?

The writer wishes to convey that Sulekha was not as forthcoming as other children of her age. She was rather reluctant and shy.

(d) What name was given to this 'backward child'?

This 'backward child' was named Bholi, the simpleton.

(II)

"As a revenue official you are the representative of the government in the village and so you must set an example to the villagers. You must send your daughters to school."

(a) **Who is speaking to whom?**

The *Tehsildar* who had come to Ramlal's village to inaugurate the primary school for girls is speaking to Ramlal.

(b) **In what capacity was the listener a representative of the government?**

Ramlal was a representative of the government in his official capacity as the *Numberdar* or a revenue official.

(c) **How many daughters did the listener have? Name them.**

Ramlal had four daughters – Radha, Mangla, Champa and Sulekha alias Bholi.

(d) **Why does the speaker want the 'revenue officer' to send his daughters to school?**

The *Tehsildar* wants Ramlal to send his daughters to school so that the villagers are inspired to follow the example of a representative of the government, and educate their daughters as well.

(e) **Did the listener send his daughters to school? Why/Why not?**

Ramlal did not send his daughters to school because he believed that educated girls cannot be married off easily. However, he did send his fourth and youngest daughter Bholi to school because he did not want to disobey the *Tehsildar*. Besides, he did not expect to find anyone to marry Bholi.

(III)

"Let her wear some decent clothes today, or else what will the teachers and the other schoolgirls think of us when they see her?"

(a) **Who speaks these lines to whom?**

Ramlal, the *Numberdar* of the village, speaks these lines to his wife.

(b) When does the speaker say this?

Ramlal says this when he plans to take Bholi to the newly opened primary school for girls in the village.

(c) Whom did the speaker wish to be dressed up in decent clothes? Why?

Ramlal, the speaker, wished to get his youngest daughter Bholi dressed in decent clothes because he was conscious of his status and did not want people to comment upon his daughter's shabby appearance.

(d) What type of dress was given to 'her'?

Bholi was given a clean dress which belonged to her sister Champa because it no longer fitted her as it had shrunk after many washings.

(IV)

Then she began to cry and tears flowed from her eyes in a helpless flood. She kept her head down as she sat in her corner, not daring to look up...

(a) Who is 'she' in this extract?

'She' in this extract is Bholi.

(b) Why did 'she' begin to cry?

Bholi began to cry because she stammered and was unable to articulate her name properly when the teacher asked her to.

(c) Why did 'she' keep her head down?

Bholi kept her head down because she was embarrassed and felt humiliated at not having been able to tell her name properly.

(d) Why didn't 'she' dare to look up?

'She' didn't dare to look up at the girls because she did not have the courage to face her classmates who she presumed were laughing at her.

(V)

"In one month you will be able to read this book. Then I will give you a bigger book, then a still bigger one. In time you will be more learned than anyone else in the village."

(a) Who speaks these lines and to whom?

Bholi's kind and loving teacher at school speaks these lines to Bholi.

(b) Which book is the speaker referring to?

The teacher is referring to the book full of nice pictures that she gave to Bholi.

(c) Why does the speaker promise to give more books to the listener?

The teacher promised to give more books to Bholi because she wanted to encourage the child to pursue studies regularly.

(d) Why does the speaker wish the listener to become a learned person?

The teacher wishes Bholi to become a learned person so that no one would make fun of her.

(VI)

Ramlal was overjoyed to see such pomp and splendour. He had never dreamt that his fourth daughter would have such a grand wedding.

(a) Who was Ramlal? Which 'pomp and splendour' left him overjoyed?

Ramlal was Bholi's father. He was overjoyed by the 'pomp and splendour' of the wedding party that had arrived in his town for the marriage of his fourth daughter.

(b) Who was Ramlal's fourth daughter?

Ramlal's fourth daughter was Sulekha but she was called Bholi, the simpleton.

(c) Why hadn't Ramlal ever dreamt that his fourth daughter would have such a grand wedding?

Ramlal had never dreamt that his fourth daughter would have

such a grand wedding because Bholi used to stammer and had pock-marks all over that made her look ugly.

(d) Who was Ramlal's fourth daughter being married to?

Ramlal's fourth daughter, Bholi was being married to Bishamber Nath, a fifty year old lame widower with grown up children from his previous marriage.

(VII)

Tears streaming down his face, Ramlal went in, opened the safe and counted out the notes. He placed the bundle at the bridegroom's feet.

(a) Who was Ramlal? Why were tears streaming down his face?

Ramlal was the *Numberdar* of the village. Tears were streaming down his face because his son-in-law to be had humiliated him by demanding dowry for marrying his ugly daughter.

(b) How many notes did Ramlal count and why?

Ramlal counted five thousand rupees because Bishamber had demanded this sum as compensation for Bholi's pock-marked face.

(c) Who was the bridegroom? Why did Ramlal place the bundle at his feet?

The bridegroom was Bishamber, a greedy, old, lame widower. Ramlal placed the bundle at his feet to beseech him to marry his ugly daughter.

(d) What was the bridegroom's reaction when Ramlal placed the bundle at his feet?

A triumphant smile appeared on the bridegroom Bishamber's greedy face when Ramlal placed the bundle at his feet. Bishamber felt that he had gambled and won.

(VIII)

....but before he could do so, Bholi's hand struck out like a streak of lightning and the garland was flung into the fire. She got up and threw the veil.

(a) **Who is 'he' in the above extract?**

'He' in the above extract is Bishamber Nath, a lame fifty year old widower with children from his earlier marriage. He was a well-to-do grocer who had agreed to marry Ramlal's fourth daughter, Bholi.

(b) **What could 'he' not do?**

Bishamber Nath could not place the garland round the neck of his bride, Bholi.

(c) **Why did Bholi fling the garland in the fire?**

Bholi flung the garland in the fire because she did not want to put up any further with the humiliation that the groom Bishamber was subjecting her family to.

(d) **What did Bholi do after throwing away her veil?**

After throwing away the veil, Bholi told her father in a clear loud voice that she would not marry Bishamber. She also told him to take back his money that he had given to Bishamber as dowry.

(IX)

The teacher had all along stood in a corner, watching the drama. "Yes, Bholi, of course," she replied.

(a) **Who is the teacher being referred to in these lines?**

The teacher being referred to in these lines is Bholi's teacher at school. She was a kind and compassionate woman who instilled confidence in the little girl.

(b) **Why did the teacher stand in a corner?**

The teacher stood in a corner because the wedding was a family event and she was participating in it as a guest.

(c) **What was the 'drama' watched by the teacher?**

The 'drama' watched by the teacher was Bishamber's demand for

a dowry of five thousand rupees to marry Bholi and the girl's defiant refusal to marry the greedy man.

(d) To which question of Bholi did the teacher reply in the affirmative?

The teacher replied to Bholi in the affirmative because the latter had sought her approval for her decision to serve her parents in old age and teach in the school where she had gained education.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 – 40 words each)

Q1. Who was Sulekha? Why was she called Bholi?

Sulekha was the fourth daughter of the village *Numberdar* Ramlal. At the age of ten months, she fell off the cot accidentally and a part of her brain got injured. As a result she grew up as a slow child and everybody started calling her Bholi, 'the simpleton'.

Q2. How did a fair and pretty Sulekha's body get permanently disfigured by pock-marks? Or

How did an attack of small-pox affect Sulekha?

At the age of two, a fair and pretty Sulekha had a severe attack of small-pox. This left behind deep black pock-marks all over her body and face. It disfigured her appearance permanently and made her look unattractive.

Q3. Why did other children make fun of and mimic Bholi? How did this affect Bholi's personality? Or

Why did Bholi talk very little?

Other children made fun of Bholi because the head injury that she had got in her infancy had impaired her speech. When she learnt to speak, she developed the problem of stammering. The children mocked her by mimicking her stammer. As a result, Bholi talked very little and remained a passive child.

Q4. Who was Ramlal? How many children did he have?

Ramlal was the *Numberdar* or the revenue official of his village. He was a prosperous farmer with plenty to eat and drink in his household. He had seven children – three sons and four daughters.

Q5. How did Ramlal look after his children?

All, except one of Ramlal's children, were healthy and strong. He spent liberally on the education of his boys and devoted adequate attention to settle three of his daughters in matrimony. However, he ignored his fourth daughter Bholi as she was a slow child and had pock-marks on her entire body except the eyes.

Q6. Why was Bholi's father worried about her? Or

Why was Ramlal worried about Bholi?

Bholi was a slow child with an unattractive appearance because of the pock-marks all over her body. This made her father Ramlal worry about her as he knew that it was going to be extremely difficult to find a groom for such a dull-witted girl.

Q7. When was a primary school for girls opened in Bholi's village and by whom? What advice did Ramlal get on this occasion?

The primary school for girls was opened when Bholi was seven years old. It was inaugurated by the *Tehsildar* who advised Ramlal that since he was the revenue official, he should set a good example for the villagers and send his daughters to school.

Q8. Why was Bholi's mother reluctant to send Bholi to school?

Bholi's mother was reluctant to send Bholi to school because her conservative surroundings made her believe that no one would marry educated girls. She did not dare to defy the social norms within which she lived.

Q9. For what unusual reasons was Bholi sent to school? Or

Why did Ramlal and his wife decide to send Bholi to school?

Bholi was sent to school because her father, Ramlal, did not have the courage to disobey the *Tehsildar* who wanted him to set an example for the villagers by sending his daughters to school. Besides, Ramlal did not hope to find any groom for the ugly looking Bholi and hence felt no harm in educating her.

Q10. Why was Bholi frightened to go to school? Or

What thoughts came to Bholi's mind as she was being taken to school?

Bholi was frightened to go to school, because she didn't know what a school was like. She thought that she was being turned out of the house just like their old cow, Lakshmi had been turned out and sold a few days ago.

Q11. How was Bholi treated at home as compared to other siblings?

Bholi was not treated on a par with her siblings. Unlike her brothers who were sent to colleges, she was denied education. Her sisters too were treated in a better way than Bholi. This simple girl was not even given new clothes, and the old dresses of her sisters were passed on to her.

Q12. Why did Ramlal tell his wife to dress up Bholi in some decent clothes before taking her to school?

Ramlal was quite conscious of his social position and he did not want the teachers or the other schoolgirls to think bad about the status of his family. Hence, he told his wife to dress up Bholi in decent clothes before taking her to school.

Q13. Why was Bholi lucky to get clean clothes on her first day to school?

Bholi was lucky to get clean clothes on her first day to school because earlier new clothes had never been made for her. The

old dresses of her sisters were passed on to her and no one cared to mend or wash her clothes.

Q14. Why did Bholi think that school would be a better place than home?

Before being sent to school, Bholi received a clean dress and she was also given a bath. In addition, oil was rubbed into her dry and matted hair. This made her feel that she was going to a better place than her home.

Q15. What were the first few things that Bholi observed when she reached school with her father?

When Ramlal and Bholi reached school, he handed over his daughter to the headmistress. Left alone, the poor girl looked about her with fear-laden eyes. She observed that there were several rooms and in each room girls like her squatted on mats reading from books or writing on slates.

Q16. Why was Bholi glad to be at school?

Bholi was glad to be at school because there she saw many girls almost of her own age. She hoped that one of these girls might become her friend.

Q17. Which things fascinated Bholi on the first day in her classroom?

Or

What did Bholi like about her classroom?

At school, Bholi was fascinated by the colours of the pictures on the walls of her classroom. The brown colour of the horse was like that of a real one and so were the black goat and the green parrot. Even the cow was like her cow, Lakshmi.

Q18. Why did Bholi begin to cry when the teacher asked her name?

Bholi suffered from speech impairment and stammered while talking. So, when the teacher asked her name, she could not

articulate it properly. The other girls in the class began laughing at her, and feeling embarrassed, she started crying.

Q19. What did Bholi do when the school bell rang on her first day at school?

After the bell rang on the first day at school, Bholi stay put in her corner. While the other girls headed out of the classroom, Bholi dared not to leave her place. She sat with her head lowered and kept on sobbing.

Q20. What encouraging words did Bholi's teacher say to her at the end of the first day at school?

Or

How did Bholi's teacher help her overcome her speech difficulty?

At the end of the first day at school, after all the girls had gone, Bholi's teacher prodded her in a soft and loving tone to tell her name. Her encouraging and soothing voice boosted Bholi's confidence and she finally told her full name without stammering. At this, Bholi's teacher patted her affectionately and told her to put the fear out of her heart.

Q21. Why was Bholi 'astonished' after telling her name to her teacher?

Bholi was astonished after telling her name to her teacher because she had managed to tell her full name in spite of her handicap to stammer. This was like a great achievement for her and relieved her of the insecurity that she would fail to talk normally.

Q22. Did Bholi enjoy her first day at school?

Bholi's first day at school was like high-drama where she experienced negative emotions like fright, humiliation, sadness, and pain along with positive feelings like fascination, gladness, sense of achievement and relief. However, combined together, the experience was enjoyable for Bholi.

Q23. Did Bholi find her teacher different from the people at home?

How?

Or

Why did Bholi find her teacher to be different from others?

Bholi certainly found her teacher different from others because this kind and soft-spoken woman showered love on her unlike those at home who always neglected and looked down upon her. The teacher was encouraging and supportive while the people at home demoralised and discouraged her.

Q24. Describe the book given to Bholi by her teacher at the end of her first day at school.

Bholi's teacher gave her a book of pictures at the end of her first day at school. The book had coloured pictures of a dog, a cat, a goat, a horse, a parrot, a tiger, and a cow just like Lakshmi. With every picture was a word in big black letters.

Q25. What did Bholi's teacher tell her after giving her the book of coloured pictures?

Bholi's teacher told her that in one month she would be able to read that book. Then she would give her a bigger book and then a still bigger one. She assured Bholi that in time she would be more learned than anyone else in the village and no one would be able to laugh at her.

Q26. What was the impact of her teacher's kind words on Bholi?

Or

What made Bholi's heart throb with a new hope and a new life?

Her teacher's kind words had a very encouraging impact on Bholi. She felt as if suddenly all the bells in the village temple were ringing and the trees in front of the school-house had blossomed into big red flowers. Her heart throbbed with a new hope and a new life.

Q27. What changes came about in the village of Bholi over the years?

Over the years, Bholi's village grew into a small town. The little primary school became a high school and a cinema came up

under a tin shed. A cotton ginning mill was set up and the mail train began stopping at the railway station.

Q28. Who was Bishamber Nath? Why did Bholi's parents accept his marriage proposal?

Bishamber Nath was a well-to-do grocer from the neighbouring village. He was a lame, fifty-year-old widower with grown-up children from his first marriage. Bholi's parents accepted his marriage proposal because Bishamber had a big shop, a house of his own and several thousand rupees in the bank. Her parents believed that Bholi was ugly and would remain unmarried all her life if they rejected his proposal.

Q29. Why did Bholi's mother approve Bishamber as a groom for Bholi?

Bholi's mother approved the well-to-do grocer like Bishamber Nath as a groom for Bholi despite his limp and age because she believed that forty-five or fifty was no great age for a man. In addition, she felt that they were lucky since he was from another village and did not know about the pock-marks and lack of sense of Bholi.

Q30. Describe the scene when Bishamber Nath arrived to marry Bholi.

Bishamber Nath arrived to marry Bholi with a big party of friends and relations. A brass-band played a popular tune as he rode a decorated horse. Ramlal was overjoyed to see such pomp and splendour as he had never dreamt of such a grand wedding for Bholi. Bholi's elder sisters were envious of her luck at having found such a well-to-do groom.

Q31. What did Bishamber do after taking a glance at Bholi's face?

Or

What demand did Bishamber make for marrying Bholi?

After taking a glance at Bholi's pock-marked face, Bishamber

demanded a price of five thousand rupees for accepting her as his wife.

Q32. What did Ramlal do when Bishamber demanded dowry for marrying Bholi? Why?

Ramlal placed his turban at Bishamber's feet and pleaded not to humiliate him when the latter demanded dowry for marrying Bholi. However, he accepted his demand after a while and placed the bundle of money at Bishamber's feet. He did so because he felt that he would never be able to show his face in the village if the wedding got cancelled.

Q33. How did Bholi react when Bishamber had finally won the gamble of seeking dowry from Ramlal?

A triumphant Bishamber announced to bring him a garland after he had made Ramlal give him five thousand rupees as dowry for marrying the pock-marked Bholi. When the veil was slipped back from Bholi's face so that Bishamber could garland her, she looked up straight at her prospective husband with cold contempt in her eyes. In place of anger or hate, there was plain rejection in her response.

Q34. Why had Bholi agreed to marry Bishamber Nath? Why did she refuse to marry him later?

Bholi had agreed to marry Bishamber Nath because she did not wish to disappoint her parents who had chosen Bishamber as her groom. However, she refused to marry him because she did not want to accept the mean, greedy, contemptible coward like Bishamber as her husband. She was fiercely angry at him for having demanded rupees five thousand as dowry from her father.

Q35. How did everyone present at Bholi's marriage react when Bholi refused to marry Bishamber?

When Bholi refused to marry Bishamber, Ramlal was thunderstruck and he scolded her for disgracing her family. The guests at the wedding accused Bholi for being shameless. The old women expressed surprise that a harmless dumb cow could be so shameless.

Q36. How did Bholi silence the old woman who called her a 'shameless girl'?

Bholi turned violently to the old woman who called her a 'shameless girl' and questioned them whether they were handing her over to a heartless creature because they thought her to be a dumb-driven cow. She challenged them that she was no longer a stammering fool and could confront them boldly if they accused her further.

Q37. Why did Bholi tell her parents not to worry about her marriage?

Or

What assurance did Bholi give to her parents in the end?

Bholi assured her parents not to worry about her marriage because she was no longer a dumb-driven cow who could be handed over to a heartless creature. She told them that she would serve them in their old age and render services in the school that had given her so much.

Q38. What was the response of Bholi's teacher after Bholi sent back the wedding party?

Or

Why did Bholi's teacher feel satisfied towards the end of the story?

Bholi's teacher approved her student's decision to send back the marriage party of the greedy Bishamber. The satisfaction that she expressed was like that of an artist who feels contented at the completion of her masterpiece since her training had made Bholi a sensible, courageous and self-respecting girl.

- Q39. Bholi's real name is Sulekha. We are told this right in the beginning. But only in the last but one paragraph of the story is Bholi called by this name again. Why do you think, she is called Sulekha at that point of time?** (Textual)

Sulekha means one with a good fate or luck. Bholi is called Sulekha only towards the end of the story because she brings herself good luck by becoming an educated, enabled and strong woman. She makes her choice by refusing to marry a greedy man and by deciding to teach at the village school and serve her parents. Her positive personality matches her name Sulekha only in the end.

- Q40. Bholi's teacher helped her overcome social barriers by encouraging and motivating her. How do you think you can contribute towards changing the social attitudes illustrated in the story?** (Textual)

I can contribute towards changing the social attitudes illustrated in the story by getting actively engaged in programmes like 'Each One, Teach One'. I can also share my pocket-money for buying study material to help those who cannot afford it. Besides, I can work as a volunteer in an organization that works to empower girls with education.

- Q41. Do you think the characters in the story were talking to each other in English? If not, in which language were they speaking? (You can get clues from the names of persons and the non English words used in the story.)** (Textual)

The characters in the story were talking to each other in a local dialect of Hindi. We can know this from the use of words like 'Tehsildar', 'Numberdar', 'izzat' etc. in the story. The names of characters and the rural setting of the story also suggest the same.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

Q1. Give an account of Sulekha's early childhood. Why did everybody call her 'Bholi'?

Sulekha's early childhood was full of misfortunes. When she was ten months old, she fell headlong down a cot, which probably damaged some part of her brain. Thus, she grew into a slow child and everybody started calling her Bholi the simpleton. Born a very fair and pretty child, she started looking ugly when she was two years old because she had a severe attack of small-pox, which left deep black pock-marks on her face and all over her body. The fall that she had in her infancy, impaired her speech and she did not learn to speak until she turned five. Eventually when she did speak, her speech was unclear and she started stammering. All these handicaps resulted in her being treated as a neglected child in the family which made her ill-confident, quiet, shy and withdrawn.

Q2. What kind of treatment was meted out to Bholi in her house, particularly by her mother? Was this treatment justified?

Or

Why was Bholi treated differently from her siblings?

All through her life, Bholi was treated with contempt by nearly everybody in the family. The love and affection that a child needs, particularly, if he or she is differently abled, was not given to her. Her father always remained worried about her marriage. Her name Sulekha was distorted and everybody called her Bholi, 'the simpleton'. She was mocked at for stammering and had to be content with 'passed-over' things. No one cared even to mend or wash her clothes. Her mother was particularly harsh on her and discriminated against her. She discouraged her husband from sending Bholi to school, and when he told her to dress up Bholi in

clean clothes, she gave her the discarded and shrunken clothes of her other daughter Champa. She also turned a blind eye to Bishamber's advanced age and other drawbacks even when Ramlal pointed them out to her. Such a treatment coming from a mother stands totally unjustified. On the contrary, Bholi's mother should have paid special attention to her and should have showered her with abundant love.

Q3. Describe Bholi's first day at school. How did it give her hope?

Or

What were Bholi's first thoughts while she was being taken to school? How did they undergo a change once she returned home?

Bholi did not know what a school was like. So, when she was batched and dressed up in a clean dress to be sent to school, she got the feeling that she was being taken to a place better than her home. Her first day at school was a day of mixed emotions and the overall experience was enjoyable.

Initially, a reluctant Bholi looked about her with fear-laden eyes. Then she noticed that there were several rooms in which girls like her squatted on mats and read from books or wrote on slates. This made her glad as she hoped to make friends with one of the girls in the school. Since Bholi could not understand what was being taught by the lady teacher, she looked at the pictures on the wall of the classroom. The colourful animal figures fascinated her so much that she was startled when the teacher asked her name. She failed to articulate her name properly and felt embarrassed and humiliated when the other girls began laughing at her. This pained her so much that she started crying and did not leave the class even after the bell. However, encouragement from her kind teacher restored her confidence and Bholi could finally speak her name properly. The teacher's assurance that one day she would be more learned than anyone else in the village and

that everyone would respect her had a magical effect on Bholi. She felt as if suddenly all the bells in the village temple were ringing and the trees in front of the school-house had blossomed into big red flowers. Her heart throbbed with a new hope and a new life as she made her way back home.

Q4. Why did Bholi agree to marry an unsuitable, lame and elderly widower? Why did she later reject the marriage? What does this tell us about her?

At first, Bholi agreed to marry an unsuitable, lame and elderly widower because she was aware that her parents were worried that she would remain unmarried all her life because of her pock-marked face and her lack of sense. She loved them and did not wish to disappoint them by challenging their apprehensions. So, she allowed them to decide for her.

However, on finding that her would-be, middle-aged husband was 'greedy and contemptible,' she rejected the alliance instantly. She did not want anyone to take her for granted and hand her over to a heartless creature. This tells us that Bholi was not the 'simpleton' that others thought her to be. Proper education imparted to her by her teacher had enabled her and had transformed her from a stammering Bholi into a mature girl capable of taking correct and independent decisions.

Q5. How far you think the teacher was responsible for moulding Bholi's personality? Or

What role did her teacher play in shaping Bholi's personality?

Bholi was sent to school not for education but just to complete a formality and escape the *Tehsildar's* annoyance. But her teacher proved to be a blessing in disguise and altered her personality. When Bholi first entered the class, she was just like a dumb-driven cattle, full of diffidence and incapable of speaking clearly.

She was neglected by her family and her father was always worried about her pock-marked looks. However, her teacher understood the psychology of 'special' children and showed concern for Bholi. She won the little girl's confidence through care, concern and affection. She gave her all possible encouragement and boosted her confidence. This treatment shaped Bholi's personality and she grew up into a secure, self-asserting young girl. Thus, the teacher proved to be a God sent angel for Bholi who moulded her personality.

Q6. There are two Bholi's in the story "Bholi". Do you agree with the statement?

Or

How did education transform Bholi?

Or

What difference can education make in the life of a girl child. Discuss with reference to the story "Bholi".

The story "Bholi" presents before the reader two pictures of the young girl – one before her education and the second after it. The Bholi that the reader meets before her schooling was timid, lacked confidence, stammered and never thought that she too had any will of her own. She accepted all the ill-treatment and discrimination meted out to her by her family and behaved like a 'dumb-cow'.

However, the second Bholi is the one who evolves after getting due care from her teacher. This Bholi is educated, self-asserting, and a courageous young girl who could accept challenges and was no longer willing to be treated like a 'dumb-cow'. She could now stand up for herself and demand her rightful place. Education had helped Bholi in shedding her diffidence and she had become a bold girl capable of taking independent decisions. She had now developed positive self-esteem that made her believe in her potential.

Thus, there are two Bholi's in the story – one who is compelled by circumstances and the other who faces the challenges boldly. One is a stammering simpleton and the other is Sulekha, who can write her own destiny.

Q7. Why did Bishamber Nath first refuse and then agree to marry Bholi? What does this reveal about his character?

Bishamber Nath was a greedy man who did not have any respect or regard for women. He used the power of his wealth to marry a girl much younger to him. He did not feel hesitant to flaunt his riches when he came to marry Bholi. He proudly rode a decorated horse and a brass-band headed his wedding procession that included a big party of friends and relations. But he could not hide his greed for dowry and held back the garland that he had lifted to place around Bholi's neck when he saw her pock-marks. He shamelessly demanded five thousand rupees from Ramlal and subjected him to the humiliation for being the bride's father. Bishamber was nearly fifty years old, limped and had grown-up children from his first wife, still he shamelessly sought dowry at a point when Ramlal could not refuse for the sake of his reputation. Finally, when Bishamber agreed to garland Bholi, it exposed the evil that lay embedded in his soul.

Q8. What 'drama' unfolded on the wedding day of Bholi's marriage?

An unpleasant drama unfolded at Bholi's wedding that was actually a mismatch between a greedy, lame, widower and an educated, sensible and enlightened girl. The groom, Bishamber Nath arrived on a decorated horse with a big procession of family and friends along with a brass-band. This pomp and splendour caught everyone's attention. The proceedings of the wedding were being carried out as per tradition and the first unexpected turn of events came when Bishamber refused to garland Bholi

after seeing her pock-marked face. Then he put a demand of five thousand as dowry for accepting an 'ugly girl' as his wife. A humiliated Ramlal pleaded with Bishamber to review his decision but the greedy groom did not relent. Compelled by the circumstances, Ramlal placed the money at the groom's feet. The final turn of events came when a triumphant Bishamber tried to garland Bholi after having won the gamble of dowry. The bold girl looked straight at the greedy man and refused to marry him. She confronted all those who termed her as 'shameless' and allayed the fear of her parents by announcing that she would serve them in their old age by working as a teacher in the school that had empowered her. Thus, the drama at Bholi's wedding reached an optimistic finale.

Q9. The girl child is a victim of the dowry system. Discuss with reference to Bholi's story.

Indian middle class and lower middle class families are particularly prejudiced against the girl child. The primary reason given in this regard is that when girls have to be married, parents are under compulsion to pay huge amounts in dowry. In case this is not done, the girl does not find a suitable groom. Since, huge sum of money has to be spent on the dowry of the girls, parents hesitate to spend on their education.

The plight of this social evil comes to light when one reads the story of Bholi. Ramlal does not send his daughters to school mainly because he seeks to marry them off by paying dowry. His chief worry about Bholi is also that he feels the ugly girl will not be accepted by anyone even with dowry. Bishamber Nath is a product of this social system. So, he shamelessly demands dowry from Ramlal just before the wedding. When Bholi refuses to let her father give in to Bishamber's demand, the people present on

the occasion find fault with Bholi in place of shaming the selfish groom.

Thus the story of Bholi clearly puts the spotlight on the evils of dowry.

Q10. Should girls be aware of their rights, and assert themselves? Should girls and boys have the same rights, duties and privileges? What are some of the ways in which society treats them differently? When we speak of 'human rights' do we differentiate between girl's rights and boy's rights? (Textual)

Girls should be made aware of their rights and be taught to assert themselves. They must know that they are as important as boys and that gender does not make an individual superior or inferior in any way. Human rights, duties and privileges ought to be equal for all. However, the ground reality is different as the society does not treat boys and girls in the same way. In lower middle class and weaker sections of the society boys are given preferential treatment in respect of education and freedom of choice. Sisters are often made the 'sacrificial lambs' so that their brothers get the best. Whether it is food or clothes or right to property, the boys are always given the upper hand. This tendency deserves to be checked.

But, when we talk of 'human rights', at least on paper, there is no difference between the rights of boys and girls. Let us hope that every letter of the "human rights" gets translated into reality soon.



'haberdashery,' a kind of shop which sells clothing, small articles of dress, pins, cotton etc.

Captain Omega, respectfully seeks Mighty Think-Tank's guidance, who asks the captain to hold up one of the 'items' so that he can examine it minutely. He concludes that since Earth creatures are always eating, the item must be a sandwich. To confirm his opinion, he orders Captain Omega to eat the book. The Captain is reluctant and he smartly passes the book on to Lieutenant Iota. He in turn passes it to the junior most member of the crew, Sergeant Oop, who tries to eat the book. Looking at the uncomfortable expressions on Oop's face, Think-Tank understands that 'the sandwich' is not tasty at all. Oop wonders how the Earthlings can eat such a dry thing without water. Noodle, then suggests that the sandwiches are a sort of a communication device. Think-Tank takes the credit of this idea and advises the probe crew to listen to the 'item'. However, in spite of serious efforts, the crew members fail to hear anything. Still, they do not dare to negate Think-Tank's opinion and Captain Omega says, "Perhaps, we are not on the correct frequency."

To rescue everyone from Think-Tank's wrath, Noodle suggests that perhaps the 'item' is opened and watched by the Earthlings. Think-Tank agrees with Noodle and informs Captain Omega that the sandwiches under reference are not meant for 'ear communication' but for 'eye-communication.' He orders Captain Omega to pick up the large colourful sandwich and tells her to give her opinion about it. Iota and Oop peer over Omega's shoulders as she observes the book. She holds the book in such a manner that the title '*Mother Goose*' is visible to the audience.

Unable to decode the 'code' of the 'item', the crew members seek help. The wise Noodle once again resolves the issue by suggesting that the crew should consume intelligence increasing vitamins in order to understand the code. The crew obeys and is able to transcribe the code. Captain Omega reads a nursery rhyme "Mistress Mary, quite

contrary..." from the book. This makes Oop laugh but he is snubbed by Think-Tank. According to him, the rhyme means that the Earthlings have discovered how to combine agriculture and mining and know how to grow crops of rare metals like silver. He also concludes that the Earthlings can also grow high explosives. Feeling alarmed at this discovery, he instructs Noodle to order the invasion fleet to hold back, which is about to go down and take over Earth.

The second nursery rhyme, "Hey diddle diddle! The cat and the fiddle..." further terrifies Think-Tank. He interprets that men have trained their domestic animals in 'musical culture' and 'space technique'. They might be launching 'an inter-planetary' assault of innumerable cows at that moment itself.

The third nursery rhyme about "Humpty Dumpty" takes the wits out of Think-Tank as he sees the large picture of Humpty Dumpty and misinterprets it to be his picture. He concludes that the Earthlings are really an advanced lot and are after his life. He would soon be a victim of a mighty fall as depicted in the poem. The plan to capture planet Earth is thus cancelled by him, and he orders his staff to leave Mars too and go a hundred million miles away to Alpha Centauri.

Once again the spotlight shines on the historian and the audience is taken back to the twenty-fifth century. The historian chuckles at Think-Tank's folly because he was defeated by a dusty nursery rhyme book. She then informs that Mars is now ruled by a wise and wonderful Noodle who had replaced Think-Tank. Martians have learnt a lot from Earthlings and both are good friends now. Human beings have set up a model library in Marsopolis, the capital city of Mars. However, one book that nobody in Mars ever dares to read is '*Mother Goose*.'

THEME

The playwright, Claire Boiko, wants to impress upon the reader that nothing in this world is insignificant or unimportant. Situations and

circumstances make even a trifle object to be extremely valuable. The chance picking of the large volume of *Mother Goose*, a book of nursery rhymes by Captain Omega in the play, saves the Earth in the year 2040. Thus, it becomes the most important object that rescues the Earthlings from the destructive plans of the Mighty Think-Tank.

Another theme of the play is that all knowledge cannot be used in every context. A self-proclaimed brilliant Think-Tank fails to use his Martian knowledge on Earth. He misinterprets the nursery rhymes and sensing danger to his own life, beats a hasty retreat. Therefore, the Earthlings, that are scorned and belittled by him, manage to evade his deadly invasion.

MESSAGE

Through the play "The Book That Saved the Earth", the author wants to convey the message that if this universe is to save itself from total destruction, every creature must learn to live with love and cooperation. In this technologically advancing era, every civilization has something valuable to contribute to the universe. Therefore, we should share our knowledge if we wish to have fulfilling lives. The message of the play becomes clear towards the end when the Martians and the Earthlings coexist peacefully in the twenty-fifth century.

TITLE

The title, "The Book That Saved the Earth", has been so aptly selected by the playwright that it directly brings the 'protagonist' into focus. The play is about the manner in which Earth is saved from a Martian invasion by a book of nursery rhymes. If this book had not been found by the crew members of the space probe team sent by the Martian ruler Think-Tank, and if he had not misinterpreted it, Earth might have been wiped away completely. Thus, the book *Mother Goose* saves the Earth and the title clearly puts forth the main concern of the playwright about how a book saved the Earth.

HUMOUR

The play, "The Book That Saved the Earth" is full of humour in one form or the other. The mighty Think-Tank's over-confidence about the potential of Martians to rout Earthlings is very amusing. His appearance with an over sized egg shaped head makes a funny reading. To add to his funny appearance is his view that a large head is beautiful. His habit of 'consulting' the mirror to seek praise as the 'most fantastically intellectually gifted being in the land' spills his vanity and adds to the humour. In addition, his insistence on elaborate salutations by his subordinates also makes the reader laugh. His over-confidence towards the close of the first scene, where he says that he wants to "invade the primitive mud called Earth before lunch" makes the reader laugh at him. The servile manner in which every Martian behaves before Think-Tank makes them look funny.

The ignorance shown by the crew members of Probe One in the Centerville Public Library is also a funny situation. The misinterpretation by Think-Tank about books being sandwiches and his childish explanation in support of this opinion provoke laughter. When the crew members pass onto their subordinates the responsibility of 'eating' a book, the situation becomes really funny. Finally, when Oop eats the book and makes funny faces, it brings laughter to the readers. The most humorous part of the play is the unfolding of the meaning of nursery rhymes by Think-Tank.

The names of these Martians also amuse. Think-Tank's name is satirical as he pretends to be a tank of intelligence but is actually very dumb. Oop, Noodle, Iota too are funny names.

The ending of the play is indeed hilarious when Think-Tank and his team beat a hasty retreat. The author has a final dig at Martians through the historian, when she chuckles and tells us that nobody in Mars wants to read the book *Mother Goose*.

CHARACTERS***Think-Tank***

Think-Tank is a conceited and an arrogant Martian, who is basically a foolish person. He thinks a bit too highly of his intellectual calibre but is in fact a dumb chap. He keeps pampering his vanity by 'consulting' the mirror to seek praise as the 'most fantastically intellectually gifted being in the land.' He is cruel and misuses his power, forcing his subordinates to flatter him all the time. He insists on being addressed with elaborate salutations.

Think-Tank is very selfish and takes credit for all the wise suggestions that are made by his junior Apprentice Noodle. He is also arrogant and no one dares to point out his errors to him. Even when Noodle knows that Think-Tank is talking nonsense and needs to be corrected, he does so very tactfully.

The hollow intelligence of this character can be noticed from the childish interpretations that he draws about nursery rhymes. He is also a coward and is the first one to run away leaving behind his crew in danger.

In short, the author targets Think-Tank as an object of ridicule.

Apprentice Noodle

Noodle is a wise Martian and acts as a shadow of his master Think-Tank. He offers his intelligent suggestions tactfully to his arrogant master. When the members of the crew fail to break the code of the 'sandwiches,' Apprentice Noodle comes up with a thought of magnificent brilliance to give them vitamins to increase their intelligence. He is an obedient subordinate and carries out his master's commands efficiently. However, he confines himself within his responsibilities as an assistant to his boss. So, when Think-Tank misinterprets the nursery rhymes, Noodle does not intervene. This silence on his part,

speaks highly of his ability to handle situations wisely. He knows very well that his boss is really scared at that moment and any suggestion is going to annoy him further.

In short, Noodle is wise, intelligent and tactful and really deserves to be the eventual ruler of Mars.

The Historian

The Historian is a woman from the twenty-fifth century who works in the Museum of Ancient History, Department of the Twentieth Century. She has comprehensive knowledge about her department and knows the various reasons because of which the twentieth century was called the "Era of the Book". She not only has complete information about the importance of books in the twentieth century but also knows about the role played by them in other centuries. She tells the reader clearly about how a particular book saved planet Earth from a Martian attack in the twenty-first century. Thus, she is a well-read and a well-informed person.

She is also adept in the use of mechanical devices and manages the historiscope and the projector with skill.

She plays the role of an initiator and recedes into the background at the right moment. She appears again towards the close of the play to deliver her epilogue (a section added at the end of the play) and tells the audience about the amity and accord amongst the inhabitants of the universe in her century. In this respect she acts as the mouthpiece of the playwright. Her sense of humour is also good, for she tells the audience that "*Martians can never bring themselves to read. You've guessed it - Mother Goose!*"

EXTRACTS FOR COMPREHENSION

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow in one or two lines.

(I)

Well, you know, the invasion never really happened, because a single book stopped it. What was the book, you ask?

(a) Identify the speaker of these lines.

The speaker of these lines is the Historian from the Museum of Ancient History in the twenty-fifth century.

(b) Which 'invasion' is the speaker referring to?

The speaker is referring to the Martian invasion of 2040 that never actually happened.

(c) Who led that invasion?

The invasion was led by the arrogant and haughty Martian ruler 'the Great and Mighty Think-Tank'.

(d) Which book stopped the invasion?

'Mother Goose,' a well-known book of nursery rhymes in English stopped the invasion.

(II)

I wish to be placed in communication with our manned space probe to that ridiculous little planet we are going to put under our generous rulership.

(a) Who is speaking to whom in this extract?

The Great and Mighty Think-Tank, the arrogant ruler of Mars in the year 2040, is speaking to his subordinate, Apprentice Noodle.

(b) Who were the members of the manned space probe?

The members of the manned space probe were Captain Omega, Lieutenant Iota, and Sergeant Oop.

(c) Which is the 'ridiculous little planet' referred to by the speaker?

Earth is the 'ridiculous little planet' referred to by Think-Tank.

- (d) **What does the speaker plan to do with the 'ridiculous little planet'?**

Think-Tank plans to capture Earth and put it under the 'generous rulership' of Mars.

(III)

Lieutenant Iota, Sergeant Oop, and I have arrived on Earth without incident. We have taken shelter in this (indicates room) – this square place.

- (a) **Who speaks these words and to whom?**

Captain Omega speaks these words to her boss, the Mighty Think-Tank.

- (b) **Why had the speaker arrived on Earth?**

Captain Omega had arrived as a member of the Probe One manned space mission sent by Mars to capture Earth.

- (c) **Where had the speaker taken shelter?**

Captain Omega had taken shelter in the Centerville Public Library on Earth.

- (d) **What did the speaker's team think the 'square place' was?**

Captain Omega's team thought that the square place was some kind of a storage barn.

(IV)

I've counted two thousand of these peculiar items. This place must be some sort of storage barn.

- (a) **Who speaks these lines and to whom?**

Lieutenant Iota speaks these lines to Captain Omega.

- (b) **What are the 'peculiar items'? Where does the speaker find these 'peculiar items'?**

The 'peculiar items' are actually books. Lieutenant Iota finds the books in great numbers in the Centerville Public Library on Earth.

- (c) **Why does the speaker think 'this place' to be some sort of storage barn?**

Iota thinks the library to be some sort of storage barn because there are two thousand 'similar items', *i.e.* the books, over here.

- (d) **Whose opinion does the speaker seek about this place? What response does he get?**

Iota seeks the opinion of Sergeant Oop who guesses that 'this place' could be a 'haberdashery'.

(V)

That is correct, sir. It was not delicious. I don't know how the Earthlings can get those sandwiches down without water. They're dry as Martian dust.

- (a) **Who speaks these lines and to whom?**

Sergeant Oop speaks these words to his Commander-in-Chief Think-Tank.

- (b) **What was 'it'? Why was 'it' not delicious?**

'It' was a book and it was not delicious simply because it was not edible.

- (c) **Why does the speaker use the expression "Earthlings"?**

"Earthlings" is a derogatory term and it is used because the Martians consider the inhabitants of Earth to be inferior in comparison to them.

- (d) **Why does the speaker find 'sandwiches' to be as dry as Martian dust?**

Sergeant Oop finds the 'sandwiches' dry because he was actually eating books thinking them to be sandwiches.

(VI)

Take them immediately and then watch the sandwich. The meaning of the code will slowly unfold before you.

(a) **Who gives this advice and to whom?**

Think-Tank gives this advice to Omega, Iota and Oop.

(b) **What does 'them' refer to?**

'Them' refers to the vitamins given by the chemical department of Mars to the crew of Probe One to increase their intelligence.

(c) **What is the 'code'?**

The 'code' is the nursery-rhymes written in the book.

(d) **Which 'sandwich' is the speaker talking about?**

The 'sandwich' here is actually the book of nursery-rhymes, *Mother Goose*.

(VII)

Stop! This is no time for levity. Don't you realise the seriousness of this discovery? The Earthlings have discovered how to combine agriculture and mining.

(a) **Who speaks these lines and to whom?**

The Commander-in-Chief of the Martian invasion of 2040, the Great and Mighty Think-Tank, speaks these lines to Oop and the other crew members of Probe One.

(b) **Which 'discovery' is being referred to over here?**

The 'discovery' of the nursery rhyme "Mistress Mary.." is being referred to over here.

(c) **Why was it a serious discovery?**

It was a serious discovery because Think-Tank misinterpreted the nursery rhyme to be a coded message about the scientifically advanced status of Earth's civilization. He concluded that people on Earth had discovered the technology of combining agriculture and mining.

(d) **How did it affect the speaker?**

It scared the wits out of Think-Tank. He immediately ordered his

subordinate Noodle to contact their invasion fleet and tell them to hold.

(VIII)

It's an invasion of Mars! Noodle, prepare a space capsule for me. I must escape without delay. Space people, you must leave Earth at once, but be sure to remove all traces of your visit.

(a) Who is the speaker? Who is Noodle?

Think-Tank is the speaker here and Noodle is his wise and humble subordinate.

(b) Why is the speaker in a hurry to escape?

The speaker, Think-Tank is in a hurry to escape because his misinterpretation of the nursery rhymes convinces him that the people on Earth have launched a powerful plan to eliminate him.

(c) Why does the speaker advise to remove all traces of their visit before leaving Earth?

Think-Tank advises to remove all traces of their visit before leaving Earth because he wants to make sure that he is not trailed and killed.

(d) Where does the speaker order his people to go?

Think-Tank orders his people to go to Alpha Centauri, a place hundred million miles away from Mars.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 30 – 40 words each)

- Q1. Where and in which department did the Historian work? What does she tell the audience?**

The Historian worked in the department of curiosities of the good old far-off twentieth century at the Museum of Ancient History. She tells the audience that the twentieth century was known as the 'Era of the Book'.

- Q2. Why was the twentieth century called the 'Era of the book,' according to the Historian?**

The twentieth century was called the 'Era of the Book' because during that period one could find books almost on all topics, from 'anteaters to Zulus'. They gave complete and thorough information about everything and were a tool of education.

- Q3. What was the 'strangest thing' that a book from twentieth century did? Why was it strange?**

The 'strangest thing' that a book from the twentieth century did was to avert the Martian invasion of 2040 on Earth. It was strange because books are storehouses of knowledge and information. They are not weapons or armours to be used to stall invasions.

- Q4. What was the invasion of 2040? How was it stopped? Or**

Who tried to invade the earth in the twenty-first century? Was this attempt successful?

The invasion of 2040 was an unsuccessful attempt by the Martians to bring Earth under their 'generous rulership'. It was stopped by a book of English nursery rhymes, *Mother Goose*.

- Q5. What is a historiscope? Why does the historian use it?**

A 'historiscope' seems to be a scientific device like the microscope which is used to probe the microorganisms very minutely. The

historian uses the historiscope to show in depth what happened in the year 2040.

Q6. Who was Apprentice Noodle?

Apprentice Noodle was the wise and humble subordinate of Think-Tank, the Commander-in-chief of the Martian invasion fleet that tried to invade Earth. Noodle went on to become the ruler of Mars in the twenty-fifth century after the invasion of 2040 was foiled.

Q7. Why did Think-Tank make Noodle repeat the salutation? Or Why did Noodle run out of breath while addressing Think-Tank?

Think-Tank was an arrogant and egoist ruler who misused his power. He made Noodle repeat the salutation to pamper his ego. The salutation was way too long, so Noodle went out of breath while addressing Think-Tank.

Q8. What was Probe One? Why did Think-Tank wish to communicate with it?

Probe One was the manned space team of three Martians - Omega, Iota and Oop. It had been sent to Earth ahead of the Martian invasion fleet in 2040. Think-Tank wished to communicate with it because he was the Commander-in-chief and he required feedback about the current status of the mission.

Q9. What are the different derogatory terms used by Think-Tank to refer to Earth? Or

What are the views of the Think-Tank about the Earth and its inhabitants?

Think-Tank considers Earth to be a ridiculous little planet, an insignificant and "primitive ball of mud". He calls the inhabitants of Earth as Earthlings and finds them to be ugly as they have tiny heads.

Q10. How is Think-Tank addressed by other Martians? Why?

Think-Tank is addressed by his fellow Martians as 'the most powerful and intelligent creature in the whole universe', 'the great and mighty one', 'your Brilliance' and 'your Cleverness'. They have to address him with these honogifics because he is a vain autocrat who boosts his ego by compelling his subordinates to flatter him.

Q11. Why does Think-Tank consult the mirror before talking to the crew members of Probe One? Or

What question does Think-Tank ask the mirror? Why do you think he asks the question?

Think-Tank is snobbish and is always eager to hear his praise. So, before talking to the crew members of Probe One, he first asks the mirror, "Who is the most fantastically intellectually gifted being in the land?"

Q12. Why does Think-Tank feel annoyed with the mirror?

Think-Tank feels annoyed with the mirror because it does not praise him instantly. A vain Think-Tank expected a prompt praise and did not find this slow admiration to be appropriate.

Q13. Why does Think-Tank consider himself to be handsome?

Think-Tank considers himself to be handsome and attractive because he finds his balloon brain to be his most striking feature. He hopes that if Noodle keeps exercising his mind, one day he too would have a large sized head like him.

Q14. What was the space Probe One crew doing when Mars Space Control contacted them?

The space 'Probe One' crew was at the Centerville Public Library when Mars Space Control contacted them. Captain Omega was fiddling confusedly with card catalogue drawers, Lieutenant

Iota was counting books in a bookcase and Sergeant Oop was examining a book in a baffled manner.

Q15. What is the first report conveyed by Omega to Think-Tank?

The first report which is conveyed by Omega to Think-Tank is that the Probe One crew has reached "Earth without incident". He also reports that all the three crew members have taken shelter in a 'square place'.

Q16. What does Iota think the library to be? Why?

Iota thinks the library to be a storage barn. He thinks so because this 'square place' had two thousand 'peculiar items' stored in it. Having come from Mars, Iota was unfamiliar with books and did not know what a library is.

Q17. What makes Oop think that the library is a 'haberdashery'?

'Haberdashery' is a kind of shop that sells clothing, small articles of dress, pins, cotton etc. Oop opens a book in the library and puts it on his head like a hat. That is why he thinks that the library is a haberdashery.

Q18. Why did Think-Tank conclude that the library was a crude refreshment stand?

Think-Tank concluded that the library was a crude refreshment stand because according to him Earth creatures were always eating and the 'peculiar items' found by his crew members in the library were sandwiches.

Q19. What description does Think-Tank give of a sandwich? Why?

Or

Why does Think-Tank call the book a 'sandwich'?

Think-Tank describes the book as a sandwich because he thinks that the cover and back of the book are the two slices of a sandwich. He considers the leaves of the book as the filling of the sandwich.

He gives this description to flaunt his knowledge and to create an impression on his subordinates.

Q20. Why did Think-Tank order Captain Omega to eat the book? Does he eat it? If not, why?

Think-Tank ordered Captain Omega to eat the book because he wanted to confirm that it was an edible 'sandwich'. But Omega does not eat it and cleverly passes on this unpleasant task to his subordinate, Iota. Iota in turn passes it to Oop who 'tries' to eat the book and concludes that it is 'as dry as Martian dust'. He wonders how the Earthlings managed to swallow it without water.

Q21. How do we know that Noodle is very humble and wise?

Or

Noodle avoids offending Think-Tank but at the same time he corrects his mistakes. How does he manage to do it? (Textual)

Noodle is very humble and wise. That is why he always keeps Think-Tank in good humour. Whenever he feels that his boss is wrong, he throws a corrective hint in such a manner that the entire credit of the new idea can be taken easily by his boss.

Q22. When does Noodle conclude that the sandwich was some kind of a communication device?

Noodle comes to the rescue of the crew members of Probe One when the sandwich theory fails. He tells that he had noticed in a surveyor film that the sandwiches were used by the Earth people as some sort of communication device.

Q23. How did the Martians try to listen to the book?

The Martians took two books each from the case and held them to their ears, listening intently. Failing to hear anything, they thought that either they were not on a correct frequency or the

Earthlings had sharper ears than them or perhaps the sandwiches didn't make sounds.

Q24. How did the crew of the Martian Probe conclude that the book was a device for visual communication?

The crew noticed that the book had a code of thousands of "little lines and squiggles and dots" and it also had pictures of Earthlings alongside this code. This made the crew conclude that the book was actually a device for visual communication.

Q25. What makes Think-Tank say that the "Earthlings are not as primitive as we have thought"?

Think-Tank is told by Oop that the sandwiches had some information written in codes that were little lines and thousands of squiggles and dots with pictures alongside. This makes Think-Tank say that Earthlings were quite advanced and not primitive as Martians had thought them to be.

Q26. Why are the crew members given vitamins? Or

What suggestion does Noodle offer for decoding the sandwich?

The crew members are given vitamins prepared by the chemical department of Mars. Apprentice Noodle makes this recommendation in order to increase the intelligence of the crew members to enable them to decode the sandwich by transcribing the nursery rhymes given in it.

Q27. How did Think-Tank interpret the first rhyme, "Mistress Mary...?"

Think-Tank interpreted the first rhyme "Mistress Mary..." as an indication of scientific advancement made by Earthlings by combining the fields of agriculture and mining. This helped them to grow high explosives and crops of rare metals like silver and cockle shells.

Q28. Why did Think-Tank order to 'cease laughter' after the second rhyme is interpreted? Or

What was the second rhyme? How did Think-Tank interpret it?

The second rhyme was "Hey diddle diddle!" Think-Tank interpreted it as an indication of the high level of civilization reached by the Earthlings. He thought that people on Earth had taught their domesticated animals musical culture and space techniques. Even their dogs had a sense of humour and they might be launching an interplanetary attack of millions of cows. Alarmed by this interpretation, Think-Tank ordered everybody to stop laughing.

Q29. What alarms Think-Tank after the third rhyme is transcribed to him?

Or

Why does Think-Tank believe that Earthlings are after him?

Think-Tank is alarmed because Oop shows him the picture of Humpty Dumpty printed alongside the third rhyme. Think-Tank concludes that it is his picture and he has been seen by the Earthlings. He fears that they now plan to capture Mars Central Control, invade Mars and bring his downfall.

Q30. What orders are passed by Think-Tank after he interprets the rhyme "Humpty Dumpty"?

Or

What orders does Think-Tank give to Noodle and his probe crew when he concludes that the Earthlings are after him?

Or

Why does Think-Tank want to go to Alpha Centauri?

Think-Tank interprets 'Humpty Dumpty' as a plan by Earthlings to eliminate him. So, he orders his probe crew to suspend the mission to invade Earth and leave Mars at once. He also tells them to remove all traces before leaving. In order to get away to safety, he orders all to evacuate their entire planet, and head for Alpha Centauri, a hundred million miles away from Mars.

Q31. What does the Historian tell the audience regarding relations between the Earthlings and Martians in the twenty-fifth century?

Or

What sort of relationship was established between Earth and Mars during the twenty-fifth century?

The Historian tells that in the twenty-fifth century Mars got a new ruler, the wise and wonderful Noodle. Earthlings became friendly with Martians and taught them the difference between a book and a sandwich. They also taught them how to read and established a model library in their capital Marsopolis.

Q32. The Aliens in this play speak English. Do you think this is their language? What could be the language of the Aliens? (Textual)

The Aliens have come to Earth from Mars, so English is not their language. Besides, they fail to transcribe the English rhymes without the help of intelligence vitamins. Thus, the language of these aliens could be 'Martianlish'.

Q33. What idea do you form of the level of intelligence that Think-Tank has from your study of the play? Who, according to you, is the most intelligent of all the characters?

Think-Tank is a foolish person and always tries to flaunt his wisdom. He does not have any original ideas and always tries to steal the views of Noodles. The most intelligent of all these characters is Noodle who is both wise and wonderful.

Q34. What incidents shown in the play give you the idea that Martians too were quite advanced scientifically?

Four different incidents show that Martians were quite advanced. The intelligence enhancing vitamins; mirror's ability to talk; advanced means of communication between Mars Space Control and the crew of Probe One; and the Martians' skill in space technology and space travel show that Martians too were advanced scientifically.

Q35. How do you think the dusty old book of nursery rhymes saved the world from a Martian invasion?

The dusty old book of nursery rhymes saved the Earth thanks to its 'imaginative' simplicity that posed a challenge to the low IQ of Think-Tank. This commander-in-chief of Mars Space Control misinterprets the rhymes and flees after concluding that his life is in danger.

Q36. Why do you think the Martians could not bring themselves to read *Mother Goose*?

The Martians could not read *Mother Goose* because they had tasted a bitter defeat at the hands of this book. They were really afraid of its power and did not wish to come even remotely close to it.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

(to be answered in about 100 – 150 words each)

Q1. What different guesses are made by Think-Tank about the books found on Earth? Or

How did Think-Tank keep modifying his 'sandwich' theory based on Noodle's observations?

Think-Tank makes different guesses about the books found on Earth. He thinks them to be sandwiches at first because his view is that Earth creatures are always eating. When this surmise is proved false, he presumes the books to be some sort of communication device since Noodle shares with him this observation from a surveyor film. However, this guess too proves to be wrong. Then Think-Tank considers them to be a device for eye communication. He thinks so because Apprentice Noodle tells him that the Earthlings opened the books and watched them. This conjecture bears fruit and after giving intelligence enhancing vitamins to the crew of Probe One, the books are

finally transcribed. Lastly, Think-Tank decodes the rhymes and concludes that Earthlings are an advanced lot who can grow high explosives by combining agriculture and mining. He gets the impression that his life is in danger and beats a hasty retreat ordering his staff to run to Alpha Centauri, a hundred million miles away from Mars.

Q2. In what ways does Think-Tank misinterpret innocent nursery rhymes as threats to the Martians? (Textual)

Think-Tank misinterprets all the three nursery rhymes that are transcribed for him. He interprets the first rhyme "Mistress Mary..." as an indication of scientific advancement made by Earthlings by combining the fields of agriculture and mining. He feels that this helps them to grow high explosives and crops of rare metals like silver and cockle shells.

The second rhyme "Hey diddle diddle..." is inferred as an evidence of the high level of civilization reached by Earthlings. He conjectures that the Earthlings have taught even their animals the art of musical culture and space technique. Even their dogs have a sense of humour and they might be launching an interplanetary attack of millions of cows.

The final rhyme, "Humpty Dumpty..." alarms Think-Tank. He looks at the picture of Humpty Dumpty given alongside the rhyme and concludes that it is his picture. He gets scared and believes that Earthlings have seen him and they now plan to capture Mars Central Control, invade Mars and bring about his downfall.

Q3. Who, according to you, is responsible for the failure of Martian venture in 2040? Why? Or

Why did the Martian invasion of 2040 fail?

The Martian mission ended in a failure because of the follies of

Think-Tank. He ruled tyrannically, and the only wise creature around him, Apprentice Noodle, had to give his suggestions with caution for fear of annoying the commander. In addition, the Martian mission failed also because Think-Tank underestimated the potential of the creatures of Earth. He presumed that it would be extremely easy for him to overpower the 'primitive ball of mud called Earth'. Another cause was the misinterpretation of the three nursery rhymes by Think-Tank. He considered the simple rhymes as an indication of the scientific advancement made by Earthlings and their plan to capture Mars Central Control, invade Mars and bring about his downfall.

The invasion failed also because Think-Tank was a coward. He got so scared after looking at the picture of Humpty Dumpty that he thought Earthlings have spotted him and his end is near. So, he suspended the Martian invasion and ordered an immediate withdrawal.

Q4. Who, in your opinion, is the most intelligent of all the Martians? Give reasons in support of your answer.

Of the five Martians, namely Think-Tank, Noodle, Omega, Iota, and Oop, Noodle is the most intelligent. All the three crew members are servile and have no opinion of their own. They merely carry out orders and obey their commander unquestioningly. Think-Tank, who is conceited and thinks himself to be very intelligent, misunderstands the books to be sandwiches and draws wrong conclusions out of the innocent nursery rhymes after they are transcribed to him. However, Noodle is humble and wise. He is very cautious and takes care not to offend the haughty Think-Tank. Noodle is the only Martian whose opinion about books being a device meant for

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