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Literature in English (Paper 2) ICSE 9 & 10

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of Prose Poetry
& Drama

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Specimen Paper,
Sample Papers &
Exam Paper

Edition
2022-23

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COMPLETE STUDY | COMPLETE PRACTICE | COMPLETE ASSESSMENT

Literature in English

(Paper 2)

ICSE 9 & 10

All in One[®]

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Authors

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Vinay Sharma



ARIHANT PRAKASHAN (School Division Series)



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A WORD

With The Readers

All in one ICSE Literature in English (Paper 2) has been written keeping in mind the needs of students studying in Class 9th and 10th ICSE. This book has been made in such a way that students will be fully guided to prepare for the exam in the most effective manner, securing higher grades.

The purpose of this book is to aid any ICSE student to achieve the best possible grade in the exam. This book will give you support during the course as well as advice you on revision and preparation for the exam itself. The material is presented in a clear & concise form and there are ample questions for practice.

KEY FEATURES

- Detailed Study of each chapter along with **Summary of the Chapter, Sample Questions, Practice Questions** and **Exam Practice**.
- For complete understanding of the drama, all necessary elements like; **About the Author, Theme of the Play, Characters Introduction, Summary of each Act and Suggested Questions-Answers**.
- Each poem given in the Poetry section have, **Central Idea of the Poem, Critical Appreciation, Stanza-wise Explanations and Extract Based Questions**.
- In Prose Section, for Quick Reading and Understanding of the Chapter, **Summary of Each Chapter** is given followed by **Extract Based Questions**.
- For complete practice of the examination **3 Sample Question Papers** based on the pattern & syllabus have been given.
- At the end of the book **Latest ICSE Specimen Paper** and **ICSE Solved Paper** have been given.

All in one Literature in English (Paper 2) for ICSE Class 9th and 10th has all the material required for examination and will surely guide students to the Way to Success.

We are highly thankful to ARIHANT PRAKASHAN, MEERUT for giving us such an excellent opportunity to write this book. The role of Arihant DTP Unit and Proofreading team is praiseworthy in the making of this book. Suggestions for further improvement of the book will be welcomed & incorporated in further editions.

In the end, we would like to wish **BEST OF LUCK** to our readers!

Authors
Ritesh Ranjan
Vinay Sharma

Literature in English

(Paper 2)

ICSE 9 & 10

PREVIEW

DETAILED STUDIES

To make the student understand the chapter quickly, each Chapter/Act etc has Summary, covering all the necessary details along with Central Idea. Stanza-wise Explanations have also been given in each poem.

SECTION B Poetry A Collection of Poems

CHAPTER

1

The Heart of the Tree

Henry Cuyler Bunner

About the Poet

Henry Cuyler Bunner was born on 23rd August, 1855. He was an American poet, a play-wright, short story writer and a novelist. His poems and stories provide a vivid description of places and people whom he had observed in and around New York city. He began his career as a clerical staff but later on turned to journalism. He worked as an editor in a weekly publication called 'Duck'. His poetry collections include 'Airs from Arcady and Elsewhere' (1884) which contained one of his best poems, 'The Heart of a Tree'. Other poems, written by him are 'Yarrow' (1892) and 'Poems' (1894). Literary historians have described Bunner as a poet capable of 'technical dexterity, playfulness and smoothness of finish'. He died on 11th May, 1896.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

The poem 'The Heart of the Tree' presents the beneficial aspects of planting a tree both for the individual and for the society or humanity over all. The poem not only appreciates the action of planting a tree but also honours the amazing work of human hands that do this noble and benevolent act. The poem is relevant in today's scenario also where rapid urbanisation and development are taking their toll on the environment. This poem is poet's voice for raising an appeal to plant more and more trees as only trees can save the world from the probable calamity.

Critical Appreciation

The Message

'The Heart of the Tree' is a meaningful poem with a message that the people who plant trees not only contribute to the betterment of nature for all the creatures but also help in nation's growth. The refrain at the beginning of each stanza—'What does he plant, who plants a tree?' is answered in the light of usefulness of trees, how they are the friends of sun and sky, a home to birds that sing in harmony with leaves, they provide shade, how they bring rain and how the person who plants a tree is fulfilling his social obligation.

Stanza-wise Explanation

Stanza 1

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants a friend of sun and sky,
He plants the flag of breezes free;
The shaft of beauty, towering high;
He plants a home to heaven anigh;
For song and mother-croon of bird—
The treble and happy twilight heard—
These things he plants who plants a tree.

Stanza 2

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants cool shade and tender rain,
And seed and bud of days to be,
And years that fade and flush again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forest's heritage;
The harvest of a coming age;
The joy that unborn eyes shall see—
These things he plants who plants a tree.

Word Meanings

Tender—soft. Flush—a sudden flow. Heritage—inheritance.
Harvest—time of the year when crops are cut and collected from the fields.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants a friend of sun and sky,
He plants the flag of breezes free;
The shaft of beauty, towering high;
He plants a home to heaven anigh;

3. In what ways are the trees friends of sun and sky?

Ans. The poet has depicted trees as friends of sun and sky because the poet feels that trees attain height due to the sun. The process of photosynthesis is carried out in the presence of sun that help trees to grow. Trees also help in taking impurified air and releasing pure air with oxygen in the sky. So, a tree is a friend of sky also.

4. What is the phrase 'The shaft of beauty towering high' used for?

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants cool shade and tender rain,
And seed and bud of days to be,
And years that fade and flush again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forest's heritage.

SECTION A Drama

The Merchant of Venice

William Shakespeare

About the Author

William Shakespeare was born in a small English town called Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, on 23rd April, 1564. He studied at a local school in Stratford. When he was 14 years old, his father lost his property and the boy had to leave school to support his family. In 1582, he got married to Anne Hathaway, who was 8 years older than him. He had three children with her. In 1587, he went to London where he remained for about 25 years.

Theme of the Play

The play 'Merchant of Venice' is full of many themes which are inherent to the development of the plot of the play. The play is based partly on the contrast between idealistic and realistic opinions about society and relationships. On one hand, the author tells about love and mercy and on the second hand, he talks about revenge and greed. The play also deals with the theme of justice and mercy. Religious intolerance and personal revenge.

Character Introduction

Major Characters

Antonio

Another main character Antonio is a passive character and at times impulsive who believes that lending money on interest was illegal. He is shown as honest, sincere, humble and soft-hearted person though his character becomes insignificant before Shylock and Portia. To help his friend Bassanio, Antonio does not mind signing a bond at his own cost.

ACT I (Scene I, II & III)

Summary of the Act

Antonio in Gloomy Mood

Antonio, a merchant, is in a sad mood and unable to find a reason for his depression. His friends Salarino and Salanio try to reason out his gloominess but unable to cheer up Antonio. Meanwhile Bassanio arrives along with his two friends who also notice Antonio's sad looks and gloomy appearance.

friend Bassanio. He also asks Shylock not to lend him as a friend but as an enemy and levy the same interest and penalty as to any debtor if he fails to pay the amount in stipulated time. Assuring Antonio that he means to be friends, Shylock offers to give the loan without interest. Instead Shylock asks him to go to a notary and get the bond executed. He informs Antonio that the bond shall state that if fails to return the money in time, an exact pound of flesh will be cut off from his body.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. Salanio Believe me Sir, had I such venture forth, the better part of my affections would be with my hopes abroad. I should be still plucking

5. What light does the opening scene throw on the dangers that sea business can face?

Ans. The opening scene enlightens us on some possible dangers which merchant ships may face at sea such as strong winds or storm, sea robbers or pirates, sand banks and dangerous rocks. Moreover, the opening scene prepares us what Antonio would fall in future when his ships would not arrive in time and Shylock

SELF ASSESSMENT

Act I

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. Salanio Your mind is tossing on the ocean; where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood or as it were, pageants of the sea, do over peer the petty traffickers, curly to them, do them reverence, they fly by them with their wowed wings.

1. What makes Salanio say these words?

/1/

2. How can you say that Antonio was in a sad mood? How does he describe his sadness?

/1/

EXAM PRACTICE AND SELF ASSESSMENT

Exam Practice have questions in that format in which these are asked in the examinations. All the questions are fully solved. The explanations given here teach the students, how to write the answer in the examination to get full marks. Students can use these questions for practice and assess their understanding & recall of the chapter.

Self Assessment At the end of the chapter, these unsolved questions are for practice and assessment of students. By practising these questions, students can assess their preparation level for the chapter.

Literature in English

(Paper 2)

ICSE9 & 10

for ICSE Class 9th and 10th Examination is a complete book which can give you all; Study, Practice & Assessment. It is hoped that this book will reinforce and extend your ideas about the subject and finally will place you in the ranks of toppers.

SAMPLE QUESTION PAPERS

To make the students practice in the real sense, we have provided 3 Sample Question Papers, exactly based on the latest pattern.

LATEST ICSE SPECIMEN PAPER

Fully Solved (Questions-Answers)

Literature in English-X (Paper-2)

Time : 2 hrs

Max Marks : 80

1. Answers to this Paper must be written on the paper provided separately.
2. You will not be allowed to write during the first 15 minutes. This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.
3. The time given at the head of this paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.
4. Attempt five questions in all from only three text books.
5. You must attempt at least one question from each of the Sections A, B and C and not more than two other questions from the same books you have already compulsorily chosen.
6. The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

ICSE SOLVED PAPER 2020

Fully Solved (Questions-Answers)

English Literature-X (Paper-2)

Time : 2 hrs

Max Marks : 80

1. Answers to this paper must be written on the paper provided separately.
2. You will not be allowed to write during the first 15 minutes. This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.
3. The time given at the head of this paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.
4. Attempt all five questions.
5. The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

ICSE SAMPLE PAPER 1

Fully Solved

Literature in English-X (Paper-2)

Time : 2 hrs

Max Marks : 80

1. Answer to this Paper must be written on the paper provided separately.
2. You will not be allowed to write during the first 15 minutes. This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.
3. The time given at the head of this paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.
4. Attempt five questions in all from only three text books.
5. You must attempt at least one question from each of the Sections A, B and C and not more than two other questions from the same books you have already compulsorily chosen.
6. The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

SECTION A : DRAMA

Answer one or more questions from only ONE of the following plays.

The Merchant of Venice by Shakespeare

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

SHYLOCK O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man,
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:

- (i) Which Christians in particular are referred to in the extract? Why, according to Shylock, are Christians suspicious? [3]
- (ii) What does Shylock mean when he says, "If he should break his day, what should I gain/ By the exaction of the forfeiture?" [3]

LATEST ICSE SPECIMEN PAPER AND SOLVED PAPER

At the end of the book Latest ICSE Specimen Paper & ICSE Solved Paper also have been given.

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Literature in English

(Paper 2)

ICSE 9 & 10

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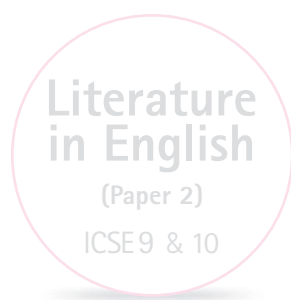
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COURSE STRUCTURE

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH (Paper 2)

PAPER 2 (Literature in English) 80 Marks

Candidates will be required to answer five questions from the prescribed textbooks, which include Drama, Prose and Poetry.

Prose (Short Stories) and Drama

Questions set will be central to the text. Candidates will be required to show that they have understood the passage and are able to clearly give their interpretation of the questions set, which should be in their own words and relevant to the text. Excerpts may be given from the prose and drama texts leading to questions on the specific book.

Poetry

A poem, or passages from poems, will be given and questions will be set to test the candidates' response to the poem. The questions will focus on the content, understanding and the personal response of candidates to the poem as a whole.

NOTE : The Class X - ICSE examination paper will be set on the entire syllabus prescribed for the subject. The Class IX internal examination is to be conducted on the portion of this syllabus that is covered during the academic year. The Council has not prescribed bifurcation of the syllabus for this subject.

NOTE : For list of prescribed text-books see Appendix- I.

DRAMA : The Merchant of Venice (Shakespeare's unabridged play by A.W. Verity).

TREASURE TROVE : A collection of ICSE Poems and Short Stories (Evergreen Publications (India) Ltd. New Delhi).

POETRY (All poems to be studied)

1. The Heart of the Tree – Henry Cuyler Bunner
2. The Cold Within–James Patrick Kinney
3. The Bangle sellers – Sarojini Naidu
4. After Blenheim – Robert Southey
5. Television – Roald Dahl
6. Daffodils – William Wordsworth
7. I Know why the Caged Bird Sings - Maya Angelou
8. The Patriot – Robert Browning
9. Abu Ben Adheim – Leigh Hunt
10. Nine Gold Medals – David Roth

PROSE (Only one of the following)

1. Short Stories : (All short stories to be studied)
 - (i) Chief Seattle's Speech
 - (ii) Old Man at the Bridge–Ernest Miller Hemingway
 - (iii) A Horse and Two Goats–R.K. Narayan
 - (iv) Hearts and Hands – O. Henry
 - (v) A Face in the Dark – Ruskin Bond
 - (vi) Angel in Disguise– T.S. Arthur
 - (vii) The Little Match Girl–Hans Christian Andersen
 - (viii) The Blue Bead – Norah Burke
 - (ix) My Greatest Olympic Prize – Jesse Owens
 - (x) All Summer in a Day – Ray Douglas Bradbury

TOP TIPS TO SCORE HIGHEST MARKS
in class 9th exam. So, check out and
apply these in your exams.

TOP TIPS

to Score the HIGHEST MARKS

ALWAYS FEEL POSITIVE

Positive attitude is the key to solve many of the problems which you face in your life. During exam time, this is an important feature to have in you for success and crack your exams with flying colours. Attitude is important for all students because it reflects your personality as well as your confidence or self-confidence. It always takes you to the top of everything, whether it is for exams or interviews or for your life. Positive attitude will take you through the door of success and make you feel full of self-confidence.

PLAN WELL FOR STUDYING

You must make a schedule for your studies followed by strict implementation of that schedule. Make that schedule detailing days or even hours when your exams are really close or it is high time for your exam. You must interact with your teachers for the important topics or topics which need more hard work or more time than other topics. Use last years' exam papers or sample papers for making a proper schedule for your studies.

You must study more or give more attention to the topics in which you feel you are not up to the mark or which your teachers recommended you to study more. You should study these topics first during your exam preparation.

JUST BEFORE THE EXAM

Never try to read anything or to study or cram just before the exam time, even if your friend asks you for some topic he has missed or left during preparation for the exams. Close your book an hour before the exam starts and feel relaxed and worry free and full of self-confidence. Also get up early in the morning and take another review of the important topics and make yourself filled with confidence, as confidence is the main key to score well. The night before the exam you should sleep as soon as possible to make your brain as well as body relax a bit and to be well prepared for the exams, as our brain too needs a rest to be fresh for the exam.

DISCUSS WHAT YOU LEARN

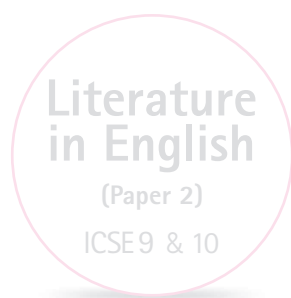
Find a friend or relative who has similar interests or who would enjoy hearing about your studies and let them know what's going on in your class.

CHART YOUR PROGRESS

Design your map of studying and you would see a certain satisfaction coming after watching your goals being accomplished. When times get hard, you can always turn to your chart and see how far you have reached.

DURING EXAM TIME

Check out all the things you require during exam time i.e., pen, pencil, sketch pens, rubber, sharpener. Each and every thing, whether it is small or big, matters a lot during your exam time. Read all the instructions carefully before starting the paper and keep them in your mind during exam time. Don't make any foolish mistake regarding your exam paper instructions.



ATTEMPTING THE EXAMINATION PAPER

Read out all the questions carefully before writing anything on the answer sheet and always start your answering from the questions which will carry maximum marks as well as which you think are tougher or need much time to think. When you start the exam from small questions, you will always feel the problem of questions left.

So, that's why time management is very much important during exams. You can write small questions even in the last 30 minutes but you will never be able to write enough for the large questions at the end, which will eventually result in sadness.

WHEN YOU FEEL STUCK DURING THE EXAM

There will also come a moment in your exam when you feel stuck with some questions or a single question. You just need to be relaxed and calm, don't panic in that situation and make yourself confident and try to think about the answer with a cool mind.

If you are not feeling like giving that answer at that time, make any sign or mark that question with pen and move on to the next question and try doing that question after you finish your paper but are still left with time. Never try to think about the 'stuck' question when you are writing the answer to any other question. This will reduce your concentration and when you feel no way out, just make a guess and attempt that question. This will leave you with something in the space you left for that question.

SOLUTION COPY SHOULD BE NEAT & CLEAN

Handwriting matters a lot for good or highest marks during your exam, as your writing makes the first impression on the checker's mind and makes your solution copy more filled with a glow for the examiner or checker of the answer sheet.

Underline the lines you feel important and want to attract the examiner's attention towards so that he/she can be able to make a right mindset about the answer given and also reward you with the full or maximum marks.

AFTER COMPLETION OF EXAM PAPER

When you end the exam paper, don't feel like running out of the examination hall. Sit there and review each and every answer before depositing your answer book with the invigilator. Also, look for the questions you left during answering or in which you got stuck. Search for the mistakes you have done during writing and turn towards the hardest question you think and also feel uncomfortable in answering. Review it and look to add any other important lines you missed in that.

ART OF WRITING ANSWERS : GIVE YOUR BEST SHOT

- One can practice answering in previous test papers or sample papers to get used to the manner in which one has to write answers in the exams.
 - Make sure that you answer the question asked and not answer what you hoped or wished the question would be.
 - Examiners expect to the point and correct answers. Resist the temptation to write everything or writing beyond limits.
 - Keep your answer stepwise. Some of you will be surprised to know that the board gives rather detailed dictates on how to evaluate the answer sheet. Try not to exceed the word limit.
 - Write your answers in a logical systematic manner. Use examples, facts, figures, quotations, tables etc. wherever necessary to substantiate your answers. Give appropriate heading where necessary.
 - Add a touch of class by putting extra information that indicate your being very knowledgeable and put this separately near the end, so that it is read just before giving the marks, especially in an essay type question like new trends etc.
-

PAPER 2 Literature in English

SECTION A Drama

- The Merchant of Venice by Shakespeare

SECTION B Poetry

- A Collection of Poems
 1. The Heart of the Tree
 2. The Cold Within
 3. The Bangle Seller
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SECTION A Drama

The Merchant of Venice

William Shakespeare

About the Author

William Shakespeare was born in a small English town called Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire, on 23rd April, 1564. He studied at a local school in Stratford. When he was 14 years old, his father lost his property and the boy had to leave school to support his family. In 1582, he got married to Anne Hathaway, who was 8 years older than him. He had three children with her. In 1587, he went to London where he remained for about 25 years.

His plays are of different kinds or genres. These are histories, tragedies and comedies. These plays are among the best known in English literature and are taught in schools around the world. His works, consist of approximately thirty-eight plays, one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, two long narrative poems and a few other verses. Shakespeare wrote his works between 1590 and 1613. Shakespeare has been credited for adding new words and phrases to the English language. He created over 1700 English words. Some of Shakespeare's most famous plays are : Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Tempest. Besides plays he wrote many famous sonnets. He went back to Stratford-upon-Avon in 1611, where he breathed his last in 1616.

About the Play

'The Merchant of Venice' is a play of revenge and exhibition of cruelty, mercy and encouragement. Antonio, a leading merchant of Venice is a wealthy, respected, rich and popular trader. He tries to help his dear friend Bassanio by lending money from Shylock (a Jew moneylender). Antonio never wanted to take money from Shylock, but has to due to shortage of cash as his ships have not arrived as yet. The money was given by signing a bond which stated that if money is not paid in time, Shylock will take a pound of flesh from Antonio's body. Bassanio wanted this money to go to Belmont and to fulfil the terms of Portia's father's will successfully by selecting from the three caskets. Bassanio and Portia marry but the news arrives that Antonio's ships have been lost at sea. Antonio cannot repay his debt and Shylock gets his chance for revenge. Shylock insists that he should be paid in accordance with his contract: a pound of flesh.

At the point, Portia disguised as a lawyer and Nerissa dressed as her law clerk enter the courtroom. Portia begins her case with a plea for mercy, she beg Shylock to forfeit the bond and accept three times the money that Bassanio had offered. Shylock refuses and want to take revenge from christians. Portia informs Shylock to take exact one pound of flesh from Antonio's body without spilling a single drop of blood. If he fails, all his lands and goods will be confiscated. Shylock goes back asking for triple amount or the return of original amount but Portia refuses now.

The Duke of Venice decides to spare Shylock's life and gives half of Shylock's money to Antonio and half is given to the state. As a reward the young lawyer asks for Bassanio's ring which his wife has given to him. The play ends on a humorous and happy role when Antonio, Bassanio and Gratiano return to Belmont. After much comical agonising moments Portia and Nerissa confess that they were the young lawyer and clerk to whom rings were given by Bassanio and Gratiano. Lorenzo and Jessica inherit the money from Shylock and are happy as they settle down. The play ends on a happy note as Antonio is informed about three of his ships have arrived safely in port.

Theme of the Play

The play 'Merchant of Venice' is full of many themes which are inherent to the development of the plot of the play. The play is based partly on the contrast between idealistic and realistic opinions about society and relationships. On one hand, the author tells about love and mercy and on the second hand, he talks about revenge and greed.

The play also deals with the theme of justice and mercy. Religious intolerance and personal revenge leave no place for mercy. However, Portia asks the Duke to pardon Shylock and Antonio also exercises mercy on Shylock by not taking Shylock's money from him.

Theme of friendship is also highlighted as shown between Antonio and Bassanio. Antonio is a perfect example of sincere friend who helps Bassanio at his own cost. Theme of Prejudice against Jews has its recurrence at some places when Antonio asks Shylock to convert to Christianity. Launcelot in his clownish ways demonstrates the absurdities that arise from damning any religious faith.

Character Introduction

Major Characters

Antonio

Another main character Antonio is a passive character and at times impulsive who believes that lending money on interest was illegal. He is shown as honest, sincere, humble and soft hearted person though his character becomes insignificance before Shylock and Portia. To help his friend Bassanio, Antonio does not mind signing a bond at his own cost.

Bassanio

A young man with expensive tastes and rich friends who borrows money from Antonio in order to become the right suitor to the rich, intelligent and beautiful Portia. He is also held in high esteem by his friends.

Shylock

Shylock is the most important character in the play. He is the central character involved in all bad things. He is a Jew and shown to be inhumane, cruel, greedy and stingy. His pleasure laid in hurting others and hence is a sadist. He serves as both the villain and the most tragic figure of the play.

Portia

Portia has been described as a beautiful, charming, graceful, intelligent, sensitive, kind hearted and witty girl. She is bold and capable. She shows her wit and presence of mind while handling the case of Antonio whom she saves from the clutches of Shylock and subsequent death.

Minor Characters

Gratiano

He is a friend of both Antonio and Bassanio, who is joyful and sprightly person. He does not have a major part in the play. He is very talkative. He is seen to accompany Bassanio wherever he goes. He was in love with Nerissa and marries her.

Nerissa

Nerissa is not only a servant in Portia's household but also her companion. She is very intelligent and always there for Portia. She is witty and cheerful. She acts brilliantly as a clerk to the lawyer, Portia.

Jessica

Jessica is Shylock's daughter. She is attractive, good-looking, sweet, polite and generous young lady. She is in love with Lorenzo and runs away with him.

Lorenzo

Lorenzo, though a minor character, keeps appearing quite often in the play. He is a great companion of Bassanio. He falls in love with Shylock's daughter Jessica. He elopes and marries her.

Salarino, Salerio and Salanio

Friends of Antonio and Bassanio, minor characters almost indistinguishable from each other (in fact they are sometimes considered to be a single person) who comment on the action and who inform the audience about the action that has occurred offstage.

Tubal

Shylock's friend, the only other Jew in the play, who functions as a news bearer of Jessica's escape and of her consequent behaviour.

Launcelot Gobbo

He is a servant with the Jew, Shylock. Launcelot was a true Jester, who was witty and humorous. He moves to the services of Bassanio after quitting job with Shylock.

Old Gobbo

Old Gobbo is an old and blind man. He is the father of Launcelot and also a servant in Venice. He wishes the best for his son.

Prince of Morocco

He was a proud and self-respecting soul. He was black in complexion and careless about his looks. He was proud of his lineage as well as strength. He does not forget his worth while making a choice of the casket.

Prince of Arragon

He was naughty and thinks too high of himself. He feels, he deserves Portia because of his merits. He also fails in choosing the correct casket. He lacks grace and manners.

Stephano

Stephano is a servant of Portia. He announces Portia's return to Belmont, supposedly from her religious return.

Doctor Bellario

A wealthy Paduan lawyer and Portia's cousin. Doctor Bellario never appears in the play, but he gives Portia's servant the letters of introduction needed for her to make her appearance in the court.

Balthazar

He is one of Portia's servants. Portia sends him to obtain her letters of introduction and costume from Dr Bellario. Balthazar is also the name that Portia steals when she impersonates a lawyer at court.

The Duke of Venice

The reigning official of Venice who presides over the court where Shylock intends to collect on his bond.

ACT I (Scene I, II & III)

Summary of the Act

Antonio in Gloomy Mood

Antonio, a merchant, is in a sad mood and unable to find a reason for his depression. His friends Salarino and Salanio try to reason out his gloominess but unable to cheer up Antonio. Meanwhile Bassanio arrives along with his two friends who also notice Antonio's sad looks gloomy appearance.

Bassanio's Confession about Portia

When only Bassanio and Antonio are left out Bassanio confesses about his love for a lady, named Portia in Belmont. Bassanio also asks Antonio to lend him more money in order to gain the love of Portia. Antonio's fortunes are all tied up at sea, so he doesn't have any money. But he offers to stand as guarantor to any money that Bassanio takes as a loan from any merchant.

Will of Portia's Father and her Unhappiness

Portia, the wealthy heiress is sad as she feels that her father has left her no freedom to choose her husband. Both Portia and her maid Nerissa then discuss the many suitors who want to marry her. She points out the faults that each of them has according to the country from which he has arrived. Nerissa, then asks Portia about Bassanio, a soldier who had stayed at Belmont many years before. Nerissa feels he is the best person for Portia and Portia also agrees to Nerissa. Portia's serving man then informs that Prince of Morocco has arrived.

Bassanio Seeks Loan from Shylock

Bassanio asks Shylock, a Jew, to lend him a sum of three thousand ducats, for a period of three months. He says that Antonio will be responsible for repaying the loan amount. Shylock wishes to have conversation with Antonio before giving loan to Bassanio.

Shylock's Hatred for Antonio and Condition for Loan

Shylock hates Antonio as he is a Christian who lends money without charging any interest. Moreover, Antonio has abused and humiliated Shylock in the gathering of merchants for taking interest from the commoner and has also cursed his tribe. The same Antonio is asking him to lend him the money now. Antonio informs Shylock that he wants money for his

friend Bassanio. He also asks Shylock not to lend him as a friend but as an enemy and levy the same interest and penalty as to any debtor if he fails to pay the amount in stipulated time. Assuring Antonio that he means to be friends, Shylock offers to give the loan without interest. Instead Shylock asks him to go to a notary and get the bond executed. He informs Antonio that the bond shall state that if fails to return the money in time, an exact pound of flesh will be cut off from his body.

Bassanio is not in Favour of the Bond

Bassanio asks Antonio not to enter into such an agreement. But Antonio assures him that he will have no trouble repaying the debt, as his ships will soon bring him wealth and he will be able to repay the loan amount within time. Shylock also reassures Bassanio by saying that he will gain nothing from a pound of human flesh. Antonio is so simple and innocent that he believes Shylock has become kinder and therefore could be becoming more Christian.

Word Meanings

Ado—difficulty; **Argosies**—large merchant ships; **Portly**—stout, plump, fat; **Venture forth**—business ventures; **Burghers**—a citizen of a town or city typically a member of a wealthy bourgeoisie; **Ague**—a fever or shivering fit; **Fie**—used to express disgust or outrage; **Mirth**—amusement; **Mortifying**—suppressing, restraining; **Visages**—facial expression; **Gudgeon**—easily fooled person; **Exhortation**—insistence, persuasion; **Bushels**—heap; **Ere**—before; **Prodigal**—extravagant, spendthrift; **Presages**—warning of an event typically an unwelcome one; **Chaff**—husk of corn or other seed; **Edifice**—building; **Dock'd**—run as horse; **Enrobe**—cover; **Leap**—frisk, jump; **Aught**—anything at all; **Curbed**—restrain or keep in check; **Colt**—a young uncastrated male horse; **Requite**—respond to love or affection; **Doublet**—a pair of similar things; **Sibylla**—prophetess; **Chaste**—virgin; **Woosers**—suitor; **Sirrah**—used as a term of address for a man or boy; **Surfeit**—satiated; **Superfluity**—something unnecessary; **Throstle**—a machine for continuously spinning wool or cotton; **Vilely**—revoltingly, disgustingly; **Capering**—jumping; **Shrive**—give spiritual consolation; **Ducats**—a gold coin, formerly currency in most European countries; **Imputation**—charge, accusation; **Squandered**—spent money like water; **Peril**—serious and immediate danger; **Gratis**—without charge or fee; **Congregate**—assemble; **Albeit**—though; **Wrought**—made or fashioned in the specified way; **Compromise**—settle a dispute by mutual concession; **Streaked**—striped; **Ewe**—a female sheep; **Borne**—tolerated; **Badge**—characteristic; **Gabardine**—a long, loose upper garment; **Rheum**—a watery fluid that collects in nose or eyes; **Spurn**—reject with disdain or contempt; **Cur**—a contemptible man; **Bated**—anxious; **Exaction**—the action of demanding and obtaining something from someone; **Estimable**—worthy of great respect; **Adieu**—goodbye; **Forthwith**—immediately, without delay; **Unthrifty**—wasteful, not using money and other resources carefully; **Knave**—a dishonest or unscrupulous man; **Dismay**—concern and distress caused by something unexpected; **Argosy**—merchant ship.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Salanio Believe me Sir, had I such venture forth, the better part of my affections would be with my hopes abroad. I should be still plucking the grass to know where sits the wind; Peering in maps to ports, and piers and roads; And every object that might make me fear Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt would make me sad.

1. Where are Antonio and his friends? What does Antonio say about his sadness? [3]

Ans. Antonio and his friends are in a street in Venice. His friend Salarino is in a talkative mood and wants to know the reason for Antonio's sadness. Antonio himself does not know the actual reason of his gloominess.

2. Where would Salanio's attention be if he had business ventures abroad? What else would he be doing in that context? [3]

Ans. Salanio during his conversation with Antonio said that if he had his business ventures abroad, his thoughts would be on the dangers associated with such business. If his ships were on sea, he would look into maps for harbours, channels and piers near to the shore where his ships could anchor in case of need.

3. What would make Salarino fear some danger to his ventures? Name two objects which would remind Salarino of the dangers to his ships at sea? [3]

Ans. Salarino while talking to Antonio expressed that every thought or action done by him would remind him of the dangers his ship would face at sea. e.g. if he was trying to cool his soup by blowing, he would be reminded of stormy winds at sea or sandy hour glass would remind him of the heavily laden ships being destroyed on the sandy shore.

4. In spite of the danger of his ships, why is Antonio not worried about his financial security? [3]

Ans. Despite dangers present at sea for merchant ships, Antonio is not worried because his business is versatile and not dependent on one ship or one location or commercial transactions of the current year. He is certain that soon his ships laden with goods will arrive and he will have a lot of wealth.

5. What light does the opening scene throw on the dangers that sea business can face? [4]

Ans. The opening scene enlightens us on some possible dangers which merchant ships may face at sea such as strong winds or storm, sea robbers or pirates, sand banks and dangerous rocks. Moreover, the opening scene prepares us what Antonio would fall in future when his ships would not arrive in time and Shylock will try to take revenge from Antonio by cutting a pound of flesh from his body.

II. Gratiano There are a sort of men whose visages do cream and mantle like a standing pond. And do a willful stillness entertain, With purpose to be dressed in a opinion of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit. As who should say, I am Sir Oracle, And when I open my lips let me dog bark.

1. In whose company is Gratiano? What has provoked him to give a long lecture? [3]

Ans. Gratiano is in the company of his friends-Antonio, Bassanio, Lorenzo, Salarino and Salanio in a street in Venice. Antonio is sad and pensive and to uplift his mood friends are trying their best. Antonio has remarked that he is destined to play a sad role in life.

2. According to Gratiano, why do some people try to look serious? [3]

Ans. As per Gratiano, some people try to look serious so that the world should regard them as wise persons to show themselves as wise they speak less as if they are pondering over deeply. These people always have a mask over their faces and want when they speak, all should be silent. They do not want anyone to interrupt them when they speak.

3. According to Gratiano, what happens when the people who pretend to be serious, speak? [3]

Ans. Gratiano is advising Antonio that he should not pretend to be serious to show that he is wise. It is useless as when these people speak, their speech affect adversely the ears of those listening them and they call these people fools rather than wise as expected by them.

4. Whom is Gratiano criticising indirectly? [3]

Ans. Gratiano's target of criticism is Antonio who he feels, remains silent and quiet so, people think of him as a wise person, which is not the right. He believes that one should live and enjoy life in whatever form one has it and not wear a mask to hide true feelings.

5. What is the opinion of Gratiano on Antonio and his friends? [4]

Ans. Antonio and his friends, Bassanio and Lorenzo do not think, it is correct of Gratiano to make such comment on him. Bassanio thinks Gratiano is too irrational in passing such judgements on people. To pacify his friend Antonio, he says words of Gratiano are like two grains in two bushels of chaff which are not worthy of finding.

III. Portia But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband.
O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none? [ICSE 2015]

1. What test had Portia's father devised for her suitors? What oath did the suitors have to take before making their choice? [3]

Ans. Portia's father had devised a lottery of three caskets of gold, silver and lead and the one who would read the inscription and choose the casket containing Portia's picture will be the rightful suitor. The suitors had to take an oath of not to marry anyone else and secrecy before making their choice, in case they failed in taking the right choice. Moreover, the suitor must leave immediately, in case he fails.

2. Who is Nerissa? What does she say to cheer up Portia? [3]

Ans. Nerissa is Portia's handmaid. She is also a comforting ally of Portia. She knows that the casket test haunts Portia, for she fears that some non-deserving suitor might become lucky and win her. However, Nerissa says that Portia need not worry about any of the suitors whom she doesn't like, as many of them dare not take the test. Nerissa proves to be a good companion who tries to make Portia see the brighter side of things.

3. Why does Portia disapprove of the county Palatine? Whom would she rather marry? [3]

Ans. Portia disapproves of the county Palatine because according to Portia he only gives facial expression. He hears good stories, but without a smile. Portia fears that he will be a sad philosopher when he becomes old, since he has such unpleasant gloom in his youth. Portia says that she would rather marry a skull with a bone in its mouth than marry such a county Palatine.

4. How, according to Portia, can the Duke of Saxony's nephew be made to choose the wrong casket? What do these suitors ultimately decide? Why? [3]

Ans. The Duke of Saxony is a drunkard, so in order to make him choose the wrong casket, Portia suggests that a large glass with best Rhenish wine be placed on the next casket to the one he was choosing to make him choose the wrong casket. These suitors ultimately decide to leave Belmont without even trying their luck with the lottery of casket, because they do not wish to try their luck as they are not true lovers.

5. Whom does Portia ultimately marry? Who were the two other suitors who took the test? Why in your opinion, is the person whom she marries worthy of her? [4]

Ans. Portia ultimately marries young Bassanio. The other two suitors who took the test are Prince of Morocco and Prince of Arragon. Bassanio, is a brave and a kind man. He was really worthy of Portia as he knew what love actually demanded and truly loved her. He believes that external show has no real value. So, he chooses the lead casket which contains the portrait of Portia.

IV. Portia If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable : for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

1. Why does Portia say that she would 'die as chaste as Diana'? [3]

Ans. According to Roman mythology, Diana was the virgin Goddess. Portia says that as her father has created such a will that made it difficult for her to find a suitor so, she says that she would die virgin like Diana, unless she is won in marriage by some suitor fulfilling the conditions laid in her father's will.

2. Why is Portia unhappy? [3]

Ans. Portia is unhappy as her father before his death has designed a will in which she can only marry a person who chooses the casket which has her portrait even though he may not be her choice. She is unhappy as right casket may be selected by a person whom she does not like.

3. Explain the words, "If I live to be as old as Sibylla". [3]

Ans. As per Greek mythology, Sibylla means prophetess, who was granted a long life. Portia here means that because of the condition her father has laid in the will she may live long as Sibylla and die a virgin.

4. Whom does Nerissa mention next that lifts Portia's spirits up? Was he the right suitor for Portia? [3]

Ans. Nerissa talks about Bassanio to uplift her spirits. Nerissa recalls the visit of young venetian alongwith the Marquis of Monteferrat, when Portia's father was alive. He was a scholar and a soldier. Yes, he was the right suitor for Portia as he was a simple man, who truly loved Portia and Portia also was in love with him.

5. What does Nerissa say to cheer her up? How does she prove to be a good companion? [4]

Ans. Nerissa is Portia's companion. She knows that the casket test haunts Portia as she fears some non-deserving suitor might become lucky and win her. Nerissa comforts her by saying that she does not need to worry as many of the suitors would not want to take the casket test for they are not the true lovers.

V. Bassanio If it please you dine with us. Shylock Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, pray with you.

1. Where are the speakers now? Who has come to Shylock and why? [3]

Ans. The speakers, Shylock and Bassanio are at a public place in Venice. Bassanio has come to Shylock as he wants a loan of three thousand ducats. Antonio, immediately follows these two as on his surety only, Bassanio is going to get a loan.

2. What alarms Bassanio? [3]

Ans. The condition of the deal, in case Bassanio or Antonio fails to pay the money alarms Bassanio. The penalty of the pound of flesh is very demoralise and Bassanio finds it very dangerous. However, Antonio is willing to sign this bond as he was overconfident of repaying this amount in time.

3. What is Shylock's response to Bassanio's request for three thousand ducats? Why does Bassanio need so much money? [3]

Ans. Shylock is a little apprehensive about lending such a large sum of money to Bassanio. However, he is ready to give the sum when told that Antonio will stand surety for the same. Bassanio needs the money to go to Belmont to impress Portia.

4. Why does he refuse to dine with Bassanio? [3]

Ans. Shylock is a Jew and he does not like the acceptance of the Christians. He does not want to eat Pork as he cannot stand the sight of it. That is why he is ready to do business, to walk, to talk but not pray and eat food with them. He is a racist and hatred Christians.

5. What is Shylock's condition to lend the money? Does Antonio accept his proposal? [4]

Ans. Shylock agrees to give loan to Bassanio on Antonio standing as a guarantor for him. However, he wants Antonio to get the document made by the notary which states that if Bassanio fails to pay the money, then Shylock will be entitled to cut a pound of flesh from Antonio's body.

Yes, Antonio agrees to the proposal as he is sure that before the expiry of the period he shall return the money.

VI. Antonio Shylock, albeit, I neither lend nor borrow. By taking nor by giving of excess, Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend. I'll break custom. [To Bassanio] Is he yet possessed, How much ye would?

1. Where are Antonio and Shylock at this time? What is the purpose of their meeting? [3]

Ans. Antonio, Shylock and Bassanio were at a public place in Venice when they had this meeting. The purpose of this meeting was that Bassanio wanted to take a loan of three thousand ducats from Shylock for which Antonio would stand surety. Shylock and Antonio were exchanging dialogues when they came face to face.

2. Why does Shylock think Antonio is spoiling moneylender's business? [3]

Ans. Shylock had accused Antonio for spoiling the business of other moneylenders as Antonio gave loans without charging interest. Moreover, Shylock was angry with him as many times, Antonio had bailed out his debtors.

3. Did Shylock help Antonio and Bassanio? If yes, then was there any ulterior motive behind his charity? [3]

Ans. Yes, Shylock did help Bassanio. He loaned him an amount of three thousand ducats upon Antonio's surety. However, the ulterior motive behind it was he wanted to avenge his grudge against Antonio as Antonio had spoilt his loan business and insulted him a lot on many occasions. Thus, he wanted to exploit his position.

4. What impression does one form of Antonio from the above lines? [3]

Ans. Antonio is a true friend. Though, he is against charging interest while lending money, to help his friend he goes against his own principles. Not only this, even though Bassanio is borrowing from his adversary, he is still there for his friend.

5. Why was Antonio not able to help his friend Bassanio? What made him come to Shylock? [4]

Ans. Antonio was a wealthy merchant. He had helped Bassanio many times in the past. However, when Bassanio wanted three thousand ducats from Antonio, he was not able to help him much as his ships were at sea and had not reached port. He told him to go to any moneylender and ask him for that sum as a loan against which he would stand as a surety and Bassanio went to Shylock for the loan.

VII. Why, look you, how you storm!

I would be friends with you and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants and take no doit'
Of usance for my moneys and you'll not hear me:
This is kind I offer. [ICSE 2017]

1. Where does this scene take place? Who is the speaker? To whom is he talking? [3]

Ans. This scene takes place at a public park where Bassanio, Antonio and Shylock are talking to each other. The speaker here is Shylock and he is talking to Antonio mentioning how much ill-treatment is meted out to him by Antonio.

2. What are 'shames' which the speaker says have stained him? [3]

Ans. The speaker is referring to the shames or insults which Antonio has hurled upon Shylock so many times at Rialto such as speaking abusively of him and his money-lending, spitting on him, many times kicking him, calling him a dog and ridiculing the Jew.

3. What are the 'present wants'? Who is in need of the 'present wants'? Why [3]

Ans. The 'present wants' refer to the immediate need of Antonio three thousand ducats, which were required by his friend Bassanio, who wanted to go the Belmont to woo the lady Portia and compete with the other suitors. As Antonio does not have ready cash to give it to his friend Bassanio, he wants to take money from this money lender, Shylock, who is a Jew.

4. Explain: "This is kind I offer". What does the speaker propose to do immediately after this? [3]

Ans. The speaker Shylock is willing to lend three thousand ducats to Antonio's friend and refers to it as an act of kindness. Shylock also refers that he was offering an interest free loan like Antonio normally does but he puts one condition. He asks Antonio to accompany him to a lawyer and execute a bond with his signature saying if he fails to repay the amount in the three months, one pound of flesh will be cut from any part of Antonio's body.

5. What do you think of Antonio and of Shylock with regard to the signing of the bond? [4]

Ans. Antonio wants to help his friend Bassanio at any cost. Moreover, he is generous but over-confident and does not think of any problem which might arise in repayment of this amount in such a short period. He appears to be a poor judge of other's character. Shylock is willing to lend money on surety signed by Antonio who sees in it an opportunity to take revenge upon Antonio in case he fails to repay this amount within three months.

ACT II (Scene I to IX)

Summary of the Act

Arrival of Prince of Morocco at Portia's House

In Belmont, Prince of Morocco arrives at Portia's house. He tells her that she should not reject him on account of his black skin. He has come to take the casket challenge to win Portia's hand. Portia informs him that she does not have the right to choose the man who will marry her. It will be according to her father's will. The person who will choose the correct casket with her portrait inside it, will be eligible to marry Portia. She informs Prince of Morocco that in case he fails, he will leave immediately and will never marry in his life.

Shylock's Servant Wants to Quit his Job

Launcelot Gobbo, a servant in Shylock's household wants to quit. His mind wavers what to do as his conscience makes him guilty when he thinks about leaving Shylock.

Meanwhile, his father, named Gobbo arrives with a basket. Launcelot plays a trick with his father and old Gobbo starts crying hearing about Launcelot's master death. Later on when things are cleared between father and son, Launcelot informs his father of his decision of quitting job at Shylock's place and joining Bassanio. Bassanio, agrees to employ Launcelot and orders for the finest uniforms for him. Bassanio's friend Gratiano wants to accompany him to Belmont. Bassanio feels that Gratiano is too loud and rude and need to mend his behaviour. Gratiano promises to be sober.

Jessica Bids Farewell to Launcelot

Jessica, daughter of Shylock, is both happy and sad for Launcelot. She will miss him after he leaves to go and work for Bassanio. She hands over a letter to take for Lorenzo, who was going to be a guest of Bassanio that night. Jessica is in Love with Lorenzo and wants to marry him.

Lorenzo Receives the Letter of Jessica

Lorenzo, Gratiano, Salarino and Salanio are preparing for a night's festivities. Launcelot arrives with Jessica's letter for Lorenzo. Launcelot asks Lorenzo to marry Jessica as she loves him dearly. Lorenzo gives him a coin asks him to tell Jessica that he shall meet her privately and not let her down.

Jessica's Plan to Run Away

Lorenzo tells all his friends what Jessica wants. She wants to run away from her father Shylock's house with Lorenzo. She also wants to take her father's jewels and money. He mentions to his friends that Jessica will run away from house becoming his torch-bearer.

Shylock's Instructions to Jessica

Shylock talks to Launcelot that he will have to judge for himself whether Bassanio is a better master. He calls Jessica to hand over the keys of the house as he is going out for dinner when he comes to know about a masque, he instructs Jessica to lock up the house properly from inside. Launcelot gives Lorenzo's message to Jessica that Lorenzo will come for her that night.

Lorenzo Arrives Late for the Masque

Lorenzo arrives late by almost an hour for which he apologises profusely. They all reach Shylock's house where Jessica was waiting for them disguised as a boy seeing Lorenzo she throws a casket full of gold and jewels. Jessica then goes back inside her house and steals even more ducats before joining the masque. Antonio asks Bassanio to start his journey to Belmont as the wind was favourable and ship was ready to depart.

At Portia's House, Prince of Morocco Examines the Casket

Prince of Morocco was taken to the room where three caskets were kept. The prince makes his own interpretations by reading inscriptions written on gold, silver and lead caskets. Prince of Morocco chooses the gold casket, which unfortunately does not contain Portia's portrait. He bids good bye to Portia with a heavy heart. But Portia is happy.

Shylock Mad with Anger Over Jessica's Elopement (run away)

Shylock found his daughter had disappeared and raised the Duke of Venice from his sleep to find her. The Duke could only find out that Jessica was last seen with Lorenzo in a Gondola. Antonio also certified Duke that Lorenzo was not with Bassanio on his ship who had sailed out to Belmont. Shylock had gone crazy and mad with anger over his daughter's elopement along with jewellery and ducats.

Antonio is Sad at Bassanio's Departure

Salerio informs that he recently got the news about a ship destruction between France and England. He hopes it wasn't one of Antonio's ships. Salerio also credits Antonio with being one of the nicest guys on the block and he tells that Antonio had a tear in his eye while saying bye to his friend Bassanio.

In Portia's House, Prince of Arragon Tries his Luck

At Portia's house in Belmont, yet another suitor, the Prince of Arragon has come to try his hand at the casket game. Portia tells the prince the rules of the riddle and also confirms that anyone who wants to marry her must agree, in advance, to each of these terms.

Wrong Interpretation by Prince of Arragon

Prince of Arragon goes about decoding the inscription of the caskets in his own way. He rejects the lead casket and gold casket and finally chooses the silver casket. But he finds a portrait of blinking fool. He leaves Belmont thinking that it was foolish on his part to come to Belmont.

Arrival of Bassanio

As Portia and Nerissa draw a curtain in front of the caskets a servant enters with the news that a messenger has come with presents and greetings from a young Venetian, who has come here before. Portia gets very excited. Nerissa hopes that the Venetian is Bassanio only.

Word Meanings

Cornets—a brass instrument resembling a trumpet but shorter and wider; **Livery**—a special uniform worn by a servant, an official, or a member of a city company; **Burnish'd**—polish (something, especially metal) by rubbing; **Thaws**—melts; **Icicles**—a hanging, tapering piece of ice formed by the freezing of dripping water; **Incision**—a measured cut; **Clime**—a region considered with reference to its climate; **Hue**—a colour or shade; **Scanted**—provide grudgingly; **Hedged**—limit or qualify (something) by conditions or exceptions; **Scimitar**—a short sword with a curved blade that broadens towards the point, used originally in Eastern countries; **Slew**—killed; **Alcides**—another name for Hercules; **Blest**—blessed; **Fiend**—an evil spirit or demon; **Heed**—pay attention to take notice; **Scorn**—feel or express contempt; **Budge**—change an opinion; **Reverence**—deep respect for someone; **Incarnation**—a living being embodying a deity or spirit; **Begotten**—bring (a child) into existence by the process of reproduction; **Sand-blind**—half-blind; **High gravel blind**—more than half blind; **Ergo**—therefore; **Beseech**—ask someone urgently; **Cudgel**—a short, thick stick used as a weapon; **Hovel post**—simply constructed dwelling; **Alack**—used to express, regret or dismay; **Famished**—extremely hungry; **Anon**—soon; **Gramercy**—used to express gratitude; **Cater-cousins**—on friendly terms; **Trifle**—a thing of little value or importance; **Bestow'd**—confer or present; **Endeavours**—try hard to do or achieve something; **Yonder**—at some distance in the direction indicated; over there; **Allay**—diminish or put at rest; **Misconstrued**—interpret; **Demurely**—quiet and modest; **Ostent**—a significant sign; **Grandam**—grandmother; **Gauge**—estimate or determine the amount; **Mirth**—amusement, especially as expressed in laughter; **Adieu**—goodbye; **Pagan**—non-believer; **Knave**—dishonest or unscrupulous man; **Heinous**—deadly; **Strife**—conflict. **Slink**—sneak away, slip; **Torch-bearers**—a person who inspires others in walking towards a valued goal; **Quaintly**—strangely, unusual; **Page's**—young attendant at formal function; **Peruse**—examine carefully; **Gormandise**—eat good food in excess; **Rend**—tear into pieces; **Apparel**—clothing; **Bid forth**—invited; **Prodigal**—reckless; **Loth**—reluctant, unwilling; **A-brewing**—mischief in the air; **Beseech**—ask someone urgently to do; **Conspired**—plot; **Black-Monday**—easter Monday; **Ash-Wednesday**—a day of fasting before easter; **Vile squealing**—shrill-notes; **Wry-neck'd**—asymmetrical position of neck; **Fife**—flute; **Casements**—a window; **Foppery**—foolish action; **Hagars off-spring**—hagar's child; **Patch**—fellow; **Drones**—murmur, whisper; **Hives**—lives; **Not Crost**—cross (Here, if nothing goes wrong with the plans). **Pent-house**—a flat on the top floor of a tall building; **Out-dwells**—late past the appointment; **Unabated**—without any reduction in intensity or strength; **Yonker**—smart boy; **Prodigal**—spendthrift; **Abode**—a place of residence; **Albeit**—although; **Cupid**—God of love; **Beshrew**—curse; **Fie**—used to express disgust; **Gentile**—a person who is not Jewish. **Withal**—with that; **Stoops**—bends; **Dross**—worthless things; **Virgin hue**—white colour; **Shrine**—temple; **Brook**—a small stream; **Cerecloth**—waxed cloth used for wrapping a corpse; **Obscure**—unclear, hidden; **Immured**—confined, jailed; **Thrive**—prosper, flourish; **Carrion**—decaying flesh or dead animal; **Gilded**—cover thinly with gold; **Inscroll'd**—to write on a scroll; **Frost**—cold, disappointment; **Riddance**—relief; **Gondola**—a light flat-bottomed boat used on Venetian canals; **Amorous**—loving; **Narrow seas**—english channel; **Fraught**—loaded; **Treads**—walk in a specified ways; **Slubber**—spoil; **Chiefest**—first or foremost; **Wrung**—shook; **Quicken**—cheer up; **Heaviness**—having relatively high density; **Ostents**—displays, **Outcries**—complaints; **Solemnised**—performed; **To woo**—try to gain the love of a woman; **Injunctions**—conditions; **Enjoin'd**—bound; **Mastlet**—a bird; **Barbarous**—extremely brutal; **Cozen**—trick or deceive; **Peasantry**—a member of a class of low social status; **Glean'd**—obtain information from various sources; **Chaff**—rubbish; **Linger**—stay in place longer than necessary; **Wroth**—anger; **Heresy**—rumour; **Bringeth**—bring; **Regreets**—greetings, cleverness; **Commends**—praise formally; **Fore-spurres**—one who rides before.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Morocco Mislike me not for my complexion.
The shadowed livery of the burnish'd Sun
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phoebus fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
Hath feared the valiant : By my love, I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too : I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.
Portia In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing :

1. Where are the speakers and who is he addressing this to? [3]

Ans. Speakers are in a room, at Portia's house in Belmont and here the Prince of Morocco is addressing to Portia since he has come to try his luck at the casket lottery for marrying her.

2. What is Portia's opinion of the Prince? [3]

Ans. Portia is restricted in her choice as for her it is not her approval that matters. She is to follow her father's will. Otherwise, the prince would have had a fair chance as any other suitor.

3. What does Prince of Morocco think about himself? [3]

Ans. Prince of Morocco is too haughty, he is brave and fearless and tells Portia that he has killed three Persian Princes, he can pull the cubs out of the arms of she-bear and can also dare to tease the hungry lion, so he is one of the good suitors for Portia.

4. What can you assess of Morocco's appearance and character based on the given extract? [3]

Ans. Prince of Morocco is dark complexioned due to climate where he lives. He is quite boastful of his bravery and has a large imposing physical appearance. He boasts of his red blood and the admiration and affection he enjoys in his land from the nobles and the best of maidens.

5. Portia speaks of 'the lottery of my destiny'. What exactly is she referring to? What in your opinion are Portia's feelings regarding this matter? [4]

Ans. Portia talks about lottery of destiny devised according to her deceased father's will. According to the lottery, each suitor has to choose from amongst the correct caskets of gold, silver and lead and one of this contains Portia's portrait. Portia feels that due to her father's will she is unable to choose and marry a person of her choice.

II. Portia Go draw aside the curtains, and discover The several caskets to this noble prince -Now make your choice.

Morocco Their first, of gold, who this inscription bears, "Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire"; [2018]

1. Who is Morocco? How did he introduce himself to Portia when they first met in an earlier scene? [3]

Ans. Morocco is the Prince of Morocco, who has come to Portia's house because he wants to take up the casket challenge to win Portia's hand in marriage. When they first met in an earlier scene, he introduced himself to Portia as a very brave man due to the redness of his blood. He says that he is loved by the nobles as well as the ladies in his land.

2. How would Morocco know that he had made the right choice? What would his reward be? [3]

Ans. Morocco would know that he had made the right choice if he found Portia's portrait in the casket he chose. His reward would be that he would win Portia's hand in marriage.

3. Which casket did Morocco finally choose? What reasons did he give for rejecting the casket made of lead? [3]

Ans. Morocco finally chose the gold casket. He gave two reasons for rejecting the casket of lead. These reasons were

- The inscription on it warned that he would have to risk all his possessions if he chose it, which he did not want to do for something made of lead.
- Lead was used for making coffins and so should not contain the portrait of a beautiful lady like Portia.

4. What two objects does Morocco find in the casket of his choice? What reason does he give to Portia for leaving in haste? [3]

Ans. The two objects that Morocco found in the casket of his choice were a skull and a scroll with something written on it. The reason he gave Portia for leaving in haste was that his heart was too much saddened by his failure to win her hand in marriage.

5. How does Portia respond to Morocco's parting words? What does this reveal of her nature? [4]

Ans. Portia responds to Morocco's parting words with happiness, as she did not want to get married to him due to his dark complexion. This reveals that she wanted a fair-complexioned bridegroom, showing that her nature was to like persons based on their external appearance and not on their other qualities.

III. Launcelot Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father, for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies, and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three; and such branches of learning, is, indeed, deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

Gobbo Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Launcelot Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father?

1. Why does Launcelot talk in high sounding words in his conversation with Gobbo? [3]

Ans. Launcelot uses very high sounding words to impress his father that he possesses classical learning and is a gentleman. Through this character, Shakespeare wanted to throw light on the fact that some vain people of his time pretended to be what they were not.

2. Why does Gobbo ask for directions to the Jew's house? Why does Launcelot confuse him while giving directions? [3]

Ans. Old Gobbo wanted to go to the Jew's (Shylock's) house to find out if his son was still working there. His son confuses him while giving directions out of sheer fun he wanted to derive from this situation. The old man gets really confused by following the directions given by Launcelot.

3. Why does Launcelot call Old Gobbo 'father' in the extract? [3]

Ans. Launcelot Gobbo is trying to fool his own father old Gobbo by saying that his son Master Launcelot has died. He calls him 'father' so that he may get a hint that actually Launcelot is alive and lying about his own death.

4. How does Gobbo react to the news of his son's death? [3]

Ans. Gobbo is shocked to hear about his son's death and starts crying stating that Launcelot was his only support in his old age. Gobbo gets real upset over this news.

5. Give any two humorous situations from this scene. [4]

Ans. One humorous situation is when Launcelot gives directions to the Jew's house. The directions are very confusing and comical and Gobbo finds difficult to follow it. Another humorous situation is the scene of Launcelot asking his father's blessing. He kneels in front of his father. His father feels his beard and says that Launcelot has more hair on his face than their horse has on his tail.

IV. Jessica I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee.
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly; And so
farewell; I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

1. Where are the speakers? How are they related? [3]

Ans. The speakers are Jessica and Launcelot and are in one of the rooms in Shylock's house. Jessica is Shylock's daughter, while Launcelot is a servant in her father's services. Jessica is bidding farewell to Launcelot who is leaving her father Shylock's house to join the service of Bassanio.

2. Who is Jessica? What does she think of her father and her house? [3]

Ans. Jessica is Shylock's daughter. She thinks her house is a hell where there is no freedom at all. She thinks her father is a heartless person who has no feelings even for her. He miserly treats everyone.

3. Who is Launcelot's new master? What favour does Jessica ask of him? [3]

Ans. Launcelot's new master is Bassanio. Jessica wants Launcelot to deliver her letter to his new master Bassanio's guest, Lorenzo, who would be present at Bassanio's house.

4. Later in the play, what happens to Jessica and her lover Lorenzo? [3]

Ans. Later in the play, Jessica wants to run away and marry with Lorenzo. She disguise herself as a boy. Lorenzo asks her to get down the balcony faster as she is his torch holder. He also tells her that the night is not long, so she should rush down before they are caught.

5. What is Jessica's plan? Why does she decide to leave her father's house? [4]

Ans. Jessica has planned to run away with her lover, Lorenzo, from her father's house at the time of mask. She decides to leave her father's house because she feels suffocated there and she knows that her father would never allow her to marry Lorenzo as he is a Christian.

- V. **Lorenzo** Nay, we will slink away in supper time, Disguise us at my lodging, and return all in an hour.

Gratiano We have not made good preparation.

Salarino We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

Salanio 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd, And better in my mind not undertook.

Lorenzo 'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours To furnish us.

1. A little later in the scene Launcelot comes, Why? [3]

Ans. Launcelot, the servant of Shylock comes carrying a letter from Jessica for Lorenzo, in which the former has written her plans to run away with the letter. He has come to become Bassanio's servant and gives Lorenzo the letter.

2. What is Lorenzo's suggestion to his friends? [3]

Ans. Learning about Jessica's plan, Lorenzo too wants to marry her and decides to elope with her so he suggests his friends that they all will meet at supper time and will change their looks at his house. After that they will come back to join the masque party.

3. What is the importance of torch-bearer in a masque? Who is going to be the torch holder here and with what purpose? [3]

Ans. Torch holder is a person who leads or inspires others in working towards a valued goal. Jessica, disguises as a boy, is supposed to be the torch-holder in the scene to facilitate the elopement of Jessica with Lorenzo.

4. Where are the speakers and what are they discussing? [3]

Ans. The speakers Lorenzo, Gratiano and Salarino are on a street in Venice. They are making plans for the masques which will be happening tonight. The masque was an amateur dramatics practice usually performed in private houses in 17th century in England. The players wore masks and costumes and took part in a torch procession.

5. What is in the letter that Launcelot gets? What are Gratiano's comments? [4]

Ans. In the letter, Jessica has laid down the required plans to run away and has asked Lorenzo to meet her at a fixed place. Gratiano comments that it is a love letter from Jessica.

VI. **Shylock** What, are there masques? Hear you me, **Jessica** Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum And vile squealing of wry-neck'd fife, Clamber not you up to the casements then, Nor thrust your head into the public street. To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces; But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements : Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear I have no mind of feasting forth tonight: But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah; Say I will come.

1. Who is Shylock addressing to? Why is he delivering this speech? [3]

Ans. Shylock is addressing his daughter Jessica. He is delivering the speech as he is going out for dinner at Bassanio's house and his daughter would be alone so he is pre-warning her at the events which are happening outside.

2. Why is Shylock happy that Launcelot is leaving him? [3]

Ans. Shylock is happy and satisfied that Launcelot is leaving his services because he feels Launcelot was having a good time sleeping and snoring. Moreover, according to him, he ate too much and worked less. So, he is happy that he is going to Bassanio and shall exhaust his wealth now.

3. Why does Shylock want his daughter to lock up the doors? [3]

Ans. Shylock wants Jessica to lock the doors as there is going to be masque tonight where the Christian fools with varnished faces playing drums and flutes would be on the street. He is a die-hard Jew, so does not want his daughter to even see the masque which is an integral part of Christian's traditions.

4. What does Shylock mean by, "I have no mind of feasting forth tonight: But I will go"? [3]

Ans. "I have no mind of feasting forth tonight: but I will go", by this Shylock means that even though he is not hungry and not wanting to go he would still go to have dinner at Bassanio's house which would result in Bassanio's money getting wasted.

5. According to Gobbo, was Shylock a good master? [4]

Ans. Shylock was not a good master as per Launcelot Gobbo. He was a Jew who had become sore and ill-tempered. He did not treat Gobbo properly and had him work all the day. Gobbo was not given proper food so had to starve. Moreover, Shylock was a

moneylender who was quite miser. He did not pay Gobbo enough. Thus, considering Shylock's behaviour and miserly nature it is not unfair to say that he was not a good master.

VII. Shylock I am bid forth to supper, Jessica. There are my keys. But wherefore should I go? I am not bid for love : they flatter me. But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon the prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl, look to my house.

I am right loath to go. There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest, For I did dream of money bags tonight.

1. Who has invited Shylock for dinner? Why does he accept the invitation? [3]

Ans. Bassanio, a dear friend of Antonio has invited Shylock for dinner. Shylock has accepted the invitation out of hatred for all Christians as he wanted to eat less and waste more money of extravagant Bassanio.

2. Why is Shylock unhappy to accept the dinner invitation? Whom does he call a 'prodigal Christian'? [3]

Ans. Shylock is not very happy while going for dinner that night as he had some premonition that all was not well. He had dream of money bags the previous night which was considered a bad omen. Bassanio is referred to as the prodigal Christian, who spends money quite recklessly.

3. How does Bassanio know Shylock? Why did he invite Shylock for dinner? [3]

Ans. Bassanio came in contact with Shylock when he needed to borrow run away for going to Belmont. Shylock was famous for lending money on high rate of interest. Bassanio has invited Shylock for dinner as he wanted Shylock to meet and talk to Antonio also.

4. How do Jessica and Lorenzo take advantage of Shylock's absence from home during dinner? [3]

Ans. Jessica used the occasion of Shylock's absence by making a plan to run away with her father's money and jewellery. Lorenzo uses the occasion to arrange the masquerade in which Jessica will be the torch-holder and thus easily elope with him.

5. Who is Lorenzo? Why does Jessica want to run away when her father is away? How does she feel inside her house? [4]

Ans. Lorenzo is a friend of Gratiano and Salarino. He is a Christian with whom Jessica has fallen in love. She feels suffocated in her house as her father Shylock is quite strict. She knows he would never allow her to marry a Christian. Therefore, she plans to runaway from her house with Lorenzo while her father was away for dinner.

VIII. Gratiano And it is marvel he out-dwells his horun, For lovers ever run before the clock.

Salarino O Ten times faster venus' pigeons fly

To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are went to keep obliged faith Unforfeited.!

Gratiano That ever holds; who riseth from a feast with that keen appetite that he sits down? Where in the horse that doth untread again.

His tedious measures with the unabated fire that he did pace them first? All things that are,

Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed.

1. Where are Gratiano and Salarino? For whom they are waiting here? Normally how do the lovers behave as the appointed time is concerned? [3]

Ans. Gratiano and Salarino are on a street outside Shylock's house. They are waiting for Lorenzo here who is late in reaching there. Normally, lovers reach before time and do not allow his or her love to wait.

2. What were the affairs that kept the lover, Lorenzo away from reaching his destination in time? [3]

Ans. Lorenzo told his friends that he got stuck in his business affairs so he could not reach in time. Also he had to plan for masque that night in which he had planned to run away with his lady love Jessica.

3. What was the plan devised by Lorenzo and Jessica to run away and get married? [3]

Ans. Lorenzo had planned a masquerade that night in which he would be hiding his face under a mask. Jessica was to go as one of the torch-bearer for that she has dressed up as a boy, hiding her real identity.

4. Who is Venus? Why it is mentioned here? How do the Venus's pigeons behave as far as love is concerned? [3]

Ans. Venus is God of Love as per Greek Mythology. It is mentioned here as the couple Jessica and Lorenzo are in love with each other. Salarino comments that the pigeons who drive chariot of Venus fly ten times faster when they are journeying to make two lovers meet.

5. Explain – “All things that are, are with more spirit chased than enjoyed”. [4]

Ans. Gratiano and Salario are talking about lovers. Gratiano uses the comment to tell what he feels about love and lovers. By his expression he means that the pursuit of any desired object is more enjoyable and gives more thrill while chasing compared to the pleasure one gets on its attainment. The same happens with love.

IX. “All that glitters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold
But outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms enfold.
Had you been wise as bold,
Young in limbs in judgement old,
Your answer had not been inscroll’d:
Fare you well; your suit is cold”
Cold, indeed; and labour lost:
Them, farewell, heat; and welcome, frost!

1. Which casket did Prince of Morocco choose? [3]

Ans. Prince of Morocco chose the golden casket as he thought that gold casket goes with the valour he has and also the inscription indicated that it contained what is desirous by many men i.e. Portia, so he went for golden casket.

2. Who is the speaker and where is he? [3]

Ans. These words are spoken by Prince of Morocco after he has chosen the casket in order to marry Portia. These words are written in the scroll that was inside the gold casket chosen by the prince. He is in a room in Portia’s house in Belmont.

3. Why does Prince of Morocco say the above mentioned lines? [3]

Ans. Prince of Morocco has come as a suitor to play the game of caskets in which he has failed. He says these lines which are inscribed on the scroll, found inside the casket to know what has been in his destiny.

4. Do you think Portia was happy that Prince of Morocco chose the wrong casket? [3]

Ans. Yes, Portia is happy that the Prince of Morocco chose the wrong casket, she was not keen on him as he was boasting too much about himself and also had a dark complexion.

5. Who comes after Prince of Morocco and what was his choice? [4]

Ans. After the Prince of Morocco has gone, the Prince of Arragon comes to win Portia. He is made to choose the casket that has Portia’s portrait. After reading the inscriptions written on each casket, he rejects the gold and the lead casket and choose the silver casket hoping it to have Portia’s portrait. In the casket he finds a fool’s head that mocks at his fate. Thus he too fails to win Portia.

X. “Be merry and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there”. And even there, his eyes being big with tears, Turning his face, he put his hands behind him.

1. Who is the speaker? Where is the scene set? What are they talking about? [3]

Ans. The speaker is Salarino. He is telling this to Salanio in the streets of Venice. Salarino tells Salanio that these were the words of Antonio to Bassanio when the latter went to gain the love of Portia.

2. Whom is the speaker asking to be merry? [3]

Ans. Antonio is asking Bassanio to be merry and enjoy his courtship with Portia and let not the business thoughts come in his mind. Antonio loves his friend so dearly that he wishes all happiness to him.

3. What is the speaker saying in these lines? To whom is he addressing and about whom is he talking? [3]

Ans. This is the conversation between Salanio and Salarino. Salarino is praising the relationship of Antonio and Bassanio. He is telling Salanio that in spite of being sad at Bassanio’s departure, Antonio encourages him to enjoy his courtship with his love and concentrate only on achieving her love.

4. In what context are these lines spoken. What is the mood of the speaker? [3]

Ans. Antonio uttered these words when his bosom friend Bassanio was departing to Belmont to pursue Portia. The speaker is teary-eyed and sad as he cannot bear the parting of his friend. He is encouraging his friend to not give up until he achieves his goal.

5. Comment on the relationship shared by the speaker and the listener. [4]

Ans. Antonio and Bassanio are very close friends. They have shared a very close bond. Both of them can take risk to help each other. Antonio could not bear the pain of Bassanio’s departure even though it was for a short time. It was too much for him and he had tears in his eyes.

XI. Portia To these injunctions everyone doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Arragon And so have I address'd me.

Fortune now

To my heart's hope!-Gold, silver and base lead.

[ICSE 2017]

1. Who had tried his luck in trying to choose the correct casket before the prince of Arragon?
Which casket had that suitor chosen? What did he find inside the casket? [3]

Ans. Prince of Morocco had tried his luck in choosing the correct casket before the Prince of Arragon. He had chosen the golden casket in which he finds a human skull holding a roll of paper.

2. What are the three things Arragon was obliged by oath to obey? [3]

Ans. The three things that Prince of Arragon was obliged by oath to obey—first he must never reveal to any other person which of the casket he has selected. Second, if he does not win Portia, he should not woo any other lady. Third, if he chooses wrong casket, he must depart without further conversation.

3. What was the inscription on the golden casket? How do the actions of the martlet illustrate this inscription? [3]

Ans. The inscription on the golden casket says “who chooses me shall gain what many men desire”. The martlet, instead of seeking a sheltered place for its nest, constructs in the open exposed place which may be unprotected from any stormy weather. Similarly the foolish common people who judge by the outward appearance of things fall into errors and fatalities.

4. Which casket does Arragon finally choose? Whose portrait does he find inside? Which casket actually contains Portia's portrait? [3]

Ans. Prince of Arragon finally chooses the silver casket. He found the portrait of a fool inside the silver of casket. He feels very disappointed and say that there is such a difference between that creature and the picture he hoped to see. The lead casket actually contained Portia's portrait.

5. Who enters soon after Prince of Arragon? What does he say about the young Venetian who has just arrived? What gifts has the Venetian brought with him? [4]

Ans. Very soon after Prince of Arragon departs, a servant enters to inform Portia that a young Venetian messenger has come with rich valuable gifts. The servant also says that he has not seen so generous an ambassador of love. He is like a beautiful day in April that indicates that a splendid summer was approaching.

XII. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous
breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love :

1. What is Portia's reaction on Prince of Arragon not able to choose the right casket? [3]

Ans. Portia is rather pleased that he did not choose the correct casket. Portia feels that he has been burnt in the flames like a moth and also that when they choose they go by the outwardly shine.

2. Who is the speaker of these lines and what is the occasion? [3]

Ans. The speaker of these lines is Portia's servant. After Prince of Arragon had left, Bassanio arrives at Portia's house to try his luck in the casket lottery.

3. Who is young Venetian referred to here? Why is the speaker happy? [3]

Ans. The young Venetian is Bassanio's messenger. He has brought with him a number of gifts and graceful compliments from his master. This has greatly impressed the speaker.

4. What is Portia's reaction on hearing the news? [3]

Ans. Portia is hoping that the Venetian who has arrived to try his luck be Bassanio. She had liked him when he had come before. Further she thinks that the servant is overreacting.

5. What does Nerissa wish? What clue does it provide you? [4]

Ans. Nerissa has seen Bassanio earlier when he visited Belmont. She found him smart and handsome for Portia. She even noticed Portia's attention towards him. So she wishes that the suitor be Bassanio as she also thinks that he is perfect for Portia. It actually tells us that even Portia is interested in Bassanio and Nerissa wants her mistress to marry him.

ACT (Scene I to V)

Summary of the Act

Misfortune Befalls Antonio

Salanio and Salerino discuss the rumour that Antonio has lost yet a second ship. Shylock enters and complains that both Salanio and Salerino had something to do with his daughter's elopement. They do not deny it but instead ask Shylock if he had heard about Antonio's loss.

Shylock is Happy and Wants his Revenge

Shylock feels happy at the misfortune that Antonio is facing as it would give him an opportunity to teach Antonio a lesson. Antonio has disgraced him, interfered in his business deals, condemned Jews and called him usurer. Now, Shylock shall make Antonio pay for it. He asks Tubal to go and find for him a police officer to arrest Antonio.

Bassanio Tries his Luck at the Casket Game

Bassanio eagerly wants to try his luck with casket game. Portia arranges for the music to be played. Bassanio looks at all the caskets and their inscriptions. He is not impressed by the shine of the gold and silver casket and choose the lead casket which contains Portia's portrait.

Portia Happily Accepts Bassanio as her Husband

Portia is extremely thrilled at the choice made by Bassanio. She declares that from that day onwards whatever is hers, shall belong to Bassanio. He shall be her lord. He will be master to the servants and the property. Portia offers him a ring and takes a promise from Bassanio, never to part with that ring. Gratiano and Nerissa also declare their love for each other and inform Portia and Bassanio about their intention to get marry.

Bassanio gets Antonio's Letter and informs Portia

As Bassanio reads the letter which Antonio has sent him through Salerio. Bassanio's expressions change drastically as it contained a bad news. Portia wants to know the content of the letter. Bassanio informs her that Antonio has lost all his fortunes and will not be able to return the loan of Shylock which Bassanio had borrowed on Antonio's surety. Jessica also confirms that she had heard her father saying that he would rather have Antonio's flesh than more money.

After hearing about Antonio and his timely help to Bassanio, Portia asks Bassanio to take her money and repay the Jew. She wants Bassanio to marry her and then leave for Venice immediately.

Shylock Wants his Revenge

Shylock has come to watch Antonio being taken away by a jailor. Shylock refuses to listen to Antonio's pleadings and wants his revenge. Antonio knows that the Duke will not be able to stop Shylock from taking revenge. He just wanted Bassanio to see that he has kept his promise and is paying according to the bond.

Portia Leaves the Care of her House to Lorenzo

Portia informs Lorenzo that till Bassanio comes back from Venice, she has taken a vow to live in seclusion only with Nerissa. She will live in a monastery two miles from Belmont.

Portia's Instructions to Balthazar

Portia gives some instructions to her trusted one, Balthazar and asks him to go to Padua and deliver her letter to Doctor Bellario. She asks him to get required things with lightening speed to Venice. She also informs Nerissa that they are going to dress up as men and go to Venice in order to help their husbands.

Launcelot's Wittiness and Jessica's Praise for Portia and Bassanio

Launcelot takes a dig at Jessica. He tells her that there is no hope for salvation for her because her father is a Jew. They both were passing with remarks when Lorenzo enters. Lorenzo tells Launcelot that, talking to his wife in seclusion would make him jealous of Launcelot. He then asks Launcelot to go and check if the dinner is ready and if the food is laid on the table. Launcelot says something funny to which Lorenzo remarks that at that instant only he has to show all his wittiness.

After Launcelot leaves, Lorenzo asks Jessica about her opinion of Bassanio and Portia. Jessica praises Portia for her virtues. When Lorenzo asks Jessica's opinion about him, she avoids it saying that she will praise him only after dinner.

Word Meanings

Rialto—stock exchange at Venice; **Carcasses**—dead bodies of animals; **Prolixity**—long windedness; **Fledged**—having wings that are large enough for flight; **Smug**—self-satisfied; **Hindered**—hampered, delayed; **Thwarted**—obstructed, blocked; **Humility**—forbearance; **Hearsed**—put in coffin; **Fourscore**—eighty; **Plague**—persecute; **Synagogue**—a Jewish temple. **Tarry**—wait; **Forsworn**—swear falsely; **Beshrew**—curse; **Peize**—retard; increase the action of bet saying someone of something; **Amity**—friendly agreement; **Torment**—severe physical or mental suffering; **Aloof**—conspicuously uninvolved; **Dulcet**—sweet and soothing; **Alcides**—hercules, a great Greek warrior; **Howling**—producing a long wailing sound; **Dardan**—a native or inhabitant of tray; **Bleared**—make dim/Blur; **Visages**—faces; **Begot**—cause, bring about; **Knell**—sound of a bell rung solemnly for a death or funeral; **Valour**—great courage in the face of danger; **Excrement**—appearance; **Wanton**—unprovoked, deliberate; **Sepulchre**—a small room or a movement in which, a dead person is buried or laid; **Beauteous**—beautiful; **Drudge**—slave; **Grossness**—disgusting; **Shuddering**—tremble as a result of fear; **Surfeit**—desire to do no more of somethings as a result of having

done it in excess; **Counterfeit**—forged fake; **Gnats**—small insects; **Oration**—a formal speech; **Solemnise**—celebrate; **Pertains**—concern; **Infidel**—the Jewess; **Hither**—to or towards this place; **Ere**—before; **Fleece**—golden fleece; **Blotted paper**—stained paper; **Braggart**—someone who boasts about their achievements or possessions; **Gaping wound**—deep and wide open wound; **Marring**—spoil; **Plies**—pursue; **Interposer**—separate; **Twixt us twain**—between two extremes. **Gratis**—without charge, free; **Gaoler**—jailor; **Impenetrable**—which cannot be satisfied; **Cur**—a contemptible man; **Bootless**—useless; **Bated**—in great suspense; **Forfeitures**—penalties; **Intercessors**—pleaders; **Impeach**—to bring an accusation against; **Conceit**—idea; **Lineaments**—features; **Bestow'd**—give granted; **Semblance**—likeness; **Husbandry**—control; **Contemplation**—consideration; **Monastery**—religious house of monks; **Padua**—a city in North-East Italy; **Tranect**—a Ferry to the landing place; **Wager**—bet; **Accountred**—equipped; **Reed**—shrill; **Mincing**—short, quick; **Frays**—heated dispute; **Bragging**—boasting; **Quaint**—charming; **Withal**—in addition, consideration; **Repent**—feel or express since regret; **Puny**—small and weak, little; **Haste away**—rapidly; **Jacks**—fellows.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Bassanio : To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love;
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.
Antonio I pray you good Bassanio, let met know it;
[ICSE 2019]

1. Describe Antonio's mood at the beginning of this scene. State any two reasons that Antonio's friends, who were present, gave to explain his mood. [3]

Ans. At the beginning of this scene, Antonio is in a sad mood, but is unable to find a reason for his sadness. Antonio's friends Salarino and Salanio suggest the reason as Antonio being worried about the safety of his merchant ships, which are at the mercy of the oceans. Gratiano, another of Antonio's friends, suggests that the reason is that Antonio attaches a lot of importance to the opinion of the world about himself or that he wants to appear as a wise man.

2. What promise did Antonio make to Bassanio immediately after this conversation? [3]

Ans. Immediately after this conversation, Antonio promises Bassanio that he is willing to stand as guarantor for any loan to be taken by Bassanio from any other person.

3. What did Bassanio say to Antonio about 'a lady richly left' in Belmont? [3]

Ans. Bassanio told Antonio that there was a young lady in Belmont who had inherited a huge amount of money from her dead father. Bassanio was much impressed with her golden hair. He felt that she liked him, as sometimes the expression on her face when she saw him expressed this. He told Antonio that her name was Portia. He knew that if he had enough money, he could win her hand in marriage.

4. Why was Antonio unable to lend Bassanio the money that he needed? [3]

Ans. Antonio was unable to lend Bassanio the money that he needed because, at that time, all his fortunes were tied up at sea with his merchant ships having gone out to trade his goods.

5. What does the extract reveal of the relationship between Antonio and Bassanio? [4]

Ans. The above extract reveals that the relationship between Antonio and Bassanio is one of best friends, in which Antonio is willing to go to any lengths to help Bassanio. Later in the play, this relationship is tested by Antonio's willingness to die for his friend Bassanio when Antonio's ships do not return in time for repaying the loan and Shylock demands his 'pound of flesh'.

II. Shylock To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? [ICSE 2020]

- 1.** Who is 'He'? What does Shylock want from him? What does Shylock mean by 'to bait fish withal'? [3]

Ans. 'He' is Antonio. Shylock wants to take revenge from Antonio. He wants to cut a pound of Antonio's flesh to take revenge from him. 'To bait fish withal' means to use as a bait for fishing. By this Shylock means that he would use the pound of flesh that he would cut from Antonio's body as a bait to catch fish.

- 2.** Explain in your own words any three ways in which 'he' had wronged Shylock. [3]

Ans. The three ways in which 'he' (Antonio) had wronged Shylock are:

- Antonio has harmed Shylock's business interests because of Antonio's practice of lending money without interest.
- Antonio has insulted and abused Shylock many times in public.
- Antonio curses Shylock's religion (Judaism) and has laughed at Shylock's losses.

- 3.** According to Shylock, in what other ways did Jews resemble Christians? [3]

Ans. According to Shylock, Jews resembled Christians because they have eyes, hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections and passions just like Christians have.

- 4.** How does Shylock use Christian example to justify his desire for revenge? [3]

Ans. Shylock says that if a Jew wrongs a Christian, revenge is inevitably sought. So, he does not see a reason why the same rule should not work both ways. In this way, Shylock uses Christian example to justify his desire for revenge.

- 5.** The given extract reveals two distinct emotions that Shylock experiences. What are they? Give one reason to justify each of these emotions. [4]

Ans. In the given extract, Shylock is happy and sad at the same time. Shylock is happy to know that Antonio's

fortunes have been ruined by the loss of his ships. On the other hand, he is sad to know that Jessica, his daughter has eloped with Lorenzo taking his money and jewels.

- III. Bassanio** A gentle scroll. — Fair lady, by your leave; [Kissing her]

I come by note, to give and to receive.

Like one of two contending in a prize,

That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes

Hearing applause and universal shout

Giddy in spirit, still gazing, in a doubt

Whether those peals of praise be his or no;

[ICSE 2019]

- 1.** Where did Bassanio find the 'gentle scroll'? What 'prize' had Bassanio just won? [3]

Ans. Bassanio found the 'gentle scroll' in the lead casket which he had chosen when he wanted to marry Portia. The 'prize' that Bassanio had just won was Portia's hand in marriage.

- 2.** Explain why Bassanio said he felt 'Giddy in spirit, still gazing, in a doubt'. [3]

Ans. Bassanio said these words because he was still in a daze, just as someone who has won a contest and thinks that all the applause and cheering is for him, but he isn't sure yet. So he wanted Portia to confirm that it was actually so.

- 3.** Shortly after this exchange, Portia gave Bassanio a ring as a token of her affection. What did the gift symbolise? [3]

Ans. The ring Portia gave to Bassanio symbolised their love. She also said that if he ever gave this ring away or lost it, their love was over and she would have a right to be angry with him.

- 4.** What assurance did Bassanio give her when he accepted the ring? [3]

Ans. When Bassanio accepted the ring, he gave the assurance to Portia that the day he took this ring off would be the day of his death. If she saw him without the ring, she could be sure that he was dead.

- 5.** What did Portia urge Bassanio to do when she learnt that his friend Antonio was in trouble? What aspect of her character is revealed through her words? [4]

Ans. When Portia learnt that Bassanio's friend Antonio was in trouble, she urged Bassanio to save his friend by immediately going to Venice, after marrying her, and giving Shylock twice the amount owed by Antonio. This money was with her and, after marriage, Bassanio could use it. The aspects of her character which are revealed through her words are her generosity, a concern for humanity and her quick thinking intellect.

IV. Portia As from her lord, her Governor, her king. Myself and what is mine to you and yours Is now converted : but now I was the lord

Of this fair mansion, master of my servants, Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now, This house, these servants and this same myself, Are yours, my lord: [ICSE 2016]

1. Where are Portia and Bassanio? What has just taken place which makes Portia to speak these words? What was the inscription is given in the lead casket? [3]

Ans. Portia and Bassanio are at Portia's house in Belmont. Bassanio has chosen the lead casket just before Portia spoke the above mentioned words. The lead casket carries the inscription 'whoever chooses me must give and risk all that he has.'

2. What does Bassanio say in praise of Portia's portrait? [3]

Ans. Bassanio says 'demi-God' in praise of Portia's portrait. He praises the portrait's eyes, lips and hair. Bassanio says that from parted lips of Portia, a sweet breath is coming. He further praises the picture by saying that in her golden hair, is a trap where man's heart can be withheld.

3. What news saddens Bassanio on this happy occasion? What does Portia ask him to do? [3]

Ans. The news that Bassanio's best friend, Antonio has lost all his fortune saddens Bassanio on this happy occasion. Portia asks him to take as much money he wishes from her and help Antonio.

4. Who is Balthazar? What was the work assigned to him by Portia? [3]

Ans. Balthazar was a loyal servant of Portia. Portia told him to run to Padua and deliver her letter to Doctor Bellario. She also instructed him to bring back with him the documents or clothes that Doctor might give him.

5. Where does Portia really plan to go? What similarity do we find between Portia and Antonio? What does this scene reveal about the character of Portia? Give a reason to justify your answer. [4]

Ans. Portia wants to go to Venice dressed in male attire. Both, Antonio and Portia are affluent people. Both are portrayed as powerful and intelligent. This scene depicts that Portia loves Bassanio quite a lot. She is intelligent, has quick thinking ability and generous also as she is willing to give everything to save Bassanio's best friend.

VI. Portia You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand, Such as I am: though for myself alone I would not be ambitious in my wish, To wish myself much better; yet for you I would be trebled twenty times myself: A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich; That, only to stand high in your account, I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends, Exceed account; but the full sum of me Is sum of something; which, to term in gross, Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised; Happy in this, she is not yet so old But she may learn; happier than this, She is not bred so dull but she can learn;

1. When does Portia speak to Bassanio? How is she feeling? [3]

Ans. Portia speaks to Bassanio after he has chosen the right casket which contained her portrait. She is very happy as she always wanted to marry Bassanio. She wanted only Bassanio as her husband which became possible now after Bassanio has chosen the right casket.

2. How does Portia describe herself? Is she a proud woman? [3]

Ans. Portia is a model of humility. In all her humbleness she describes herself inexperienced. She is not at all proud of her beauty or riches. She rather wishes to be better to win Bassanio's esteem.

3. Describe Portia in context of these lines. [3]

Ans. Though Portia is beautiful and rich, she is free from arrogance or petty-mindedness. She tries to do everything to save Bassanio's dear friend Antonio. She is quite a generous and good natured woman and offers all her money if needed to save Antonio's life.

4. Who all come later in this scene? What information do they bring along? [3]

Ans. Salerio, Bassanio's friend from Venice, Lorenzo who has decided to serve Bassanio and Jessica, Shylock's daughter, all enter Portia's house. Bassanio welcomes them all after taking permission from Portia. Lorenzo informs that Salerio persuaded him to come here. Salerio is also carrying a letter from Antonio which is addressed to his dear friend Bassanio. Bassanio asks Salerio how his best friend Antonio was doing.

5. What news does the letter convey which makes Bassanio's face colour grow pale? What does Portia offer him to do at present? [4]

Ans. Antonio has sent a letter to Bassanio that his ships have been wrecked at sea and Shylock is going to the court to ask for the fulfilment of the bond. Bassanio becomes sad as

he reads the letter. Portia at once asks Bassanio to go to Venice with as much money and gold as he needs to rescue his dear friend.

VII. Antonio The Duke cannot deny the course of law for the commodity that the strangers have With us in Venice, if it be denied, Will much impeach the justice of his state; Since that the trade and the profit of the city Consistent of all nations. Therefore, go; These griefs and losses have so bated me, That I shall hardly aspare a pound of flesh, Tomorrow to my bloody creditor. Well, gaoler, on Pray God, Bassanio come To see me pay his debt and then I care not!

1. Who is the speaker here? Where is he? Which Duke is referred to in the extract? [3]

Ans. The speaker here is Antonio. He is walking around in the streets of Venice bound by a jailor. Shylock, after being informed that Antonio's ships have been wrecked had asked the police officer to arrest Antonio and put him in the jail so that he can take revenge as per the bond. The Duke of Venice has been referred in this extract as even his intervention will not be able to save Antonio.

2. What does Shylock warn the jailor to do in a scene before? [3]

Ans. Shylock warns the jailor to keep a close watch on Antonio and not to show any mercy on him. Antonio is held by the jailor as he has failed to repay the loan that Bassanio took from Shylock for which Antonio was a surety.

3. Why do you think that Antonio is right in saying that the duke will not be able to refuse Shylock's demand? [3]

Ans. Duke cannot refuse Shylock's demand as the state will become a suspect and also the economy as well as justice of the state will be affected, especially in the eyes of the foreign merchants. The prosperity of the state will also be at stake.

4. Why does Antonio want to meet Bassanio? [3]

Ans. Antonio and Bassanio are very close friends. Antonio has helped Bassanio whenever he needed his help. Now, when Antonio has not been able to pay back money borrowed by Bassanio from Shylock, Antonio has been arrested and Shylock is going to take his revenge. So before dying Antonio wants to meet Bassanio.

5. What makes us feel that Antonio has already suffered a lot? What is his attitude at the moment? [4]

Ans. Antonio's ships have not been able to reach their desired destinations and one of them has been wrecked in

English channel too. He is too disturbed because of the loss. He has now resigned to his fate that, Shylock will make him pay the penalty and hence is calm and mentally prepared for any eventuality. However, he still wishes to meet Bassanio before dying.

VIII. Portia Like a fine bragging youth; and tell quaint lies, How honourable ladies sought my love, Which I denying, they fell sick and died; I could not do withal; then I'll repent, And which, for all that, that I had not kill'd them. And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell; that men shall swear I have discontinued school Above a twelve month; I have within my mind A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks, Which I will practise.

1. Portia is speaking to whom? In what context she is talking? [3]

Ans. Portia is speaking to her companion Nerissa. She has plans to go to Venice dressed as male members. She wants to act as a young lawyer and wants Nerissa to be her clerk. She has planned to fight the case of Antonio and defend him somehow.

2. How does Portia describe herself in the role of a young man? [3]

Ans. Portia talks to Nerissa and tells her that when she is dressed up as young man she will wear a dagger by her side, speak in a husky voice. She will walk like a boy taking long strides. She will also boast of broils and fight like a boastful young man.

3. How does this scene reflect on Portia's intelligence and imagination? [3]

Ans. This scene depicts that Portia is a highly intelligent lady who decides very quickly how she can help her husband Bassanio's bosom friend Antonio. She knows that if Antonio had not helped Bassanio, she would not have been able to marry him, so she decides quickly and plans in detail how she is going to fight Antonio's case in the court at Venice.

4. What is Portia's plan? [3]

Ans. Portia has planned to dresses up as a young lawyer along with Nerissa who dresse as male clerk. She wants to defend the case of Antonio in disguise and does not want her identity to be revealed to either Bassanio or Antonio.

5. Why did Portia not go to Venice with Bassanio? [4]

Ans. Portia intentionally did not go to Venice with Bassanio as she wanted to keep her plan of fighting the case for Antonio as a surprise for her husband. Moreover she needed some time to chalk out her plan and reach the court disguised as a young lawyer with her maid Nerissa as a lawyer's clerk.

She also arranged a letter from Dr Ballerio to present herself as a young lawyer. For all this she needed time and therefore she did not leave for Venice along with Bassanio.

IX. Launcelot But, I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?
Gobbo Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Launcelot Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destines, and such odd sayings, Sisters Three and such branches of leaning, is indeed, deceased; or as you would say in plain terms gone to heaven. [ICSE 2020]

1. What information does Gobbo seek from Launcelot at the beginning of this scene? What does Launcelot say has happened to Gobbo's son? [3]

Ans. At the beginning of the scene, Gobbo asks Launcelot the way to Shylock's residence. Launcelot says that Gobbo's son has died.

2. What are the 'Sisters Three'? What role were they thought to play in the lives of humans? [3]

Ans. The 'Sisters Three', according to the Greek mythology, were the fate or destiny. They were lotho, the one who spins the thread of life, Lachesis, the one who measures the thread of life and Atropos, the one who cuts the thread of life. After every birth of a child, for seven nights afterwards they (the three sisters) visit the child to determine his or her fate to see how to spin their life line.

3. Who was Launcelot's master? What gift had Gobbo brought him? What does Launcelot want him to do with it? [3]

Ans. Shylock was Launcelot's master. Gobbo had bought a dish of doves for Launcelot's master. Launcelot wants that his father should give the gift to him so that he can give it to Bassanio (his new master).

4. What reasons does Launcelot give for wanting to leave his present master's service? Whom does he wish to serve instead? [3]

Ans. Launcelot states that he wants to leave his present master's service because Shylock was a Jew and if he stays a little longer with him, then he would become a miserly Jew like Shylock. He also says that his master (Shylock) is starving him to death. He has become so thin that his ribs can be counted easily. Instead of serving Shylock, Launcelot wishes to serve Bassanio.

5. Why does Gobbo have trouble recognising Launcelot? What purpose does this scene serve in the context of the play? [4]

Ans. Gobbo has trouble recognising Launcelot because he is half-blind and hence is unable to see Launcelot clearly.

This act serves the purpose of supporting the play structurally as Launcelot leaving the service of Shylock prepares for a similar defection of Jessica.

X. Jessica Past all expressing. It is very meet The Lord Bassanio live an upright life. For, having such a blessing in his lady He finds the joys of heaven here on Earth;

1. Before this what had Jessica and the listener been doing? [3]

Ans. Portia had asked Jessica and Lorenzo to guard her house while she was going. Jessica and Lorenzo had obliged her by assuring her of the same. Presently they were in the garden of Portia's house. Earlier they were also in the company of Launcelot who had impressed them by his wit.

2. Who is addressed in this line? Why is she being called a blessing? [3]

Ans. The lady in the above lines is Portia who is being called a blessing because she is a generous and sensible human being. She has sent her husband to help Antonio on the very day of her marriage. She also understands the bond that her husband shares with Antonio and feels that she is fortunate to be his wife.

3. What can you infer about the lady talking in the extract? [3]

Ans. The speaker here is Jessica who is quite witty and understanding. Jessica is daughter of a miser Shylock, but as she gets an opportunity, she is trying to mature and her happiness suggests that she has taken the right decision by marrying a Christian Lorenzo. Her new happiness suggests that she has been wise in coming out of the house of her father and is experiencing bliss.

4. What tone has been adopted by Jessica here? Why does she admire Portia? [3]

Ans. The tone of Jessica here is of admiration. She has respect for what Portia has done by sending her husband to help his best friend. Therefore she tells Lorenzo that the words cannot explain how much she admires her.

5. Who is Jessica? Where is she at this time? To whom is she talking? What is the point of a conversation? [4]

Ans. Jessica is Shylock's daughter and Lorenzo's wife. At this time she is in Belmont in Portia's garden and she's talking to her beloved husband, Lorenzo. The point of the conversation is the relationship between Bassanio and his wife Portia. She is full of praise for Portia and says that words are not enough to express her admiration for Portia. Jessica suggests that Bassanio should lead an upright life. He has the joys of heaven here on the Earth. If he does not value the joy while on the Earth, he does not deserve to expect happiness in heaven.

ACT IV (Scene I & II)

Summary of the Act

Court Hearing Starts

The Duke of Venice checks for Antonio if he is present. He feels sorry for Antonio and requests Shylock to reconsider his decision. But Shylock wants nothing less than one pound of flesh from Antonio's body.

Shylock is Adamant

Shylock asks Duke to honour the bond and allow him to cut one pound of flesh from Antonio's body. Bassanio also requests Shylock to not carry out this inhumane treatment but Shylock insists that he does not have to please anyone and he would like to do as per the bond.

Arrival of a Messenger

As the Duke waits for Dr Bellario to turn up, Salarino announces arrival of a messenger from Dr Bellario with letters. Nerissa enters dressed like a lawyer's clerk. She confirms her arrival from Padua, along with letters sent by Dr Bellario.

Portia Enters Dressed as Doctor of Law

After reading the letter, The Duke tells that the Dr Bellario has sent another young and a learned doctor to the court. The letter mentioned that Dr Bellario is not well, so he is sending across a young doctor of Rome, named Balthazar. Portia enters dressed as the doctor of Law. Duke welcomes her. Portia acknowledge her awareness about the issue and wants to know who the merchant is and who the Jew is. Both Antonio and Shylock introduce themselves. On being asked Antonio confirms of signing the bond with Shylock.

Portia Impresses Shylock

Portia asks Shylock to accept the money to cancel the bond but Shylock wants to go as per the bond. Portia is in agreement that Shylock is entitled to cut a pound of flesh from Antonio's breast according to law. Shylock is impressed by Portia and says she has good knowledge of law.

Antonio Bids Adieu to Bassanio

Portia questions Shylock if he is ready with the balance to weigh a pound of flesh. Shylock is ready with it. She, then checks if any doctor is arranged to stop the wound from bleeding, else Antonio would bleed to death. Shylock

questions Portia that there is no mention of such arrangement in the bond. Antonio says final good bye to Bassanio. He asks him not to feel guilty of what is happening to him. Antonio asks Bassanio to tell his wife how he has achieved his end and how much he loved her. Both Bassanio and Gratiano are willing to put at stake their and their wives life if Antonio's life could be saved. This thinking is not appreciated by both Portia and Nerissa.

Portia Turns the Tables

As Shylock is all set to apply his knife to cut Antonio's flesh, Portia stops him and warns that when he cuts the flesh, not a single drop of blood should fall off as it is nowhere mentioned in the bond. If he does not do it, Shylock's life will be at the mercy of Duke and as per the laws of Venice, all his property confiscated by the state.

Shylock Questions Portia

Shylock is very upset and questions Portia. She replies saying that he can see the bond and since he desire justice, he shall have justice. However, she again reminds Shylock that not a single drop of blood should fall. Shylock finds himself in a tight corner and now agrees to take the offer made by Bassanio.

Portia's Suggestion to Shylock

Portia reiterates that the Jew will have nothing but only justice and act as per the bond. He shall have a pound of flesh with no blood shed and if he cut a little less or more, then all his property stands confiscated as per the law of Venice. Listening to all this Shylock responds to be given the principal amount only.

Duke's Verdict

The Duke announced that Shylock is forgiven on the condition that half of his property goes to Antonio and the other half shall go to the state of Venice, as a fine. When Antonio is asked what does he want, he requests that half of Shylock's property should be given to Jessica and Lorenzo after Shylock's death as he himself did not want any share of Shylock's property. Duke orders Shylock to follow this. Shylock requests the court to let him go as he is not feeling well and to send the deed later for his signature.

Portia's Unusual Request

Everyone congratulates Portia and the Duke invites Portia to have dinner with him. She refuses politely. Bassanio offers her three thousand Ducats in lieu of saving Antonio's life. Antonio also says that all of them stand indebted to her for saving his life. Portia thanks them all but refuses to take money. Bassanio further requests her to take something as token of remembrance, Portia asks for Antonio's gloves and Bassanio's ring.

Bassanio is at a loss as he does not want to part with that ring as it was given by his wife. Antonio asks Bassanio to give the ring to the lawyer for his sake. He sends his ring with Gratiano and leaves for dinner at Antonio's place.

Portia, Nerissa and the Ring

Portia asks Nerissa to check for the Jew, Shylock's house and get the deed signed. Then they shall leave for Belmont in the night and reach a day before their husbands are due. She also asks to give this deed to Lorenzo as a welcome gift. Gratiano comes to them with the ring and conveys Bassanio's dinner request to them too. Portia takes the ring

but refuses the dinner offer. She requests Gratiano to show Shylock's house to her clerk (Nerissa). Nerissa also plans to take the ring from her husband that would give an opportunity to quarrel with their husbands.

Word Meanings

Stony—cruel; **Adversary**—opponent; **Dram**—a small drink of whisky; **Void**—bereft of; **Obdurate**—obstinate; **Remorse**—compassion; **Forfeiture**—loss; **Huddled**—crowded; **Enow**—enough; **Commiseration**—pity; **Flint**—a hard fine grained quartz; **Sabbath**—seventh day of the week observed as rest; **Carrion**—pity; **Gaping**—with open mouth; **Inevitable**—impossible; **Serpent**—snake; **Ewe**—female sheep; **Fretten**—blown; **Beseech**—to beg; **Abject**—degrading; **Palates**—appetite; **Viands**—rich food; **Tainted**—sick; **Wether**—sheep; **Epitaph**—an inscription on grave; **Whet**—rub; **Inexcrable**—deserving of being cursed; **Currish**—vile, wicked; **Gallows**—wooden framework, where persons are put to death; **Dam**—mother; **Ravenous**—starving; **Importunity**—request; **Impediment**—hindrance; **Scruple**—very small unit of cut; **Infidel**—dishonest; **Contrive**—conspire; **Predicament**—situation; **Christening**—baptism; **Mercenary**—greedy; **Outswear**—swear loudly; **Tarry**—wait.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Duke What, is Antonio here?

Antonio Ready, so please your grace.

Duke I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer, A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy. [ICSE 2015]

1. What are the terms of the bond that Antonio has signed? [3]

Ans. According to the bond that Antonio has signed he has borrowed three thousand ducats from Shylock which he should repay within three month's time. If he is not able to pay the money in the stipulated time, Shylock would be entitled to cut 'a pound of flesh' from any part of Antonio's body.

2. Why does the Duke call Shylock 'inhuman'? What does the Duke expect Shylock to do? [3]

Ans. The Duke refers to Shylock as 'inhuman' because he had no pity for Antonio and was totally lacking in mercy. The Duke expected Shylock to have mercy on Antonio as that was required of him at such a moment. He reminded Shylock that he would gain nothing out of Antonio's flesh.

3. What reason does Shylock give for choosing rotten flesh over money? What are the things hated by some people? [3]

Ans. Shylock states that he would prefer to have the rotten flesh, instead of three thousand ducats as he has a deep-rooted hatred and detestation for Antonio. According to Shylock, there are some men who hate a gaping pig and others who cannot put up with a harmless domestic cat or wool-covered bag-pipe.

4. State three examples Antonio gives to illustrate Shylock's stubborn attitude. [3]

Ans. Antonio gives certain examples to illustrate Shylock's stubborn attitude. He says that Bassanio might stand on the seashore and ask the ocean tide not to rise. He might ask the wolf why he made the mother sheep mourn for the lamb he devoured. He might as well forbid the pine tress on the mountains to sway their high tops and to make noise when disturbed by the winds from above. However, he could do nothing to soften the stubborn heart of the Jew.

5. How is Shylock's property distributed at the end by Antonio? Do you think Shylock deserves the punishment given to him? Give a reason to justify your answer. [4]

Ans. Antonio foregoes half of Shylock's wealth and keeps the other half, to be given to his son-in-law, after Shylock's death. He also wants Shylock to become a Christian and sign a deed with the condition that upon his death and his property would go to his daughter and son-in-law. Yes, Shylock indeed deserves the given punishment. He is a vindictive character with a passion for revenge. He is malicious and so hard-hearted that for his revenge he wants nothing less than Antonio's life. He is, thus, rightly paid for his devilry.

II. Duke You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

[Enter Portia, dressed like a Doctor of Laws]

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Portia I did, my lord.

Duke You are welcome: take your place.

Are you acquainted with the difference

That holds this present question in the court?

[ICSE 2019]

1. Where is this scene set? Why was Portia there? [3]

Ans. This scene is set in a Court of Justice in Venice, also called the Duke's Court. Portia was there disguised as a male Doctor of Laws.

2. What reason had Bellario given for his absence? Whom had he sent in his stead? [3]

Ans. For his absence, Bellario had given the reason that he was very ill. He said in his letter to the Duke that he was sending another learned Doctor of Laws named Balthazar, who would act as Bellario's substitute as the judge in the case.

3. Bellario's letter stated that he had taken some measures to prepare the 'young and learned doctor' to deal with the case. What were they? [3]

Ans. The measures that Bellario had taken to prepare the 'young and learned doctor' for the case were that he had told him about the case and they had consulted many books together. The doctor knew about Bellario's legal opinions about this matter, and also has his own expert opinions as well.

4. What was the 'difference' between Shylock the Jew and Antonio the merchant that the Duke was unable to resolve? [3]

Ans. The difference between Shylock and Antonio that the Duke was unable to resolve was that Shylock did not show mercy in executing the bond which Antonio had signed, despite the fact that the money was being returned to him now by Bassanio.

5. How does Portia succeed in saving Antonio? What does this reveal of her character? [4]

Ans. Portia manages to save Antonio from Shylock collecting on his bond by disguising herself as a male Doctor of Laws sent by Bellario, who was to judge the case, as his substitute. She cleverly finds a loophole in the bond that prevents Shylock from harming Antonio. This reveals her excellent knowledge of Venetian law and quick thinking to find the loophole in the bond.

III. But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. [ICSE 2016]

1. Name the speaker. Why did the speaker appeal to the Jew for mercy? Earlier who else in the play appealed for mercy? [3]

Ans. The speaker of these lines was Portia. The speaker appealed to the Jew for mercy as she wanted to save Antonio. She said that quality of mercy cannot be forced, there is no compulsion in its exercise. Mercy is a free voluntary action. Earlier, Bassanio had requested Shylock to show mercy on Antonio.

2. What are the three qualities of mercy which the speaker has stated just before the extract? [3]

Ans. Portia is addressing Shylock when he asks on what grounds should he show mercy to Antonio. She says that mercy is a double blessing as it benefits both the giver as well as the receiver. It is the greatest quality in the most powerful men. It is a very noble quality of a king, much nobler than the crown which a king wears.

3. Give the meaning of 'But mercy is above this sceptred sway'. How does Shylock turn down Portia's plea for mercy? What does he insist on? [3]

Ans. The line means that the king's sceptre represents his earthly power, the symbol of his majesty. But mercy is higher than sceptre. It's enthroned in the heart of kings and is a quality of God himself. Shylock turns down Portia's plea for mercy by saying that he has taken an oath for killing Antonio and will not break it. He insists on the penalty as specified in the bond.

4. What is Bassanio ready to do for Antonio in the court? Why is Bassanio snubbed immediately by the disguised Portia? [3]

Ans. Bassanio is prepared to sacrifice everything of his, his life and even his wife, to save Antonio. Portia snubs Bassanio as she thinks that his wife is not likely to be thankful to him if she were to hear him say this.

5. Mention two prominent character traits of Shylock as highlighted through the scene from which the extract has been taken. Substantiate your answer with examples from the text. [4]

Ans. Shylock is more concerned with money. When his own daughter elopes with a Christian, Shylock seems to be more worried about jewels and money. His hard heartedness is shown when instead of receiving more amount, he pledges to cut Antonio's flesh from his body.

IV. Antonio But little : I am arm'd and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio : fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom : it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering
penance,
Of such misery doth she cut me off.

1. Who is being addressed by the above words? What does Antonio says in his defence ? [3]

Ans. This scene is set at the courtroom in Venice. These words are addressed to Bassanio by his dear friend Antonio when Portia as a young lawyer asks Antonio if he has anything to say in his defence. Antonio says no. He can say only very little as he has signed this bond so that he could help his friend Bassanio.

2. How does Antonio console Bassanio that he should not feel guilty? [3]

Ans. Antonio tells his best friend Bassanio that he need not to feel sad over Antonio's fate. He should not feel guilty that because of him Antonio has become a victim of Shylock's revenge who wanted nothing else but a pound of flesh from Antonio's body.

3. What is Bassanio asked to do by Antonio after his death in above extract? [3]

Ans. Antonio instructs Bassanio to convey his respect and affection to his wife, inform about his death and the reason of his death. He asks Bassanio to speak well of him before his wife, Portia and present before her a picture of a true friend.

4. How can you say that Bassanio carries a deep love for Antonio? [3]

Ans. Bassanio tells Antonio that he has a wife whom he loves as dearly as his own life. But he rates Antonio's life above his own life, above life of his beloved wife and above everything else on earth. He is ready to sacrifice all if by giving it he can persuade Shylock to spare Antonio's life. This offer reflects Bassanio's deep love and friendship for Antonio.

5. Why does Antonio not blame Bassanio for his sentences which is to be given to him? What is Antonio attitude towards life and death? [4]

Ans. Antonio is really a gem of person. He is happy to help his friend even at the cost of his life. Antonio further says that he does not have least remorse of paying Bassanio with his life as he is the dearest of his friends. He feels happy that he is sacrificing his life to make his dear friend's life easy and happy. Moreover, he is grateful that he is spared to lead a life of misery and poverty after all his wealth has been lost. Here Antonio appears to be a very wise person and he loves his friend dearly. He is not at all unhappy to die for the happiness of his friend.

- V. Shylock** Shall I not have barely my principal?

Portia Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture, To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

1. What makes Shylock change his decision of cutting one pound of Antonio's flesh? [3]

Ans. Portia informs Shylock that as he wanted to fulfil his bond, there is no way out for him. When Shylock is being asked to cut a pound of flesh without shedding a drop of blood, Shylock finds himself in a tight corner. He wants to forego his bond or double the amount which Bassanio was offering.

2. What does Shylock say when Portia puts before him the condition of not shedding a single drop of blood? [3]

Ans. Shylock does not know how to react. He responds by saying that let the devil take away Antonio. He has nothing more to argue in this case. Portia has left no choice for him and got him fixed by his own words.

3. What information is given to Shylock about the law of Venice for a foreigner? [3]

Ans. Portia explains to the Jew, Shylock about another claim that Venetian law has on foreigner people. It is laid down in The Laws of Venice that if it is proved against a foreigner that he has conspired directly or indirectly against a Venetian citizen, then one half of his property will be given to that citizen. The other half is to be paid into the treasury of the state.

4. What proves Antonio not to be a greedy gentleman? [3]

Ans. Antonio is a thorough gentleman. He proposes not to claim half of Shylock's property and he would like it to be given to Shylock's daughter Jessica and her husband Lorenzo after Shylock's death. This shows that Antonio is not a greedy and he does not want to take the advantage of this situation.

5. Who plays the role of an intelligent lawyer? What does it indicate about his/her character? [4]

Ans. Portia plays the role of a young intelligent lawyer who is able to save Antonio's life by logic and perception. She is of a generous character, who can go out of the way to save the life of her husband's most loving friend. She is intelligent, imaginative and shows her skills as an efficient lawyer.

VI. Bassanio There's more depends on this than on the value. The dearest ring in Venice will I give you, And find it out by proclamation. Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.
Portia I see, sir you are liberal in offers :
You taught me first to beg and now me thinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

1. Where were the speakers? What offer was made to Portia by Bassanio on winning the case? [3]

Ans. The speakers were in the court room at Venice where Portia had fought the case of Antonio. She was disguised as a young male lawyer who was recommended by Dr Bellario. As she had saved Antonio's life, Bassanio feels very grateful. He requested her again and again to accept something as a token of their regards for winning the case.

2. What has Portia demanded? Why is Bassanio reluctant? What offer does he make? [3]

Ans. Portia demands a ring which she has given to Bassanio at the time of their marriage. Bassanio is reluctant to give it to her because of his promise to his wife not to part with that ring in his life time. He offers to give young lawyer any other valuable ring available in Venice.

3. Why does Portia refuse the offer? In which mood is she? [3]

Ans. Portia refuses the offer saying that she has a strong desire for it. She pretends to be in an angry mood on being denied of the ring after the offer of a gift has been made to her. She says that many men who do not wish to give a present, give such reasons.

4. "You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd". Explain. [3]

Ans. Portia pretends to be angry. She says that Bassanio has shown how a beggar should be treated. Bassanio feels himself to be in tight spot. He wants to offer something valuable to the young lawyer but not the ring which is given to him by his wife, Portia on the promise that he will never part with the ring she has given to him. So he is not able to fulfil Portia's demand.

5. Did Bassanio fulfil Portia's demand? How? [4]

Ans. When Portia, as a young lawyer, was asked by Bassanio to accept something as a reward for winning the case against Shylock, she asks for the ring which he was wearing. Bassanio was on a tight spot as he could not part with that ring as desired by Portia. But Antonio, as a generous man requested Bassanio to give that ring to the young lawyer as a reward for saving Antonio's life and Bassanio love for Antony should over rule Portia's command. So, Bassanio fulfilled Portia's demand by giving her the ring which he never wanted to part with. He sends the ring through Gratiano and also sends an invitation for dinner in their honour.

VII. Bassanio Were you the doctor, and I knew you not?

Gratiano Were you the clerk?

Antonio Sweet lady, you have given me life and living: For here I read for certain that my ships Are safely come to road.

Portia How now, Lorenzo! My clerk hath some good comforts too for you. [2018]

1. Where does this scene take place? What had Portia directed Antonio to give to Bassanio just moments before the above words were spoken? [3]

Ans. This scene takes place in Belmont on the road near Portia's house. Just moments before the above words

were spoken, Portia gave Antonio a ring and had directed him to give it to Bassanio. It is the same ring which Bassanio had given to Portia, disguised as the doctor, in the courtroom earlier.

2. Portia had just given Antonio, Bassanio and Gratiano a letter to read. (Who had written this letter)? What does Bassanio learn about Portia from this letter? [3]

Ans. The letter which Portia had given to Antonio, Bassanio and Gratiano was written by Bellario from Padua. Bassanio learns from the letter that Portia had disguised herself as the doctor in the courtroom.

3. What good news does Portia have for Antonio? How does he respond to it? [3]

Ans. The good news that Portia has for Antonio is that three of his ships, which were earlier reported to be shipwrecked, had returned to the harbour laden with goods. Antonio responded to this news by not having anything to say, as he was dumbstruck by the unexpected good news.

4. To whom does Portia refer as 'My clerk'? What 'good comforts' does the 'clerk' have for Lorenzo? [3]

Ans. Portia refers to Nerissa as 'My clerk'. The 'good comforts' that Nerissa has for Lorenzo is that Shylock, Jessica's father, has willed that, after his death, all his possessions should pass on to Lorenzo and Jessica.

5. How was Bassanio persuaded to give away the ring that Portia had given him at the time of their marriage? What does this reveal of Bassanio's relationship with Antonio? [4]

Ans. At the time of their marriage, Portia had given Bassanio her ring, which was a symbol of all her wealth. But when Portia, disguised as a lawyer, asked him for the ring as her fees for fighting the case on his behalf, Bassanio initially refused to part with the ring. However, on Antonio's persuasion, Bassanio parted with the ring. This reveals that Bassanio is willing to do anything for Antonio, even to the extent of losing all his possessions and also his wife's affection, only to maintain Antonio's friendship. This shows that Bassanio's relationship with Antonio is of true friendship.

ACT V

Summary of the Act

Romance is in Air

Lorenzo and Jessica are seen sitting in Portia's garden in Belmont. It is a moonlit night and lovers indulge in a sort of game by narrating stories of different lovers. At that time Stephano, a servant of Portia arrives to inform them about arrival of Portia before the day break. He also informs them Portia is visiting holy places in Belmont at that time, where she is praying for her happy married life. Stephano enquires about Bassanio, Lorenzo informs him that he has not returned yet, but he may arrive soon.

Lorenzo asks Stephano to instruct the musicians to play music in order to welcome Portia. Both Lorenzo and Jessica feel enchanted by music. Portia and Nerissa arrive home. On returning to home, Portia appreciates the candle light coming out of hall. Portia praises the light and also talks of sweetness of music. Portia learns that Bassanio and others have not returned so far. She asks Nerissa to tell all the servants not to tell Bassanio and Gratiano of their absence.

The Ring Saga Continues

Bassanio arrives along with Antonio and Gratiano. He introduces Antonio to Portia and tells her how Antonio has helped him at the risk of his life. Antonio informs Portia that he has been acquitted. Meanwhile Nerissa starts fighting with Gratiano saying that he must have given ring to some pretty young woman in Venice. Gratiano tells her that he has given the ring to the lawyer's clerk. Portia tells Gratiano that he should not have parted with the ring.

She, then remarks that if Bassanio would have parted with the ring, she would have actually been mad at him. She turns around to ask Bassanio about the ring. Bassanio replies that he too had to part with the ring, Portia starts quarelling.

Bassanio Apologise to Portia

When Portia and Bassanio, Nerissa and Gratiano begin to quarrel, Antonio intervenes and says that he is the subject of this quarrel. Portia says that he is most welcome in their house and should not feel upset about it. Bassanio asks Portia to forgive him and assure her that he will never commit such a mistake again. When Antonio stands surety for Bassanio, Portia at once gives a ring to Antonio and asks him to advise Bassanio never to part with that ring. Bassanio is very surprised to find the same ring. Nerissa too produces another ring and tells Gratiano that it was given by lawyer's clerk.

Disclosure of the Truth

All are amazed at what is happening. Portia tells them the truth that she was the young lawyer and Nerissa was the clerk. She and Nerissa have just arrived from Venice. She also hands over a letter to Antonio which carries good news for him. The letter states that three of his missing ships have reached safely at Venice. Antonio thanks Portia for giving him a new lease of life. Then, Nerissa hands over the deed signed by Shylock to Lorenzo which states that after his death half of his wealth will be Lorenzo's. Lorenzo is all thankful to both of them. Portia, then says that since it is a new morning, let them all go inside the house and celebrate together.

Word Meanings

Avenue—a broad road in a town, typically having trees at regular intervals; **Willow**—a symbol of unhappy love; **Unthrift**—ceaseless; **Shrew**—scolding woman; **Slander**—malicious statement; **Out-night you**—beat you in the game of making speeches about nights; **Hark**—listen; **Wedlockhour**—married life; **Patines**—plates; **Orb**—spherical body; **Cherubins**—angels; **Muddy vesture**—body of perishable flesh; **Wanton herd**—mischievous group; **Bellowing**—deep roar of large animal; **Perchance**—by any chance; **Feign**—imagine; **Treasons**—betrayal, treachery; **Stratagems**—deception; **Antipodes**—people living in the other part of the globe; **Scant**—cease to express; **Vehement**—strong; **Besmear**—disgrace; **Come to Manna**—divine drink; **Inter' gatories**—questions.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Stephano Stephano is my name; and I bring word,
My mistress will before the break of day Be here at
Belmont : She doth stray about By Holy crosses, where
she kneels and prays For happy wedlock hours.

1. Where does this scene takes place? Who is Stephano? [3]

Ans. The given scene takes place is the garden in front of Portia's house in Belmont. Jessica and Lorenzo are enjoying each other's company. Stephano is a servant of Portia.

2. Where was Portia when she was away from Belmont? [3]

Ans. According to Stephano, during her absence from home, his mistress was visiting various shrines with holy crosses. She was praying and seeking blessings for her happy married life. But in reality, Portia was in Venice disguised as a young male lawyer. She had gone there to fight the case against Shylock and save Antonio's life, a dear friend of Bassanio.

3. Where did Portia and Nerissa really go after Bassanio and Gratiano had left for Venice? What had happened to Antonio's ships? [3]

Ans. Portia and Nerissa disguised themselves as a lawyer and her clerk respectively. Portia went to Venice to defend Antonio's case of bond and save him from cruel Shylock. Antonio's ships have been lost in various seas and he was unable to pay three thousand Ducats within three months according to the bond.

4. What was the deed document? Why did Shylock ask to collect the document from his house? [3]

Ans. The deed document was to be signed by Shylock. It stated that after Shylock's death half of his property and money will be handed over to his son-in-law, Lorenzo. Shylock was very upset at the turn of events. He was put in a tight corner where neither he was able to cut a pound of flesh from Antonio's body nor he was able to get back the loan amount as he has tried to take away a Venetian citizen's life. So, he wanted to go home as he was not feeling well.

5. How is Jessica and Lorenzo's love story linked to love story of Portia and Bassanio? [4]

Ans. Jessica-Lorenzo romance is linked to the love story of Portia and Bassanio. Lorenzo is Bassanio's friend and well wisher. Jessica is Shylock's daughter. They both get the opportunity to elope when Bassanio had organised a dinner for Shylock. They eloped to Belmont and stayed in Portia's house during her absence. When Portia has defended Antonio's case, Lorenzo gets half of Shylock's property after Shylock's death.

II. Portia The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest, it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.

[ICSE 2020]

1. Where does this scene take place? Why is Portia here? Why does Bassanio not recognise her? [3]

Ans. This scene takes place at a court in Venice. Portia is here to fight the case of Antonio. Bassanio does not recognise her because she is dressed as a lawyer.

2. To what is mercy compared in these lines? Why is mercy said to be 'twice blessed'? [3]

Ans. In these lines, mercy is compared to a soft rain that falls from the heaven and nourishes the earth. Mercy is said to be 'twice blessed' as it blesses the one who gives it and the one who receives it.

3. Explain the lines :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest, it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown. [3]

Ans. These lines mean that mercy is a quality which only someone with supreme power can portray. The time might of a king is exhibited by his merciful demeanour even more than his crown.

4. Later in her speech Portia mentions a sceptre. What is a sceptre? How, according to Portia, is mercy above the 'sceptred sway'? [3]

Ans. A specter is a decorated stick that is carried by a queen or a king during some official ceremonies as a symbol of their authority. A king's 'spectred sway' represents the control he has on earth and adds to his majesty. But, according to Portia, mercy is more powerful than any earthly control as it is a quality attributed to God who is the King of all kings.

5. To whom are these words addressed? What does the person say in response to Portia's words? Portia is seen as the dramatic heroine of the play. Using references from the text mention any two aspects of her character that appeal to you most. [4]

Ans. These words are addressed to Shylock. In response to Portia's request for mercy, Shylock insisted on the justice of his cause. He was determined to get a pound of flesh from Antonio's body as a penalty. Portia's compassionate nature and her cheerful and optimistic disposition appeal to me the most. Her famous 'Quality of Mercy' speech is a proof of her compassionate nature. She is always cheerful and optimistic and only in one occasion in the whole play she feels melancholic. This is when she is unable to choose her husband.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Act I

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. Salarino** Your mind is tossing on the ocean; where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood or as it were, pageants of the sea, Do over peer the
petty traffickers, curtly to them, do them reverence, they fly by them with their woven wings.
1. What makes Salarino say these words? [3]
 2. How can you say that Antonio was in a sad mood? How does he describe his sadness? [3]
 3. Does Antonio agree to the explanation given by Salarino? Comment. [3]
 4. In your words, elaborate how Salarino describes the ships of Antonio. [3]
 5. What explanation is Salarino trying to give Antonio for his pensive state? How does he try to lift his spirits up? [4]

II. Salarino Why then you are in love.

Antonio Fie, fie!

Salarino Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,
And laugh like parrots at a bag-paper;
An other of such vinegar aspect,
that they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

1. Who has just said that Antonio was in love? What was Antonio's reaction to it? [3]
2. When Antonio says that he is not in love, what other explanation does Salarino give in for Antonio's sadness? [3]
3. What is meant by two-headed Janus? Why is he referred to in the extract? [3]
4. Describe in your own words the two types of fellows who have been framed by nature. [3]
5. Who is Nestor? Why is he referred to in the extract? [4]

III. Gratiano : Let me play the fool:

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come; And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?

1. What advice is given by Gratiano to Antonio and why? [3]
2. Why do some people, according to Gratiano, try to look serious? [3]
3. What is Gratiano's belief about life? Why does he criticise Antonio? [3]
4. What is the dramatic significance of Antonio being gloomy and melancholic? [3]
5. Who comes to meet Antonio after sometime? What was the reason of his visit? [4]

IV. Bassanio In Belmont is a lady richly left;

And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,

I did receive fair speechless messages:

To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:

Of wondrous virtues; sometimes from her eyes

Her name is Portia; nothing undervalued.

Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,

1. Who lives in Belmont? Why was Bassanio interested in her? Why did he want to go to Belmont? [3]
2. How do we know that Portia is a centre of attraction for many young people? [3]
3. Why did Bassanio approach Antonio? Why did he mention Portia during the conversation? [3]
4. What confession does Bassanio make to Antonio before these lines? How is his financial position? Can we conclude that Bassanio is an extravagant man? [3]
5. What does Bassanio mean by 'Fair speechless messages and nothing undervalued'? [4]

V. Portia If to do were easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces; is good divine that follows his own instructions; can easily twenty what were good to be done, be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching; brain may devise laws for the blood, a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree such a hare is madness the youth to skip o'er the meshes of good council and the cripple; but this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband.

1. Where are the speakers and who is Portia speaking to? [3]
2. What would happen if the people were to do what is good? [3]
3. Who is a good priest? [3]
4. What is young man compared to? [3]
5. Is Portia free to make her choice? What does she feel now? [4]

VI. Nerissa Your father was ever virtuous and holy men at their death have good inspirations:

therefore, the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver,

and lead—whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you,—will, no doubt,

never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love.

But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Portia I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them;

and according to my description, level at my affection.

1. What is the will that Portia's father has left her regarding her marriage? [3]
2. Describe the lottery which is talked about in the will. [3]
3. How does Portia react to the lottery? [3]
4. Portia is sad in the beginning of the scene as Antonio was in the previous scene. What is the difference between Antonio's melancholy and that of Portia? [3]
5. How does this scene show a mood of anxiety and melancholy? [4]

Act II

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. Portia**
- You must take your chance; And either not attempt to choose at all or Swear before you choose, if you choose wrong, Never to speak to lady afterward

In a way of marriage: therefore be advised.

Morocco Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.**Portia** First, forward to the temple: after dinner, Your hazard shall be made.**Morocco** Good fortune then! To make me blest or cursed'st among men.

1. Where are the speakers and what are they discussing? [3]
2. Why has Prince of Morocco come to Belmont? [3]
3. Why is Portia saying, 'your chance'? [3]
4. When the Prince arrives what does he boast of? [3]
5. Does the Prince of Morocco go ahead with the casket lottery or not and what are the consequences? [4]

II. Gratiano You must not deny me : I must go with you to Belmont

Bassanio Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano,
Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice, Parts that become thee happily enough, And in such eyes as
our appear not faults But where thou art not known, why, there they show something too liberal. Pray thee,
take pain to allay with some cold drops of modesty thy skipping spirit; lest, through thy wild behaviour, I be
misconstrued in the place I go to and lose my hopes.

1. What is the context in which Bassanio utters these words? [3]
2. What advice was given by Bassanio to Gratiano? [3]
3. What assurance does Gratiano give to Bassanio about the latter's advice? [3]
4. What exception to Gratiano's behaviour is accepted for the particular night? Why? [3]
5. Explain : Thou art too wild. [4]

III. Launcelot Adieu! Tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! If a Christian do not
play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived. But, adieu; these foolish drops do something drown my
manly spirit: adieu.

1. Who is Launcelot and what is he doing here? [3]
2. Why is Launcelot leaving Shylock? [3]
3. What does the line "Our house is a hell and there, a merry devil" mean? [3]
4. Is Shylock happy that Launcelot is leaving him or not why? [3]
5. Why does Launcelot bid teary adieu to Jessica? Why does he call her the most beautiful pagan? [4]

IV. Lorenzo I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed

How I shall take her from her father's house;
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with;
What page's suit she hath in readiness.

If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
And never dare misfortune cross foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me: peruse this as thou goest:
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

1. Where are the speakers and what is Lorenzo talking about? [3]
2. What are the preparations going on for? Where are all the friends assembling? [3]
3. Why does Lorenzo feel that if ever Shylock goes to heaven after death, it will be because of his daughter? [3]
4. What are the contents of the letter? Who all are involved in it? [3]
5. Who got the letter for Lorenzo? Why does Lorenzo tell him that he will not fail Jessica? [4]

V. Shylock The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder; Snail-slow in profit and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me; Therefore, I part with him, and part with him
To one that would have him help to waste his borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica go in; perhaps I will return
immediately: do as I bid you; shut doors after you: fast bind, fast find; a proverb never stale in thrifty mind.

1. Whom is Shylock delivering the speech to? Why is he doing so? [3]
2. Why is he satisfied that Launcelot is leaving his services? [3]
3. What does he mean to say, "Waste his borrowed purse"? [3]
4. Where is he going? Who leaves the house soon after he has left? [3]
5. Mention any four character traits of Shylock. [4]

VI. Jessica Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains. I am glad tis night you do not look on me, For I am
ashamed of my exchange: But love is blind and lovers cannot see the pretty follies that themselves commit:
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush to see me that transformed to a boy.

Lorenzo Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jessica What, must I hold a candle to my shames?

They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light. Why, 'tis is office of discovery, love; And I should be
obscured.

1. Where are the speakers? What is the occasion? [3]
2. Why is Jessica ashamed? [3]
3. Why does Lorenzo ask her to descend fast? Why does he call her, his torch-bearer? [3]
4. What is Jessica carrying in the casket? [3]
5. What do you mean by 'For if they could, Cupid himself or blush'? [4]

VII. Morocco Let's see once more this saying graved in gold;
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."

Why that's the lady; all the desires her;
From the four corners of the Earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint;
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vastly wilds
Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia.

1. Who is Morocco Prince speaking to? What is the occasion? [3]
2. What does he think while reading the inscription on the gold casket? [3]
3. How does he praise Portia? [3]
4. Explain "The Hyrcanian deserts and the vastly wilds now". [3]
5. What makes him choose the gold casket? What does he find in the gold casket? What is his reaction? [4]

VIII. Salanio I never heard a passion so confused, so strange, outrageous, and so variable, As the dog Jew did
utter in the streets: "My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!" Fled with a Christian! O my Christian
ducats! Justice! The law! My ducats, and my daughter! a sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats.

1. Where is Salanio and who is he speaking to? [3]
2. What has happened? Why is Shylock so mad? [3]
3. In what mood is Salanio? Why is he so disapproving of Shylock? [3]
4. What is Salanio scared of? Does it turn to be true? [3]
5. What does he say about Antonio and Bassanio towards the end of the scene? [4]

IX. Arragon I will not choose what many men desire, Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes. Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure house; Tell me once
more what title thou dost bear; "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves:" And well said too; for
who shall go about To cozen fortune and be honourable : Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume to
wear an undeserved dignity.

1. Where are the speakers? What was the result of the casket lottery this time? [3]
2. Prince of Arragon rejected the gold casket, why? What does it speak of his character? [3]
3. Why is he impressed by the inscription on the silver casket? What does it reflect of his character? [3]
4. To what extent is he right? Where does he go wrong? [3]
5. What does he find in the casket that he chooses? How does Portia react on his leaving? [4]

Act III

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Tubal Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa.

Shylock What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tubal Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shylock I thank God, I thank God! Is't true, Is't true?

Tubal I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

Shylock I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

Tubal Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

Shylock Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting!
fourscore ducats!

1. Where are the speakers and what are they discussing? [3]
2. About whom is Tubal giving information, which has pleased Shylock? [3]
3. What does Tubal tell Shylock about his daughter? [3]
4. Why does Shylock say that he shall never see his gold again? [3]
5. After a while in this scene, why does Shylock ask Tubal to meet at Synagogue? [4]

II. Bassanio How many cowards, who's hearts are all as false

As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins

The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;

Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;

And these assume, but valour's excrement

To render them redoubted!

1. Why is Bassanio giving this speech and where? [3]
2. What does he think on seeing the gold and the silver caskets? [3]
3. What has Bassanio to say about the dishonest and pretentious people? [3]
4. What is his opinion about the lead casket? Does he choose that? [3]
5. What is Portia's reaction when Bassanio chooses the lead casket? [4]

III. Antonio Let him alone:

I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
 He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
 I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
 Many that have at times made moan to me;
 Therefore he hates me.

1. Where is Antonio when he is saying these words and to whom is he talking? [3]
2. Why does Antonio not want to request Shylock? [3]
3. What does Antonio try to say in these lines? [3]
4. What is the true reason for Shylock to go against Antonio? [3]
5. A little while later in the context Antonio wants to meet Bassanio before he pays the debt. Why? [4]

IV. Portia Now, Balthazar, as I have even found thee honest true, So let me find thee still. Take this same letter And use those all the endeavour of a man In speed to Padua; see thou tender this Into my cousein's hand, Doctor Bellario.

1. How do we know that Portia is a very efficient person? [3]
2. Where is Balthazar asked to go and why? [3]
3. Who was Dr Bellario? Did he have any connection with the case of Shylock and Antonio? [3]
4. What are Portia's plans? How does she materialise it? [3]
5. Where does she intend to go and why? How will she disguise herself? [4]

V. Launcelot Yes truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid up on the children: therefore, I promise you, I fear you. I was always plain with you and so now I speak my agitation of the matter: therefore be of good cheer, for, truly, I think you are damned.

Jessica I shall be saved by my husband: he hath made me a Christian.

1. Where are the speakers and what is Launcelot talking about? [3]
2. Do you think Jessica believes Launcelot? Why? [3]
3. Who is Launcelot and why is he with Jessica? [3]
4. A little later in the scene Lorenzo says something to these two, what does he say? [3]
5. Why is Jessica in Portia's house? [4]

Act IV

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Portia The quality of mercy is not strain'd, It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed; It blesseth him that gives and him that takes; 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes the throned monarch better than his crown; His sceptre shows the force of temporal power, The attribute to awe and majesty, Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;

1. On what occasion does Portia utter these words? What makes her beg for mercy from Shylock? [3]
2. 'It is twice blest'. What does Portia mean to say? [3]
3. In what sense is mercy a divine quality? [3]
4. How does Shylock turn down Portia's plea for mercy? What does he insist on? [3]
5. How does he later turn down three times the amount of loan offered by Bassanio? [4]

II. Shylock When it is paid according to the tenour. It doth appear you are a worthy judge; You know the law, your exposition, Hath been most sound : I charge you by the law, Whereof you are a well deserving pillar, Proceed to judgement.

1. To whom these lines were spoken by Shylock? Where is the scene taking place? [3]
2. Which judgement is being referred to by Shylock? [3]
3. What had happened before this scene? Why was Antonio called by Duke? [3]
4. What did Duke ask Shylock before the arrival of this lawyer? [3]
5. Who was this lawyer? What was his purpose to come in disguise and present himself as a Clerk? [4]

III. Gratiano Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en: My Lord Bassanio, upon more advice, Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat your company at dinner.

Portia That cannot be: His ring I do accept most thankfully : And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore, I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.

1. Whom is Gratiano addressing this to and where? [3]
2. Why does Bassanio send his ring and invite Portia for dinner? [3]
3. Does Portia accept the dinner offer made by Gratiano? [3]
4. Why does Portia ask Gratiano to show the clerk Shylock's house? [3]
5. Why are Portia and Nerissa visiting Shylock's house? [4]

Act V

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Portia You're all amazed,
Here is a letter, read it at your leisure;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario;
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor;
Nerissa there her clerk; Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now return'd; I have not yet
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome.

1. What proposition does Portia put before Antonio? [3]
2. What is the confusion and how is it solved? [3]
3. What good news does Portia give to Antonio? [3]
4. How does Antonio show his gratitude to her? [3]
5. What does Nerissa tell Lorenzo that makes him and Jessica happy? [4]

SECTION B Poetry

A Collection of Poems

The Heart of the Tree

Henry Cuyler Bunner

About the Poet

Henry Cuyler Bunner was born on 3rd August, 1855. He was an American poet, a playwright, short story writer and a novelist. His poems and stories provide a vivid description of places and people whom he had observed in and around New York city. He began his career as a clerical staff but later on turned to journalism. He worked as an editor in a weekly publication called Puck. His poetry collections include 'Airs from Arcady and Elsewhere' (1884) which contained one of his best poems, 'The Way to a Ready'. Other poems, written by him are 'Rowen' (1892) and 'Poems' (1896). Literary historians have described Bunner as a poet capable of "technical dexterity, playfulness and smoothness of finish". He died on 11th May, 1896.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

The poem 'The Heart of the Tree' presents the beneficial aspects of planting a tree both for the individual and for the society or humanity over all. The poem not only appreciates the action of planting a tree but also honours the amazing work of human hands that do this noble and benevolent act. The poem is relevant in today's scenario also where rapid urbanisation and development are taking their toll on the environment. This poem is poet's voice for raising an appeal to plant more and more trees as only trees can save the world from the probable calamity.

Critical Appreciation

The Message

'The Heart of the Tree' is a meaningful poem with a message that the people who plant trees not only contribute to the betterment of nature for all the creatures but also help in nation's growth. The refrain at the beginning of each stanza—'What does he plant, who plants a tree?' is answered in the light of usefulness of trees, how they are the friends of sun and sky, a home to birds that sing in harmony with heaven, they provide shade, how they bring rain and how the person who plants a tree is fulfilling his social obligation.

Title

'The Heart of the Tree' is an appropriate title. The heart is one of the most important organs of our body that pumps blood and provides oxygen to all the parts of the body. In the same way, a tree has many qualities which are essential for human survival. Trees provide us pure oxygen, they cause rainfall, trees like human heart provide leaves, sap and wood. So, we can say that the title of the poem is appropriate as this poem is about trees and their importance to our survival.

Uses of Literary Devices

Rhythm

The rhythm of the poem is amazing. The rhyme scheme is ABABBCCAA for each stanza. The diction used is simple but careful wording makes the poem more expressive and musical.

Figures of Speech

The poet has used Alliteration as figure of speech- for e.g. hushed and happy, heaven's harmony.

Personification Friend of sun and sky.

Metaphor The flag of breezes free, the shaft of beauty towering high.

Transferred Epithet Transferred Epithet is a figure of speech where an adjective qualifies a noun grammatically other than the person or thing it is actually describing. For e.g. 'In hushed and happy twilight heard', here the adjective 'happy' is used with twilight though it means people's happiness in that hour.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants a friend of sun and sky,
He plants the flag of breezes free;
The shaft of beauty, towering high;
He plants a home to heaven anigh;
For song and mother-croon of bird
In hushed and happy twilight heard-
The treble of heaven's harmony-
These things he plants who plants a tree.

Word Meanings

Breeze-a gentle wind, **Shaft**-a pole or rod that forms the handle of a tool, **Towering**-elevated, **Anigh**-near, close, **Croon**-a soft low voice or tone, **Hushed**-very quiet and still, **Twilight**-the soft glowing light from the sky when the sun is below the horizon, **Treble**-a high tone in music, **Harmony**-a way in which different musical notes are played or sung together to make a pleasant sound.

Reference These lines have been taken from the poem 'The Heart of the Tree' written by Henry Cuyler Bunner.

Context The poet puts a question before us but in the following lines starts giving the answer himself to the question, "What does he plant who plants a tree?"

Explanation The poem begins with a question, 'What does he plant who plants a tree?'. This brings before us the spirit of the whole poem. The rest of the lines are the

poet's answer to the question and the significance and value of planting a tree. The tree has been portrayed as a friend of sun and sky because sun is important for a tree's growth. Similarly, tree is a friend of sky also as it takes carbon dioxide from the air and releases oxygen in the air.

The poet compares the branches of the tree to a flag and trunk of the tree to a pole of a flag that remains firm and tall. A tree also provides a home to birds singing melodiously in the sky. By planting a tree, a human being makes the earth inhabitable for birds and helps in conservation of the environment. In clear twilight the man hears the melodious songs of these birds which provides a harmonious environment all around. The stanza has emphasised that the action of planting a tree is certainly a blissful and glorious deed.

Stanza 2

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants cool shade and tender rain,
And seed and bud of days to be,
And years that fade and flush again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forest's heritage;
The harvest of a coming age;
The joy that unborn eyes shall see-
These things he plants who plants a tree.

Word Meanings

Tender-soft, **Flush**-a sudden flow, **Heritage**-inheritance, **Harvest**-time of the year when crops are cut and collected from the fields.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context These lines provide another answer to the question 'What does he plant who plants a tree?' which was put forth in the beginning of the stanza.

Explanation Again in this stanza, the poet repeats the same question 'What does he plant who plants a tree?' and proceeds to answer or explain the motive behind planting of a tree. The trees planted by human beings provide shade and shelter. They also help to bring rain, provide a beautiful landscape with greenery and colourful flowers. Therefore, plants or trees are the glory of the Earth. Moreover, a tree which is planted today may change into a forest with the passage of time. By planting a tree, therefore man plants a forest in advance. The fruits of a tree may be enjoyed by the future generation. So, it will be a delightful experience for the younger generation. Here, the poet has tried to explain the various advantages of planting a tree for making our land a worthy or delightful place to live.

Stanza 3

What does he plant who plants a tree?
 He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,
 In love of home and loyalty
 And far-cast thought of civic good—
 His blessings on the neighbourhood,
 Who in the hollow of His hand
 Holds all the growth of all our land—
 A nation's growth from sea to sea
 Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.

Word Meanings

Sap—fluid or juice, **Far cast thought**—thought for the futures,
Hollow—empty, **Stirs**—move or cause to move slightly.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet again places the question 'What does he plant who plants a tree?' and provides yet another explanation and advantages of planting trees.

Explanation Again the stanza starts with the question, 'What does he plant who plants a tree?' In answer to that question the poet says that by planting trees man is doing a great social work. It also shows his devotion and affection towards his precious Earth. Man's action of planting trees helps in the growth of his nation and the world. So, he is fulfilling his social obligations toward humanity at large. His action contributes to the process of advancement of his country. The poet's use of capital 'His' shows that he gives a divine status to the man who plants a tree because a simple action results in altering the destiny not only of his neighbourhood and nation but also of humanity at large. The concluding lines of the poem stresses the significance of man's heart, his feelings, dreams and aspirations behind planting a tree.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. What does he plant who plants a tree?
 He plants a friend of sun and sky,
 He plants the flag of breezes free;
 The shaft of beauty, towering high;
 He plants a home to heaven anigh;

1. Who is asking the question and from whom? Does the beginning of the poem create an impact on its readers? [3]

Ans. The poet Henry C Bunner is passing a question to the readers. Putting a question in the beginning is very impressive. It is done to create curiosity and anxiety in the readers to know more about the poem. Yes, this beginning, definitely leaves its mark on its readers.

2. According to the poet what are the two uses of planting a tree? [3]

Ans. According to the poet, if a man plants a tree, he plants a friend of sun and sky as tree grows in sun and attains height. He plants a flag (tree) through which breeze blows and provides us soothing cool air.

3. In what ways are the trees friends of sun and sky? [3]

Ans. The poet has depicted trees as friends of sun and sky because the poet feels that trees attain height due to the sun. The process of photosynthesis is carried out in the presence of sun that help trees to grow. Trees also help in taking impurified air and releasing pure air with oxygen in the sky. So, a tree is a friend of sky also.

4. What is the phrase 'The shaft of beauty towering high' used for? [3]

Ans. With this phrase the poet describes a tree as a shaft or pole that is decorated with leaves and branches. It grows higher and higher like a tower that touches the sky. In this way the tree goes closer to his friend the sky.

5. Point out the refrain in the poem. What effect does the refrain have on the reader? [4]

Ans. The poem starts with a refrain 'What does he plant who plants a tree?' that comes in the beginning of each stanza. The refrain highlights the actual benefits of planting a tree as by planting a single tree, many objectives can be achieved. In every stanza, the readers are reminded by this question, 'What else is being planted with a tree' so that their attention can be drawn toward the other benefit of trees.

II. For song and mother-croon of bird
In hushed and happy twilight heard—
The treble of heaven's harmony—
These things he plants who plants a tree.

1. What is referred to as mother-croon of bird?
Why is the song sung in the hushed voice? [3]

Ans. The mother-croon of the bird referred to here is the soft song that mother bird sings for her little ones. It is sung in a hushed voice because it is sung during twilight when human activities are restricted and an atmosphere of calmness prevails.

2. What is a twilight? Why is it a happy twilight? [3]

Ans. Twilight is the faint light at the end of the day after the sun has gone down. It is a happy twilight because birds croons are happy listening to her mother's song sung in soft tunes.

3. What is meant by 'treble' and 'heaven's harmony'?
What role does the treble play in heaven's harmony? [3]

Ans. A high tone in music is called treble. Harmony is the way in which different musical notes are played or sung together and combine to make a pleasant sound. The soft voiced song of mother croon sinks into the pleasant harmony of the universe.

4. Mention some of the functions of a tree. [3]

Ans. A tree functions as a friend of sky and sun. It purifies the air and absorbs carbon dioxide. Trees provide a home to many birds and their youngsters. Through trees a harmonious atmosphere is created as various bird's songs are heard in the air.

5. Would you say 'The Heart of the Tree' is an apt title for the poem? [4]

Ans. 'The Heart of the Tree' is an appropriate title. The heart is one of the most important organs of our body that pumps blood and provide oxygen to all the parts of body. In the same way, a tree has many qualities which are essential for human survival. Trees provide us pure oxygen, they cause rainfall, trees like human heart provide leaves, sap and wood. So, we can say that the title of the poem is appropriate as this poem is about trees and their importance to our survival.

III. What does he plant who plants a tree?

He plants cool shade and tender rain,
And seed and bud of days to be,
And years that fade and flush again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forest's heritage;

The harvest of a coming age;
The joy that unborn eyes shall see—
These things he plants who plants a tree.

1. Mention some ways through which human beings are benefitted by planting a tree. [3]

Ans. Trees provide us cool shade in summer. Trees are also responsible for cloud formation due to evaporation (steam). So, trees bless us with tender rains also. Trees provide home to many birds as in rains, birds prefer to make nests on them.

2. How do trees provide for the harvest of the following years? [3]

Ans. Trees provide us with wood, fruits and medicines. The one who plants a tree plants the entire forest for the benefit of human beings. As today's tree may transform into a forest, planting a tree today will give us fruits in coming days. Our next generation will be delighted seeing so much vegetation and reap its benefits.

3. How do trees account for the forest wealth of a nation? [3]

Ans. The poet says that if we plant a single tree today, it may turn into a forest someday. Trees account for the forest wealth of a nation by ensuring plenty of harvest in the days to come. The poet says that trees, beside keeping our environment healthy and clean also yield a number of products such as fruits, flowers and other things that are good for health and are also beneficial from economic point of views.

4. What does the expression 'Unborn eyes' indicate?
What will they see? Why will they rejoice? [3]

Ans. The expression 'Unborn eyes' refers to the future generation. They will see a land full of beautiful trees laden with fruits and flowers adding beauty to the land. Numerous benefits of trees like cool shade, rains, fruits and timber etc will be enjoyed by the future generation. The future generation will be benefitted with medicinal plants and woods.

5. How do the last two lines of the extract explain the process of regeneration? How does the man plant the forest's heritage? [4]

Ans. After many years the old trees will wither (fade) away and the seeds of the trees will grow into new trees and into dense forest. This is symbolic of the process of birth, death and regeneration. In this way, trees will make the plains beautiful. The forest will provide crops to the future generations. Thus, the upcoming generations will reap all the benefits of the trees that are being planted now.

IV. What does he plant who plants a tree?

He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,
 In love of home and loyalty
 And far-cast thought of civic good—
 His blessings on the neighborhood,
 Who in the hollow of His hand—
 Holds all the growth of all our land—
 A nation's growth from sea to sea
 Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.

- 1.** Comment 'A person who plants a tree, serves his nation'. [3]

Ans. In the above line, poet's sensibility sounds very idealistic as a person who plants a tree also serves his nation. His contribution may not be direct but the benefits acquired by the future generation due to the presence of trees, are enormous, so the person responsible for planting trees is benefitting the whole nation.

- 2.** What does the expression 'far-cast thought of civic good' mean? In what way planting trees is a blessing? [3]

Ans. The above expression means farsightedness or foreseeing the betterment of society and its citizens. Planting trees is a blessing in many ways as it provides fresh air, food, timber, cool shade and rain. It is a blessing for the present as well as future generation.

- 3.** How can a person who plant trees can serve humanity at large? [3]

Ans. In poet's point of view, a person who plants a tree loves the human kind. Planting a tree can be advantageous for all. It also suggests that an individual's signal of planting trees indicates his caring for the society and his surroundings. He helps in making a society prosperous and spreading harmony all around.

- 4.** How can this poem help in making an individual a good citizen? [3]

Ans. A person who plants trees brings happiness, blessings and prosperity. Our land will become barren without trees, man gets food from leaves and sap of the tree. Looking at all the benefits of a tree, a person who plants tree is really involved in a noble cause. His practice of planting trees reflects the humanistic idea of common good.

- 5.** Which figure of speech is used in last four lines of the poem? [4]

Ans. In last four lines of the poem, the poet has used a figure of speech- Alliteration. Alliteration signifies the occurrence of several words in continuity the same first consonant sound or similar sounding letter. In last 2 lines we see the phrases 'Sea to Sea' and 'Stir' with the same consonant sound 'S' in the beginning.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow

I. What does he plant who plants a tree?

He plants cool shade and tender rain,
And seed and bud of days to be,
And years that fade and flush again;
He plants the glory of the plain;
He plants the forest's heritage.

1. Who is 'he' mentioned by the poet? [3]
2. How can trees be beneficial for mankind? Mention their two uses as stated by the poet. [3]
3. What does the expression 'glory of the plain' mean here? [3]
4. How do these lines explain the process of regeneration? How does the man plant the forest's heritage? [3]
5. Explain the second line of the poem. [4]

II. He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,

In love of home and loyalty
And far-cast thought of civic good—
His blessings on the neighbourhood,
Who in the hollow of his hand
Holds all the growth of all our land—

1. The poet says, 'He plants in sap and leaf and wood', which figure of speech is used here? [3]
2. In what way the action of planting a tree is a blessing? And for whom? [3]
3. How does a tree convey loyalty of the man who plants it? [3]
4. How does this poem convey the theme of environmental awareness? [3]
5. Explain the significance of the stanza. [4]

The Cold Within

James Patrick Kinney

About the Poet

The poet James Patrick Kinney was born on 16th March, 1923, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Though he was a Christian conservative yet he was a friend to all kinds of people-rich and poor alike.

He quit school in 10th grade to support his mother but he spent rest of his life reading widely and attempting self-education. He is best known for his inspiring poem, 'The Cold Within' but he wrote a number of poems that were published in different magazines.

James Patrick Kinney wrote these poems in 1960s. Some of these include 'Of A Rejected Poem', 'Of Life's Sad Moments', 'I Can't Change You,' 'This Dream Bemusing' etc. He died on 29th May, 1974.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

The poem 'The Cold Within' was first rejected as being too controversial, but it gained popularity within no time after it had been read out at a council meeting of all religions. The poem describes the tragic death of a group of six people who stand around a fire each holding a log of wood. The fire which is saving them from cold is about to die but due to their selfishness, prejudice, malice and suspicions to dictate their actions, they refuse to share the log to fuel the fire and finally all of them lose their lives. The poem is a reminder to overcome our personal hatred and be open to the wisdom of considering everyone equal. If we persist in discriminating on grounds of race, religion, caste, gender and racial, we are all lost.

Critical Appreciation

The poet James Patrick Kinney uses this poem 'The Cold Within' to illustrate the mistake of falling prey to one's prejudices, hatred and discriminatory attitude that badly affect the humanity.

Title

The title of the poem is very appropriate as it deals with 'The Cold Within' hearts of people. People lack warmth of feelings and their hearts are full of ill-feelings, a sort of sin when one doesn't think about the consequences of holding grudges against other.

Reflection of Poet's Desire to do Some Soul Searching

Kinney was disturbed by discriminatory attitude of the people and wrote this poem to do some soul searching or reasoning. How stupid we are when we die to our prejudices. Its message is relevant even today, when we face discriminatory attitude that leads to hatred and violence.

The poem is a gentle reminder to set aside our personal grudges, prejudices, hatred and work towards the betterment of society at large. The poem illustrates how each one of us has the opportunity to unselfishly save of ourselves and choose life instead of 'death'.

Use of Literary Devices

Rhyming Scheme

The poem comprises of quatrains—Each stanza consists of 4 lines with abcb rhyme scheme. The poet has used simple language and structures to ensure that the message is not diluted. Poet's use of visual imagery engages the reader skilfully. For e.g. In bleak and bitter cold (line 2), the dying fire (line 5), the first one held hers back (line 6), she noticed one was black (line 8), the third one sat in tattered clothes (line 13).

Figure of Speech

The poet has used no fancy words or heavy metaphors. But he has used personification by giving personal characteristics to something non-human when he says **Their logs held tight in death's still hands (line 29)**.

The poet has used allegories through wood logs which can be seen to represent a person's abilities and resources. Fire itself symbolises the common good.

The poet does not preach, he wants the readers to draw inferences from the visual and symbolical clues that he gives each character to arrive at a conclusion.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

Six humans trapped by happenstance
In bleak and bitter cold.
Each one possessed a stick of wood
Or so the story's told.

Word Meanings

Happenstance—a coincidence, **Bleak**—cold and unpleasant, **Possessed**—have or hold,

Reference These lines have been taken from the poem 'The Cold Within' written by James Patrick Kinney.

Context The poet is going to tell a story about six people who meet their death due to their selfishness and personal prejudice.

Explanation The poet, in the first stanza, recounts a tale he has heard, of six persons caught together in the grip of a severe winter. The poet calls them six humans as he wants to draw attention to the gathering as specific individuals, rather than as collective group. They were trapped by chance in an inescapable situation and each person is holding a stick of

wood. Here, the stick of wood refers as a means of escape from the bitter cold as it can be burnt to warm them. This is where the story starts and introduces the six humans holding a long in their hands respectively.

Stanza 2

Their dying fire in need of logs,
But the first one held hers back,
For, of the faces round the fire,
She noticed one was black.

Word Meanings

Dying fire—fire becoming less and less due to lack of fuel, **Logs**—pieces of wood, **Black**—here it refers to a person having black colour skin.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The story is about six people who were trapped by chance at a place where fire was getting slower due to lack of fuel. The stand of the first person, a lady is being described here.

Explanation The second stanza brings a key element of story, the dying fire. It is in need of wood which all six of them possessed. If they want to keep themselves warm, it is mandatory to keep the fire alive. The dying fire is a silent appeal to the group of those six people for helping each other. The next line reveals how the situation unfolds. The first person holding the log of wood does not want to put it in the fire as the white lady does not want to share it with a person whose skin colour is black. This is a practice of discrimination on the ground of colour or race. It is a prime example of silly prejudices.

Stanza 3

The next man looking cross the way
Saw one not of his church,
And could not bring himself to give
The fire his stick of birch

Word Meanings

Church—belonging to same religious ideology, **To bring himself**—to agree, **Birch**—made of wood.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet here gives the insight into another person's thinking and religious intolerance.

Explanation In this stanza the poet brings out another prejudice. Here, the second person who holds a log of wood does not want to give it as one of the persons in that group is someone who is not from the same religious background as he is. Religious intolerance does not allow this person to offer the wood so that dying fire can be revived. The prejudice overrules the need and makes people insensitive for each others' needs.

Stanza 4

The third one sat in tattered clothes,
He gave his coat a hitch.
Why should his log be put to use
To warm the idle rich?

Word Meanings

Tattered—old and worn out, **Hitch**—pull or give a jerk,
Put to use—to be used.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet unfolds the mind set of a poor man who would like to die instead of helping the rich.

Explanation In this stanza focus comes on a poor man. His old and torn clothes in the cold weather indicate his poverty. He is perhaps feeling colder than others due to insufficient woollens but here he too, is adamant and shows discriminatory behaviour. He does not want to part with his log of wood as the rich man does not deserve his meagre ration. He is defensive and does not want to part with his log of wood. He also does not realise that by not sharing his wood, he will bring his own death, as without fire nobody will be able to survive in this severe cold.

Stanza 5

The rich man just sat back and thought
Of the wealth he had in store,
And how to keep what he had earned
From the lazy, shiftless poor.

Word Meanings

In store—in possession, **Shiftless**—aimless, without any aim

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, the poet unfolds the indifferent attitude of yet another person—this time a rich man, who also does not want to share his log of wood to keep the dying fire alive.

Explanation Now, the poet talks about a rich man who also possesses a log of wood. Here, again the exhibition

of indifference is shown. The rich man is proud of his richness but unaware of the reality. He is greedy, selfish and does not want to share not only his wealth but also a single piece of wood with the poor. He considers, in his vanity, the poor as aimless people, full of laziness who do not want to work hard. It is nothing but a display of greed and foolishness. How can people prefer to die instead of helping out one another?

Stanza 6

The black man's face bespoke revenge
As the fire passed from his sight
For all he saw in his stick of wood
Was a chance to spite the white.

Word Meanings

Bespoke—appearance, **Spite**—to take revenge, **The white**—the white skinned people.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, the poet narrates the revengeful nature of yet another person who himself is a victim of racism but he does not want to rise above and act magnanimously.

Explanation Here, in this stanza, we find a strange change of sequence. Here, the victim becomes an abuser. Normally a person who is victim of racism is supposed to behave rationally but due to atrocities (violence), received from the whites, the black man has become quite revengeful. He knows that the fire is dying. His sharing the log will save him and others but the spark of human kindness has died within him. He chooses not to share his log of wood and let the people die including himself. Perhaps he has readied himself to die and not to put his log of wood to good use which may save a white man from dying.

Stanza 7

The last man of this forlorn group
Did nought except for gain
Giving only to those who gave
Was how he played the game.

Word Meanings

Forlorn—miserable, sorrowful, **Gain**—advantage,

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet here, talks about the last person of this hopeless group. This person also waited for others to take the initiative instead of himself doing something worthwhile before any one else has done it.

Explanation For the first time in this poem, the poet calls the group 'forlorn' or hopeless, predicting their fate. Even the last man of the group continues the same apathy or the unconsciousness. He carries a look which indicates that others will do something that all of them want but no one takes the initiative. Each person perhaps hopes the others to do it but not coming ahead to do it first. In giving just to get, the last person also plays with his life where not initiating means losing one's life. It is really a sad situation where due to his prejudices, malice, hatred each one holds to his log of wood, not initiating to act first and try to save each other's life.

Stanza 8

Their logs held tight in death's still hands
Was proof of human sin.
They did not die from the cold without
They died from the cold within.

Word Meanings

Still hands—hands are frozen as the person is dead, **Proof**—evidence, witness, **Cold without**—cold weather outside, **Cold within**—lack of human feelings.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context As the poem comes to a close, the final stanza gives us the outcome of people's apathy, revengeful nature and prejudices. Death's still hands have taken over all of them.

Explanation Here, we see the outcome of each individual's rigidity, prejudices for hatred. Each person is responsible for his/her death which is personified here with 'stilled hands'. Hands are not moving, with their refusal to act. The fact that each of them still is in possession of his log of wood suggests their personal motives in not using their wood is the proof of their sin.

The final lines show us the poet's verdict- an irony that each of them die not because of cold outside but because each one is without any trace of human spirit, the feeling of helping each other or co-operation. Because of their baser human instincts they meet their end i.e. death. 'The Cold Within' suggests lack of human sensitivity, the feeling of co-operation and lack of sympathy for any one.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. Six humans trapped by happenstance
In bleak and bitter cold
Each one possessed a stick of wood
Or so the story's told.

1. Who are the people referred to in the above extract?
Why do they need logs? [3]

Ans. The poet has referred here not a group but six humans who are caught by chance in bitter cold, facing unfavourable climatic conditions. The people need logs to keep the fire burning and keep them warm but unfortunately none of them uses his log and saves himself from death.

2. Explain the expression 'bleak and bitter' cold. [3]

Ans. The adjectives bleak and bitter perhaps set the dangerous outcome of their actions in the end. Bleak itself suggests a state of helplessness. It was acute cold and fire was badly needed to fight with the extreme cold. These words also suggest to the decaying moral values due to which people are unwilling to act unselfishly.

3. 'Each one of them possesses a stick of wood'.
What does this expression suggest here? [3]

Ans. This phrase is both literary and symbolic. Literally, it means that the object i.e piece of wood held by each one of them is helpful in keeping the fire burning. It can save their lives. Symbolically, it means some traits which are deep rooted in an individual. As they possess them, it is difficult to change them on the spur of moment.

4. 'So the story is told'. Do you think the poem is based on a story or is it poet's own creation? [3]

Ans. As indicated by the last line, the poem may be based on a story that the poet might have heard. The poet's intention may be to express the main context of the story in the poetic form and express his pain through this poem.

5. Do you think we can relate this poem in the present context also? [4]

Ans. Yes, this poem is for all times. Human nature remains the same whether it is 18th century or 21st century. In today's scenario people are lacking human feelings and warmth of relations is missing. Indifference, cold attitude, prejudices all are destroying the fabric of compassion and caring for one another.

- II. Their dying fire in need of logs
But the first one held hers back,
For, of the faces round the fire,
She noticed one was black

1. Explain the significance of phrase 'Their dying Fire'. [3]

Ans. The dying fire literally means the fire which is burning to reduce the effect of bitter cold. The fire need more fuel or wood to keep it burning. The symbolical meaning of dying fire implies the reducing of basic spirit of compassion and warmth in the hearts of people. The word 'dying' suggests the sorry state of social relationship in present world where it is decreasing rapidly.

2. What does the first one hold back and why? [3]

Ans. The first-one perhaps is a white lady who holds back her log because she is guided by her racist attitude towards the black skinned person. She prefers not to use her log of wood as she never wants the black man to get the warmth in burning her log of wood. She herself prefers to suffer from cold.

3. What does the word 'Logs' imply here? [3]

Ans. The word 'Logs' here refers to the negative attitudes or prejudices of people who are present there. They are so obsessed with their prejudices that they forget that their basic survival is at risk if they do not use their log. Still due to malice, jealousy and prejudices, they refrain themselves from using the logs to save their own life.

4. What kind of discrimination is referred to here in this stanza? [3]

Ans. Here, the white woman refuses to use her log of wood so that its warmth does not benefit the black person who is there in this gathering of six people. This kind

of attitude is called racial discrimination in which the people maltreat others on the basis of their colour or caste. It is a foolish attitude and people should rise above such petty attitudes.

5. Is this discriminatory attitude good for humanity at large? [4]

Ans. Not at all, it is high time we all must absorb the basic spirit of humanity, rise above petty racial attitude and help each other in the time of crisis. If this set of six people had helped each other instead of being driven their prejudices, they would have survived the bitter cold and death. The indifference, hatred and discrimination brought their doom.

- III. The next man looking cross the way
Saw one not of his church'.
And could not bring himself to give
The fire his stick of birch.

1. What character traits would you associate with this second character? [3]

Ans. The person mentioned in this stanza suffers from religious prejudice. Usually no religion teaches a man to differentiate people on the basis of religious practice they follow. But, here we see a man intolerant of the other who is not from the same church. It prevents him from offering his log of wood to fire so that it may not benefit the man who belongs to other church, than his.

2. What feeling prevents this next man to offer his log of wood? [3]

Ans. The next man sees a man who does not belong to his church. In spite of severe cold, his religious beliefs prevents him from sharing the log of wood. Each religion is based on highest principles and ideals but the way it has been absorbed by people leads to such an action. Here, the role of people who teach or preach religion should be such as not to inculcate the feeling of hatred for the people of other place or caste.

3. Explain 'Could not bring himself to give'. [3]

Ans. Through these words the poet wants to clear before us that in spite of the need of the time, this man is insensitive to others due to his religious practices. It is really shocking as no religion preaches intolerance, still people behave the way this man does. As a result he brings his own doom as well as doom for others.

4. What type of people are needed in today's world? [3]

Ans. As the world has shrunk globally and no country or individual can survive in isolation, we need tolerant people who do not get carried away by prejudices and ill-feeling for people belonging to other religions or creed.

5. Do you think religious differences lead to intolerance? [4]

Ans. I don't think any religion teaches intolerance for others who are from other religions or from other church. It is basic meanness or insensitive nature of man which prompts not to help others who are not following his religion. This problem has prevailed due to lack of understanding, the basic teachings of any religion.

IV. The third one sat in tattered clothes,
He gave his coat a hitch.
Why should his log be put to use
To warm the idle rich?
The rich man just sat back and thought
Of the wealth he had in store,
And how to keep what he had earned
From the lazy, shiftless poor.

1. What is meant by tattered clothes? Why does this third man gives his coat a hitch? [3]

Ans. The word 'tattered' means torn clothes as the man is too poor to buy new clothes for himself. This shows that the man who is wearing such clothes is really poor and does not have enough money to afford new warm clothes. This man gives a hitch or jerk (sudden movement) to his coat to protect himself from biting cold and feel warm.

2. The poor man does not want to use his piece of log of wood to warm the rich. Why? [3]

Ans. The third man is a poor man. He might be jealous of this rich man or he is prejudiced against all rich man feeling that due to these rich people there is no equal distribution of money. We may call it economic prejudice which fills a poor man with hatred and jealousy for the rich man.

3. Why does the poet use the expression 'idle rich'? [3]

Ans. The poor generally presume that rich people become richer as their money multiplies even when they do not work hard. For them the poor man uses the term 'idle'. This is a wrong attitude as people do not become rich over night. They must have worked hard to acquire that wealth.

4. What is the attitude of the rich man here? What makes him to sit back and not offer his wood of log? [3]

Ans. The rich man here has his own set of prejudices or thinking. As soon as he observes a poor man among the six people, he thinks of keeping his wealth safe from poor man. He decides not to offer his wood so that poor man may also not get the benefit of warming himself.

5. Is being materially wealthy is of any use if it can not help the rich to survive in a critical situation? [4]

Ans. In the context of this poem, the rich man is quite prosperous but he is biased towards the poor. Due to his biased opinion, he fails to act and use his wood to save himself from the biting cold. The feeling that others may not be benefitted, rules the rich man, bringing his downfall also. What a petty thinking!

V. The black man's face bespoke revenge
As the fire passed from his sight
For all he saw in his stick of wood
Was a chance to spite the white.

1. What prejudice does the black man have and for whom? [3]

Ans. The black man has the prejudice for whites because the whites have been discriminating them for centuries denying their existence as human beings and have made the most of their pitiable condition to prosper themselves.

2. What must be the motive behind black man's idea of not using his stick of wood? Who is the real target of his hatred? [3]

Ans. The stanza reveals the hidden feeling of revenge in the mind of the black against the whites. It is true that the whites have dominated and tortured the blacks. They have always been insensitive to the respect a human wants whatever colour of skin may be. In this context on that bitter cold night, he gets an opportunity to take revenge and harm the white man by keeping the log to himself.

3. What does the black man see in his piece of wood? Give an instance from the poem to show that his feelings were some what justified. [3]

Ans. The black man sees a chance to take revenge from the white man by not sharing his log to the fire. Though he knows that by not offering his log he too may die. He cannot get rid of the feelings of revenge. Unlike the other people, he steps back from offering his log on the ground of maltreatment and atrocities done against them by the whites that may justify his feelings of revenge to some extent because with the death of the white man his vices too die which is a positive sign for mankind.

4. What would have been the best way for the white and black men in this situation presented by the poet in this poem? [3]

Ans. The best way for both would have been to forget their hatred and co-operate with each other. If both had forgotten the past and had focussed on the present crisis, they would have been saved. But perhaps prejudices against each other overruled and both lost their lives.

5. Could you say that deeprooted prejudice block our sense of good or bad. How is it true in the context of the present poem? [4]

Ans. Yes, deep rooted prejudices block any person's sense of right or wrong. One loses the balance of mind while inflicted with prejudices and all negative thoughts surround his thinking.

In the context of the poem each of the six members suffers from deeprooted prejudices which does not allow them to think even about their welfare. They are obsessed with the idea of harming the other person against whom they are prejudiced. As a result, no one survives, a clear example of non-cooperation, feeling of brotherhood is totally missing and revenge overrules all good judgement.

VI. The last man of this forlorn group
Did nought except for gain
Giving only to those who gave
Was how he played the game.
Their logs held tight in death's still hands
Was proof of human sin.
They did not die from the cold without
They died from the cold within.

1. Explain the expression 'forlorn group'. [3]

Ans. The group of six people that the poet mentions here are caught in a bad weather and get cut off from the rest of the world. The chances of their survival depend on their action of keeping the fire alive by using their piece of wood. But these people are not ready to be rid of their prejudices and help each other leaving behind their feeling of hatred and revenge. So, the poet mentions this group as 'forlorn' as they never think about others. They are self-centred, prejudiced people unwilling to let go their ill-feelings.

2. What type of man is the last man? Why does he not offer his piece of wood to keep alive the dying fire? [3]

Ans. The poet refers to the sixth man as an opportunistic person who will offer any help only when he is going to gain from that situation. Though he does not belong to any ethnic group, he decides to act only when he gets any benefit out of this situation. Since no one else offers his log to renew the fire, he also steps back.

3. What proof of human sin do we see here? [3]

Ans. All the six people die clutching their log of wood tightly in their hands. They meet their death due to their prejudices, feeling of revenge, insensitive nature and discrimination. They are all insensible people who never think of compassion and welfare of others. It is a proof of human sin that even when their cooperation with each other would help them to survive, they preferred to die, keeping alive their feelings of hatred and differences.

4. What does the word 'game' imply here? [3]

Ans. The word has been used here to suggest the opportunistic behaviour of some prejudiced minds incapable of seeing anything beyond themselves. The man referred to here is a prime example of a person who is not ready to 'give' anything, because he does not sense the prospect of any immediate gain for himself. Thus, the connotation of this word is negative.

5. The poet has tried to give a message through this poem. How does he succeed in carrying out his mission? [4]

Ans. The poem gives us a clear message. We should rise above petty indifferences, racial bias, apathy and religious intolerance. If we keep following these narrow feelings, they can be self-destructive, so it is futile to be so selfish, to be revengeful, to be intolerant. There is need to accept everyone with open arms and warm heart so that life becomes easy for all of us and we can try for a better tomorrow. The poem is a simple yet powerful reminder that if we selfishly hold on to the world's resources, and the wealth that it has to offer, if we persist in discriminating on grounds of race, religion, caste, gender and ethnicity, we are all lost. We will not get a chance again to rise and shine.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow

- I.** Their dying fire in need of logs,
But the first one held hers back,
For, of the faces round the fire,
She noticed one was black
1. What was the weather like when six people found themselves together? [3]
 2. What does the expression 'dying fire' indicate? How does it help the poet to convey his message? [3]
 3. Why wouldn't the white lady put her piece of log in the dying fire? [3]
 4. Do you think the word 'log' here has any implications. [3]
 5. How is this poem a satire on human nature? [4]
- II.** Their logs held tight in death's still hands
Was proof of human sin
They didn't die from the cold without
They died from the cold within.
1. What does the first line imply here? [3]
 2. What proof of human sin is being referred to here? Explain. [3]
 3. The phrases 'Cold without' and 'Cold within' suggest something different? Elucidate. [3]
 4. What message does the poet try to convey through this poem? How does he succeed in carrying out this? [3]
 5. Explain 'Their logs held tight in death's still hands'. [4]

The Bangle Seller

Sarojini Naidu

About the Poetess

Sarojini Naidu an Indian English poetess, was born on 13th February, 1879 at Hyderabad. She is also known as Nightingale of India. Mahatma Gandhi gave her this name because of the colour, imagery and lyrical quality of her poetry. Her major contribution has been in the field of poetry as she surprised everybody by composing a narrative poem of two thousand lines in English at the age of thirteen.

Her major works include 'Golden Threshold' (1905), 'The Bird of Time' (1912), 'The Broken Wing' (1917). Some of her famous poems are 'The Indian Weavers', 'The Planquin Bearers' and 'A Lady of the Lake'. Her poems reveal a distinct melody and her manipulation of words and sounds invests her poetry with a musical grace and flow. She died on 2nd March, 1949.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

The poem 'The Bangle Seller' belongs to the third section of 'Indian Folk Songs' of Sarojini Naidu's second book 'The Bird of Time'. It is a fine example of musical verse. This poem stands out as it discusses not only the lives of Indian women but also the lives of bangle sellers. The bangles have been shown as symbols of love in people's lives. The bangle sellers sell glass bangles at village fairs and in temple towns. The different coloured bangles symbolise the different stages in a woman's life as a young maiden, as a bride and as a middle aged, matron elderly. The bangle sellers play an important role in bringing happiness to the society and preserving the eternal cultural tradition of Indian society.

Critical Appreciation

The poetess Sarojini Naidu has used this poem to indicate the varied shades of bangles, our Indian culture and various stage in the life of a woman. The bangle sellers is selling bangles suitable for all occasions and for all stages be it a maiden, a married bride or a middle aged woman.

Title

The title of the poem is very appropriate as the poetess describes colours of bangles and other associated matters through bangle sellers. The bangle seller is trying to convince the purchasing of the spiritual and symbolic importance of these bangles. In this process, the speaker makes strong connection between the bangles and their role in providing 'happy daughter and happy wives.'

Use of Imagery and Contemporary Indian Theme

Through this poem the poetess has tried to depict the Indian culture through beautiful imagery. There is no mention of the poverty or hardships of seller's profession except the 'Shining load' means the bundles of bangles become quite heavy. The bangle sellers sell their bangles in a joyous tone as the wearing of bangles denotes happiness in a woman's life. The poem progresses step by step passing through each phase of life of a woman.

Use of Literary Devices

Form

The poem is written in four stanzas containing six lines each. Each stanza is divided into ballad and a couplet.

Rhyming Scheme

The poetess has used a set rhyme scheme which is AABBC.

Figure of Speech

- (i) **Simile** A simile is one where two objects or things of different kinds having common qualities are compared to each other.
- In second stanza the line “Some are meet for a maiden’s wrist, silver and blue as the mountain mist” is an example of simile.
 - Some are “flushed like the buds that dream” is another example of simile used by the poetess.
 - Some are like “fields of sunlit corn”.
 - Some like the “flame of her marriage fire.”
 - All the above given lines are examples of Simile used in this poem.
- (ii) **Metaphor** It is a figure of speech in which two different objects are compared to each other. But the comparison is implied. e.g.
- Who will buy these delicate, “bright Rainbow tinted circles of light?”
 - Here, multi-colours of bangles are compared to the colours of the rainbow.
 - The poem also employs colourful imagery liberally. Beautiful and bright colours used by the poetess have heightened the visual impact of the poem.
 - The tone of the poem is joyful and lively, each stanza has a clear tone. A profound sense of happiness and fulfilment is witnessed in the poem.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

Bangle sellers are we who bear
Our shining loads to the temple fair...
Who will buy these delicate, bright
Rainbow-tinted circles of light?
Lustrous tokens of radiant lives,
For happy daughters and happy wives.

Word Meanings

Shining Loads—colourful bangles, **Fair**—it is an event where people gather to sell their goods, **Rainbow Tinted**—colours which are present in a rainbow, **Lustrous**—bright, **Radiant**—happy.

Reference These lines have been taken from the poem, ‘The Bangle Seller’ written by Sarojini Naidu.

Context Here the poetess has described the bangle sellers who are on their way to temple fair where they will sell their bangles meant to increase the happiness of wives and daughters.

Explanation The poem begins with the speakers introducing themselves as bangle sellers who carry the bundles of bangles to sell the colourful bangles at the Temple fair. They call out to people to buy bangles. These bangle sellers describe their bangles as delicate, bright, rainbow coloured circles of light. The bangles are a token of love and happiness in people’s lives specially married women and young daughters. The bangles are meant for daughters and wives who are delighted to possess them. By repeating the word ‘happy’, the poetess has tried to show that bangles can make both daughters and wives equally happy.

Stanza 2

Some are meet for a maiden’s wrist,
Silver and blue as the mountain mist,
Some are flushed like the buds that dream
On the tranquil brow of a woodland stream,
Some are aglow with the bloom that cleaves
To the limpid glory of new born leaves.

Word Meanings

Mist—thin fog, **Flushed**—become red and hot, **Tranquil**—quiet, peaceful, **Brow**—slope, **Woodland**—land covered with woods or trees, **Aglow**—shining, bright, **Cleaves**—stick to, being in close contact, **Limpid**—clear and transparent, **Glory**—being beautiful.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here the poetess has described how the bangles increase the beauty of a maiden’s wrist.

Explanation The poetess further elaborates that there are some bangles which are meant to be worn by young unmarried girls. The bangles which are suitable for maidens are of silver and blue colours and appear like mist on the mountain in their colour. Some are flushed red like buds dreaming of their blooming on the tranquil banks of woodland stream. Some of these bangles are shining green whose freshness is close to the vivid beauty of the new born, tender leaves which look like transparent green glass sheet. All these types of bangles are suitable for unmarried girls. ‘Buds that dream’ is suggestive of an image of young girl dreaming of marriage.

Stanza 3

Some are like fields of sunlit corn,
Meet for a bride on her bridal morn,
Some, like the flame of her marriage fire,
Or, rich with the hue of her heart's desire,
Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,
Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.

Word Meanings

Sunlit corn—corn shining in sunlight, **Hue**—colour, a particular shade of a colour, **Tinkling**—ringing sounds, **Luminous**—bright, shining, **Tender**—delicate.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poetess has used beautiful imagery to describe the various colours of bangles which the unmarried girls prefer to wear.

Explanation The description of colours of bangles continues in this stanza also. The bangles are sold by bangle sellers in a fair. The poetess says that some bangles resemble the colour of ripe corn i.e. yellowish golden. Bangles of this colour seem suitable for a bride on the day of her marriage. Some other bangles are pure red in colour which reminds us of bride's marriage flame. Some bangles are rich with colours of her heart's desire. They make soft sounds just as bride makes at the time of her marriage. The words 'bridal laughter' and 'bridal tear' suggest emotional feelings of a bride. She laughs as she is going to start a new life but at the same time sheds tears as she has to leave her parent's house to live with her husband and in-laws.

Stanza 4

Some are purple and gold flecked grey
For she who has journeyed through life midway,
Whose hands have cherished, whose love has
blest,
And cradled fair sons on her faithful breast,
And serves her household in fruitful pride,
And worships the gods at her husband's side.

Word Meanings

Fleck—a small portion of a particular colour, **Cherish**—care tenderly, **Cradle**—to hold gently the small children, **Worship**—to offer prayers.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here the poetess has given the description of the bangles meant for middle aged women.

Explanation In these lines the bangle sellers say that they possess some bangles of purple colour, some more bangles are of gold and grey colours. All these colours are suitable for a middle aged woman who has journeyed her life. She has brought up her children well and has taken care of her family. These bangles are for those women who have led her household with pride as she has not been careless in her duties towards her husband and family. These bangles are suitable for such women who are proud of their life and pay their gratitude to the Gods while worshipping beside their husband.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Bangle sellers are we who bear
Our shining loads to the temple fair... [ICSE 2020]

1. Why does the poet use the word 'delicate' to describe the bangles? How is 'rainbow-tinted circles of light' an appropriate description of bangles? [3]

Ans. The poet uses the word 'delicate' to describe the bangles as they are made of glass and hence can break easily. 'rainbow-tinted circles of light' refers to the round shaped, multi-coloured bangles that glow in sunlight. Therefore, it is an appropriate description of the bangles.

2. Explain the following phrases from the poem in your own words; Shining loads, Lustrous tokens of radiant lives, For happy daughters and happy wives [3]

Ans.

- 'Shining loads' means the bangles which are sparkling in sunlight.
- 'Lustrous tokens of radiant lives' means bright symbols of shining lives.
- 'For happy daughters and happy wives' means that the radiant bangles are meant for happy daughters and happy wives. It expresses the happiness of daughters at young age and the joys a married woman has in her marital life.

3. The poet uses several images of sight and sound to create a musical effect in the poem. [3]

Ans. The examples of these images are : 'shining loads', 'Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear' and 'Rainbow-tinted circles of light'.

4. What are the emotions that the poet associates with a bride on her wedding day? What colours are the bangles on her wrist that reflect these emotions? [3]

Ans. The poet associates the emotions of happiness and sadness with a bride on her wedding day. She is happy as she is getting married and entering into a life of her dreams. She is sad because she is going to leave her parental home. The bride is wearing bangles that are deep red in colour which express the passion of her heart.

5. What colours does the poet associate with :
a maiden, a middle aged woman [4]
How does the poet describe the thoughts and concerns of women in both these stages of life? [4]

Ans.

- Blue, green, red and silver colours are associated by the poet with a maiden.
- Purple and gold-flecked grey colours are associated by the poet with a middle-aged woman.

The maiden is fresh and beautiful and dreams of getting married. The middle-aged woman is mature and responsible. She is concerned about fulfilling her household duties.

II. Some are meet for a maiden's wrist,
Silver and blue as the mountain mist,
Some are flushed like the buds that dream
On the tranquil brow of a woodland stream,
Some are aglow with the bloom that cleaves
To the limpid glory of new born leaves.

1. As per the poetess, what types of bangles are suitable for young maidens? [3]

Ans. According to the poetess young maidens symbolises purity and freshness. The youth in them shines and the light attracts everybody's attention towards them. So they should wear the types of bangles that can compliment their beauty and freshness. Hence they are advised by the poetess to wear the bangles of silver and blue colours.

2. Explain the expression "flushed like the buds that dream". [3]

Ans. Beautiful imagery has been used by the poetess here. The poetess is comparing the colour of some of the bangles which is worn by young maidens. Some bangles are in pink and reddish colour and they have been compared to the colour of a blooming bud growing along a silent riverside that flows through the forest.

3. Why are silver and blue colours compared to the mountain mist? [3]

Ans. According to the poetess the bangles of maidens are always new and bright. They are pure and untouched which look extremely beautiful around her wrists. They usually produce silver and blue reflections, same as those of the mountain mist (fog) that makes the mountain look like the hands of a lady decorated with silver and blue bangles.

4. How does the poetess compare the colour of bangles to the 'new born leaves'? [3]

Ans. The poetess says a new born green leaf is transparent and every thing across it visualises clearly as the leaf is like a green glass sheet. So some bangles of this green colour produce the same effect as the new born leaves. 'New born leaf' also symbolises a newly wedded girl as she too is gentle and innocent like a new born leave in her inlaw's house.

5. How can you say that 'Sarojini Naidu' is an expert in the use of colour imagery? [4]

Ans. In the poem 'The Bangle Sellers' the poetess Sarojini Naidu has presented vibrant colours of bangles that Indian girls and women of different age groups prefer to wear. She has not only described the colours of bangles worn by the women of a particular age group but also told that how these colours resemble the state of mind of their wearers. She is successful in arising the feeling of happiness and joy in the mind of readers through the use of colour imagery, which demonstrates her expertise in the same.

III. Some are like fields of sunlit corn,
Meet for a bride on her bridal morn,
Some, like the flame of her marriage fire,
Or, rich with the hue of her heart's desire,
Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,
Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.

1. The word 'some' has been repeatedly used by the poetess in this poem. What can be its purpose? [3]

Ans. The poetess has used the word 'some' to denote different coloured bangles which have been described by her in different stanzas. She has described different colours for different ages or stages when women would like to wear bangles according to their state of mind.

2. What does the expression 'fields of sunlit corn' mean? How is this relevant in the context of a bride? [3]

Ans. It suggests the joyful prospect of a new phase of life for a bride that is about to start. It suggests that some colours of bangles are meant to a bride as she wears ornaments made of gold so to compliment her jewellery she needs the bangles of golden colour just like the colour of corn when sunray falls on it.

3. Which figure of speech has been used in the expression 'like flame of her marriage fire'? Which colour does it suggest? [3]

Ans. The phrase 'like flame of her marriage fire' is an example of simile as a comparison is being made between the colours of bangles and the flame of marriage fire. According to the poetess the colours of the bangles of a bride are red, yellow and golden just as the colours produced by the flame of marriage fire.

4. Bring out the relevance of the line 'Some, like the flame of her marriage fire.' [3]

Ans. The bride on her wedding day generally wears crimson red and orange colour bangles which resemble the colour of flame. This flame is very important in a

bride's life as she takes marriage vows with her groom around it. The flame like colour of bangles symbolises the flames of love in a marriage.

5. What do you understand by the phrases 'bridal laughter' and 'bridal tear'? With what have they been compared in the extract? [4]

Ans. The phrase bridal laughter refers to the happiness of a bride when she is going to start a new chapter of her life while getting married. 'Bridal tear' refers to the sadness which a bride feels while leaving the parental house. These phrases have been associated with the bangles suitable for a bride-shinny red, bright and radiant. The colours of the bangles of a bride are the reflection of her mood as when she laughs they look luminous and when she weeps they look tender.

IV. Some are purple and gold flecked grey
For she who has journeyed through life midway,
Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest,
And cradled fair sons on her faithful breast,
And serves her household in fruitful pride,
And worships the gods at her husband's side.

1. Describe the use of colour imagery in this extract. [3]

Ans. The poetess has used purple and grey colours that signify depth and maturity. When a boy or girl undergoes a transition to adulthood, his or her maturity level also rises due to the experience he or she has undergone. We say that poetess has very judiciously chosen the colours of the bangles for different stages of life for a woman.

2. Explain the phrase 'who has journeyed through life midway.' [3]

Ans. The phrase refers to middle aged women who have experienced so much in their life after marriage. They have crossed the stage of a young girl when they longed for beauty and adventures. They have crossed the stage of a bride too when they entered a new life full of responsibilities and struggles. Now after facing all kinds of situations they have become proud wife and proud mother and have gained experience and wisdom.

3. What colour of bangles does the poetess find suitable for a middle aged woman? [3]

Ans. According to the poetess purple and grey colours symbolise the maturity that comes as one gets experience and establishes oneself in the society. So the poetess refers purple and gold flecked (dot) grey coloured bangles suitable for middle aged women. The colours of the bangles described here are totally different from those mentioned for maidens and brides.

4. Explain the phrase 'fruitful pride' as used by the poetess in these lines. [3]

Ans. The phrase fruitful pride refers to multiple roles and multiple duties a woman carries throughout her life.

She has been a caring daughter, a loving bride, a responsible wife and mother. She has carried out her responsibilities with perfection and she feels proud of her performance while carrying out her household duties.

5. How does Sarojini Naidu describe the stages of woman's life through her poem 'The Bangle Seller'? [4]

Ans. In this poem the poetess has expressed different stages of Indian women's life and respective colours associated with it. Silver and blue coloured, pink, and green—all these colours are worn by young unmarried girls. The Indian brides wear crimson red, orange and yellow golden coloured bangles. A middle aged married woman prefers purple and grey coloured bangles with a golden tinge in it. The present poem is a celebration of the female life.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow

I. Bangle Sellers are we who bear
Our shining loads to the temple fair....
Who will buy these delicate, bright
Rainbow tinted circles of light?
Lustrous tokens of radiant lives
For happy daughters and happy wives.

1. Why do bangle sellers choose to go to the temple fair? [3]
2. Why are bangles referred to as rainbow-tinted circles of light? [3]
3. Why are bangles called 'lustrous tokens of radiant lives'? [3]
4. What does the poetess mean by 'happy daughters and happy wives'? [3]
5. What is the significance of bangles in the Indian Society? [4]

II. Some are purple and gold flecked grey,
For she who has journeyed through life midway,
Whose hands have cherished, whose love has blest,
And cradled fair son on her faithful breast,
And serves her household in fruitful pride;
And worships the gods at her husband's side.

1. How has the poetess used her descriptive skills to represent the fact? Give two examples. [3]
2. Discuss the use of colour imagery in the extract. [3]
3. What are the five words used in the poem to suggest the different roles of a middle aged woman? [3]
4. How many stages of a woman are skilfully linked with the bangles? [3]
5. What is the background of the poem 'The Bangle Seller'? [4]

After Blenheim

Robert Southey

About the Poet

Robert Southey was born on 12th August, 1774, Bristol, United States. He was a prolific prose and poetry writer unlike most of the English romantics. He produced epics, romances and metrical tales, ballads, plays, odes, eclogues, sonnets and miscellaneous lyrics. He was 'Poet Laureate' of England for around three decades starting from 1813 until his death in 1843. His poetry was first published in 1795, in a collection, titled Poems: containing the Retrospect, Odes, Sonnets, Elegies by Robert Lovell and Robert Southey. Some of his much read poems are 'Inchcape Rock' and 'After Blenheim', his verse still enjoys some popularity. Robert Southey died on 21st March, 1843.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

This is an anti-war poem in the form of a ballad. Robert Southey wrote and published it in 1798. This poem, 'After Blenheim' sharply criticises the death and destruction caused by war. The theme of the poem is the famous battle of Blenheim of 1704. The poet uses the simple narrative of a grandfather explaining to his two grandchildren, his own suffering and the suffering of many others who were victims of the battle. The grandfather cannot give any concrete reason for war and only repeats that "it was a famous victory", obviously, this has the propaganda that was programmed in the common people.

The poet wants to emphasise through the repetition of the lines that wars are senseless, evil and that, in war, there are no real winners. It is poet's protest against the heroic ideals of war. The poem is a wake up call to seek peaceful solutions to all conflicts.

Critical Appreciation

Title

The title of the poem 'After Blenheim' refers to the Battle of Blenheim. The poem presents a conversation between an old man and his grandchildren in a place where many skulls are found. This is the place where 'famous battle' was fought. The title is poet's indication about what happens after war, is horrible, undignified and shocking but common men are not wise enough to analyse the horrible situation caused by the war. The poet, thus, through this title, delivers a strong message against war.

The Message

The poem ironically mocks at Kaspar's belief of a famous and great victory at the end of the battle. When thousands of soldiers had lost their lives and their bodies were left to smell, how that war could be called a 'victory'. It is a defeat of innocence, human dignity and humanity.

Use of Literary Devices

Rhyming Scheme

Each stanza contains six lines repeating four and three iambic meters respectively. End rhyme in each stanza except the second is abcbdd. Rhyme of second stanza is abcddd.

Figure of Speech

In several stanzas, Robert Southey has used alliteration as figure of speech to promote rhythm and euphony. For e.g. 'Little Wilhelmine looks up with wonder waiting eyes'.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

It was a summer evening
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

Word Meanings

Sported—playing or played, Green—open fields all around.

Reference These lines have been taken from the poem 'After Blenheim' written by Robert Southey.

Context In this stanza the poet is telling about the situation which leads to the conversation between Kaspar and his grandchildren.

Explanation These lines describe a summer evening telling us about a farmer Kaspar who had finished his work is relaxing and sitting in the sun before his cottage. He is affectionately watching his granddaughter Wilhelmine playing on the green grass. 'On the green' suggests an open area, may be his cottage is situated far away from urban area. Greenness of vegetation spread around old man's cottage also suggests calm and serene atmosphere.

Stanza 2

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Word Meanings

Roll something—to cause something to move, Rivulet—a small stream, Smooth—having no sharp edges or holes.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, the poet tells about the reason that makes Peterkin to start a conversation with his grandfather.

Explanation The poet says that Kaspar's granddaughter Wilhelmine watched her brother rolling something large and round. He had found it in the fields near the stream where he had been playing. The boy could not make out what it was. He was coming to show it to his grandfather and enquire about it. The poet repeats the words large and round so that the readers can be reminded that the thing that was being rolled and played was large and round like a football.

Stanza 3

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And, with a natural sigh,
'Tis some poor fellow's skull,' said he,
'Who fell in the great victory.

Word Meanings

Expectant—eager, excited, Natural sigh—shaking of head expression of the pity of war, Skull—a bony structure that forms the head, Fell—died.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet here reveals what was found by the boy which will lead to Kaspar describing about that great war.

Explanation The grandson Peterkin has found a smooth round object while playing. He takes it to Kaspar, the grandfather and asks about it. Old Kaspar takes the round object from his grandson who is keen to know about what the object is. Just holding the object in his hand, he comes to know what it is and why it was near the stream, where Peterkin was playing. The old man takes a sigh and replies that it is a skull of a soldier who died in the battle of Blenheim. He calls this battle a great victory.

Stanza 4

'I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out.
For many thousand men,' said he,
'Were slain in that great victory.'

Word Meanings

Ploughshare—the main cutting blade of a plough, **Turns them out**—takes them out, **Slain**—killed, **Great victory**—victory for England.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Seeing the skull, Kaspar is reminded of Battle of Blenheim in which the English had routed the French, a great victory.

Explanation The old man Kaspar starts talking about the famous Battle of 'Blenheim'. He tells his grandchildren that many skulls are scattered in and around the fields. He further adds that he has found many skulls while ploughing, as thousands of soldiers had lost their lives in the battle and their corpses were left there to decay. It has been suggested that the place where old Kaspar's cottage is situated must be the ground where the Battle of Blenheim was fought many decades ago. That is why the skulls of soldiers who had died in the battle can be found there frequently.

Stanza 5

Now tell us what 'twas all about,
Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
'Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for.'

Word Meaning

Look up—looks towards the grandfather, **Wonder-waiting**—surprised.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context When Kaspar mentions about the great battle and victory, the grandchildren request him to tell them more about this Battle of Blenheim.

Explanation Hearing about the plight of the corpses of the soldiers who had to sacrifice their lives in the battle, the children's conscience receive a severe shock. As their curiosity has been aroused, young Peterkins wants to know why that battle was fought in which the corpses of thousands of soldiers were left to decay. Wilhelmine too is shocked on the outcome of the war that had claimed the lives of so many soldiers. She asks Kaspar to describe the war and its causes. But he is unable to explain why the involved countries fought this war.

Stanza 6

'It was the English,' Kaspar cried,
'Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out;
But everybody said,' quoth he,
'That 'twas a famous victory.'

Word Meanings

To rout—overwhelming defeat, **Make out**—to see and identify with difficulty or effort, **Quoth**—said.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The grandfather Kaspar is going to tell about the Battle of Blenheim in which hundreds of lives were lost but he considers it a great victory.

Explanation Here, Kaspar is narrating the details of the war as his grandchildren wanted to know more. He tells them that in this battle, the English army defeated the French. But Kaspar is unable to tell the actual reason of battle, why it was fought and why hundreds of lives were lost. He claims that the common people hailed it and called it a famous victory as English army came out victorious. Kaspar's casual descriptions and words here create an ironical effect as the war had caused huge devastation and thousands of casualties. Kaspar is not aware of the bad effects of war.

Stanza 7

'My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.'

Word Meanings

Stream—river, **Dwelling**—house, **Fled**—ran away,

To rest his head—a shelter to rest.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Kaspar is narrating the details and consequences of the Battle at Blenheim. How his father suffered and how a war brings misery to hundreds of innocent lives.

Explanation At this juncture of the poem 'After Blenheim', Kaspar recollects from the past, source of the scenes of the war. He begins with remembering what happened to his father who lived in a small village of Blenheim near a river. The French army had burnt many houses and ruined the village. Innocent people suffered a lot and they, including his father, had to flee from their village to a safer area. He was left homeless, shelterless, without money or food due to threatening war. They had to roam from one place to another seeking a place to live.

Stanza 8

'With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby died;
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

Word Meanings

Country round—all over the country, Childing—pregnant.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, the old Kaspar is describing what happened with the people during the war and why it was justified.

Explanation Here, the poet describes the cruelties of war. 'Fire' and 'sword' are symbols of man's cruelty for man. They are symbols of destruction, death and horror. The use of word 'wasted' has its own significance. It brings before us an image of a land deprived of any use, purpose and dignity. It also shows futility of war and its power to destroy. The image of mother and baby being killed in war makes us think of battle as bringing an end to the present and future. Kaspar perhaps has resigned to the belief of death. That's why he takes those killings casually. 'Famous victory' is intentionally repeated by the poet to create a sense of irony.

Stanza 9

'They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

Word Meanings

Shocking—upsetting, Sight—scene, Rotting—left to decay, decompose.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, Kaspar is describing what the scene was like after the battle had been won.

Explanation The poet carries on to depict the terrors of war. When the battle got over, thousands of dead bodies of soldiers were left in the field to rot. This was really cruel. These lines show that war not only leaves people shelterless and poor but also takes away human dignity

and kindness. The words 'shocking' and 'rotting' give us a horrifying image of war. The scene of rotting dead men shows the apathy of living people who themselves were in great sorrow of losing their loved ones. Kaspar again claims that these kinds of things are very important and surely take place after a battle is won. Because of these disastrous outcomes a victory is called famous.

Stanza 10

'Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene.'
'Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!
Said little Wilhelmine.
'Nay...nay... my little girl,' quoth he,
'It was a famous victory'.

Word Meanings

Wicked—cruel, Quoth—said.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet praises the heroes of this battle who helped England to defeat the French Army. The Duke of Marlbro and Prince Eugene are glorified in this stanza.

Explanation Here, in these lines, Kaspar praises the Duke of Marlbro and Prince Eugene for winning the battle, they represent England. These two were responsible for defeating the French and bringing glory to the nation i.e. England. A disturbed Wilhelmine (granddaughter) of Kaspar exclaimed that it was a very bad thing and could not understand how her grandfather could sing praises of such a devastating war. Kaspar keeps repeating the words, that it was a 'famous victory'. It is clear that this old man is perhaps afraid of breaking the romantic ideals of war and tries to hide all the destruction, cruelty and agony behind these words.

Stanza 11

'And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win.'
'But what good came of it at last?'
Quoth little Peterkin.
'Why that I cannot tell,' said he,
'But 'twas a famous victory.'

Word Meanings

Great fight—famous battle, What good—purpose.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Through this stanza poet reflects his view about war which he considers as destructive and horrifying.

Explanation Many people praised the Duke and the prince for having won the battle. Through words of Peterkin, the poet is questioning the utility of any war. What good it does—Nothing. The purpose of war is

being questioned by the poet through Peterkin. But the old man is not able to give any appropriate answer to his questions. All he is able to repeat is it was a famous victory. People simply tend to forget the thousands of soldiers who die fighting for their nation. Victory can not bring back all the lives that have been lost during the battle. Hence, the poet questions the purpose and need of war.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I.** It was a summer evening
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

- 1.** Who was the old man? Who all were there?
Where were they? [3]

Ans. The old man was the grandfather of the children. He was the narrator of the war that took place in 1704 and was fought between the English and the French. He was sitting before his cottage while his granddaughter Wilhelmine was playing on the grass and his grandson Peterkin was playing near the stream that was somewhere near his cottage.

- 2.** Do you feel that Kaspar was in good mood?
How? [3]

Ans. Yes, Kaspar was certainly in good mood as he had finished his work and at the time when he was sitting in front of the door of his cottage, the sun was going to set so it was not too hot. The surroundings were full of trees and grass. Apart from all these things his granddaughter Wilhelmine was playing before him. Hence, he had every reason to be happy and cheerful.

- 3.** What according to you is atmosphere like around Kaspar's home? [3]

Ans. As the stanza starts with 'summer evening', it indicates that the place is illuminated with pleasant full light. The green is the symbol of greenery and vegetation

that enhance the beauty of the surroundings. The place is situated next to a river that brings more charm to the place.

- 4.** Who had found a smooth round thing? What was it actually? [3]

Ans. Kaspar's grandson Peterkin had found a smooth and round object while playing. Actually it was a skull. It must be of one of the soldiers who had died during the battle. Their bodies were left in the open to smell and decay.

- 5.** Where was the round thing found? Why did the speaker say that it was of some poor fellow? [4]

Ans. The skull was found near the stream that was running near the field. The speaker feels pity and says that it was the skull of a poor fellow who must have died in the battle. During the battle thousands of people lost their lives. The skull can be of a soldier or a peasant.

- II.** Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And, with a natural sigh,
'Tis some poor fellow's skull,' said he,
'Who fell in the great victory.'

- 1.** Who took the skull? What did he know about it? [3]

Ans. Old Kaspar took the skull from his grandson, Peterkin who had come to ask about the round strong thing. The skull was large and round. It was found near the stream where many decades ago a battle took place between the English and the French so according to him the skull was either of a soldier or a civilian who would have lost his life in the battle.

2. Why did the boy stand expectant by? [3]

Ans. Little Peterkin wanted to know about the large and round object that he found while playing near the river. When his grandfather took the skull, he understood that he was about to be told what that object was so he stood expectant by him.

3. What does 'with a natural sigh' imply? [3]

Ans. 'With a natural sigh' implies that he was not pretending it. It came involuntarily. It also shows that the finding of the skull by Peterkin was not a surprise for him because he had been witnessing such skulls ever since he started ploughing fields.

4. Who had witnessed the Battle of Blenheim? What did he tell his grandchildren about the skull? [3]

Ans. Old Kaspar had witnessed the Battle of Blenheim. He told his grandchildren that the skull was of some soldier or peasant who had lost his life during the battle. The old man took pity on thousands of soldiers who had lost their lives in the battle and their dead bodies were left there to decay.

5. What did Kaspar mean by great victory? [4]

Ans. When Kaspar mentioned great victory, he meant that the war was won by his country England. He did not know whether it was a great victory or not. The only thing that he knew about the war was that the English came victorious and it was sufficient reason for him to call this victory a great victory.

III. 'I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out.
For many thousand men,' said he,
'Were slain in that great victory.'

1. How common were the skull there? What impression does the skull make on the grandchildren of Kaspar? [3]

Ans. The skulls were a common sight in the ground near the Old Kaspar's cottage, where the battle of Blenheim was fought. The skull which was found by Kaspar's grandson has generated curiosity and excitement which arouse (excited) a question mark in his mind.

2. What was the profession of the old man? How do you know it? [3]

Ans. Old Kaspar was a farmer as he told that while ploughing his field, he had found many such skulls unearthed by his ploughshare. Moreover, his cottage was situated near a river, an ideal sight for farming as he could get plenty of water from the river for irrigation.

3. Whom did Kaspar refer by 'many thousand men'? [3]

Ans. Kaspar was telling his grandkids Wilhelmine and Peterkin about the skull, from where it came. He told them that thousands of such skulls were around and under the field near by. These skulls were of the men who were killed during the war and their dead bodies were left to rot in the open.

4. What promoted the old man to give an account of the Battle of Blenheim? [3]

Ans. Finding of a skull by Kaspar's grandson Peterkin and repeated requests by both the grandchildren prompted Kaspar to give an account of the Battle of Blenheim. The children had a number of questions regarding the war like why was it fought and by whom etc. Kaspar was forced to give them all the details regarding the war.

5. What refrain has been used by the poet? What effect does the refrain have on the reader? What do you think is the poet's attitude to war? [4]

Ans. The refrain used by the poet is 'it was a famous victory' is ironical as the victory resulted by loss of so many lives and properties. Though he knows what war can do, as a common man he has been taught to glorify war, so he continues to do so. The poet is quite satirical about war and puts before the readers the repercussion of a battle in which hundreds of innocent lives are lost and there is widespread destruction.

IV. Now tell us what 'twas all about,'
Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
'Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for.' [ICSE 2019]

1. Who are Peterkin and Wilhelmine? How does the poet describe the scene at the beginning of the poem? [3]

Ans. Peterkin and Wilhelmine are grandchildren of Kaspar, the person who was a victim of the Battle of Blenheim. The poet describes the scene at the beginning of the poem as Kaspar sitting in the sun outside his cottage on a summer evening. His granddaughter Wilhelmine was playing on the grass near him. She was watching her brother rolling something round and round which he had found in playing near a stream flowing nearby.

2. What did Young Peterkin find and where? Describe it. [3]

Ans. Young Peterkin had found the skull of a soldier who was killed in the Battle of Blenheim. It was large, smooth and round. The skull was in the fields near a stream where Peterkin had been playing.

3. Who is referred to as 'each other'? What did they fight for? [3]

Ans. The allied army led by the English fought the battle against the French army. They are referred to as "each other". However, Kaspar did not know what they fought each other for.

4. To whom are the words in the extract addressed? How was this person's family affected by the war? [3]

Ans. The words in the extract are addressed to Kaspar, the grandfather of the children. His family was much affected by the war as his father's house was burnt down. Thus, the father was forced to run away from there with his wife and child. Kaspar was that child. They were thus rendered homeless.

5. What, according to the poet, are the consequences that are often associated with great and famous victories? What message does the poet want to convey to the readers? [4]

Ans. According to the poet, the consequences often associated with great and famous victories are horrifying, as many soldiers lose their lives in battle. The message that the poet wants to convey to the readers is that war is condemnable because many lives are lost in it. Instead, it is a defeat of innocence, human dignity and humanity.

- V. 'My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

1. What information do we get about Kaspar's father? What happened to him during the war? [3]

Ans. Kaspar told his grandchildren that his father had a house at Blenheim, near a small stream. The enemy soldiers burnt down his father's house. As a result he was forced to run from that place to save his life. He took his wife and small child to another place but he did not get any place to hide himself.

2. Who were affected most by the war? [3]

Ans. The war was fought between the English and the French. During the war thousands of people were killed and many more became homeless. The war affected the civilians the most as they had to lose their loved ones, their lands and their homes of no faults of theirs. They had to flee to save their lives.

3. How was the country affected by the war? What are your feelings for the speaker? [3]

Ans. The country was ruined by the forces. The war had devastated everything. Thousands of corps lay rotting in the fields. I feel pity for the speaker as he sighed at the sight of a poor fellow's skull but his conditioning was such, that he justified war.

4. What is meant by 'Childing Mother'? Why does the poet specifically mentions death of childing mother and new born babies? [3]

Ans. 'Childing Mother' means expectant or pregnant women expecting a baby. The poet specifically mentions these to show the horrible consequences of war which do not spare the lives of new born babies or expecting mothers. The war is heartless, miserable and brings suffering to the innocent people.

5. Is it wise on part of Kaspar to call the Battle of Blenheim 'a great victory or famous victory'? [4]

Ans. No, it is not at all wise on part of Kaspar to call it a great victory. The war involved huge devastation and loss of life. Soldiers were killed and their bodies were left to rot in open field. It is totally inhuman. Kaspar is not right in calling this battle 'a great victory'. He does not even know why it was a great victory. The repetition of the line 'a great victory' at the end of every stanza is only to emphasise the fact or the poet's message that war is not good for humanity. It can not be great, it can do no good.

- VI. 'They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

1. What was the shocking sight? Why did it happen? [3]

Ans. The shocking sight referred to thousands of bodies which were left in the open to decay. They simply got rotten. How inhuman must be that sight as the Battle of Blenheim progressed, there was large scale casualties of soldiers and the French were defeated in this battle. Then deadbodies were left to smell so this was a shocking sight.

2. What do you think of the old man's point of view? [3]

Ans. The old man's point of view represents the common man's perception of war. They praise victory but are unconcerned about the effects a war has on people and place. They think that terrible consequences are part of war, what matters is ultimate victory. He accepts the loss of lives of innocent people.

3. How the poet mocks on war through Kaspar by calling this battle 'a great victory'? [3]

Ans. The poet is here condemning war and through Kaspar he calls it a great victory satirically. How can a victory be great when it incurs mass destruction, displacement of innocent civilian and large scale dead people lying in the open. Kaspar is not at all justified in calling this battle a great victory. He just holds a common man's perception to call it great.

4. "But things like that", what do these words show about old man's perception of war? [3]

Ans. Kaspar represents the large number of common people who are unaware of the horrible realities of war. They believe that war is all about heroism and patriotism and it is a great victory. Kaspar's views are perhaps not his own. These views have been explained by the warmongers (political leader).

5. What is most tragic about the war hinted here? [4]

Ans. The most tragic impact of war that is hinted here is the destruction, horror and ruin faced by the innocent civilian population. From the description given by Kaspar, it is clear that war inflicts misery on innocent people. They were displaced from their house, they had to flee to save their lives and family and restart life at a new place. There were death, blood and misery, a sorrowful condition of once calm and happy place.

VII. 'Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene.'
'Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!'
Said little Wilhelmine.
'Nay...nay... my little girl,' quoth he,
'It was a famous victory.'

1. Who was Duke of Marlbro? Why did he win so much praise? Who else has been glorified here? [3]

Ans. Both Duke of Marlbro and Prince Eugene have been glorified in the poem. Duke of Marlbro was English Captain General who led the English army to the victory. In the Battle of Blenheim, Eugene joined hands with Duke of Marlbro to make the Grand alliance against the French army. They both received great praise for the victory at Blenheim.

2. Why were the Duke and the Prince praised instead of the soldiers who lost their lives? [3]

Ans. The Duke and the Prince Eugene led the army of England that defeated the French. They were the people who executed the plans and strategies. They

guided the army. Because of their strategies and guidance the war could be won so they were hailed as the heroes of the war. The sacrifice of the soldiers who had lost their lives had become secondary.

3. Why does Wilhelmine call this war a wicked thing? Do you agree with it? [3]

Ans. I agree with Wilhelmine in calling war a wicked thing. War shows man's inhumanity to man. The skull Peterkin finds and those skulls which Kaspar regularly finds while ploughing, are mute indication of the fact that war is totally inhuman and undignified. Wilhelmine is correct in calling war a wicked thing.

4. Do you think Wilhelmine is a rational child? Elaborate. [3]

Ans. Wilhelmine is shocked to hear inhuman nature of the war where man killed man and burnt each-other's habitates even innocent women and children had to lose their lives. She seems to know that in civilised world everybody has the right to live, killing people is unlawful and an inhuman work. Thus, her calling the war wicked shows that she is a rational child.

5. Why does Kaspar counter Wilhelmine's statement? [3]

Ans. Since his childhood Kaspar has been hearing that it was a famous victory. He does not bother of about its consequences. He seems to have accepted whatever happens in the war, is common. So, when Wilhelmine says the war was wicked thing, he counters her saying that it was a famous victory and it was more important than the lives of people who were killed. Thus, he wants her to think the same as he does.

VII. 'And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win.'
'But what good came of it at last?'
Quoth little Peterkin.
'Why that I cannot tell.' said he,
'But 'twas a famous victory.'

1. What impression do you draw about little Peterkin from his question? [3]

Ans. Peterkin has been listening about the war patiently. Finally, he asks what good came out of it as so many people lost their lives and homes but no positive result was mentioned. His question shows that he is quite anxious by the end of the war when only two people were praised for their leadership while no actual good came in to people's lives except it was a famous victory for them. Thus, Peterkin seems to be a thoughtful child.

2. Why did Grandfather not answer Peterkin when he asked 'what good came out of the battle of Blenheim'? [3]

Ans. Kaspar's perhaps was focusing more on the great victory instead of evaluating the losses that the people suffered during the war. But he was not able to answer Peterkin's question as he was not even aware of the reason the French and the English army were fighting about.

3. What has inspired Kaspar to repeat his statement of 'famous victory'? [3]

Ans. Kaspar seems to be ignoring the answers of the questions asked by his grandchildren. It seemed that Kaspar does not know the actual reason of war. Though he knows what war can do, as a common man he has been taught to glorify war, so he continues to do so. He does not want to create a bad impression about war. Hence, he repeats his statement of 'famous victory' so that the children's attention can be moved towards the positive impact of the war.

4. Was the Battle of Blenheim really a 'great victory' at all as presented in Robert Southey's poem 'After Blenheim'? [3]

Ans. The poem ironically mocks at Kaspar's belief of a famous and great victory at the end of the battle. The battle had caused a lot of destruction and loss of lives. But what had the common people gained from the war, absolutely nothing, it had been an ultimate loss and defeat of humanity and innocence. That's why the little children Peterkin and Wilhelmine found no reason to call this battle 'a great victory'.

5. What is the moral of the poem 'After Blenheim'? [4]

Ans. The moral of the poem is that it appears to avoid wars at any cost as they bring death and destruction. "What do we earn when everything is lost?". There is nothing great about victory as people were left to die in the most undignified ways. Thousands of people were forced to flee from their country and countless mothers and babies lost their lives. So, through these description poet brings out the ugliness of war and teaches us not to indulge (devolve) in war at all.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow

I. Now tell us what 'twas all about,'

Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With Wonder-Waiting eyes;
"Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for",

1. Young Peterkin wants to know about it. What it is about? [3]
2. Who is Wilhelmine? Why does she give the expression 'wonder waiting eyes'? [3]
3. Justify the title of the poem 'After Blenheim'. [3]
4. What was the cost of the victory as narrated in the poem? Write any three. [3]
5. Why do the children want to know more about the war? [4]

II. My father lived at Blenheim then

Yon little streams had by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

1. What does Kaspar recollect from the past? [3]
2. Why does Kaspar's father have to flee? [3]
3. How is the great victory a personal tragedy for the Kaspar family? [3]
4. What is meant by words 'rest his head' used in the above extract? [3]
5. What were the consequences of this war? [4]

III. 'And everybody praised the Duke

Who this great fight did win.'
'But what good came of it at last'?
Quoth little Peterkin
'Why that I cannot tell'? said he,
But 'twas a famous victory'.

1. Which Duke is being referred to here? Why was he praised by everyone? [3]
2. What is the relevance of little Peterkin? [3]
3. Does war help any one? Elaborate. [3]
4. How can you say that this poem is rightly called 'an anti-war' poem? [3]
5. How does the speaker try to justify the war? [4]

Television

Roald Dahl

About the Poet

Roald Dahl was born on 13th September, 1916. He was a British novelist, short story writer, poet, screen writer and fighter pilot. Children's author Roald Dahl wrote the kid's classics. 'Charlie and The Chocolate Factory' and 'James and the Giant Peach', among other famous works. He has been referred to as 'one of the greatest story teller for children of the 20th century' writing almost 50 books in his career. In recognition of his outstanding contribution to literature, he was awarded the 1983 World Fantasy Award for Lifetime Achievement and the British Book Award and Children's Author of the year in 1990. His books have sold more than 250 million copies worldwide. Roald Dahl died on 23rd November, 1990.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

The poem 'Television' takes a comic look at a serious problem among young children today. This poem of Dahl advises and inspires us to read books instead of watching the television. This is one of the most relevant poems of our time. The poet, in this poem, warns us about the dangers of watching television excessively, TV robs the power of imagination and creativity of our mind. The poet advises us to read books as it will enable us to discover deeper levels of joy, find fulfilment in life and open a whole new and exciting world for us.

Though the poem is a long one, it is very simple in language and form. The poet has capitalised the important portions -especially where he talks about the undesired consequences of watching television. Dahl in his characteristic warns that we will become zombies if we keep staring uninterrupted at the television for long hours.

Critical Appreciation

Title

'Television' is an appropriate title of this poem as it makes us aware of the poet's idea about Television. He predicts that Television will spell the death of imagination as children keep watching virtual reality. As TV hands them ready images, children's imagination suffers and thinking power also decreases.

Death of Imagination

The poet Roald Dahl is perhaps ahead of his time to predict that TV watching will deprive our creativity and power of imagination. As children's author, he knows what books can do to enhance a child's imagination, on the other hand, he is well aware that TV can make one's imagination process slower and more strained.

Reading as a Habit to be Inculcated

Dahl promotes the habit of reading through this poem. He has beautifully described how children can be engaged by fascinating characters of different books. The poem also addresses the parents and asks them not to let children watch TV in a hurry to finish their own work or they allow children to watch TV for long hours so that they get time for themselves.

It is a wrong practice and certainly harms the children. So, parents should get lots of books for their children and inculcate this habit of reading right from the beginning.

Use of Literary Devices

Rhyming Scheme

The rhyme scheme followed in this poem is aabb and so on in a series of rhyming couplets. Only on one occasion the poet diverges from this when only the end words of lines rhyme in lines 31,32,33.

Figures of Speech

- (i) **Apostrophe** This rhetorical device is used when a poet addresses his poem to an audience which is absent. The poet uses this device when he addresses his poem to parents/adults and advises them to throw away the TV sets and inculcate a habit of reading in their children.
- (ii) **Metonymy** A metonymy establishes a balanced relationship between the use of language and conventional perception of reality and occurs as frequently in poetry. Some examples are
 - To read some more Great Scott! Gadzooks!
 - The younger ones had Beatrix Potter.
 - Just how the camel got his Hump.
 - And how the Monkey Lost his Rump.
- (iii) **Repetition** Repetition is the purposeful re-use of words and phrases for an effect. Sometimes, especially with longer phrases that contain a different key word each time, this is called parallelism e.g.
 - (3) Is never, Never, Never.
 - (14) Until they're hypnotised by it.
 - (15) Until they're absolutely drunk.
 - (44) They used to Read! They'd Read and Read.
 - (45) And Read and Read and then proceed.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

The most important thing we've learned,
So far as children are concerned,
Is never, NEVER, NEVER let
Them near your television set—
Or better still, just don't install
The idiotic things at all.

Word Meanings

Concerned—worried or related/considerate of, **Install**—set up, **Idiotic**—foolish.

Reference These lines have been taken from the poem 'Television' written by Roald Dahl.

Context The poet addresses the adults advising them not to allow children to watch Television which he calls 'an idiotic thing'.

Explanation In these lines the poet seems desperate to make people avoid Television for the welfare of their children. He gives the reference of the experience that we (including the poet) have learnt that TV creates a negative impact over our children. He wants to draw our attention towards the ill-effects that TV makes especially over the children. The poet advises the people that they should never ever allow their children to watch Television. A better option will be not to install the TV set at all. The poet calls TV as an idiotic thing. Throughout the poem, the poet has tried to answer why TV watching is an idiotic action and why parents should not allow their children to watch TV at all.

Stanza 2

In almost every house we've been,
We've watched them gaping at the screen.
They loll and slop and lounge about,
And stare until their eyes pop out.
(Last week in someone's place we saw
A dozen eyeballs on the floor.)

Word Meanings

Loll—sit, lie or stand in a lazy way, **Slop**—flow over, **Lounge**—waste time, **Stare**—look fixedly at someone or something, **Pop out**—to come out.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context In these lines the poet is describing the behaviour of the children while watching TV at their homes.

Explanation The poet says that TV sets have become the part of every house because every house that he has gone had TV set. So, he says that whichever house, he has visited, he has seen children watching TV with mouth wide open and eyes constantly on the screen. For sitting a long time before the TV set, children adopt wrong body postures. Sometimes they sit or lie in a lazy and casual manner and get sloppy. But still, they stare at the television until their eyes become too tired. To prove his point he gives the reference of a house that he visited last week. He saw half a dozen people lying on the floor and the surprising fact was that it was day time. The people were lying not because of the labour they had done but because of the fatigue of their eyes which could no longer watch TV so they had to sleep on the floor.

Stanza 3

They sit and stare and stare and sit
Until they're hypnotised by it,
Until they're absolutely drunk
With all that shocking ghastly junk.
Oh yes, we know it keeps them still,
They don't climb out the window sill.

Word Meanings

Hypnotised—send into a trance, put to sleep, **Ghastly**—extremely unpleasant, bad, **Junk**—useless, of little value, **Still**—without moving, **Window Sill**—a ledge, surface at the bottom of a window.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, the poet is telling what effect a TV set makes on children when they keep watching it.

Explanation The poet says that children sit for a long time before Television staring at the screen. They forget their surroundings and keep sitting at a single place as they probably forget everything around them in the real world. The poet has used the term 'hypnotised' to denote that children watch TV as if they are under some magic spell. The children's minds are totally occupied with those shocking stories or serials which are mostly unreal and inappropriate for the age. TV shows kill their valuable time and make them lazy. They do not get involved in physical play or exercises making their bodies dull and minds inactive.

Stanza 4

They never fight or kick or punch,
They leave you free to cook the lunch
And wash the dishes in the sink -
But did you ever stop to think,
To wonder just exactly what
This does to your beloved tot?
IT ROTS THE SENSE IN THE HEAD!
IT KILLS IMAGINATION DEAD!

Word Meanings

Wonder—a feeling of admiration, **Beloved tot**—loving, small and very young child, **Rots**—decay, decline, **Imagination**—the creative ability, the act of forming a mental picture of something not present.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet here describes the possible advantages (satirically) for mothers to let children watch TV.

Explanation The poet says that while watching Television, there is total silence as children do not indulge in fights or kick each other or going out of the window sill. They are so happy watching TV that they allow their mothers to cook the lunch and wash the utensils in the sink without disturbing them again and again. Then, the poet puts a question to the parents, have they ever thought of the harm which Television watching does to young loving children. He himself answers the question wisely, he says that watching TV regularly takes the child away from real world. He lives in virtual reality. Watching TV regularly damages the imagination or creativity in the child. Child is not able to think on his own or do something creative as he gets obsessed with TV watching.

Stanza 5

IT CLOGS AND CLUTTERS UP THE MIND!
IT MAKES A CHILD SO DULL AND BLIND
HE CAN NO LONGER UNDERSTAND
A FANTASY, A FAIRYLAND!
HIS BRAIN BECOMES AS SOFT AS CHEESE!
HIS POWERS OF THINKING RUST AND FREEZE!
HE CANNOT THINK – HE ONLY SEES!

Word Meanings

Clogs—block or obstruct, **Clutters**—fill something with untidy collection of things, **Dull**—uninteresting or boring, **Fantasy**—day dreaming, imagination, **Fairyland**—imaginary home of fairies, **Rust**—decay, crumble away, **Freeze**—solidify or harden, deprive a part of the body of feeling.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet here describes the disadvantages of allowing children to watch TV on a regular basis.

Explanation Roald Dahl continues to argue on how Television affects a child's mind. Children watch different shows on different channels. Sometimes there are opposite ideas. Sometimes whatever is shown on TV is far from reality. These things mess up the organised ideas and thoughts of his mind. His precious time is wasted in fictional thoughts. The child does not get any idea how to improve his/her skills or personality, the poet also feels that due to watching TV continuously, the child can not take his imagination to understand a fantasy or a fairy tale. His mind gets used to see a virtual image or virtual reality. The poet believes that the child only believes what he watches or hears on TV. His own thought process gets blurred, the child is not able to analyse or interpret a thing. He only loves to watch what is shown on TV.

Stanza 6

'All right' you'll cry. 'All right!' you'll say,
'But if we take the set away,
What shall we do to entertain
Our darling children? Please explain!
We'll answer this by asking you,
'What used the darling ones to do'?
How used they keep themselves contended,
Before this monster was invented?'

Word Meanings

Take away—to remove, **Entertain**—amuse, delight, **Darling ones**—dear ones, **Contented**—satisfied, **Monster**—here it refers to Television set, **Invented**—created, innovated.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet reminds the adults of the time when TV was not invented. How they as children used to spend their leisure time.

Explanation The poet before asking parents to take away the TV set from their children says that he knows the parents will raise their voice and will say many things in support of Television which has become an integral part of their children's life and it cannot be substituted with anything. He throws a question on behalf of the parents. If children are not allowed to watch TV what is the option left. How should the

children be entertained. In answer to this question the poet again puts a question in front of adults or parents. He asks them to remember how they used to entertain themselves or be satisfied as children when there was no TV. It is like an addiction, a monster which needs to be avoided.

Stanza 7

Have you forgotten? Don't you know?
We'll say it very loud and slow;
THEY ... USED ... TO ... READ! They'd
READ and READ,
AND READ and READ, and then proceed
To READ some more. Great Scott! Gadzooks!

Word Meanings

Forgotten—unremembered, gone clean out of someone's mind.
Proceed—begin a course of action.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet describes the habit of reading, being inculcated in children right from beginning, reading should replace TV watching according to the poet.

Explanation The poet reminds us that earlier times small children, when there was no invention of TV, used to read a lot of books. Reading used to give them a lot of enlightenment as well as satisfaction. Surprisingly people then spent half of their lifetime in reading books. The poet mentions some of the famous books such as Great Scott!, Gadzooks! etc.

Stanza 8

One half their lives was reading books!
The nursery shelves held books galore!
Books cluttered up the nursery floor!
And in the bedroom, by the bed,
More books were waiting to be read!

Word Meaning

Galore—in abundance, in great quantity, cluttered up to fill with rubbish.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet describes how books were found at every place whether it was children's room or bedroom or bed. Everywhere only loads of books could be witnessed.

Explanation Here, the poet is advocating the habit of reading books than to watch TV. The best way to entertain themselves when they were children was to read books. Reading was so popular that time that half of an individual's life was spent in reading books. In the absence of TV, there used to be lots of books in nursery shelves of small children. The books used to be so large in numbers that half of them could be found lying on the floor of nursery. There used to be books in the bedroom of the children. Some books could be found lying on the bed itself. The books were in so much abundance that some of them always remained waiting to be read.

Stanza 9

Such wondrous, fine, fantastic tales
Of dragons, gypsies, queens, and whales
And treasure isles, and distant shores
Where smugglers rowed with muffled oars,
And pirates wearing purple pants,
And sailing ships and elephants,
And cannibals crouching round the pot,
Stirring away at something hot.
(It smells so good, what can it be?
Good gracious it's Penelope.)

Word Meanings

Distant—far off, **Smugglers**—a person who smuggles goods, **Rowed**—travel by rowing a boat, **Muffled**—muted or not loud, **Oars**—a pole with a flat blade, **Pirates**—sea-robbers, **Cannibals**—man-eater, **Crouching**—Sit in a squat position, or bend down, **Penelope**—it is a name of baby in Greek.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context In these lines the poet describes about the characters and the imaginary places that used to entertain them.

Explanation The poet now talks about the popular books of adventures that children used to read in their times. Girls and boys used to read amazing stories of dragons, gypsies, queens, whales, treasure islands, smugglers, pirates, ships, elephants, cannibals and so on. This description suggests that there was no dearth of books on any subject and parents made all types of books available for their children. The description found in these books used to be so interesting and fascinating that children used to get totally absorbed in those types of books. It made them always ready to discover new world hidden in the books. The story looked interesting and amusing and there was no matter of content. It always seemed a new story like a beautiful newly born baby.

Stanza 10

The younger ones had Beatrix Potter
With Mr Tod, the dirty rotter,
And Squirrel Nutkin, Pigling Bland,
And Mrs Tiggy-Winkle and-
Just How The Camel Got His Hump,
And How the Monkey Lost His Rump,
And Mr Toad, and bless my soul,
There's Mr Rat and Mr Mole-
Oh, books, what books they used to know,
Those children living long ago!

Word Meanings

Helen Beatrix Potter—she was an English writer best known for her children's book featuring animals, **Tiggy-Winkle**—a children book, **Hump**—a lump, **Rump**—the lower back of a bird, or the hind part of the body of a mammal.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, the poet describes various books having different and interesting characters. The poet just admires at the variety of books in earlier times, which were provided to the children long time back.

Explanation The poet says that earlier children used to read lots of books. They used to read stories written by Helen Beatrix Potter, an author of children's books featuring animals with colourful illustrations. The poet Roald Dahl praises the children's author for her fantastic stories on animals. He also mentions stories like 'How the camel got his hump' and 'How the monkey lost his rump.' Some characters mentioned by the poet are like Mr Toad, Mrs Tiggy-Winkle, Mr Rat, Mr Mole etc. from those stories. This vivid description shows the poet's love for these books and how he enjoyed them in his childhood days. The books were very interesting and had amazing stories but it was known to only those children who read them.

Stanza 11

So please, oh please, we beg, we pray,
Go throw your TV set away,
And in its place you can install
A lovely bookshelf on the wall.
Then fill the shelves with lots of books,
Ignoring all the dirty looks,
The screams and yells, the bites and kicks,
And children hitting you with sticks—

Word Meanings

Bookshelf—a shelf for holding books, **Screams**—make a loud, high pitched sound, **Yells**—a loud sharp cry of pain.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet advises the parents to throw away the TV sets and install a bookshelf with lots of books in it.

Explanation The poet advises the parents to be firm and stick to their decision of getting rid of the TV set for the well being of their kids. In desperation the children can behave violently and may hit them so, he earnestly requests the parents to throw away their TV sets. To replace TV, a new bookshelf should be installed in its place and fill that shelf with variety of books. The poet warns the parents to ignore all the dirty looks, the screaming and crying of children. These small children may even try to bite or kick their parents. In anger the children may even try to hit their parents with sticks.

Stanza 12

Fear not, because we promise you
That, in about a week or two
Of having nothing else to do,
They'll now begin to feel the need
Of having something to read.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, the poet assures the parents that they need not worry as sooner or later they will get the positive result.

Explanation The poet has described the possible behaviour of the children in absence of the Television set at their homes. Their violent behaviour may scare the parents who are worried about them. But he says that parents should not get scared of all these tantrums (anger). The poet assures the parents that in a week or fortnight when children will have nothing else to do, without TV sets, they will finally feel the need to read books. They will start reading the books and liking them.

Stanza 13

And once they start - oh boy, oh boy!
You watch the slowly growing joy
That fills their hearts. They'll grow so keen
They'll wonder what they'd ever seen
In that ridiculous machine,
That nauseating, foul, unclean,
Repulsive television screen!
And later, each and every kid
Will love you more for what you did.

Word Meanings

Wonder—a feeling of amazement, **Ridiculous**—laughable, absurd, **Machine**—here it refers to Television Set, **Nauseating**—disgusting, liable to cause a feeling of nausea, **Foul**—offensive to senses, wicked, **Repulsive**—arousing intense distaste.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet assures the parents that once the children start reading books, they are certainly going to enjoy reading them.

Explanation The poet assures the parents that once their small children start reading the books, they will find it very interesting. Once the reading habit is residing in heart, the children become avid readers as reading provides them new thoughts, ability to imagine, the knowledge and wisdom inherent in those books. The children will start getting a unique type of satisfaction, a fulfilling experience and they will really start relishing reading books. A time will come then, when they will start hating TV sets and may also call it a 'Silly Machine'. As they discover the pleasures of reading books, the children will call the television screen disgusting and dirty, not worth watching. Children will be thankful to their parents then and will start respecting them for developing the habit of reading in them.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. The most important thing we've learned,
So far as children are concerned,
Is never, NEVER, NEVER let
Them near your television set—
Or better still, just don't install
The idiotic thing at all.

1. What does the poet mean when he says that the most important thing we've learned? [3]

Ans. The poet is sharing his experience that he has witnessed, in almost all the houses that children have become addicted to TV watching which has badly affected their mental as well as physical growth. It has taught him that children should not be allowed to watch TV so he wants to share his experience with the parents.

2. Does poet's use of adverb 'Never' three times signify anything? [3]

Ans. The adverb 'never' is repeated three times which means 'not ever'. The purpose of using it, is to emphasise on not using something which is not acceptable. The poet wants to emphasise that children should not be allowed to watch TV because it kills their creativity and rots their thinking skill. So, use of never has its own significance.

3. How does Television control the activities of the children? [3]

Ans. The television makes the children sit glued to it as children watch TV open mouthed. They never blink while watching the TV which is really harmful to their eyes. TV watching makes the children totally lazy or inactive as they keep sitting and adopt inadvisable body postures while watching Television.

4. What is an idiotic thing? [3]

Ans. An idiotic thing is a nick name for Television as it deprive the creativity of the children, it hampers their imagination and makes them inactive. It has turned children into couch potatoes, not playing outdoor games which later, results in ill-health.

5. Whom is the poet addressing in the poem? What is his motive? [4]

Ans. The poet has penned this poem to highlight the bad influence of Television over children whose well being is the prime concern of their parents. So, he is addressing the parents whose children watch TV. His motive is to make people aware of the bad effects of TV and of the substitute of it so that a world without TV can be created. So, he advises the parents never to let their children go near the TV set and watch it. He emphasises that if possible the parents should not even install it.

II. In Almost every house we've been,
We've watched them gaping at the screen.
They loll and slop and lounge about,
And stare until their eyes pop out.
(Last week in someone's place we saw
A dozen eyeballs on the floor.)

1. What has the poet witnessed at every house? [3]

Ans. The poet has witnessed at every house the children are watching TV. The most shocking thing that he has noticed that the children of one house follow the same postures as that of the other. They don't do any activity rather staring at TV which draws all their attention toward it.

2. Which body part is affected most by Television? [3]

Ans. The eyes are the most affected parts of the body. Children keep staring at TV without a pause even for a minute until their eyes start paining. This continuous watching TV badly affects the eyes. The child does not sleep properly which makes negative impact on his mind, his eye-sight may get weaker and there may be constant pain in them.

3. What other activities can be given to the children other than TV watching so that they are kept occupied? [3]

Ans. The children can be engaged in indoor or outdoor games, reading books, pursuing their hobby of painting or playing music etc in the absence of TV. The children can be asked to help their parents in household activities so that they may not feel bored.

4. What does the poet want to illustrate by the last lines 'Last week..... floor'? [3]

Ans. The poet has been criticising the postures of the children while watching TV. Their continuous watching TV also infuriates him as it can affect their eyesight badly. To strengthen his point, he gives the example of a house that he visited last week. The members of the house were sleeping even in the day time. It was the result of their watching TV till their eyes were open, which could be late midnight. Hence they were compelled to sleep during day time, such was the effect of TV set.

5. What is the role of a TV set to make children inactive? [4]

Ans. The poet declares a TV set guilty of making children inactive. It makes children addicted to it so they are not able to get rid of its spell. It confines them within the room in which it has been installed and forces them to stare at it continuously sitting or lying on a single place and same posture. Under its spell other physical activities become secondary so they are ignored. This ignorance of physical activities makes children inactive.

III. They sit and stare and stare and sit
Until they're hypnotised by it,
Until they're absolutely drunk
With all that shocking ghastly junk.
Oh yes, we know it keeps them still,
They don't climb out the window sill.
They never fight or kick or punch,
They leave you free to cook the lunch
And wash the dishes in the sink -
But did you ever stop to think,
To wonder just exactly what
This does to your beloved tot?

1. Explain the expression 'until they're hypnotised by it'. [3]

Ans. The poet uses the line 'until they are hypnotised by it'. He wants to draw the attention of the readers towards the effect of TV set on children. They stare the TV with such attention that they almost get hypnotised by it. As a hypnotised person does whatever he is dictated in the same way the children imitate whatever is shown in TV.

2. What does the phrase 'all that ghastly shocking junk' imply in these lines? [3]

Ans. The poet Roald Dahl is of the opinion that so many channels including, kid channels roll out such non-sense programmes that are not worth watching at all. The poet calls such programmes as junk, as they are neither informative nor creative.

The language used by characters is very rustic. If child imbibes all this nonsense, his progress is really going to get stuck.

3. When a child watches TV what all advantages does a mother get? [3]

Ans. The poet in a very amusing tone says that children do not indulge in hyper activities while watching TV like climbing a window sill or fighting and kicking each other as they remain glued to one place. A mother feels relieved and free to cook lunch or wash utensils without worrying too much about her children.

4. List the ways in which Television viewing affects the mind of our beloved a lot. [3]

Ans. TV viewing affects the minds of the little children so much so that they start believing in what they are watching. They forget outdoor games and spend hours in watching TV. The children forget original creative thinking and get absorbed in what is being shown on TV.

5. Is it possible to throw away the TV sets in today's world? What should be our balanced approach? [4]

Ans. In today's world, it is not possible to survive without a TV set at one's house but parents should fix the TV watching hours for their children. There are some very educative programmes being telecast on TV, parents should focus on them. They must keep an eye on what their children are watching during that designated time. Moreover, if reading habit is residing in heart from the beginning, the children themselves will not spend too much time in watching TV.

IV. IT ROTTS THE SENSE IN THE HEAD!

IT KILLS IMAGINATION DEAD!

IT CLOGS AND CLUTTERS UP THE MIND!

IT MAKES A CHILD SO DULL AND BLIND

HE CAN NO LONGER UNDERSTAND

A FANTASY, A FAIRYLAND!

HIS BRAIN BECOMES AS SOFTS AS CHEESE!

HIS POWERS OF THINKING RUST AND

FREEZE!

HE CANNOT THINK – HE ONLY SEES!

1. How does Television kill child's imagination? [3]

Ans. The child of today spends hours together in front of the 'idiot box'. He does nothing else but watch TV all day. The child loses the capacity to think. He slowly loses the ability to understand and respond to the environment around him. In today's scenario TV has killed the habit of reading books. As a result the child has lost his creativity and ability of imagination.

2. What is the significance of writing these lines in capital letters? [3]

Ans. The writer has written these lines in capital letters to emphasise the disadvantages of TV watching. As these lines are written in capital letters, these lines show poet's desperate attempt to draw reader's attention towards the problems that too much watching TV can cause.

3. Explain this line "IT CLOGS AND CLUTTERS UP THE MIND". [3]

Ans. Watching junk on TV can have a negative impact on the child's mind. As the child watches useless programmes on TV, he is away from reality. His mind's creativity gets damaged, thinking power goes away and he remains absorbed in the images, he watches on TV. He lives far away from reality but does not understand. This TV watching messes up a child's organised ideas and thoughts.

4. 'HE CANNOT THINK -HE ONLY SEES', What does this line suggest to us? [3]

Ans. The poet wants to warn parents about the ill-effects of TV watching. This line clearly states that creativity and imagination of a child get damaged by watching TV everyday. The child is lost in a virtual world, oblivious of his surroundings. His analytic power does not develop. The poet categorically says that too much watching TV spoils the creativity of children as they are not able to use their brain to understand things.

5. What message does the poet convey through these lines? [4]

Ans. The message is pretty clear. He tells that Television watching is a very harmful activity. It rots our senses and kills imagination. It clutters up the mind. Parents need to inculcate the habit of reading in children right from the childhood. The poet advises to throw the TV set away, install a nice bookshelf in its place and stuff it with books on various topics. In this way a new world will appear before them and they will be able to use their ability of imagination and creativity.

- V. 'All right' you'll cry. 'All right!' you'll say,
'But if we take the set away,
What shall we do to entertain
Our darling children? Please explain!
We'll answer this by asking you,
'What used the darling ones to do'?
How used they keep themselves contented
Before this monster was invented?

1. Explain, All right 'you'll cry 'All right!' you'll say. [3]

Ans. The poet wants to bring change in children's lives by getting them rid of TV sets. It is not children who have to be convinced but their parents as they will decide whether to keep the TV set or throw it away for the welfare of their children. Here, he displays the possible reactions that he will receive when he will ask them to get rid of TV set. It will be a shock for them so they will cry and will ask many questions to get the solution of the problem.

2. What is the question? Why is it asked? [3]

Ans. The question is what the parents will do to entertain their children in the absence of Television as without it they will get bored. The question is asked by the parents when they are asked to throw away their TV set for well being of their kids but they are in dilemma as they will be left with no option to entertain their children.

3. Why are the parents so concerned about the entertainment of their children? [3]

Ans. The parents are so concerned about the entertainment of their children as it is very important for their development. If a child does not get entertained he will get bored and eventually will be used to it. It will affect his growth adversely while if he is entertaining himself, his mental and physical growth will be positive.

4. How does the poet answer the question asked by the parents? [3]

Ans. The parents want to know what they will do to entertain their kids if they are to throw away TV set. At this the poet asks them another question what they themselves used to do when they were young and there was no Television as it had not been invented then. He indirectly suggests them to use the same options to entertain their children as used by them.

5. What does he call monster and why? [4]

Ans. The poet is very critical about Television and calls it the real culprit for the decline to children's health and morality. According to him a monster first kills his prey and eats it, in the same way a Television just as a monster first kills the physical activities in a child then finishes them making the child inactive. In short TV set is the main reason behind the gradual inactivity in children.

- VI. Have you forgotten? Don't you know?

We'll say it very loud and slow;
THEY ... USED ... TO ... READ!
They'd READ and READ,
AND READ and READ, and then proceed
To READ some more. Great Scott! Gadzooks!

1. What surprises the poet? [3]

Ans. The question of the parents what options should be there to entertain their children surprises the poet as according to him the parents are supposed to be knowing the answers themselves. He shows this when he asks them if they have forgotten and do not know how to entertain their kids without a TV set.

2. What alternative does the poet suggest to parents in place of TV? [3]

Ans. The poet reminds the parents of the days when this monster called **Television** was not invented. Children used to read the books and spend a considerable time in reading only. He asks the parents to install a bookshelf in the house and loads it with lots of books of various kinds.

3. Which point does the poet try to stress here? [3]

Ans. The poet wants to stress on the view that, parents should never allow children to watch TV or the better option is not keeping a TV set in their houses. He further says that the task of finding such substitutes is quite simple. They do not have to take pains instead have to remember the things that used to entertain them when they were children.

4. What is the significance of capitalising some words in this stanza? [3]

Ans. The poet has intentionally written some words in capital letters to highlight the importance of these words. **READ** is obviously the most important of all words capitalised. He perhaps wants to reinforce the importance of **reading books**, a habit which was practised by people when Television was not invented.

5. What is the central idea of the poem? [4]

Ans. The central idea of the poem is that the poet associates Television watching with loss of imagination and creative abilities of the children. He hankers for the older days when life was simpler and people were fond of reading. The parents' role in the development of children has been told very crucial as they are the ones who mould their children's habit and behaviour. Reading is a very good habit for children. It enriches their minds and introduces them to a whole new world, they never knew existed.

VII. One half their lives was reading books!
The nursery shelves held books galore!
Books cluttered up the nursery floor!
And in the bedroom, by the bed,
More books were waiting to be read!

Such wondrous, fine, fantastic tales
Of dragons, gypsies, queens, and whales
And treasure isles, and distant shores
Where smugglers rowed with muffled oars,
And pirates wearing purple pants,
And sailing ships and elephants,
And cannibals crouching 'round the pot,
Stirring away at something hot.
(It smells so good, what can it be?
Good gracious it's Penelope.)

1. Explain 'And in the bedroom, by the bed, more books were waiting to be read'. [3]

Ans. In the above lines, the poet talks about the great popularity of books due to which their presence was literally visible everywhere. This was because children were very fond of reading them. The number of books was so large that the process seemed to be almost everlasting, because there were always some books that 'were waiting to be read.'

2. Describe the scene inside the houses when people were fond of reading books. [3]

Ans. The poet very beautifully describes the scene when there used to be no TV sets. At that time children used to read books. There used to be books in children's nursery, on the floor, in the bedroom, even at the bed. The description suggests that at that time **reading** used to be a passion with children and half of their lifetime was spent reading books.

3. How is the world depicted in stories or other books different from the one that is shown in the TV programmes? [3]

Ans. The world of fantasy depicted in story books is based on pure imagination. The writer talked about unusual characters and situations to entertain and amuse the readers. Through the television programmes, children live in virtual reality. TV watching does not provide an opportunity for the children to develop their imagination or creative ability. Children are not able to imagine characters or situations that are described beautifully in books.

4. How does reading develop an imaginative mind? [3]

Ans. Reading fairy tales and adventure stories certainly develops child's creative ability as there is no ready image in front of him. He is reading something so he delves into imagination to bring that image in his mind whether it is of a dragon or a fairy or an adventure.

5. Is there a balance which could be struck between watching Television and reading books? What would that balance be? [4]

Ans. Yes, I think it is not possible to throw out the TV sets from our houses. But most certainly TV watching can be limited to a few hours. The parents too must sacrifice their habit of TV watching if they want their children to reduce TV watching hours. Moreover, reading habit is to be inculcated right from their childhood. They can not be supposed to develop it over night. A balance can be maintained between Television watching and reading books. Parents need to schedule time for children. Children should be made aware of the disadvantages of excess TV watching and of the advantages of reading books that open a whole new world before them.

VIII. Oh, books, what books they used to know,
Those children living long ago!
So please, oh please, we beg, we pray,
Go throw your TV set away
And in its place you can install
A lovely bookshelf on the wall.
Then fill the shelves with lots of books,
Ignoring all the dirty looks,

1. What does the poet mean by 'Those children living long ago!?' [3]

Ans. The poet is talking about the childhood days of the parents who used to read books to entertain themselves. 'Long ago' symbolises the time when books were spiritedly read and were extremely famous among the children of that period. By 'those children' he wants to indicate the adults who were children that time. They could enjoy reading those books.

2. Why does the poet request the parents so earnestly? [3]

Ans. Poet seems to be one of the biggest critics of Television and does not tolerate it at homes where it has enslaved the children. He wants children to get rid of it at any cost. It is possible only when parents are convinced to throw it so to convince the parents he repeats his request and even begs them to do so.

3. What should be installed in place of TV set and why? [3]

Ans. Dahl advises parents to remove Television from the wall and in place of it a bookshelf should be installed. He is of the opinion that only reading books can replace the habit of watching TV. So, the bookshelf should be filled with a number of books that will be read by the children sooner or later without having any other option but to read.

4. What does the poet mean by the phrase 'ignoring all the dirty looks'? [3]

Ans. The poet says that bringing in a bookshelf as a replacement of TV set, may not be tolerated by the children in the beginning. The children may become restless and will try to blackmail their parents by crying and screaming. They will make such expressions as may compel them to reinstall Television. But for the welfare of the children, parents should ignore their looks as they are not real and may affect the decision taken for their well being.

5. Does the poet seem to be favouring books as the replacement of TV set? Why? [4]

Ans. Yes, the poet does seem to be favouring books as the replacement of TV set because being a children's writer he knows that books not only entertain children but also improve their innovative and creative skills. There are certainly other options but they are not as fruitful as books as far as a child's creative and imaginative qualities are concerned. He focuses more on mental growth than on physical growth that shows that he is not much concerned about children's physical growth.

IX. The screams and yells, the bites and kicks,
And children hitting you with sticks—
Fear not, because we promise you
That, in about a week or two
Of having nothing else to do,
They'll now begin to feel the need
Of having something to read.

1. How are children supposed to behave when TV set is removed? [3]

Ans. As children have become addicted to watching TV, to remove TV will be an action that may suddenly change their behaviour towards their parents. They may become aggressive, may shout and yell at them and even may bite and hit them with stick compelling them to change their decision.

2. Parents play a major role in child's development. Elaborate. [3]

Ans. Yes, the role of parents in a child's development is enormous. It is with the help of parents' guidance that good habits can be developed in a child. In the context of TV watching, it becomes more critical as it can hamper their children's mental as well as physical growth. The initial years of children are very critical so whatever is done and watched by them, should be properly monitored so that the development of children will remain smooth and continuous.

3. What does the poet promise and why? [3]

Ans. The poet draws the possible future scenario where the children would be misbehaving with their parents for removing their dear idiot box from house. He promises that the parents need not worry as this situation will not last long and within one week or two, the children will take to reading books. They will explore a beautiful new world they have not witnessed yet.

4. What are some of the advantages of reading as mentioned by the poet? [3]

Ans. The poet is very sure that reading improves a child's knowledge, his power of imagination, and creative thinking. After reading books a child can grow wise and analytical and is able to decide between the right and the wrong. New thoughts will come to his mind after reading various types of books.

5. Is the transition from TV watching to reading books possible as instantly as suggested by the poet? What role parents play in this regard? [4]

Ans. No, the transition from TV watching to reading books can be done instantly. The transition is beset with difficulties for parents. The balance can be struck by parents by minimising TV watching on the condition that children equally spend time on reading books. Parents need to be patient and spend quality time with their off springs to bring this transition. They need to establish the value of reading books in children's life and they should themselves start this reading habit and read out the books to their children in an interesting manner. Once children start taking interest in reading, naturally they will spend less time in watching TV and will be motivated to read more and more books.

X. And once they start-oh boy, oh boy
You watch the slowly growing joy
That fills their hearts. They'll grow so keen
They'll wonder what they'd ever seen
In that ridiculous machine,
That nauseating, foul, unclean,
Repulsive television screen!
And later, each and every kid
Will love you more for what you did.

1. What is poet's opinion about effects of TV watching by the children? [3]

Ans. The poet is of the opinion that TV watching almost hypnotises the children and deprive their creativity. Watching too much Television fills up the mind of children with useless facts while at the same time

destroying their ability to create or understand world of fantasy. Children become inactive, lazy and keep staring at the Television screens.

2. In modern households why parents find it convenient to allow the children to watch TV most of the time? [3]

Ans. In modern household specially in nuclear families , there are less people to interact with one-another. The children are full of energy and if they are not kept occupied they are likely to indulge in jumping or fighting with each other. Many mothers find it very convenient that while children watch TV they are able to finish household chores like cooking or washing utensils peacefully.

3. How can reading habit create silence and creative atmosphere where parents can find time for themselves? [3]

Ans. Here role of parents is of great importance. They must inculcate the habit of reading in their children right from their childhood. Children will be benefitted from reading variety of books and parents will get time to perform their household chores. It will be a totally different type of atmosphere where time will be spent gainfully not like an idiot in front of a Television Set.

4. Do you think whether it is TV watching or playing video games and reading—moderation in all things fit into the equation of daily life. How? [3]

Ans. Excessive use of anything be it watching TV, or playing video games or reading can have its own adverse effect. So, the keyword is 'Moderation'. In today's world we can not throw away TV sets or disallow children to play video games. As being not exposed to these things they will be left far behind in this cut-throat competitive world.

5. What has been referred to in this stanza as 'that ridiculous machine' and why? [4]

Ans. The phrase 'that ridiculous machine' refers to Television sets. The poet has used many such adjectives like unclean, repulsive television screen, nauseating, foul etc. All these depict poet's dislike for this machine called Television. There is obvious reason for the poet to call it so. The poet believes and it is true too that when we watch TV, it is a passive process on our part. We do not actively engage with the material as we do in reading. We live in virtual reality. This passivity ultimately makes the brain work at slower pace and ability to reason and think something out of the box becomes a distant dream.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. They sit and stare and stare and sit

Until they are hypnotised by it,

Until they are absolutely drunk

With all that ghastly shocking junk.

1. What has the poet advised the parents in just preceding lines? [3]
2. Who are 'they' mentioned here? What activity is being described here? [3]
3. How do these lines depict children's fascination with Television? [3]
4. Explain the expression 'hypnotised' in the context of this poem. [3]
5. What does the phrase 'absolutely drunk' imply here? [4]

II. 'All right! you'll cry. All right! you'll say,

But if we take the set away,

What shall we do to entertain

Our darling children? Please explain!'

1. Who is referred as 'you' and 'we' in the stanza? [3]
2. List some of the ill-effects of watching TV on our beloved children. [3]
3. Do you think throwing away the TV sets is the only solution to move children towards reading habit? [3]
4. Do you agree 'The role of parents is very crucial in inculcating the habit of reading,'? [3]
5. What does the poet assure the parents at end of the poem, if they follow his suggestion? Do you think that the title of the poem is appropriate? [4]

III. Oh, books, what books they used to know,

These children living long ago!

So please, oh please we beg, we pray,

Go throw your TV set away,

And in its place you can install

A lovely bookshelf on the wall.

1. Describe how children spent their leisure time in the past and how they spend it now. [3]
2. Who are the people addressed in these lines? Is it a fruitful suggestion in today's world? [3]
3. How does television watching kill one's imagination? [3]
4. What does the poet want the parents to replace the TV set with? [3]
5. Parents play a major role in shaping the future of their children. What does the poet plead here? [4]

Daffodils

William Wordsworth

About the Poet

William Wordsworth was born on 7th April, 1770 in Cockermouth, Cumberland, in the Lake District England. He lost his parents at an early age. He wrote beautiful poetry filled with sweet imagery, usually based around the natural world. Often his poem contained slight somber undertones. Wordsworth lived through the French Revolution, which he first supported and later rebuked. Wordsworth, along with close friend and fellow poet, Samuel Coleridge was pioneer of the Romantic Era of poetry and Wordsworth's earlier romantic poems were widely derided as a result of this. He was also the poet laureate for Queen Victoria for a period of seven years. He died on 23rd April, 1850.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

This remarkable poem is the perfect example of Wordsworth's using his imagination and love for nature. Once when Wordsworth has gone for a walk with his sister, he sees a row of beautiful daffodils, beside a lake. Wind is blowing over these flowers. This sight inspires Wordsworth to write this poem. The poem is known for its simplicity yet refine of its thoughts. He goes on to tell the readers that mere memory of this beautiful sight of daffodils fluttering, lifts his spirits whenever he feels depressed. The poem is one of the best nature poems written by Wordsworth.

Critical Appreciation

Title/Theme

The title of the poem is directly linked with the poet's personal experience with a field of daffodils. The poet is reflecting on a memory and describing it in the poem. The theme of this poem is nature but there are other themes like happiness and memories. His enthusiasm and love towards nature is reflected in the poem.

Use of Literary Devices

Form

The poem is written in four stanzas with six lines each, for a total of 24 lines. It has a fairly simple form that fits its simple and folksy theme and language.

Rhyming Scheme

The poet has used a set of rhyme scheme: ababcc and the meter is iambic tetrameter.

Figures of Speech

- (i) **Hyperbole** 'They stretched in a never ending line.' A hyperbole is used to exaggerate statements or claims not to be taken literally.
- (ii) **Personification** 'Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.' The poet describes the flowers as living beings, tossing their heads purposely.

- (iii) **Imagery** 'I wandered lonely as a cloud that floats on high o'er vales and hills.' The poet images himself to be a wandered cloud.
- (iv) **Simile** 'Continuous as the stars that shine.' The poet compares the daffodils with the stars of the Milky Way using a simile. This allows the reader to create an image.
- (v) **Assonance** 'Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.' The poet repeats the vowel sound in this sentence in the poem. The poet does this to add rhythm to the poem and to make it sound pleasant to the reader.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Word Meanings

Wandered—walked, Floats—stays afloat, Vales—valleys, Fluttering—dancing.

Reference The above stanza has been taken from the poem 'Daffodils' composed by the famous poet 'William Wordsworth'.

Context In this stanza the poet says that one day when he was wandering all alone, he saw a large number of daffodils which were dancing in the breeze.

Explanation In this stanza, the poet calls himself a lonely cloud that is floating over valleys and hills. He is in complete disappointment so he is unable to feel anyone else's presence and calls himself lonely but suddenly he sees a valley covered with golden daffodils that attract his attention and he finds himself drowned in the beauty of these flowers. The flowers are stretching beside the lake and beneath the trees. They are fluttering and dancing in the breeze. Here he tells that the flowers have surrounded the valley and there is no place left and when the breeze forces them to move, they seem to be dancing an art that can be performed by humans only.

Stanza 2

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

Word Meanings

Twinkle—shine, Stretched—extended, Margin—edge, bay Glance—look quickly, Tossing—shaking, Sprightly—lively.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context In this stanza, the poet describes about the daffodils which are stretching to the never-ending line. He sees near thousands of flowers which are dancing in a jovial mood.

Explanation Here the poet says that he is fascinated to see the beauty of daffodil flowers which are looking like uncountable stars. As the stars shine and twinkle on the milky way, in the same way daffodil flowers shine and twinkle in valleys and hills. The flowers have covered all the valleys and hills it means as far as he sees he can spot only daffodils which are ending nowhere. They are stretching at margin of a bay. They are so thickly standing that at a glance ten thousand flowers can be seen. Here with ten thousand he means a lot of flowers in thousands. The breeze is making them to move their heads which seems as if they were dancing with happiness.

Stanza 3

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed-and gazed-but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

Word Meanings

Out-did—excelled, Sparkling—shining brightly, Glee—delight, Gay—happy, Jocund—cheerful, Gazed—stared.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, the poet compares the dance of the waves with that of the daffodils. He gazes continuously and tries to know the permanent pleasure in the sight.

Explanation Here the poet continues the description of effect of the daffodil flowers over the vales, the hills and the lake beside which they are stretching. He says that besides the flowers the waves in the lake are also dancing and moving which itself is a very beautiful scene and cannot be ignored.

but the atmosphere that is being created due to dancing and floating of daffodils, is far more impressive and fascinating so in this respect the daffodils outdo the waves. It is an ideal atmosphere for a poet who feels nothing else but happy and joyful. He further says that he cannot stop himself from gazing the flowers continuously without even realising that he has been exposed to a wealth few get to see. He calls his experience of witnessing such beautiful daffodils in abundance a wealth in the form of never lasting memory which can be used any time in future.

Stanza 4

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Word Meanings

Of—often, Couch—sofa, Pensive—sad, Bliss—great pleasure, Solitude—loneliness

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Whenever, the poet is in a sad mood, the sight of those daffodils comes to his mind and his heart feels happy.

Explanation Here the poet describes about the memory that he has acquired while walking past the valleys and hills covered with daffodils. It was so beautiful a memory that even today it comes into his mind as living as it was when he saw it. It has become his pain-healer and accompanies him in his solitude. That's why whenever he lies on his couch with nothing to do or feels dejected, the picture of the vales and hills covered with daffodil flowers comes across his mind and he experiences the same feeling as was experienced when he was there. It fills his heart with immense pleasure as if it again had come amid the daffodils and in excitement it dances with them.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I.** I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

- 1.** Who wanders like a lonely cloud? What does he come across while wandering? [3]

Ans. The poet 'William Wordsworth' wanders like a lonely cloud over the valleys and hills. While wandering among the valleys and hills the poet comes across the host of golden daffodil flowers near the lake and under the branches of the trees.

- 2.** What does the phrase 'lonely as a cloud' suggest here in the above lines? [3]

Ans. In the above lines, the poet describes himself as a cloud to express his loneliness despite the fact that clouds are not supposed to be lonely. It is known that clouds usually float in groups. Perhaps a cloud is lonely because it has been driven apart from its group by the strong wind and is floating in the sky without any company. In the same way, the poet wanders through the vales and hills.

- 3.** Where are the daffodils and what are they doing? [3]

Ans. The daffodils flowers are by the side of the lake and under the trees. The poet calls them a 'crowd' because they are packed tightly together. They are fluttering in the breeze as if they were dancing like human beings expressing their joy and energy.

4. Why does the poet call the daffodils golden? [3]

Ans. Having spotted the valley covered with the daffodils flowers the poet is enchanted. He has been attracted by the colour of the flowers, which are of yellow but seem to him golden in the rays of the sun. It shows his love towards nature and mastery to relate things to nature.

5. Describe in your own words the poet's feelings when he saw the host of golden daffodils. [4]

Ans. The poet was thrilled to see a host of golden daffodils by the side of the lake under the trees moving their head in a joyful manner. They seemed to be dancing like human beings expressing their energy and joy. When the poet saw the flowers, his imagination travelled to other world to find a comparison. He was reminded of the stars twinkling in the milky way at night. The long line of the daffodil flowers bore comparison with the bright stars seen across the night sky.

II. Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay :
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

1. What have been compared to the stars and why? [3]

Ans. The host of golden daffodils by the side of the lake under the trees have been compared to the stars. A milky way is a cluster of stars which shine brightly across a huge stretch of space similarly like the stars in the milky way the poet feels that the daffodils are not only uncountable but also dancing with full energy and joy in never ending line along the margin of the lake.

2. What does the poet say about 'the margin of the bay'? [3]

Ans. When the poet sees a group of waving golden daffodils, he gets enchanted by the beauty. He watches them very carefully. He observes that the flowers are concentrated in a line along the margin of the bay that seems endless. Here in the stanza, the margin of the bay is the center of his attention.

3. What does the poet mean by 'Ten thousand saw I at a glance'? [3]

Ans. The poet is walking through a valley that is full of daffodils that have covered it so wherever he moves his sight he sees only daffodils. They are so dense that at a glance thousands of them can be seen thus to add charm in his expression he says 'Ten thousand saw I at a glance',

4. Describe the whole stanza in your own words. [3]

Ans. In the stanza, the poet says the daffodils are shining and stretching continuously without a break, like the stars in

the milky way galaxy. There are a lot of daffodils which can be counted in thousands. The yellow flowers tossed their heads beautifully in the soft breeze and it seems that they are dancing.

5. What literary device is used in 'Ten thousand saw I at a glance' and why? [4]

Ans. The sight of the golden daffodils near the lake fascinates the poet and he guesses them to be 'ten thousand' in a glance. The poet has used the literary device 'hyperbole' here. He has used this literary device to stress the number of daffodils in more expressive manner as to reveal the impact it has laid on him and to express the scene for a better appeal. His attempt does not go in vain as he becomes successful to draw the same feeling in the readers' mind as he had when he was glancing at the daffodils.

III. The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed-and gazed-but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :

1. Whom did the daffodils outdo and how? [3]

Ans. The daffodils outdid the waves in the lake. The daffodils seemed to be dancing like human beings expressing their joy and energy when the breeze blew over them. The waves too were dancing but in front of daffodils they were not looking bright so could not compete with them. Both the flowers and waves seemed to have competition to show their feelings and expressions.

2. About which jocund company is the poet referring to? [3]

Ans. The poet is referring to the jocund company of the host of golden daffodils dancing in joy by the side of the lake under the trees. Along with them the waves in the lake too were dancing by the side of the daffodils. The poet was bound to be happy in such a joyful company of the daffodils and the waves.

3. How does the poet make difference between the natural surroundings and daffodils? [3]

Ans. In the above stanza, the poet has shown difference between the daffodils and the natural surroundings. He says that there are other things like trees, lake and waves that are enhancing the beauty of the surroundings but the golden daffodil flowers are making it more beautiful. Their dancing movements and brightness are making a deeper impact on him than the other things in surroundings.

4. Which wealth is referred to here by the poet? [3]

Ans. The wealth which is referred to here by the poet means wealth of joy and happiness; which actually comes from happy and fond memories. The poet sees a host of golden daffodils by the side of the lake, beneath the trees. Thus the poet has come to know the worth of the flowers.

5. "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity." Analyse this statement in the light of the poem Daffodils by William Wordsworth. [4]

Ans. In the present poem 'Daffodils', Wordsworth has depicted a host of beautiful golden daffodil flowers that he came across in the valley of Scotland. The beauty of those flowers had left an everlasting impression upon his mind. He recollected the memory of those daffodils which used to fill his heart with pleasure, that is why the poet wrote this poem. This poem was not a intentionally and artificial attempt of the poet, but a spontaneous expression of his feelings, the joy the flowers had brought to his life. This originates from the 'emotion recollected in tranquillity'. Thus the poem 'Daffodils' holds true to his own statement about what poetry should be.

IV. For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

1. Describe the feelings of the poet when he lies on his couch. [3]

Ans. The poet imagines the scene of the valley and the hills covered with daffodils while lying on his couch in two cases either he is unoccupied or he is in sad mood. By 'In vacant' he means that he has nothing to do or think and his mind is without any thought. 'In pensive mood' draws the attention of the readers toward his sorrow that makes him feel dejected.

2. What happens to the poet when he is sometimes in a pensive mood? [3]

Ans. Whenever the poet is in an unoccupied and sad mood, the happy memory of the daffodil flowers flushes upon his eyes of imagination which is a source of joy and inspiration to him. He feels the same pleasure that he felt when he had first seen them.

3. What is the phrase 'inward eye' referred to in the extract? [3]

Ans. The phrase 'inward eye' is referred to the imagination of the poet about the picture of dancing daffodils and shining waves which became a part of his life. He uses the phrase as a metaphor in the poem as he imagines the golden daffodils in his spiritual vision. The poet seems to have been connected to the spiritual beauty of these flowers forever.

4. Explain the phrase the 'bliss of solitude' in the context in which it has been used. [3]

Ans. The poet uses the phrase 'bliss of solitude' to highlight his idea about the daffodils. The memory of the flowers is so everlasting that it seems to entertain him even when he is all alone and has no one to accompany him or no work to do. It has become an integral part of his life and is best realised when he is left in solitude.

5. What does the poet say in the last two lines of the stanza? [4]

Ans. William Wordsworth says that when he gets alone, the scene of the valley and the hills that were covered with beautiful daffodil flowers looking golden in the sun comes in his mind and gives him the same pleasure as if he were among the flowers. His hearts fills with happiness and even dances with excitement with daffodil flowers. Through these lines he tries to show the extent to which this experience has touched his heart and conscience.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

1. Who is referred to 'I' in the extract? What is he doing? [3]
2. The poet uses the word 'wandered' for himself. How would you justify it? [3]
3. What is referred by the term 'crowd' in the extract? Why does the poet use it? [3]
4. Why does the poet describe the daffodils 'golden daffodils' and where does he see them? [3]
5. Explain the last two lines of the extract. [4]

II. The waves beside them danced; but they

Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company :
I gazed-and gazed-but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :

1. What is the role of the waves in the surroundings? Explain. [3]
2. What is meant by jocund company and why does the poet think it jocund? [3]
3. What is meant by the wealth for the poet after he sees the crowd of the golden daffodils? [3]
4. What rhyme scheme is followed in the poem? Explain with example. [3]
5. Explain the significance of above extract. [4]

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Maya Angelou

About the Poet

Maya Angelou was born on 4th April, 1928 in Missouri, US. She was a powerful feminist writer, a widely acclaimed American poetess, story teller, activist and autobiographer. She was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President Bill Clinton. In 2010, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honour in the US. The present poem 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' is her acclaimed memoir about her life upto the age of 17. Maya Angelou published several collections of poetry but her most famous was 1971's collection 'Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I diie', which was nominated for Pulitzer Prize. She died on 28th May, 2014.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

The poem 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' was written in 1969. This poem brought Maya Angelou international acclaim and recognition. The bird in a cage is a symbol of all African Americans and their fight for freedom. She has given images of caged bird and a free bird symbolising the people who are slaves and the people who are free. The poem is a clear reflection upon class partiality or social disparity and ideals of freedom and justice. The poem is quite symbolic, so there are various hidden messages, she tries to convey her feelings indirectly. The poem has a tinge of sorrow but shows many signs of perseverance (firmness) also.

Critical Appreciation

Title

The title of the poem is a reflection of earnest struggle of the African Americans in the 1950s. The atmosphere is quite motivational as inspite of clipped feathers, the bird sings and his voice is heard.

Tone

Through this poem Maya Angelou uses a calm but direct tone. The reader can clearly see that the poetess has a message to send across her readers. Though the language used is very simple, it also tells the reader how a caged bird sings for freedom and sees hope through its cage bars.

A Subtle (Complex) Word Picture

Through the discrete use of words, Maya Angelou, has tried to express abstract meanings. Her use of words is very vivid. The word used in this poem convey deep meaning. The diction is fluid, leaving the reader analysing and making connections with the poem's connotative, meaning all her people being able to live happily with equality and peace with the same rights and privileges as the Whites.

Use of Literary Devices

Form

The poem is divided in six stanzas written in free verse describing the state of two birds—free bird and caged bird.

Rhyming Scheme

Though this poem does not have any definite rhyme scheme, it creates the illusion of rhyme with the clever use of consonance.

Figures of Speech

The poem is built around a metaphor that contrasts the condition of a free bird with the caged one.

Some poetic devices used in this poem are end rhyme, alliteration and personification.

- (i) **End rhyme** In lines 23 and 24 - end rhyme with the words breezed and trees.
- (ii) **Alliteration** In line 10 repetition of sound 'S'- Seldom, See.
- (iii) **Personification** In line 28 'his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream' is an example of personification because shadows do not have the human ability to shout.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

Word Meanings

Leaps—jumps, **Floats**—swims, **Downstream**—moving in the direction in which a river flows, **Dips**—plunges, sinks, **Orange sun**—sunlight appears orangish when it is clear sky early morning, **Claim**—assert, hold.

Reference These lines have been taken from the poem 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' written by Maya Angelou.

Context In these lines the poetess shows the freedom, a free bird experiences when he is able to move freely in the air.

Explanation Here, the poetess describes a bird who is free. He fearlessly soars (rise) high with the winds. The poetess has beautifully described the movements of this free bird when he floats down in the direction of the

stream and wets his wings in cool water when the orange sunlight falls upon him.

The orange rays suggest early morning and a clear sky. The bird is enjoying his freedom and is free to move about wherever he likes. He is without any bonds and goes up and down freely at his own free will. The bird is enjoying the nature's beauty and claiming the sky to be his possession.

Stanza 2

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

Word Meanings

Stalks—to walk in an angry or proud way, **Narrow Cage**—cage has very limited area, **Seldom**—rarely, Infrequently, **Rage**—violent, uncontrollable anger, **Clipped**—cut short or trim.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here, the poetess describes the miserable condition of a caged bird to contrast with that of the free bird. The bird is unable to move freely and can not go beyond his cage.

Explanation Here, the poetess describes the condition of a bird who is kept in a cage as a contrast to the free bird who is free to move around wherever he wishes. The bird who is kept in a cage is unable to see outside world which makes him angry. He is hardly able to get a glimpse of the sky which makes him sad. He desires day and night to escape from this slavery but is unable to do so. Wings are clipped suggests, forcibly snatching of the freedom from someone. The bird is unable to move out of the cage as his feet are tied. He feels helpless and can only open his mouth to sing a song of freedom. The bird's singing appears as a symbol of his desire to be free and his only joy and achievement in life.

Stanza 3

The caged bird sings
With fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Word Meanings

Fearful—frightened, afraid, **Trill**—a quavering and warbling sound, **Longed**—have a strong wish or desire, **Distant**—far-away, far off.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poetess describes the singing of the caged bird who aspires for freedom but his singing is tinged with a little fear also.

Explanation The caged bird sings with a trembling voice. The caged bird dreams of his freedom, which he is not able to achieve. He does not know the taste of freedom, his voice shows trembling born out of fear, yet he hopes to be free. The song or his voice can be heard at far off places, at distant hills inspiring others also to dream about freedom. Though the bird is caged, he does not sing a sad song. The poem has its symbolic relevance, like caged bird many black people wrote and cried out for freedom they deserved but their voices were only heard as a distant voice. Yet this would not stop them from yearning for freedom as everybody has right to be free and be treated with equality. Their voice, though trembling denotes their hopes and aspirations.

Stanza 4

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

Word Meanings

Breeze—a gentle wind, **Sighing**—breeze making a sound resembling a sigh, **Dawn**—early morning.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poetess here describes the joy, a free bird feels in singing and flying, free from all worries and sufferings.

Explanation Here, the poetess again describes about the free bird who is free to do whatever he wishes. This time he thinks that he should fly with another breeze and

does so. He flies among the trees that are making a sound just like a sigh. He has the freedom of choosing his food. He sees worms on the grass field. The worms are fat and are sitting on the grass. It is dawn and the field is shining due to the sun rays. The free bird thinks the whole sky as his own, he feels proud of his freedom and considers the whole universe as his own.

Stanza 5

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

Word Meanings

Grave of Dreams—the hopes and aspirations of black people are dead, **Nightmare**—a very upsetting or frightening dream, **Scream**—a very loud pitched cry.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poetess describes how a caged bird is denied its freedom by clipping his wings and tying his feet.

Explanation Here, again the poetess describes the parallel between a free bird and bird which is kept in captivity. A caged bird's all hopes and desires have been killed as he is forced to bury whatever dreams he has. His dreams of flying free or experiencing freedom is futile. His slavery is like a nightmare. His wings are trimmed so he is unable to fly. His feet are tied, that's why he can not move around freely, so he opens his throat to sing, kindling a little hope that he may get freedom.

He keeps his voice alive inspite of all adversities. This is the only freedom available to the caged bird. Again symbolic representation of hardship of blacks by the whites. The blacks are not allowed any type of freedom but still they are raising their voice, demanding freedom.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

1. Describe the life of the free bird as described by the poetess Maya Angelou. [3]

Ans. The free bird as described by the poetess is enjoying his freedom fearlessly. The bird is enjoying his flight in natural atmosphere or habitat. 'Dips his wings' means that the bird is free and uses his wings the way he wants.

2. What does the free bird symbolise? [3]

Ans. The free bird symbolises people who are free to lead their life the way they want without any prejudices. The free bird has the opportunity to move through life seeking in its abundance. The people, like free bird are able to make their own decisions and choices.

3. How does poetess show her love for nature through this stanza? [3]

Ans. The poetess has described nature beautifully through the movements of free bird as he flies upward in the sky and at the next moment his floating effortlessly down the gentle current of a river. The morning sun has been described as 'orange sun rays', a beautiful imagery of rising sun which appears orange, when the bird flies he appears as if he had dipped his wings in the orange sun.

4. What is the biggest possession of a free bird? [3]

Ans. Freedom is the biggest possession of a free bird that makes him able to experience all kinds of beauty of nature, to fly wherever he wishes, to eat whatever he wants and to live and stay wherever he desires. No matter how big and strong a bird is, cannot even move his wings on his own wish, if he does not possess freedom.

5. Describe the tone of the poetess in these lines. [4]

Ans. Even though, the poetess is describing the free bird, her tone is a bit satirical as later on she describes the plight of a caged bird representing the condition of African Americans who were exploited by the Whites. The words chosen to describe the free bird like leap, floats, dips etc not only show the freedom of the bird but also highlight the contrast where she describes the caged bird.

II. But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

1. What is plight of the bird mentioned in these lines? How is it different from the one described in the first stanza? [3]

Ans. The bird described here is kept in captivity and is not free at all. He is kept in a cage so he is unable to see the open sky as through cage, only limited vision is possible. The bird feels helpless and unhappy. His wings are clipped and feet are tied suggests that he can not do anything independently. This situation keeps him away from flying.

2. Despite being in a cage, unable to fly, the caged bird sings. Describe the condition of bird in the extract. [3]

Ans. The caged bird, though feels helpless to fly, he sings in expectation that he was created to be free. He hardly even gets a chance to see the sky. The bird is shown to be afraid of many strange and undisclosed things, yet he wants to taste freedom.

3. What do the words 'clipped' and 'feet tied' suggest? [3]

Ans. 'Clipped' means that freedom of concerned person is curtailed and he is not free to do or move around as he wishes. The blacks in America had to face limitations based on a systematic cycle of racial oppression which prevented class mobility. 'Feet tied' also suggests slavery as the concerned person is not able to enjoy the liberty or the freedom to do things on his own.

4. Explain, 'So he opens his throat to Sing'. [3]

Ans. The last line of this stanza, suggests that inspite of clipped wings and feet tied, the bird still wants to sing or raise his voice so that his craving for freedom can be heard at least. The bird, though in fearful tone calls for freedom.

5. Whom does the poetess refer indirectly while mentioning the free and the caged birds? [4]

Ans. The poetess here refers the free bird to the Whites who were free to do whatever they wished and could live fearlessly. On the other hand the caged bird refers to the Blacks who were oppressed by the Whites. They felt helpless due to slavery, unable to take independent decisions and do whatever they wanted to do.

III. The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

1. Here the poetess says that 'caged bird sings with fearful trill', why? [3]

Ans. The poetess says that 'caged bird sings with a fearful trill' - is ironic as the caged bird is the one singing not like the free bird as we expect. The words 'fearful' and 'trill' make us realise that actually it is not a happy voice but a desperate cry for freedom.

2. What does the poetess mean by the expression, 'his tune is heard on the distant hill'? [3]

Ans. The poetess reveals that the caged bird's cry for freedom is heard only as a soft background noise. His cries are heard only as a distant noise. No one gives attention to his voice, though he too was created by God and has a right to live with dignity and freedom.

3. What is the purpose of repeating the line 'the caged bird sings of freedom'? [3]

Ans. The purpose of repeating the line 'the caged bird sings of freedom' shows the poetess' yearning for freedom. 'Sings of freedom' suggests, raising the voice against racism and the poetess in her life sang and danced because it was her way of expressing her longing for freedom and her protest against partiality.

4. How is this poem a reflection on social disparity? [3]

Ans. The poetess Maya Angelou has used metaphors of free bird and caged bird interchangeably to reflect on the social disparity. With the use of these metaphors Angelou represents the inequality of justice in the society of her time when African Americans were not treated at par with the White Americans. She also illustrates the nature of both freedom and slavery by creating a deep contrast between the two by showing free and caged bird.

5. Why does the bird in the cage sing of freedom? What does it imply? [4]

Ans. The last line may imply that though the bird is inside the cage, he dares to sing. He may never have experienced freedom but he still sings as everyone was created free. This is similar to what the Black Americans did. They wrote and sang and cried for freedom they deserved, but it took a long time before their voice was heard.

But nothing could stop them as they were aware that everybody has the right to live as a free individual and making someone slave was incorrect and unethical. They knew they will continue their struggle, until they were made free and live freely to enjoy life.

IV. The free bird thinks of another breeze and the
trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright
lawn and he names the sky his own.
But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

1. How, through this poem, the poetess has shown the various activities of free bird? [3]

Ans. In this stanza the poetess shows the liberty taken by free bird. He is free to move in any direction but he is not contented and chooses another breeze so that he can enjoy more freedom and be free to find his own food. The bird is not contented and is greedy to have even more freedom.

2. How is the life of a caged bird is not same as that of a free bird? [3]

Ans. The poem shows the life of a free bird and a caged bird. The caged bird is not free. He can not fly as he is put inside the cage. All his dreams and desires have died sitting inside a cage.

He does not get a chance to see the outside world and explore the sky. He is afraid but still he opens his mouth to sing because his inherent desire for freedom can not be taken away. The free bird is allowed to fly and explore different areas but a caged bird is not able to even fly.

3. Explain, 'The grave of dream'. [3]

Ans. The caged bird is not free to pursue what he dreams. As he lives in captivity inside the cage, he has not been able to fulfil his dreams and aspirations. So, the poet calls the bird's cage as 'grave of dreams'. The bird's ambitions and aspirations are suppressed by the sorrowful captivity inside the cage.

4. Why do you think Maya Angelou wrote this poem? [3]

Ans. Maya Angelou must have written this poem to bring out the fact that a wide disparity existed in the treatment and facilities given to White Americans and African Americans. The caged bird symbolises the plight of African Americans who were deprived of freedom and were not able to fulfil their dreams and desires.

5. How does the description of a caged bird resemble the state of mind of the poetess? [4]

Ans. As the poetess Maya Angelou was an African American, she was a victim of racism and segregation (apart from state). The caged bird and his grave of dreams reveals the poet's feelings about her own dreams. She had so many desires but all of them were suppressed as she was never given an opportunity.

Being Black author and poetess, she often felt that her words were not heard, she was often experiencing slavery. Partiality and racism made her caged and although she sang, she felt her voice was not heard in the world, but only by those near her cage.

- V. But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sing. [ICSE 2020]

1. In the context of the poem who is a 'free bird' and who is a 'caged bird'?
What mood do the above lines convey? [3]

Ans. The white people in America are referred as 'free bird' and the blacks in America are referred as 'caged bird'. The lines convey the angry and sad mood of the 'caged bird'.

2. How does a free bird live his life? What are the things he thinks of and dreams about? [3]

Ans. The free bird enjoys his freedom fearlessly. He thinks of another breeze through the trees and dreams of good eatables like fat worms waiting on a bright lawn.

3. What does the caged bird sing about? What are the restrictions that a caged bird has to deal with? [3]

Ans. The caged bird sings about 'things unknown'. 'Things unknown' refers to the fact that the caged bird has never enjoyed freedom before and has no idea of what it tastes like.

The caged bird is unable to see the open sky as through the cage only limited vision is possible. His wings are dipped and feet are tied and hence he cannot move or fly.

4. What do you understand from the title of the poem? What do you like about the poem?

Ans. The title of the poem compares the life of the bird who lives freely to the one who is confined to a cage. The poet uses the metaphor of a bird struggling to escape its cage. The caged bird represents the poet's confinement resulting from racism and oppression. I like the way in which the poet has described the caged bird and the free bird.

5. Explain what you understand by the following lines :

'... a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage'
'he names the sky his own' [4]

Ans. (i) '..... a bird that stalks down his narrow cage' means that the bird in the cage is unable to move freely and is angry at his helplessness.
(ii) 'he names the sky his own' means that the free bird has all the freedom and so he thinks that the sky belongs to him.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

1. Who is a free bird? Why is he called so? [3]
2. What is the significance of verbs 'leaps', 'floats', 'dips', 'dares'? [3]
3. What does the expression 'dares to claim the sky' mean? [3]
4. What does the poet mean by 'orange sun rays'? [3]
5. Describe the image of the bird as presented in the above extract. [4]

II. The caged bird sings
with fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

1. The bird sings with a fearful trill. Why? What is the significance of the use of adjective 'Fearful'? [3]
2. The caged bird is symbol of the poetess in what ways? Elucidate. [3]
3. Though he is put in a cage, the bird still wants to sing. Why? [3]
4. Where is his tune heard and by whom? [3]
5. Is the title of poem apt? Give reason for your answer. [4]

III. But a Caged bird stands on a grave of dreams.
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

1. What 'dreams' in the above extract is mentioned? [3]
2. Why does the caged bird 'scream'? [3]
3. What does 'clipped wings' signify here in the context of African-Americans? [3]
4. Explain the expression 'shadow shouts'. [3]
5. What is the purpose and tone of the poem? [4]

The Patriot

Robert Browning

About the Poet

Robert Browning was born on 7th May, 1812, Camberwell, London, England. He was an English poet. His poems are known for their irony, characterisation, dark humour, social commentary and historical settings. His literary career began promisingly, but was not a success. In 1840, his poem 'Sordello' brought his poetry into disrepute. In 1868-69, he published the twelve-volume 'The Ring and the Book', which some critics believe to be his greatest work, and which earned the poet popularity for the first time. Browning received honorary DCL (Doctor of Civil Law) from Balliol College at Oxford University. Robert Browning died on 12th December 1889.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

The poem 'The Patriot' is a dramatic monologue which is written by one of the famous English poets Robert Browning. In this poem, the poet is talking about the harsh reality of the leaders or heroes who are true patriots of their country. It is about the sacrifices of a leader who was misunderstood by the people and going to be executed in front of the public.

Through this poem, the poet wants to give the reader a glimpse of the life of a hero who was given a grand welcome on his arrival to the town but later he was being executed for a crime which he had not committed. People threw stones at him which made him bleed. It shows ill-fate of a man who sacrificed his entire life for his country and his people.

The poem is also an expression of Browning's optimistic philosophy of life. As, he says "God is in his heaven and all is well with the world." The patriot hopes since he did not receive his reward in this world, he will be rewarded in the other world.

Critical Appreciation

The poem 'The Patriot' describes the inner feelings of a patriot who sacrifices everything for the sake of his country and his people. But he gets what he doesn't deserve as he has been declared guilty for a crime which he has not committed and this causes him his life as people who welcomed him once, throw stones and abuse him.

Title

The poem revolves around a leader or hero who sacrifices his life for the sake of his country and in the service of his people. But he gets punished for a crime which he never committed but is hanged as punishment. Being a true patriot, he doesn't blame anyone for his fate and doesn't become sad as he knows that he will be awarded in the other world for his service to the country. Hence, the title seems so appropriate.

Use of Literary Devices

Form

The poem is written in six stanzas with five lines each, for a total of thirty lines. It has a simple form that fits its simple theme and language.

Rhyming Scheme

The poet has used a set of rhyme scheme: ababa. The poem is being written in iambic meter, stressed syllables followed by unstressed syllable, which add pace to the poem.

Figure of Speech

- (i) **Metaphor** 'The church-spires flamed, such flags they had', 'And you see my harvest, what I reap'.
- (ii) **Simile** 'With myrtle mixed in my path like mad'
The word 'mad' refers to the state of extreme or intense feelings or acts. Here in the poem this simile is used to describe the passionate and welcoming feelings of public for their leader.
- (iii) **Personification** In this poem house roofs have been personified: 'The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway'.
- (iv) **Irony** The poet talks about the poor mentality of illiterate common masses ironically as: 'For they fling, whoever has a mind'.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

Word Meanings

Myrtle—an evergreen shrub, **Heave Sway**—move or cause to move slowly, **Spire**—a tapering conical or pyramidal structure on the top of a building, typically a church tower, **Flamed**—shine or glow like a flame.

Reference The above stanza has been taken from the poem 'The Patriot' composed by the famous poet 'Robert Browning'.

Context In this stanza, the patriot is presented as a public hero who is greeted with immense love and affection by the people of the country.

Explanation In this stanza, the speaker describes a past event of a grand public welcome that happened in his life last year on the very same day. He remembers that his walking path was covered with the flowers of rose and

myrtle. The path was decorated with these flowers for him. People were standing on the roofs of their houses and were cheering for him when he passed by. Everybody seemed happy to see him. People had covered the spires of the church with flaming flags for the celebration. People were very glad to greet their hero and were enthusiastic to see him as he passed by.

Stanza 2

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

Word Meanings

Mist—used in reference of something that blurs one's perceptions or memory, **Folk**—people in general, **Repel**—drive or force (an attack or attacker) back or away, **Yonder**—the far distance.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context In this stanza, the speaker describes the whole welcome ceremony in a delighted mood. Here, he shows his gratitude towards the people.

Explanation In the second stanza of the poem, the speaker tells about the past incident that happened on the same day a year ago. People were celebrating by ringing bells and the entire atmosphere was filled with its noise. They were standing on some old structure and cheering for the patriot with their cries rocking the walls. The Sun is the symbol of immortal power, honour and glory. Hence, the patriot asked the people to fetch him their Sun from the skies.

The patriot says that he had not asked anything like that for him but the respect and the welcome he had received from the people was overwhelming. They would then ask him what else he wanted. He says that he could get anything from them and they would have readily given it to him, so great was his image.

Stanza 3

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Nought man could do, have I left undone:
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

Word Meanings

Alack—used to express regret or dismay, **Leaped**—moved quickly and suddenly, **Nought**—nothing, **Reap**—receive (something) as a consequence of one's own or another's actions.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context In this stanza, the speaker says that once he was worshipped as demi-god by the people. But due to some political revolution, he is now considered a traitor.

Explanation In this stanza, the speaker speaks that he asked the people who had gathered to welcome him to bring the Sun for him but on the contrary he had to do impossible for them. He says that for his people he did everything that brought happiness and peace in their lives. He even did the work that was not possible for any other man and while performing his duty toward his people he sacrificed everything. Now he regrets over the fruits of his sacrifice as the people have turned against him. He has been declared traitor as so has been accepted by the people. He calls it the harvest of his deeds that he will have to reap means he will have to face the sentence of his work on the same day after one year when he was hailed as a hero.

Stanza 4

There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the window set;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shamble's Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

Word Meanings

Palsied—affected with paralysis and involuntary tremors,
Shamble—(of a person) move with a slow, shuffling, awkward gait,
Scaffold—a raised wooden platform used formerly for the public execution of criminals, **Trow**—think or believe.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here the poet describes the present day contrasting it with the one on the same day a year ago. Now, he has been convicted and being punished as a traitor in front of the public.

Explanation In this stanza, the poet mourns that nobody can be seen on the housetops to welcome him now. It is quite opposite to the scene when he was welcomed by them. Now there are only a few people, who are rather paralysed and are standing at the windows. Now they are watching a different sight. This sight is a sort of ridicule and everybody agrees to it. Obviously, the sight is horrible because the leader is now being taken to the slaughter-house, or it can be better said, the leader thinks, that he is being taken to the gallows to be hanged there. It is all the reward of his good deeds. His noble deeds have been converted into wicked sins and people are now punishing him for his supposed misdeeds.

Stanza 5

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, of my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Word Meanings

Bleeds—to lose blood from the body as a result of injury or illness,
Fling—move or push (something) suddenly or violently, **Misdeed**—a wicked or illegal act.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The fifth stanza is the continuation of the previous one and further describes the speaker's humiliation at the hands of the people. The patriot is in his own mind, knowing the steadfast certainty of death ahead of him.

Explanation In this stanza, the poet also mocks over his sad condition. The imagery here is that of the patriot walking in the rain, heading towards the place he is about to be hanged. They have tied his hands behind his back with a tight rope. When they are taking him to the slaughter-house, the rope cuts his both hands at wrists. The culprit (the leader) feels that his forehead is bleeding. This is because everybody in his right sense throwing stones at him. Everybody feels that he has done nothing for his countrymen. Every person has turned against him and the achievements of his past one year have been changed to misdeeds. This means they have forgotten his service to them and they are now punishing him for his good work for them.

Stanza 6

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
“Me”—God might question; now instead,
‘Tis God shall repay: I am safer so.

Word Meanings

Triumph—a great victory or achievement, **Dropped down dead**—died very suddenly and unexpectedly, **Owe**—have an obligation to pay in return for something received.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The last stanza of the poem reflects on the patriot's death. It is full of philosophical and religious ideas. He feels safer knowing that God knows he stood for what he thought was right and thus he will be safe under him.

Explanation Here the tone of the speaker has become spiritual. He says that as he was born and entered in this world in the same way he will die and depart from it. He does not seem to be angry or regretful instead is happy with his fate as he claims that in the struggle of good people are misunderstood and have to sacrifice their lives.

He is very optimistic about his future after death as he has been punished for his sin if he did any so has no fear. God will welcome him in the same way as he was welcomed by the people. He will be safe with God as he is just and fair and does not punish anyone for the sin that he has not committed. So he places his trust on God and shows no fear of death.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. It was roses, roses, all the way
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

1. How was the patriot treated at the beginning? [3]

Ans. The patriot says that just a year ago on the very same day when he entered the city, people welcomed him warmly. His paths were decorated with roses and myrtles. There were sounds of bells resounding in the air. People gathered to see the great leader who performed great deeds for his nation. People were very happy and excited.

2. Explain the 'with myrtle mixed in my path like mad'. [3]

Ans. The second line of the stanza states that the path of the martyr was decorated with myrtle (a decorative flower). It was done so as to welcome the patriot. Numerous myrtle flowers were spread on his path. They were falling on his path like mad people scattering here and there.

3. Why did the house-roofs seem to heave and sway? [3]

Ans. The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway as people had gathered to welcome their hero, 'the patriot' who came to the city after a victory. They wanted a glimpse of their hero so they approached to the roofs of the houses. Here, the patriot remembers the feeling of immense joy and love at the time of his welcome, a year ago on the very same day.

4. What is meant by the phrase 'the church-spires flamed' in the above stanza? [3]

Ans. The phrase 'the church-spires flamed' has been used to describe happiness and joy of people when they welcomed their hero. It shows that the minarets and domes of churches looked like flames, due to colourful flags used to decorate the city to welcome the patriot.

5. What is the significance of the last line of the stanza? [4]

Ans. The last line signifies that a year ago the patriot was welcomed warmly by the people. This makes the reader more curious as to how he is treated by his people now. It is mentioned so as to contrast the difference in the life of the martyr in the 'past' to what is happening at 'present' quite intelligibly. It also displays the irony involved in the line that it was the same day last year when he was hailed as a hero against today when he is being taken through the same streets to be hung.

- II. The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels—
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

1. Describe 'the air broke into a mist'. [3]

Ans. The people were giving a warm welcome to the patriot. They were ringing the bells and raising slogans. These different voices got mixed and produced a sort of music. Due to this the air became misty and heavy.

2. What does 'The old walls rocked' mean? [3]

Ans. It refers to the incident when the patriot returned a year ago. The people were standing on an old structure and were cheering by ringing bells. The cheering was so loud that it seemed to rock the walls of the structure.

3. Explain the third line of the above given stanza.
What did it suggest about the mood of the crowd? [3]

Ans. It states that the people were so happy when he came at the same time last year that if he had asked them for anything else, they would have given it to him. They would have even given him on which their livelihood depended.

4. Do you think that the people were ready to sacrifice anything for the patriot? How? [3]

Ans. Yes, the people were ready to sacrifice anything for the patriot. This is mentioned in the last line where the people ask him if he want them to get anything else for him. Everybody wanted to honour him and at that time whatever he wished was of the utmost importance for the people.

5. What did the patriot want from the people? [4]

Ans. As per the stanza, the patriot did not want the cheer, the applause of the people and extravagant celebrations that die down with time. He was looking for something more permanent. He wanted them to fetch something immortal for him such as the Sun's admiration. In other words, he wanted to live in their memories as a hero forever.

III. Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Nought man could do, have I left undone:
Any you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

1. Who is 'I' in the above extract? What does 'leaped at the sun' mean? [3]

Ans. In the above extract 'I' has been used by the poet for the hero. It means that the patriot has done the impossible for the people. The task that he accomplished, could not be accomplished by anyone else.

2. Discuss the mood of the patriot in the given lines. [3]

Ans. The patriot is in a regretful mood in the given lines. He is sad that even after doing great works for the people, he is called a traitor. All the sacrifices that he made for his countrymen have gone in vain.

3. What does 'Nought man' signify in the poem? [3]

Ans. 'Nought' means no here. It means that no man could have been able to accomplish what had been done by the patriot. He also wants to express that no other man was as patriotic as he was because he did the work called impossible by other man.

4. Describe 'what I reap' in above stanza. [3]

Ans. It means the result of the poet's actions. The poet had done the impossible for his people. However, the reward that he got from the people at the end of it was not what he had expected. He expected a honourable life for whatever he had done for his people but what he got was the tag of a traitor the fruit of his patriotism.

5. Explain the last line of the poem in given stanza. [4]

Ans. It describes that a year ago on the same day patriot was given a warm welcome by the people. He was shown a lot of respect, honour and concern by the people. A year back patriot was given celebrity status. However, now he has been branded as a traitor by the same people. This type of behaviour of the people hurts the sentiment of the patriot.

IV. There's nobody on the house-tops now—
Just a palsied few at the window set;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shamble's Gate—or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow. [ICSE 2019]

1. Who is the speaker? Where is he being taken? Why? [3]

Ans. The speaker is the patriot who is giving the monologue in the poem. He is being taken to the place where criminals and traitors are publicly hanged, called Shambles' Gate because his patriotic deeds have been misunderstood as traitorous deeds.

2. Describe the scene when he had walked down the same street a year ago. [3]

Ans. When he had walked down the same street a year ago, the path was decorated with rose and myrtle flowers. People were standing on the rooftops of their houses. They cheered him as he passed because he was a great hero at that time.

3. Where does the speaker think all the people had gathered that day? Why does he think so? [3]

Ans. The speaker thinks that all the people had gathered that day at 'Shambles' Gate', where criminals and traitors are publicly hanged. He thought so because people love to watch a spectacle such as a public hanging.

4. Describe the speaker's physical condition. [3]

Ans. The speaker's physical condition is that his hands are tied behind by a tight rope – so tight that it cuts his wrists. He is bleeding from his forehead as the people are throwing stones at him which are causing injuries to him.

5. What is the central message of the poem?
Does the poem end on a note of hope or despair?
Give one reason for your answer. [4]

Ans. The central message of the poem is that sacrifices of the leaders are misunderstood by the people. It stresses the point that not all decisions made or supported by the people are the right decisions, or even in their own interest. The poem ends on a note of hope because the patriot believes that it is God who will reward him according to his true merit.

- V. I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, of my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

1. What does 'rain' signify here? [3]

Ans. 'Rain' signifies that the patriot has become wet due to the falling rain. This has made him lose all his dignity. It may also symbolise that the patriot is innocent as he is washed clean in the rain.

2. How do the crowd show their displeasure with the patriot? [3]

Ans. The crowd have distanced themselves from the patriot whose achievements were lauded and appreciated one year ago. He is soaking in rain and hands are tied with a rope which is hurting his wrists. Some angry people are throwing stones at him as a result blood is coming out of his forehead.

3. Why is the patriot bleeding? Why cannot he save himself? [3]

Ans. People are throwing stones at the patriot and as a result he gets injured and bleeds. He feels the flowing of blood from his forehead. He cannot save himself as he is chained, his hands are tied with a rope. He is being taken to Shambles Gate where he will be hung so he cannot run to save himself.

4. Explain 'For they fling, whoever has a mind'. [3]

Ans. This means that the people who are throwing stones at the patriot are the ones who have an active mind. The patriot does not seem to be angry with these people as he thinks that they have misunderstood him.

5. Explain 'year's misdeeds'. [4]

Ans. This means that the patriot's achievements of the past one year have been changed to misdeeds. In a way,

that people have forgotten his service to them as he is being punished for the good that has been done by him for them. It is a brilliant portrayal of the imperfect public commendation memory.

- VI. Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
"Me?" God might question; now instead,
'Tis God shall repay: I am safer so.

1. Explain the first line of the stanza. [3]

Ans. The first line of the stanza describes the patriot's entry (birth) into the world and his exit (death). This also signifies his entry and exit from his position of power and the people's mind, to his execution as a traitor.

2. Explain the second line of the above given stanza. [3]

Ans. It means that some people die of doing good. He looks at his circumstances as his pride. He believes that he stood by the right things and thus considers himself victorious in defeat, as his work benefited his people.

3. The patriot wishes that he should have died in power, why? [3]

Ans. The poet wishes that he should have died while he was in power. This is because he felt insulted as after doing so much good for his people he is being hanged. On the other hand, he believes that if he had died while he was in power, he would not have been insulted like this.

4. In what way does the patriot feel safe? [3]

Ans. Even though he is dying, the poet feels safe as he knows that he has been moral and has done the right things in life. Therefore, he thinks that he would go to heaven where he will not have to face punishment for the things he has not done.

5. How does the above extract reflect the feeling of patriot towards God? What does God say to the patriot? [4]

Ans. The patriot's religious beliefs have been reflected and his belief in after life has been showcased when he mentions how he will be received by God. God tells the patriot that his sins will already be washed when he dies. This is because the people have been punished him for his sins and he is now free of all corruption. He then asks the patriot what he expects from him now.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

1. Why was a magnificent welcome given to the hero? [3]
2. Describe the scene of people greeting the patriot. [3]
3. What does the line 'house-roofs seemed to heave and sway' indicate? [3]
4. What happens a year after the celebration of the triumph? [3]
5. What were the feelings of the patriot during this? [4]

II. Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Nought man could do, have I left undone:
Any you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

1. What must have brought the downfall of the patriot? [3]
2. How is he being treated by common people now? Is public memory very short? [3]
3. Do you think the patriot has achieved the impossible in the last one year? [3]
4. Explain 'And you see my harvest, what I reap'. [3]
5. What is the poetic style of 'The Patriot'—An Old Story? [4]

Abou Ben Adhem

James Henry Leigh Hunt

About the Poet

Leigh Hunt's full name was James Henry Leigh Hunt. He was born on 19th October, 1784 in Middlesex, England Leigh was an essayist, critic, journalist and poet. He was also a friend and supporter of poets PB Shelley and John Keats. From the beginning, his poems reveal a love for Italian literature. His first volume, *Juvenilia* and the story of *Rimni* reintroduced the English couplet verse lost in the eighteenth century. 'Abou Ben Adhem' and 'Jenny Kissed Me' are some of his best known poems. He died on 28th August, 1959.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

Abou Ben Adhem is based on the spirit of brotherhood. Abou was a pious man. He was the leader of his tribe. One night when he was sleeping peacefully in his room, a sparkling light woke him up. He found out that there was an angel in his room who was writing something in a book of gold. Abou maintained his calm during the presence of the angel and asked what it was writing in the book. The angel told him that it was writing the names of people who loved God. Abou then asked it if his name was in the list. The angel replied in the negative, which made Abou sad. However, he requested it to include his name in the list of people who loved God's fellowmen.

The other night, the angel appeared again with a list of the names of people whom God had blessed. Abou was surprised to find that his name was on top of the list. This poem conveys the message that if one wants to get God's love, one must love one's fellow beings.

Critical Appreciation

'Abou Ben Adhem' is Leigh Hunt's rendering of a divine encounter between an angel and a sufi mystic, Ibrahim ibn Adham. It is a literary piece based on the spirit of 'Brotherhood'.

Title/Theme

The title of the poem is appropriate as the legend of 'Abou Ben Adhem' was picked up by Henry Leigh Hunt from a French Book. The message is clear and simple which is conveyed through this poem. All the people have spark of divine within and by acknowledging that spark, one demonstrates the love of God.

Use of Literary Devices

Rhyming Scheme

Leigh Hunt has written the poem in rhyming pairs of lines (couplets) Line 1 rhymes with Line 2 the meter of the poem varies. Most of the lines have ten syllables that frequently consist of five iambs as in Line 3 and 5.

Figure of Speech

The poet has used '**Alliteration**' quite frequently in the poem : e.g. Abou Ben awoke one night from a deep dream of piece.

Use of Assonance

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming in its phrases or sentences.

Example in this poem : Ben Adhem deep dream of peace making it rich.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold :
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,

Word Meanings

Book of gold—a book in which God writes the name of people who are dear to him, **Exceeding**—a large amount of something.

Reference These lines have been taken from the poem 'Abou Ben Adhem'. The poem is written by James Henry Leigh Hunt.

Context In the given stanza the poet describes the scene when the protagonist comes across a divine visitor in his room.

Explanation Abou Ben Adhem was an eighth century sufi mystic. He loved his tribesmen and helped them greatly. 'May his tribe increase!' is written in the 1st line of the poem in brackets to wish for the growth of people who followed the teachings of Abou Ben Adhem. One night Abou Ben Adhem awoke while he was having a peaceful dream in his sleep. His room was lit by the moonlight. Suddenly an angel appeared in his room. It's appearance made the room look lively. It was as beautiful as the lily flower in bloom. The angel was writing something in a book of gold (a divine book containing the names of people who love God). The appearance of the angel did not frighten Ben. In other words, he was not scared of the appearance of the angel like other people would be if they were in a similar situation. This was because he was a brave person and had done nothing wrong in his life.

Stanza 2

And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?"-The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men".

Word Meanings

Sweet accord—a look that evokes sweetness, **Nay**—no, **Speak more low**—to speak in a low tone.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here the poet beautifully describes the conversation that takes place between the protagonist and the angel who is writing something in the divine book.

Explanation Seeing the angel writing something in a book of gold in his room, Abou Ben Adhem, gathered courage and asked the angel what it was writing. At this the angel raised its head. Seeing Abou in front of it, the angel made very sweet expression on its face and with very sweet voice answered him that it was writing the names of those who loved God. The answer of the angel made Abou asks if his name was among those people's. But the angel replied that his name was not written in the book. Hearing this the voice of Abou became more low but the answer could not mar his devotion towards God as his voice was still full with happiness and hope. He requested the angel to write his name among those who love their fellow men which was also a divine deed close to God.

Stanza 3

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Word Meanings

Vanished—disappeared, **Wakening light**—bright light that aroused Ben Adhem from his sleep, **Blest**—blessed, **Led all the rest**—was at the top.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The present stanza brings before us the fact that God blesses those who love their fellow beings.

Explanation Here the poet describes how the prayers made to God, do not go in vain. The same happened with the sufi Abou Ben Adhem. On the request of Abou Adhem, the angel wrote his name among the names of other people who love their fellow men and disappeared. The next night it reappeared but this time the room was lit with bright light that awoke Abou Adhem.

The angel showed him the names of those whom God had blessed with his love and affection. It was more surprising for him as his name was written on the top of the list indicating that his work of human welfare had been recognised long ago and he was the favourite person of God.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)

Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
[ICSE 2020]

- 1.** What did Abou Ben Adhem see when he woke from a deep sleep one night? [3]

Ans. Abou Ben Adhem saw an angel when he woke from a deep sleep one night. The angel was as beautiful as the lily flower in bloom. She was writing something in a book of gold (a divine book containing the names of people who love God).

- 2.** What did Abou Ben Adhem ask the angel? What was the angel's response? [3]

Ans. 'Abou Ben Adhem asked the angel what she was writing in the book. The angel responded by saying that she was writing the names of those people who love God.

- 3.** What did Abou request the angel to do when he learnt that his name did not appear among the names of those who loved the Lord? What does this reveal to us of Abou Ben Adhem's character? [3]

Ans. When he learnt that his name did not appear among the names of people who loved the Lord, Abou requested the angel to write his name among those who love their fellow men. Abou Ben Adhem did not lose his spirit when he came to know that his name was not in the list of people who loved God. He still spoke to the angel with cheer and joy.

- 4.** When and how did the angel appear to Abou Ben Adhem again? What did the angel show Abou this time? [3]

Ans. The angel appeared to Abou Ben Adhem again the next night. It appeared with a great awakening light which was so bright that it awoke Abou Ben Adhem. The angel showed him the names of those people whom God had blessed with his love and affection.

- 5.** What does the poet mean by 'May his tribe increase! Why do you think he says this? What is the central message of the poem? [4]

Ans. By 'May his tribe increase', the poet wishes for the growth of people who followed the teachings of Abou Ben Adhem. He says this because Abou loved his tribesmen and helped them greatly so he (the poet) wanted the tribe of Abou (the followers of Abou) to increase.

The central message of the poem is that God blesses and loves those people who love and serve their fellowmen. If one wants to please God, one must please one's fellow men.

- II.** And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" - The vision raised its head, And with a look made of all sweet accord, Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."

"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so," Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low, But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee, then, Write me as one that loves his fellow men".

- 1.** Why did neither of them show any surprise in their encounter or meeting? [3]

Ans. The poem is based on a spiritual background where existence of God and His messengers seemed to be common and certain. Abou Ben Adhem being a Sufi was a great believer of God as well as his angels so he

did not find it surprising to see an angel in his room while the angel too knew the spiritual side of Abou Ben and was certain that it would be spotted by him. Thus neither of them showed any surprise.

2. How did the angel respond to his question? [3]

Ans. The angel raised its head and looked at Ben with a face that evokes kindness. Angel told him that it was writing the names of those who loved God. When Abou Ben asked him if his name was written in the book. The angel replied him in negative.

3. What did Abou Ben want to know when the angel told him that it was writing the names of those who loved God? and Why? [3]

Ans. Hearing that the names of those who loved God, were being written. Abou Ben got curious to know if his name was fortunate enough to be written along with other peoples. He too was a great lover of God and had left all the luxurious to serve him and his people. Thus he thought that his name should be among those who loved God.

3. What was the effect of the angels answer on Abou's tone? [3]

Ans. The answer affected the volume of his tone as it got more low. It happened so because he himself was a great lover of God and thought himself to be worthy of the place among the lovers of God. Though his voice became more low, he did not lose his spirit and was still speaking with cheer and joy.

4. What did Ben Adhem request the angel to do? and Why? [3]

Ans. Ben Adhem told the angel that since his name was not in the list of people who loved God, his name should be written as the one that loves his fellow men. It implies that he wanted his name to reach the almighty same way or the other so that he could know his deeds and could bless him.

5. What is the significance of the book of gold? [4]

Ans. The second question asked by Ben was if his name appeared in the list of the people who loved God. In this poem the book of gold symbolises its great value and richness placed as its contents. This was not an ordinary book but a divine one where everyone craved to place his name.

III. The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God
had blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

1. What happened the following night? [3]

Ans. The following night the angel appeared again in Ben's room with a white light and showed him the names of the people whom God had blessed. Ben was surprised to see that his name was first in the list.

2. Describe the angel in Abou Ben Adhem. [3]

Ans. As described by the poet the angel is a divine messenger. The room is full of golden light due to angel's presence and its face has an unparalleled sweetness. It seems to have been sent by God himself to test Abou Ben Adhem's patience.

3. Explain "a great wakening light." How has Abou Ben Adhem been rewarded? [3]

Ans. The above line refers to the bright light capable of wakening the world. Abou Ben Adhem's name has been added in that list in which God has blessed the people. Inclusion of his name in that list is a big achievement for Ben Adhem.

4. Write a short note on the traits of Abou Ben Adhem. [3]

Ans. As described in this poem, Abou Ben Adhem was a pious man and the leader of a tribe. He loved his fellow men and was rewarded with God's love. He was quite patient and thankful of whatever he had. He had always thought the well being of his fellow men first.

5. What is the theme of the poem 'Abou Ben Adhem'? [4]

Ans. The theme of this poem is that God loves those who love their fellow men. Abou had shown true brotherhood and selfless love towards his people, which made him, more close to God. It was the best type of worship. Abou Ben Adhem's name was on top of the list of those who loved their fellowmen. Man is the most beloved creature of God, so those who love their fellowmen too deserve His blessings.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow.

I. And to the presence in the room he said,
“What writest thou?” - The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, “The names of those who love the Lord.”
“And is mine one?” said Abou. “Nay, not so,”
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, “I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men.”

1. What do ‘vision’ and ‘presence’ mean in the extract? [3]
2. Why did Ben Adhem speak in a low voice? [3]
3. Who was there in the room? What was it doing there? [3]
4. Explain the fourth line of the extract. [3]
5. Describe one of the qualities of Ben Adhem described in this extract. [4]

II. The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.

1. What does ‘vanished’ mean in the extract? [3]
2. What was the impact of “a great wakening light”? What was its role? [3]
3. Why was Abou Ben Adhem’s name on the top of the list? [3]
4. Explain the fifth line of the extract. [3]
5. What message does the poem convey? [4]

Nine Gold Medals

David Lee Roth

About the Poet

David Lee Roth was born on 10th October, 1954 in Indiana, United States. He is the son of ophthalmologist Nathan Roth and Sibyl Roth. He started singing solo when he was in late teens. Roth is also a talented guitarist and harmonica player. As a singer, song writer, recording artist, keynote speaker, workshop leader and instructor, David has earned top honours at premier song-writing competitions.

About the Poem (Central Idea)

'Nine Gold Medals', written by the American poet David Lee Roth, is a poem that inspires human compassion and co-operation. The poem is based on a story about the nine differently-abled athletes in a Special Olympic event. In a race, when one of the runners fell to the ground, all the others stopped and returned back to help him stand on his feet and then they walked hand-in-hand to finish the race. Each of the athletes was awarded a gold medal in recognition of his outstanding show of empathy and compassion. The poem 'Nine Gold Medals' conveys a great message to the humanity that the world now needs no more competition, but more co-operation and collaboration. This is very much relevant in our times when people have forgotten to help one another in an unhealthy rat-race in every aspect of life.

Critical Appreciation

Through the poem 'Nine Gold Medals' the poet David Lee Roth tells us that sport competitions are not just about winning medals only, it is more about showing values like kindness, empathy, love and co-operation. By exhibiting these values, one can be a true sportsman.

Title

The title of the poem conveys the theme of the poem. The title invokes our curiosity as to who won the nine gold medals and for what. The poem has the answer. The title not only reveals the subject matter of the poem, but also carries a delicate message.

Uses of Literary Devices

The unrhymed free verse form is used by the poet in this poem. The poem has 8 stanzas consisting of 4 lines each.

Stanzawise Explanation

Stanza 1

The athletes had come from so many countries
To run for the gold, for the silver and bronze
Many weeks and months in training
All building up to the games.

Word Meanings

Athlete—one who participates in a sporting event,
Building up—preparing for the event.

Reference These lines have been taken from the poem
'Nine Gold Medals' written by David Roth.

Context The poet is going to narrate an incident which
happened at the Special Olympics when differently
abled contestants set off for a race.

Explanation Here, the poet is describing about the
setting of the poem. The place is the venue of Special
Olympics games where the athletes from all over the
world have assembled at the venue of the competition
for winning the gold, silver and bronze medal in the
hundred metre race. They have spent a number of
weeks and months to train themselves for this event
which is to take place in the Special Olympics.

Stanza 2

All round the field spectators were gathered
Cheering on all the young women and men
Then the final event of the day was approaching
The last race about to begin.

Word Meanings

Spectator—one who goes to watch a sporting event, **Final**—last,
Approaching—come near.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet is here describing the scene at the play
field where a race event was about to start.

Explanation There was a great excitement among the
crowd to watch the worlds best athletes competing for
medals so a large stream of spectators were present at
the ground to cheer the participants of different
events. They were cheering the players and enjoying. It
continued throughout the day. Now, it was time for
the final event of the day—the hundred metre race.
People were excited and eagerly waiting for the race to
start.

Stanza 3

The loudspeakers called out the names of the runners
The one hundred metre the race to be run
And nine young athletes stood there determined
And poised for the sound of the gun.

Word Meanings

Stood—past and past participle of stand, **Poised**—self assured.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet here tells about the hundred metre race
which was about to start in a few minutes.

Explanation The names of nine runners who were going
to participate in the race were announced. All these nine
participants were determined to win the competition
and were standing up at their starting point. They were
all set to start at the sound of the gun.

Stanza 4

The signal was given, the pistol exploded
And so did the runners on hearing the sound
But the youngest among them stumbled and staggered
And he fell on his knees to the ground.

Word Meanings

Exploded—fired, **Stumbled**—to trip and almost fall, **Staggered**—to
move unsteadily.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here the poet is describing the scene how the
race starts and about the unexpected incident that
happens on the track.

Explanation All the runners who were to run the race,
had stood on their track waiting for the pistol to explod.
As soon as the signal for starting the race was given by
the firing of the pistol, all the participants in the race
started running as fast as they could. However, the
youngest of the participants in the race lost his balance
and fell on the ground. This event of falling down of a
runner during a race was unexpected as it does not occur
usually.

Stanza 5

He gave out a cry of frustration and anguish
His dreams and his efforts dashed in the dirt
But as sure as I'm standing here telling the story
Now it's a strange one, but here's what occurred.

Word Meanings

Anguish—extreme unhappiness caused by physical and mental suffering. **Dashed in the dirt**—got devastated or got shattered.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet is describing the scene when hundred metre race started and one of the participants fell down on his knees to the ground.

Explanation The scene is that of the final event of Olympic games where one hundred meter race had just started but one of the participants had fallen on his track. To assure the readers that what happened next was real though it looked impossible in today's competitive world. He says that he is sure what he witnessed was as true as he was telling the readers about the incident. The runner who fell down uttered a moan cry of frustration and sadness. This was due to the fact that as he had fallen down in the race, his dream of winning the race had also got shattered. It had also wasted all the efforts and hard work he had put in to win the competition.

Stanza 6

The eight other athletes stopped in their tracks
The ones who had trained for so long to compete
One by one they turned round and came back to help him
And lifted the lad to his feet.

Word Meaning

To his feet—help someone to get up.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context Here the poet is describing the incident that took place after the youngest of the runners had fallen on his track.

Explanation The poet is describing here the unusual sight that he as well as all the spectators gathered had seen when the other runners preferred helping their fellow participant to winning the most prestigious event of the Olympic games. On seeing the runner fall down, the other athletes stopped running.

One by one they turned back and went to the athlete who had fallen down. They helped him to stand up. Though, they had spent a lot of time and effort on their training, they did not hesitate to stop running to help the injured athlete.

Stanza 7

Then all nine runners joined hands and continued
The one hundred metres reduced to a walk
And the banner above that said "Special Olympics"
Could not have been nearer the mark.

Word Meanings

Banner—a strip of material showing the name of an event.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet describes the brilliant act of compassion and empathy for the fallen athlete by other eight runners.

Explanation After helping the fallen athlete (runner) to get up, all the nine athletes (runners) joined hands and started walking together towards the finishing line. Thus, the hundred-metre race had now been reduced to a walk by the athletes. The poet mentions that there was a banner hung above the racing track which said Special Olympics. He further says that the placement of the banner could not have been more appropriate as the athletes had displayed the value of true sportsmanship by helping the injured athlete and deciding to walk together to the finishing line as the injured athlete was not able to run anymore.

Stanza 8

That's how the race ended, with nine gold medals.
They came to the finish line holding hands still.
And the banner above and nine smiling faces
Said more than these words ever will.
Said more than these words ever will.

Word Meaning

Still—without moving.

Reference Same as stanza 1.

Context The poet talks about the action taken by all nine runners. They all walked together upto the finishing line. This was a fine example of empathy, cooperation and sportsman spirit.

Explanation As all the athletes walked down past the finishing line while holding their hands, the race ended and all of them were awarded a Gold Medal each. There was no second or third position in this race as all the athletes who took part in the race had won the first prize i.e. the Gold Medal. They, were smiling in a very wide manner and happy after winning the Gold Medal in the Special Olympics. When the audience saw the noble gesture of the athletes walking together past the finishing line as one of them was injured and could not run, they gave the athletes a standing ovation.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I.** The athletes had come from so many countries
To run for the gold, for the silver and bronze
Many weeks and months in training
All building up to the games.

- 1.** What is the reason for the coming of the athletes? [3]

Ans. The athletes have come to participate in the Special Olympics. They are supposed to take part in the events that were to be performed. These athletes were differently-abled so they wanted to show the world that they were not weaker as far as strength and determination were considered.

- 2.** How are the athletes mentioned in the extract different from the normal athletes? [3]

Ans. The athletes mentioned in the poem, are participating in the Special Olympics which is meant for people who are differently-abled. Their being differently-abled makes them different from normal athletes.

- 3.** What do the words 'gold', 'silver' and 'bronze' stand for in the above extract? [3]

Ans. It states that the athletes have come to participate in the Special Olympics to win Gold, Silver and Bronze medals in the events. These are the top three medals awarded to the persons with brilliant performance.

- 4.** Describe 'all building up'. [3]

Ans. 'All building up' means that the athletes undergo a long training so that they are able to participate and win the contest. They intensified their training so that they can develop their body as per the level of the olympics.

- 5.** How do you know that the athletes went through a rigorous training? [4]

Ans. We know that the athletes went through rigorous training because the third line of the stanza says 'Many weeks and months in training'. This means that their training lasted for a long period and was very rigorous. Everyone hoped for a medal, so athletes prepared themselves to mark their name for these awards. It could be possible only when they won one medal or two for their country.

- II.** All round the field spectators were gathered
Cheering on all the young women and men
Then the final event of the day was approaching
The last race about to begin. [ICSE 2019]

- 1.** Where had the 'young women and men' come from? What had brought them together?
How had they prepared themselves for the event? [3]

Ans. The young men and women had come from all over the world. The Special Olympics for the disabled had brought them together. They had prepared themselves for the event by training for many weeks and months before the event was held.

- 2.** What was the last event of the day? How many athletes were participating in this event? What signal were they waiting for? [3]

Ans. The last event of the day was the hundred metres race. Nine athletes were participating in the event. The signal they were waiting for was the sound of the starter's gun.

- 3.** What happened to the youngest athlete half way through the race? How did he respond? [3]

Ans. Halfway through the race, the youngest athlete stumbled and staggered. He then fell on his knees to the ground. He responded by giving a cry of frustration and anguish as his dreams and efforts had failed.

- 4.** What 'strange' turn did the story take at this point? [3]

Ans. At this point, the story took a strange turn. On seeing the youngest athlete fall down, the other athletes stopped running. One by one, they turned back to where he had fallen down and helped him to his feet. Then all runners joined hands and walked together to the finish line.

- 5.** Why does the poet say that the banner — 'Special Olympics' could not have been nearer the mark? What human quality does the poem celebrate? [4]

Ans. The poet says that the banner, 'Special Olympics', could not have been nearer the mark because all the

athletes had displayed the 'special' value of true sportsmanship by helping the injured athlete and walking together with him to the finish line. The human qualities that the poet celebrates are empathy, cooperation and sportsman spirit.

- III.** The signal was given, the pistol exploded
And so did the runners on hearing the sound
But the youngest among them stumbled and staggered
And he fell on his knees to the ground.

- 1.** Explain the 'And so did the runners on hearing the sound'. [3]

Ans. The second line of the stanza describes that as soon as the pistol was fired to signal the starting of the race, all the runners taking part in the hundred metre race started to run.

- 2.** Describe 'the youngest among them'. [3]

Ans. 'The youngest among them' refers to one of the participants in the hundred metre race. He was the youngest among all the participants in this event. Like the other athletes, he too wanted to make his country proud of him by winning the race.

- 3.** Mention two events happening in this stanza. [3]

Ans. The first event mentioned in the stanza is the participants' running as soon as the pistol was fired to mark the starting of the hundred metre race. The second event mentioned is the falling down of the youngest participant in the race.

- 4.** What happened when one of the athletes fell down? Why was it unusual? [3]

Ans. When one of the participants fell to the ground the other participants came running to him instead of running to the finishing line. It was called an unusual happening because it was supposed to be a competition where one should try to beat others.

- 5.** How did the athlete react after the incident took place in the race? [4]

Ans. The youngest of athletes felt disheartened and dejected. He knew that the chance of his success had been spoilt due to sudden fall. He thought that his efforts would go in vain. Thinking that he was unable to pursue the race, he gave out a cry. This feeling made him weak and frustrated. He also showed his anger for not being able to win the race due to his falling on the track. He was angry either at his inability or on his fate that had disappointed him at the final moments.

- IV.** He gave out a cry of frustration and anguish
His dreams and his efforts dashed in the dirt
But as sure as I'm standing here telling the story
Now it's a strange one, but here's what occurred
The eight other athletes stopped in their tracks
The ones who had trained for so long to compete
One by one they turned round and came back to help him
And lifted the lad to his feet.

- 1.** Explain the first line of the given stanza. [3]

Ans. This first line of the stanza states that the youngest participant in the hundred metre race cried in frustration and grief after he fell down on the ground while running in the race.

- 2.** What does 'His dreams and his efforts dashed in the dirt', state? [3]

Ans. It states that the dreams and efforts of the youngest runner in the race were shattered as he fell down in the race. He had dreamt of winning the race and had trained himself intensively to do so but this accident wasted all his efforts.

- 3.** Whom do 'he' and 'they' refer to in the given stanza? [3]

Ans. 'He' in the stanza refers to the youngest runner in the hundred metre race who had fallen down while running in the race. 'They' refer to the other eight participants in the hundred metre race in Special Olympics.

- 4.** How many participants were taking part in the race? How do you know? [3]

Ans. Total nine participants were participating in the hundred metre race in the Special Olympics. We got to know about it as the title of poem suggests 'Nine Gold Medals'. Moreover 'the other eight athletes' and 'all the nine runners' too suggest that there were nine participants who were to run in the hundred meter race.

- 5.** Were the other eight runners selfish? Explain. [4]

Ans. No, the other eight runners were not selfish as they had stopped running on seeing the youngest runner fall on the track. They helped him to get up. It was one of the most prestigious events and the athlete who had won it, he would have been hailed as a hero. These eight athletes preferred helping the fallen runner to winning the gold medal. This shows their generous nature. If they had been selfish they would have continued running.

V. Then all nine runners joined hands and continued
The one hundred metres reduced to a walk
And the banner above that said 'Special Olympics'
Could not have been nearer the mark.

1. What is an unusual behaviour? Why is it called so? [3]

Ans. The stopping of running by the other eight runners to help the runner who has fallen, is an unusual behaviour. It is called so because usually in the prestigious event like this a cut-throat competition is seen, but here to help an opponents, all the athletes have given up their dream of winning the gold medal. It is the sheer demonstration of human empathy and brotherhood which is far more rewarding than a piece of glittering metal.

2. Mention the significance of 'joined hands and continued'. [3]

Ans. On seeing that one of the participants in the race had got injured and was unable to run, the other participants stopped running and holding one another's hands walked up to the finishing line along with the injured participant. This also shows the generosity spirit, empathy, love, compassion and co-operation of the participants in the race.

3. How had the race reduced to a walk? [3]

Ans. The race had been reduced to a walk as after the runner who had fallen while running had got up, all the runners (participants) walked up to the finishing line instead of running as the injured one could not run.

4. Why were these Olympic games called 'Special Olympics'? [3]

Ans. 'Special Olympics' were the olympics where only the physically challenged people were allowed to participate. Not to make these people feel underprivileged these Olympics games were called 'Special Olympics'.

5. Explain the last line of the stanza given. [4]

Ans. It means that when all the participants walked past the finishing line of the hundred metre race, the banner of Special Olympics hanging up there could not have been more appropriate. This is because by doing this, they had displayed true sportsmanship i.e. the true spirit of the Special Olympics, which is to bring all the humans together, irrespective of their casts, creeds, gender and nationality.

VI. That's how the race ended, with nine gold medals
They came to the finish line holding hands still
And the banner above and nine smiling faces
Said more than these words ever will
Said more than these words ever will.

1. How did the race end? [3]

Ans. The race ended when all of the participants of the race walked past the finishing line at the same time. As a result, all of them were awarded a gold medal each in the Special Olympics, declaring them the winners of the race.

2. What is meant by 'They came to the finishing line holding hands still'? [3]

Ans. Through this line the poet wants to show that the athletes came back to the finishing line holding one another's hands to thank the spectators for support to acknowledge their work as a noble deeds and making their victory special.

3. Why were the faces beaming? [3]

Ans. The faces were beaming as they (the nine participants) in the hundred metre race of the Special Olympics had won a gold medal each. As they had done something wonderful, their faces were beaming out of satisfaction.

4. In what way is this race different from other races? [3]

Ans. In other races participants want to secure the first position and do not care if any of the participants gets injured while running. However, in this race the participants cared for the injured participant and walked together to the finishing line.

5. According to the poet what should be the reaction of the spectators over the incident? and Why? [4]

Ans. The poet says that the kindness showed by the other participants towards the injured participant made the audience give them a standing ovation. They were also happy as each one of them had won a gold medal. The feeling of the audience and the happiness of the participants could not ever be expressed in words by the poet.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follows.

I. The athletes had come from so many countries
To run for the gold, for the silver and bronze
Many weeks and months in training
All building up to the games.

1. Where did the athletes come from all over the world? Why? [3]
2. Explain the second line of this extract. [3]
3. Were the contestants well prepared for the event? Give reason to support your answer. [3]
4. What was the aim of the athletes' presence on the ground? [3]
5. Explain the level of rewards referred here. [4]

II. All round the field spectators were gathered
Cheering on all the young women and men
Then the final event of the day was approaching
The last race about to begin.
The loudspeakers called out the names of the runners
The one hundred metre the race to be run
And nine young athletes stood there determined
And poised for the sound of the gun.

1. Why had the spectators gathered at the ground? [3]
2. What was the final event of the day? [3]
3. What type of spectators could be seen on the ground? [3]
4. Explain the last line of the extract. [3]
5. What message does the poem 'Nine Gold Medals' give? [4]

III. That's how the race ended, with nine gold medals
They came to the finish line holding hands still
And the banner above and nine smiling faces
Said more than these words ever will
Said more than these words ever will

1. Explain the feeling of all athletes participating in the race. [3]
2. How did the nine athletes come to the finishing line? [3]
3. How did the spectators react after watching the last scene in the poem? [3]
4. Why was it really a 'Special Olympic'? Enumerate. [3]
5. Is the title of the poem appropriate? [4]

Chief Seattle Speech

Chief Seattle

About the Author

Chief Seattle was born in 1780 AD in Black Island. Chief Seattle was from a Suquamish tribe. He was a prominent figure among his people. He is also known as Sealth, Seathle, Seathl or see-ahth. At a young age Seattle engaged reputation as a leader and warrior, ambushing and defeating groups of tribal enemy raiders coming up the green river from the cascade foothills. The 'speech' or 'letter' attributed to Chief Seattle has been widely cited as a 'powerful' bittersweet plea for respect of Native American's rights and environmental values. He died on 7th June, 1866 in Port Madison.

About the Story

It is a speech delivered by Chief Seattle in 1854, which caused a huge sensation across America due to its passionate appeal and oratory excellence. The speech has been cited as a powerful bittersweet plea for the respect of native American's rights and environment values. His speech is both consolatory in nature and helping his people to understand what is going on and how weak they are in political climate.

Seattle's speech expresses his hope for a reconciliation between the Blacks and the Whites. He insists that for the progress of his people, the hostilities between the two races should be wiped out. He addresses almost all the points concerning his people like their decreasing population, the aggressive behaviour of youngmen, the ignorance of the Whites' God to his native people, the fear of the attack of the Whites and their sacred land. In the last part of his speech, he claims that even their death cannot separate his natives from the land of their forefathers.

Character Introduction

Chief Seattle

He belongs to the Suquamish tribe. He is well-known figure among his tribal community. He delivers a speech in which he strikes a note of reconciliation between his tribal people and the White people. He became famous both as a leader and a warrior.

Summary of the Story

Attachment to his Land

Chief Seattle is a powerful leader and eloquent (powerful) speaker, which reflects the sorrow of a dying community and their love towards motherland. He starts the speech describing his land which has been compassionate towards the Native Americans all through the years.

In his speech he points out the difference between the Native Americans and The White people's ways of life. He recollects the bitterness that once existed between the White people and the Native Americans and wants a reconciliation between the two.

Conflicts between the Natives and the Whites

Chief Seattle recollects the time when the White men clashed with their forefathers. The young men would like to take revenge but the old tribal people are wise and would never like to indulge in any war. He further hopes that their good father in Washington will protect them.

Complain about God

The Chief Seattle is very much disappointed at the loss of his native land in the hands of the Whites. He therefore says "Your God is not our God". He further adds that White's God protects them and holds them with utmost care. But He has left His Native children abandoned. He compares Native people with orphans who can look nowhere for help. He further adds that these two races are separate in origins. There is little in common between them.

The Religion of the Whites and Natives

Chief Seattle says that the White man's religion was written upon tablets of stone by the iron fingers of their God. But the Native's religion is the tradition of their ancestors. He further adds that Natives consider the ashes of their ancestors sacred. He then says that their dead men cease to love them (the Whites') but their (the Natives') ancestors can never forget this beautiful world. They keep on loving its verdant valleys, rivers, magnificent mountains, lakes etc.

Decision taken by Chief Seattle

The propositions made by the Whites seem to be fair to Chief Seattle and therefore he thinks of accepting them. He says that day and night can not dwell together. By this, he refers to the Red/Natives and the Whites. There is no other option left for the Natives except to accept the proposal made by the Whites. But before the decision he puts a condition, that the natives will be free to visit the graves of their ancestors, friends and children at any time.

Word Meanings

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Yonder—the far distance, **Compassion**—sympathy, **Eternal**—endless, **Prairies**—a large open area of grassland, **Red-man**—an American Indian, **Wind-ruffled**—disordered or disarranged by wind, **Reproach**—address in such a way to insult.

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Relentless—unstoppable, **Restrain**—keep under control or within limits, **Forefathers**—ancestors, **Hostilities**—unfriendliness, **Bristling**—stand upright especially in anger or fear, **Forsaken**—abandoned, **Receding**—move back away from a previous position.

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Teeming—be full of, **Firmament**—the heaven or the sky, **Hollowed**—holy, **Sachems**—a chief, **Nativity**—birth, **Verdant**—green with grass, **Sequestered**—hidden, **Proposition**—a suggested scheme or plan, **Remnant**—remaining.

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Hovers—remain in one place in the air; float, **Grim**—without hope, **Stolidly**—without any excitement, **Ponder**—consider, **Swelter**—be uncomfortably hot, **Stirring**—exciting.

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Departed—dead, **Somber**—dark, **Solitude**—loneliness, **Eventide**—evening, **Perished**—suffered death, **Swarm**—move in large group, **Throng**—crowd (noun), pressed into (verb).

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow

- I. There was a time when our people covered the land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor, but that time long since passed away with the greatness of tribes that are now but a mournful memory. I will not dwell on, nor mourn over, our untimely decay, nor reproach my paleface brothers with hastening it, as we too may have been somewhat to blame.

1. What does the extract imply? [3]

Ans. The chief in this extract is remembering the time when red Indians had the hold over the vast land. But over the years their power and hold on the land had reduced remarkably. Native Americans themselves and their leaders are primarily responsible for this reduced hold on their vast lands.

2. Explain with a metaphor how Chief Seattle compares the Natives and the Whites. [3]

Ans. Chief Seattle says that the Whites were large in number and are like the green grass that covers vast prairies- the grasslands of America whereas the Natives are very few. They resemble trees which are less in numbers.

3. Which offer is being referred here? How does he find the proposition? [3]

Ans. Here, the offer made by the Whites is to buy the lands that belong to Natives with the promise that their brave army will protect the Natives from their ancient enemies. The proposition appears to be kind and generous as the Red Native do not have rights over these lands. Moreover, as Native Americans are less in number and are no more powerful as they used to be, they should accept the offer.

4. Why does the Chief become sentimental? What is he talking about the buying of land? [3]

Ans. The Chief becomes sentimental remembering about the time when the Red Indians had complete hold over those vast lands. Those memories and culture of his tribe is something that cannot be forgotten. Moreover, Earth is not man's property. It is for everyone to use it. The idea of buying or selling the land makes the Chief very emotional.

5. Why does Chief Seattle mean by untimely decay? Why does he use this phrase? [4]

Ans. In the present story, Chief Seattle is addressing his people. He reminds the natives about the greatness of the tribe that are now only a memory as over the years, their power and numbers both had come down tremendously. The word 'Untimely Decay' here means the lessening of the power of the Red Indians for which they themselves were also responsible. The natives, specially the young ones were quite violent and indulged revengeful acts, but as White men were more powerful and large in number the youths lost their lives before time.

- II. Youth is impulsive. When our young men grow angry at some real or imaginary wrong and disfigure their faces with black paint, it denotes that their hearts are black and that they are often cruel and relentless and our old men and old women are unable to restrain them. Thus, it has ever been. Thus, it was when the White man began to push our forefathers ever westward. But let us hope that the hostilities between us may never return. We would have everything to lose and nothing to gain.

1. What do the young men do when they are angry? What do they want to indicate by doing this? [3]

Ans. Chief Seattle calls the young men of his tribe impulsive who have no control over their anger. They react over some real or imaginary wrong being done to them, by disfiguring their faces with black paint. They think this to be a sign of their aggression and prowess (courageousness).

2. Why do the young men blacken their faces with paint? Why do they want to take revenge? [3]

Ans. The young men want to take revenge of the wrong done to their forefathers. They are always ready to take up a fight over a real or imaginary problem, their aggression and power to the enemies, they blacken their faces with paint demonstrating their impulsiveness, cruelty and revengeful nature.

3. What does Seattle feel about disfiguring the face by the youth? Why he not like it? [3]

Ans. Seattle felt that when their youths disfigured their faces by painting black, they were being cruel and uncontrollable and react irrationally. They did not listen to their elders or the women.

Seattle does not like this revengeful nature led to their own untimely departure from this world as their enemy was more powerful and strong.

4. What does the Chief hope for? What will be the effect of reconciliation on his people? [3]

Ans. The Chief hopes that enmity between the Red Indians and the White Americans may end forever. If Red Indians surrender their lands to the White, they would be protected and their women and children could live peacefully. The brave soldiers of White Americans would provide them much needed strength and protection. As a result, due to friendly relations with the Whites, the natives may progress and lead a peaceful life.

5. Why does Chief Seattle want an end to these hostilities between the Natives and the Whites? [4]

Ans. Chief Seattle wants an end to the hostilities as he is aware of the fact that the Whites are large in numbers whereas his tribemen are lesser in number. Moreover, it is better to progress in their company rather than fighting with them. Here, the Chief is being practical as the Red Indians could gain nothing by fighting against large army of the Whites. Moreover, they will be provided protection so that native Indians could live peacefully without any fear of their fierce ancient enemies.

III. Your religion was written upon tablets of stone by the iron finger of your God so that you could not forget. The Red Men could never comprehend or remember it. Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors—the dreams of our old men, given them in solemn hours of the night by the Great Spirit; and the visions of our sachems and is written in the hearts of our people.

1. What opinion does Seattle have about the religion of the White Men? [3]

Ans. Chief Seattle thinks that the religion of the White men was written on tablets of stone by the iron finger of God. God has done so that his message may not be erased and his people remember it throughout their life. The message is something that the Red people cannot understand so they are unable to remember it.

2. What is the Natives' religion? What does it constitute? [3]

Ans. According to Chief Seattle the Native's religion is the tradition of their ancestors. It constitutes the visions and dreams which were dreamt by the old people. These visions were provided to these old people by Great Spirits in the peaceful nights.

People remember those dreams and it was written only in the hearts of people, not in any book or stones.

3. Compare the religion of the White men with that of the Natives. [3]

Ans. The White men's religion was Christianity and it was written by the God symbolising strict adherence to the rules as laid down by the supreme. The religion of the Natives was different from the White man as it was not written anywhere, it was there in their hearts. Their religion is following of the traditions as laid down by their ancestors who were given visions by the Great spirits.

4. How can you conclude that the Natives are more dependent on their ancestors than the White men? [3]

Ans. The Natives/tribal people follow the religion as laid down by their ancestors. The White people are indifferent to their ancestors and they keep themselves away from their resting ground. They neglect them and pay no respect to them whereas the natives respect their ancestors and consider their graves sacred.

5. Why are the White people indifferent to their ancestors? What is the religion of the Natives? [4]

Ans. Unlike the Natives whose religion is the tradition of their ancestors, the religion of the White people was written by God himself. It is not forgotten and does not inspire or compell them to accompany their dead forefathers so they keep themselves away from their graves.

IV. Your dead cease to love you and the land of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb and wander away beyond the stars. They are soon forgotten and never return. Our dead never forget this beautiful world that gave them being. They still love its verdant valleys, its murmuring rivers, its magnificent mountains, sequestered vales and verdant lined lakes and bays, and ever yearn in tender fond affection over the lonely hearted living, and often return from the happy hunting ground to visit, guide, console, and comfort them.

1. When do the dead of the White men cease to love their land and their people? [3]

Ans. The dead of the White men cease to love them as soon as they pass the portals of tomb because according to the religion of White people, their dead carry no responsibility and attachment with their living people. So once gone, they are soon forgotten.

2. What is the attitude of the White people towards their dead ancestors? [3]

Ans. They are indifferent towards their ancestors. They neglected them and pay no respect to them. No sooner do they die, they forget about them because their dead ones do not return to accompany them in their joy and misery.

3. On the other hand, what do the dead of the Native man do to their living? [3]

Ans. The dead of the Native man never forget their native land where they lived. They still love its grassy valleys, its murmuring rivers, its magnificent mountains. They love their living people. They keep visiting their land and guide console and comfort their tribe people.

4. What proposal is put forward to the Natives by the Great Chief? What will they get in return? [3]

Ans. The proposal which has been put forward by the great Chief i.e. George Washington is that if Natives surrender or sell their land to the White settlers, his army will provide them protection and save them from their ancient enemies. The White Chief's brave soliders will provide the much needed security to the natives and his ships would fill their harbours, so that no enemy could attack them.

5. How does Chief Seattle react to the proposition sent by Whites? What will it do in their favour? [4]

Ans. Chief Seattle is appreciative about the proposition. He suggests his people to accept this as it seems fair. It may end the hostilities between the two races and provide the protection from their ancient enemies. It will open the path of their progress and prosperity. The youth of the tribe will have a purpose in their life rather than hatred that mislead them and they waste their energy and time in hostility.

V. A Few more moons, a few more winters, and not one of the descendants of the mighty hosts that once moved over this broad land or lived in happy homes, protected by the Great Spirit, will remain to mourn over the graves of a people once more powerful and hopeful than yours. But why should I mourn at the untimely fate of my people? Tribe follows tribe, and nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. It is the order of nature, and regret is useless. Your time of decay may be distant, but it will surely come, for even the White Man whose God walked and talked with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We will see.

1. How does the speaker differentiate his tribal people from the White people? [3]

Ans. Chief says that these are two distinct races with separate origins and separate destinies. There is little common between them. Their religion is different moreover their attitude towards their ancestors is also different.

2. What is Chief Seattle expecting about his tribe? [3]

Ans. As the number of the tribal men is decreasing day by day, Chief Seattle is concerned that soon his tribe will disappear from the land as no one from his tribe will remain to mourn over the graves of their dead people.

3. Why should Chief Seattle not mourn now? How does nature flow? [3]

Ans. While assuming the doom of his tribe, Chief Seattle ceases to reconsider this thought and realises that it is useless to mourn over untimely decay of his tribe. Nature flows like the waves of sea hence cannot be tamed so should be respected and no mourn should be done to change its course.

4. What does the Chief comment on order of nature? [3]

Ans. The Chief comment that tribe follows tribe and nation follows nation like the waves of the sea. It is the order of the nature and regret is useless. The power of nature cannot be challenged. It is nature that decides the fate of humans and their existence. Anyone who rises to glory is also doomed to decay.

5. What according to Chief Seattle is common destiny of both the races? Why does he think so? [4]

Ans. According to the Chief, common destiny of both races will be the ultimate decay. It is the rule of nature, no one can challenge it. According to the Chief every tribe, culture that has risen to the heights of glory would definitely meet its downfall one day. So, both races of Native Red Indians as well of White Settlers will meet then doom sooner or later. Seattle believes that a time will come when glory of the Whites will also come down and they will be moving towards their inevitable doom.

VI. We will ponder your proposition and when we decide we will let you know. But should we accept it, I here and now make this condition that we will not be denied the privilege without molestation of visiting at any time the tombs of our ancestors, friends and children. Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people. Every hillside, ever valley, every plain and grove, has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished. Even the rocks, which seem

to be dumb and dead as they swelter in the sun along the silent shore, thrill with memories of stirring events connected with the lives of my people, and the very dust upon which you now stand responds more lovingly to their footsteps than yours, because it is rich with the blood of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of sympathetic touch.

1. Why is the speaker ready to consider the proposition of the White father? What hope does he foresee? [3]

Ans. Though the past with the White people has been bitter, the speaker is ready to consider their proposition of buying their land. He sees a new ray of hope in the form of progress and protection from foreign enemies.

2. What is the condition that the speaker puts forward before taking the decision on the White man's proposition? [3]

Ans. The condition is that the Natives will have freedom to visit the graveyards of their ancestors, friends and children, without being molested by the new land owners. This proposition shows that he does not want to compromise with the freedom of his people.

3. How is every part of the soil sacred to his tribal people? [3]

Ans. Every part of the soil is sacred to his tribal people because it is associated with sad or happy events of the by gone days. The soil of the land, even the mute rocks which face the burning seen are full of memories of heart warming memories related to the lives of ancestors of tribal people.

4. Why does the rocks seem to him be thrilled? What have they witnessed? [3]

Ans. The rocks of the lands too have witnessed the greatness of the dead ancestors, their sad moments and their happiness. The hot rocks also get thrilled by the activities of the tribal people. It is just the imagination of the Chief, who believes that all parts of nature remain a witness to the sad or happy events which have taken place earlier.

5. How does the dust respond? [4]

Ans. The dust responds lovingly to the footsteps of the tribal people as it is rich with the blood of the ancestors of the tribal people. Generations come and go but the dust on which the people are standing remains the same and witnesses the devotion and valour of the people. So the touch of the natives' feet excites it and in response it showers love.

b Short Questions [4 Marks each]

1. While talking about the buying of land, why did Chief Seattle become emotional? Elucidate.

Ans. Chief Seattle took it as an unusual thing to sell or buy land. He believed that these natural resources did not belong to any particular race or tribe. These were God's gift to mankind. He and his people shared an emotional relationship with the land as they had been sheltered by this land for generations. They had developed an undying affection towards it and just thought of it being the property of the Whites caused great pain to him.

2. Why do the tribal people regard themselves as orphans? What does God of the Whites do?

Ans. The tribal people feel that God of White people loves His own people and hates them. He has abandoned them and does not protect them. The White man's God showers His love on His people and gives protection to them. Thus, tribal people regarded themselves as orphans.

3. If both the races had a common God, how should He be?

Ans. If both the races had a common God, he would be fair towards both the communities. He would love and shower his blessings equally. He would actually not be biased. He will deprive neither community of his love and protection. He would give strength and would punish equally.

4. How does the Chief differentiate between tribal people and White people? What does he say about the religion of both the races?

Ans. The Chief says that the tribal people and White people are two distinct races with separate origins and separate destinies. There is little in common between the two. Moreover the religion of the White people is different from that of the tribal people. The White man's religion was written up on tablets of stone by the iron fingers of their God.

5. Why did Chief Seattle say about the common destiny for all races?

Ans. Chief Seattle could very easily understand the pain of his tribe, he could hear their sad voices. He believed that tribe and nature followed each other and both were like two sides of the same coin. He further remarked that White people could not escape decay for a long time. He thought that death is inevitable and nobody could play hide and seek with it. When he observed that tribe follows tribe, and nation follows nation, he realised that he should not mourn at the untimely fate of his tribe because it was the order of the nature.

6. How is every part of the soil sacred to his tribal people? What memories the Native cherish with the land?

Ans. Every part of the soil is sacred to Natives because they are deeply connected with that soil. It is sacred to them as they have some sweet, sour and bitter unforgettable memories with that place. Due to this association of some past events of life every hillside, every valley, every plain and grave is sacred to the Natives.

7. Comment on the title Chief Seattle's speech? Is it as per the theme of the story?

Ans. The title is very appropriate because the speech delivered by Seattle at Washington in 1854, deals with the speaker's views about the White people. He thanks the White Chief for acknowledging the greetings of friendship and goodwill. He speaks in favour of ecological responsibility and respect of Native American's land rights. He wants the White people to be just and kind to his tribal people.

C Long Questions [8 Marks each]

1. On what basis the two races are entirely different from each other according to Chief Seattle?

Ans. Chief Seattle was disturbed at the loss of his ancestral land as the Whites were offering to buy their land. He believes that God of both the races is not the same God. According to him, both races were different on many counts. They are as follows

Religion of the Natives He and his tribal people hold their ancestors in great esteem. He adds that the tribal people regard the ashes of their ancestors as sacred. The religion of the tribal people is based upon the traditions left by their ancestors.

Religion of the Whites The White people are indifferent to their ancestors and they keep themselves away from the graves of their ancestors. The religion of the White people was written upon the tablets of stone by the iron finger of their God so that they do not forget it.

Ignorance of God The Chief feels sceptical about one thing. He feels that God of the White people loves His own people and hates the tribal people and therefore cannot be their God. He has abandoned His tribal people. The Chief then refers his own God, the great spirit, that also seems to have abandoned them.

Difference between the Population One more thing that concerns him a lot is the difference between the population of both the races. The population of the Whites is larger than that of the Natives. His people's number is decreasing rapidly and very soon they will

disappear completely from this sacred land of their forefathers. He realises that the nature of the land also blesses his people because they have been the part of it for generations and will remain so even after their death. The Whites are indifferent to the nature and are alien to the land, will never be able to attend the blessings of it as do the Natives.

2. Critically appreciate Chief Seattle's speech? How was he successful to impress his audience with his oratory excellence?

Ans. Seattle's speech that he delivered at Washington, in 1854 is marked by brilliant oratory. Given below are the points that appreciate Chief Seattle's speech excellency.

An Excellent Orator In his speech he is logical and argumentative. He gives forceful arguments in favour of ecological responsibility and respect of the Native American's land rights. His oration is brilliant and straightforward. He strikes a note of reconciliation between his tribal people and the White people in a direct and straightforward manner.

Advocacy of Peace He advocates peace and does not want the hostilities that existed between the White people and the tribal people to return. He is wise, profound and philosophical. Chief Seattle's speech is marked by philosophical notes. He remarks "day and night cannot dwell together. The red man has ever fled the approach of the White man, as the morning mist flees before the morning sun."

Attachment towards Land When he makes mention of his attachment towards his land and his long dead elders in his speech, the readers/audience realise his devotion and love for them. His speech also showers a ray of hope for his people who according to him, will be benefitted by the proposition made to them by the White Man. He gives an ironical touch to his speech by assuming that their existence will become a myth after the last of them passes away, even then the place will be crowded by their souls as they will never cease to love this land.

3. Comment on the hostilities that existed between the tribal people and the White people. What solution does Seattle find to put an end to hostilities?

Ans. Chief Seattle was the most prominent figure of his tribe, an excellent orator and philosopher.

Appeal to his People In his speech he appeals his people to end the hostilities between them and the Whites. He makes them aware to have found the permanent solution to this, in the form of the

proposition to acquire their land by the White man by sitting in Washington. He fears that the hostilities cherished by the youth of his tribe will churn not profit but their destruction while the proposal that is being offered to them will not only stop this madness of self-elimination but also provide them protection from their ancient enemies.

The Old Hostilities Chief Seattle recollects the time when the White men began to push their forefathers westward. There were hostilities between them. He wishes that these hostilities may never return. The young men would like to take revenge but the old tribal people are wise and would never like to resume the hostilities towards the Whites.

His Hope from the White Father He hopes that their good father in Washington would protect them and his brave warriors would prove to be a great wall of strength against the ancient enemies who frighten their women, children and the old men. Then in reality he would be their father and they would be his children.

His Optimism Although he is conscious of the fact that they are two distinct races with separate origins and separate destinies, yet he strikes a note of optimism when he says that his people would accept the new proposition sent by the White man because it seems to be fair and reasonable.

4. What conditions were made by Chief Seattle before accepting the proposal of White Chief for buying the land? Why was he concerned about his people's rights?

Ans. Before accepting the proposal sent by the White's Chief, Seattle has put forward some conditions. They are as follows

Hope for Reconciliation He delivers a speech in which he strikes a note of reconciliation between his tribal people and the White people. He strikes a hope in his speech that their good father in Washington would protect them and his brave warriors would prove to be a great wall of strength against their ancient enemies.

Hope from the Proposition Seattle compares his tribe with the wounded doe that hears the approaching footsteps of the hunter in the form of White Settlers. He knows that his race would extinct in the coming years. So he has no other alternative except accepting the proposal of giving away their ancestral land.

Reaction of His People He hopes that his people will react favourably to the proposition and accept it.

He feels the proposition to be honest and in the welfare of his people yet he is quite alert through his past experience with the Whites. By acquiring their lands, the White people will become their ultimate owners and will be free to enforce their rules and laws as they wish. These rules and laws of theirs may affect the newly earned harmony between the two races and even may go against the sentiment of the tribal people.

The Condition To avert all kinds of forthcoming unwanted situation he puts a condition before they take a decision. He wants his people to have freedom to visit the graves of their ancestors, friends and children at any time. Besides they should also be given a special area where they could live peacefully with all their rites, rituals and other cultural practices.

5. What message do we get from Chief Seattle's speech?

Ans. Chief Seattle, who belonged to the suquamish tribe, through his speech becomes successful to impress his audience. Given below are the points that give detail about the message from Chief Seattle's speech.

Firmness of Promise Through his speech, Chief Seattle, the first and the foremost message that he wants to showcase, is that his words are not mere words, instead once spoken they become certain as the coming of the sun and the next season. Whatever is spoken by him, should be presumed true and permanent without any doubt.

Message of Peace He wants to convey that hostilities between White people and his tribal people should end because it will lead to destruction. In this speech, he strikes a reconciliation between his tribal people and the White people. He also puts forward his arguments in favour of ecological responsibility and respect of Native American's land rights.

His Determination and Intelligence His speech also exhibits his determination and intelligence. He puts the condition that his people will be allowed to visit the tombs of their forefathers, friends and children without being molested, making it clear that his determination and intelligence cannot be questioned or challenged.

Proud of His People He says that his people respect their religion, culture, traditions and ancestors. He eulogises his people, land and traditions and shows great dignity while speaking about them. He strikes a note of optimism when he says that his people will accept the new proposition sent by the White man because it seems to be fair. He concludes on a hopeful note that his people will be free to visit the graves of their ancestors.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow

- I.** Your God is not our God! Your God loves your people and hates mine! He folds his strong protecting arms lovingly about the paleface and leads him by the hand as a father leads an infant son. But, He has forsaken His Red children, if they really are His. Our God, the Great Spirit, seems also to have forsaken us. Your God makes your people wax stronger every day. Soon they will fill all the land.
1. Why did Chief Seattle blame his own people for losing their ancestral land? [3]
 2. What has White man's God given to them? [3]
 3. According to Chief Seattle, on what conditions the father in Washington would be his tribe's father too? [3]
 4. How would Washington's men protect his race? [3]
 5. How did Chief Seattle prove that White's God was different from theirs? [4]
- II.** To us the ashes of our ancestors are sacred and their resting place is hallowed ground. You wander far from the graves of your ancestors and seemingly without regret. Your religion was written upon tablets of stone by the iron finger of your God so that you could not forget. The Red Man could never comprehend or remember it. Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors-the dreams of our old men, given them in solemn hours of the night by the Great Spirit and the visions of our sachems and is written in the hearts of our people.
1. On what basis Chief Seattle denies that the Whites and Red Indians were brothers? [3]
 2. Why cannot the tribal people become friendly with Whites? [3]
 3. What was little in common between the two races? [3]

4. How did the Red Man regard the ashes of their ancestors? [3]

5. What do the dead tribal people not forget? [4]

III. Day and night cannot dwell together. The Red Man has ever fled the approach of the White Man, as the morning mist flees before the morning sun. However, your proposition seems fair and I think that my people will accept it and will retire to the reservation you offer them. Then we will dwell apart in peace, for the words of the Great White Chief seem to be the words of nature speaking to my people out of dense darkness.

1. Why did the dead of White men cease to love them? [3]
2. How do the dead of Red Man keep loving the beautiful world? [3]
3. Why would Red Indians likely to accept the propositions made by the White Chief? [3]
4. Why was the Chief sad about the fate of his tribe? [3]
5. Chief Seattle believed in the vicious circle of change. Explain. [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. How does Seattle differentiate tribal people from White people?
2. What does Seattle, the big Chief, want to convey to the White Chief in his speech?
3. Did Chief Seattle really want to accept the White Chief's offer?

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. What did Seattle mean by, "there is no death, only a change of worlds"?
2. Explain the 'common destiny' being discussed by the Chief in his speech.
3. Write character sketch of Chief Seattle.

Old Man at the Bridge

Ernest Hemingway

About the Author

Ernest Hemingway was born on 21st July, 1899 in Cicero, (Now in Oak Park) US. He published 7 novels, 6 short story collections and two non-fiction works. He was renowned for novels like *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *The Old Man and The Sea*, which won the 1953 Pulitzer Prize. Hemingway produced most of his work between the mid 1920s and the mid 1950s. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954. He committed suicide on 2nd July, 1961 in Ketchum, Idaho.

About the Story

The 'Old Man at the Bridge' is a powerful story about the tragedy of war. The story is a conversation between a soldier and an old man. The story is set in the countryside during the Spanish Civil War. During the war, there was a panic and anxiety all around. The narrator, who is a soldier starts conversing with the old man. The old man tells him that he is not worried about his own safety. He remains obsessed with the thought about the safety of his animals. The old man represents all the innocent casualties of war. He has no involvement in the war and supports neither side. His quiet life is upturned and he becomes a symbol of the countless civilian victims of war. The story reflects the theme of depression, resignation and impending death.

Character Introduction

Old Man

The story revolves around an old man of 76 years, who is a civilian, without an involvement in politics. He is a war refugee who is concerned about his animals. He has been displaced by the civil war. Nothing has been mentioned about his family but he loves his animals. He is having the charge of two goats, a cat and four pairs of pigeons.

The Narrator

The narrator in the story 'Old Man at the Bridge' is the soldier. The story is written in first person and narrated by an anonymous soldier. He is a volunteer who is helping republicans during the Civil War.

Summary of the Story

Old Man's Miserable Life

The story revolves around an old man who, has to leave his hometown during the Spanish Civil War. The town has to be empty out due to artillery fire. He has walked 12 kilometres from his hometown and sits exhausted, by the side of a road near a pontoon bridge that crossed a river. He is too tired to move and above all his concern towards his animals restricts him from going further. The young soldier's duty is to observe the approach of enemy and make sure that everybody has left the town. When he sees him sitting at the same place while exploring the region, he feels concerned for him.

Conversation between Old Man and Soldier

The old man informs the soldier that he had charge of two goats, a cat and four pairs of pigeons. He says that a captain told him to leave the town and the animals because of artillery fire. He also tells the narrator that he has no family. He further adds that cat would be alright because cats can look after themselves, but he does not know what would happen to the other animals.

Old Man Expresses Gratitude Towards the Narrator

When the soldier asks the old man about his whereabouts, he feels happy. He is grateful towards him and thanks him many times. He feels guilty as he is not able to fulfil his duty of protecting the animals. The narrator consoles him saying that his animals would be fine. He tells him that pigeons would fly away, but the old man continues to worry about the goats. The narrator tells him that it is better not to think about the animals and he should get up and leave that place immediately.

Word Meanings

Page. No 48.

Rimmed—the outer, often curved or circular, edge of something, **Pontoon bridge**—a small metal structured floating bridge, **Staggered**—walk or move unsteadily, **Peasants**—agricultural worker, **Plodded**—walked doggedly and slowly with heavy steps, **Bridgehead**—a strong position of inside the enemy territory from which to advance or attack.

Page. No 49.

Artillery—large calibre guns used in warfare on land, **Slope**—a rising or falling surface, **Forks**—the roads divide into two parts.

Page. No 50.

Blankly—with no expression, **Dove**—pigeons, **Swayed**—to move slowly, **Easter Sunday**—a Sunday that is celebrated as festival, **Fascists**—followers of dictatorship.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I.** An old man with steel rimmed spectacles and very dusty clothes sat by the side of the road. There was a pontoon bridge across the river and carts, trucks, and men, women and children were crossing it. The mule-drawn carts staggered up the steep bank from the bridge with soldiers helping push against the spokes of the wheels. The trucks ground up and away heading out of it all and the peasants plodded along in the ankle deep dust.

- 1.** Who sat by the roadside? Where was he sitting? [3]

Ans. An old man with steel rimmed spectacles and dusty clothes sit by the side of the road. He was sitting by the roadside near a pontoon bridge which was being used by the people to cross the river as the enemy could attack the place anytime.

- 2.** Describe old man's appearance. Why was he tired? [3]

Ans. He was wearing steel rimmed spectacles and dirty clothes and was sitting by the roadside near a pontoon bridge that crosses a river. He is tired by the long journey that he had to cover on foot.

- 3.** Why did the old man not move from his place? [3]

Ans. The old man could not move from his place as he was dead tired. He had walked twelve kilometers from his hometown to the bridge. By the time he reached the place, he had got completely exhausted. He was old and in grief of losing his dear animals so he could not force himself to walk farther.

- 4.** What did the narrator observe while doing his duty? [3]

Ans. The narrator who was a soldier observed that an old man was sitting at the bridge while everybody was fleeing from the place. He found it strange as nobody was supposed to stay there because the place could be attacked any time by the enemy.

- 5.** The old man was the native of which place? Why did he leave his place? [4]

Ans. The old man who was sitting by the roadside near the bridge, belonged to San Carlos where danger of attack by the enemy artillery was looming. The Captain asked him to leave the place to save his life as amid the attack nobody would survive. Hearing these words of the Captain the old man had to leave his hometown.

- II.** That was his native town and so it gave him pleasure to mention it and he smiled.

"I was taking care of animals," he explained.

"Oh," I said, not quite understanding.

"Yes," he said, "I stayed, you see, taking care of animals. I was the last one to leave the town of San Carlos." He did not look like a shepherd nor a herdsman and I looked at his black dusty clothes and his gray dusty face and his steel rimmed spectacles and said, "What animals were they?"

"Various animals", he said, and shook his head.

"I had to leave them."

- 1.** What was the old man's occupation? [3]

Ans. The occupation of the old man had not been mentioned clearly yet through his talking it can be assumed that his only occupation was to look after his pet animals which consisted of two goats, a cat and four pairs of pigeons.

- 2.** Why had the old man left his hometown? [3]

Ans. It was the war time and the old man's hometown was also in danger zone and could be attacked. He and his town people were asked to leave the place to save their lives so the old man had to leave his hometown.

- 3.** What did the soldier asked the old man to do to save himself? Why did he ask him to do so? [3]

Ans. The soldier, the narrator of the story was concerned about the old man. He knew that staying near the bridge was a certain death so he asked the old man to catch the truck to Barcelona to save his life.

- 4.** What did the old man tell the narrator about himself? [3]

Ans. The old man told the narrator that he was a refugee and he had come from San Carlos. In his native town he was taking care of the animals he was in charge of. He was worried about his pets as there was no one but he, who could take care of them. In the attack they might get killed.

5. Name the animals mentioned in the story. Why were they not with him? [4]

Ans. The animals that were possessed by the old man, were two goats, a cat and four pairs of pigeons. They could not accompany him because it was war time. There could be attack anytime and from anywhere. First the old man was not permitted to take his animals with him and second he could not take care of them in that long journey with no exact destination to reach.

III. "I am without politics," he said. "I am seventy-six years old. I have come twelve kilometers now and I think now I can go no further." "This is not a good place to stop."

1. What does the narrator want to know about the old man? What is his intention? [3]

Ans. The narrator wants to know which political party, the old man favours. He wants to know it because the country is going through a civil war. The Fascists want to bring back dictatorship so by knowing the politics of the old man, the narrator wants to know that whether he was a desirable or undesirable fellow.

2. How old was the man without politics? How did his old age affect him? [3]

Ans. The man without involvement in any type of politics was 76 years old. His old age affects him physically as he was dead tired after walking 12 kilometres from his hometown to the bridge. The extreme fatigue that he was experiencing was partly due to his old age which forced him to stop near the roadside.

3. Why did the narrator tell the old man that it was not a good place to stop? [3]

Ans. The narrator asked the old man not to stay there as enemies could attack any moment. The narrator therefore asked the old man to leave that place immediately as there was a danger to his life.

4. Why did the old man refuse to go to Barcelona? [3]

Ans. As the old man was so exhausted, he preferred to stay back for some more time. When he came to know that trucks were going toward Barcelona he refused. He wanted to leave himself to the mercy of fate just like he left his animals back his home town.

5. What does it tells about the old man when he showed his gratitude towards the narrator? [4]

Ans. The old man was a lonely person, when the narrator showed concern for him, he felt grateful towards him because it seems that the soldier was the only person that asked about his well-being.

- IV.** He looked at me very blankly and tiredly, then said, having to share his worry with someone, "The cat will be all right, I am sure. There is no need to be unquiet about the cat. But the others. Now what do you think about the others?"

1. What did the old man worry about and why? [3]

Ans. The old man was worried about the fate of his animals which he had left behind in his hometown due to the war. He was worried about them because there was no one to take care of them. They would have to remain hungry and could be killed by the artillery fire.

2. Who looked at the narrator very blankly and tiredly? What was the reason behind such looks? [3]

Ans. The old man looked at the narrator very blankly and tiredly when he suggested him to go by truck. He did not want to go to Barcelona where the trucks were going as he did not know anyone there.

3. Why was the old man worried about the goats? [3]

Ans. Unlike the pigeons, the goats could neither take care of themselves nor fly in the sky. They had no option but to roam in the open amid firing which meant a certain death. So, the old man was most worried about them.

4. What did the old man tell about his animals? [3]

Ans. The old man was not worried about the pigeons because they could fly and save themselves. He was less worried about the cat because it could look after itself, but he expressed his concern about his two goats because the goats could not fly and could not save themselves.

5. How did the narrator console the old man? Did it affect the old man in a positive way? [4]

Ans. The narrator tried to console the old man by saying that his animals would be safe. He told him that the pigeons would fly and save themselves. When the old man expressed his concern about the other animals, the narrator told him not to think about the others.

No, it did not affect the old man in a positive way because he was obsessed with the thought of safety of his animals.

- V.** "If you are rested I would go," I urged. "Get up and try to walk now."

"Thank you." he said and got to his feet, swayed from side to side and then sat down backwards in the dust.

"I was taking care of animals," he said dully, but no longer to me. "I was only taking care of animals."

1. What did the narrator advise the old man?
What was the danger there? [3]

Ans. The narrator advised the old man to catch a ride on a truck to Barcelona and leave that place in order to save his life. He asked him to do so because there was a danger to his life as the enemy planes could hit the place anytime.

2. Why did the old man seem grateful towards the narrator? [3]

Ans. The narrator had asked the old man to catch a ride on a trip to Barcelona and save his life. Therefore, he thanked him for showing concern about his life. It seemed that he was meeting a person who showed concern towards him after a long time. Hence, he was grateful to the soldier for his gesture.

3. What feelings did the narrator have for old man at the end? [3]

Ans. The narrator thought that since the old man could not get rid of the thought of his animal's safety, nothing could be done to save him. He felt pity for him. As the attack by the enemy was about to take place any time and the old man was sure to die.

4. Why did the old man sit down again in the dust? [3]

Ans. The old man had walked 12 kilometres to reach the bridge and now he was badly tired. And due to fatigue he again sat down in the dust. He no longer wanted to run from his fate thus had made his mind to stay at the place without worrying about the enemy's attack.

5. Did the old man not accept narrator's advice? Why could he not walk farther? Did the narrator leave him? [4]

Ans. Yes, the old man did not accept his advice as he was extremely tired. The twelve kilometres that he had walked had taken all his energy making him completely helpless to go farther.
Yes, the narrator left him as he had understood that the old man had resigned to his fate and could not be convinced to leave the place. Moreover keep standing with him, was a certain death as the danger of attack by the enemies was looming and it could happen anytime.

b Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. Why did the old man leave his hometown? Why did he leave it reluctantly?

Ans. The old man was forced to leave his hometown due to the Spanish civil war. The Captain told him to run away at the earliest as there was an artillery fire. He left it reluctantly because he did not want to leave his animals behind. He was worried about the safety of his animals. He actually left his animals behind with a heavy heart. The thought of impending death of the animals disturbed him.

2. Why was the old man worried too much about the animals? Why did he have to leave his pets behind?

Ans. The old man was in charge of some animals. Those animals included two goats, a cat and four pairs of pigeons. He had to leave them due to the untimely war and the Captain asked him to leave because of the artillery fire. The old man had no family and only those animals were his family. He did not want to leave them unattended. The animals that worried him the most was the pair of goats as he knew that the cat could look after itself and the pigeons were also unlocked so they would also fly away.

3. How did the narrator console the old man? Why could his attempts, not make a positive impact on him?

Ans. The narrator consoled the old man by saying him that nothing would happen to his animals. He told him that the pigeons would fly and save themselves. When the old man expressed his concern about the other animals, the narrator told him not to think about the others. It did not affect him positively because he was obsessed with the thoughts of his animals' safety. The narrator could not get success as the old man was not able to get rid of the thought of his animals.

4. What did the narrator urge the old man? Did he accept his advice?

Ans. The narrator urged the old man to catch a ride on a truck to Barcelona and leave that place to save his life. He asked him to do so because there was a danger to his life. The enemy artillery planes could hit that place any moment. No, he did not accept his advice. He told him that he was too tired to walk any farther. He tried to walk but could not do so due to fatigue.

5. Give a vivid description of the consequences of the war. Who were most hit by it?

Ans. The story had taken place during the Spanish civil war at a pontoon bridge. It was Easter Sunday but there was a lot of disturbance everywhere instead of celebrations, the enemy troops were fleeing heavily. People were leaving their homes and things. The old man who was the main character of the story seems to be worried about his animals whom he had left behind in his town. The situation was chaotic as the civilians were fleeing from the place due to unexpected attack of the enemy somewhere beyond the bridge. The old man seemed to be totally exhausted and was looking somewhat confused and worried.

C Long Questions [8 Marks each]

1. Throw some light on the theme of the story. Describe the situations that highlight the themes.

Ans. The story deals with themes of resignation, depression and consequences of war. These are reflected in the conversation between the soldier and the old man who had to leave his hometown during the Spanish civil war.

Below are given the situations that deals with the themes of the story.

Depression The old man is gripped by panic and anxiety. He expresses his concern about the safety of his animals whom he has left behind. When the soldier who is concerned about his safety asks him to catch the truck to Barcelona, he tells him that he is too tired to go farther so he resigns himself to his fate. The soldier tells him that it is best not to think about his animals. The old man is unable to stop thinking about them and this leads him to depression which is caused not only by the thought of slaughter (killing) of his dear animals but also by the inability to go farther due to the fatigue of travelling such a long distance as twelve kilometres.

Impending Death He is somewhat relaxed by the fact that the cat can look after itself but apart from that the soldier says that nothing can be done for him and his death seems certain. Impending death is also one of the major themes of the story as every body is in hurry out of the fear of impending death. Carts, men, women and children are crossing a pontoon bridge of fearing death. The old man leaves his animals behind fearing death and now he fears the impending death of them.

Fear of Attack The story is set on the back drop of the Spanish civil war. When the danger of attack was looming everywhere. Towns prone to the attack by artillery have been evacuated so that civilians could be

saved. The scene where the story is picturised is of side of the road near which carts, children, women are crossing a river through a pontoon bridge as the planes of the enemy could attack anytime soon. So the narrator who is a scout soldier has been assigned with duty to watch the advancement of the enemy expected to approach the place sooner or later.

2. Write the character sketch of old man.

Ans. The old man is the main character of the story. He is 76 years old and is a war refugee.

Following are the points that discuss about the character of old man.

Displaced and Concerned He has been displaced by the civil war. He has no family at all but the few animals he had were his world. He has the charge of two goats, a cat and four pairs of pigeons. He is worried about their safety as he has left them alone in his hometown. He thinks that they would die. The idea of their impending death makes him sad and depressed.

Symbol of War Victims He has already walked twelve kilometres from his hometown San Carlos to the bridge and now is too tired to walk. The old man symbolises the men and women who have to leave their homes as the victims of war with which they have nothing to do. The old man is a victim of the war like the goats because the goats unlike the pigeons cannot fly.

Fatalist He surrenders to his fate proving that he is a fatalist. The advice by the narrator to catch the truck to save his life, makes no effect on him. He is ready to face anything stored in his fate regardless of the possibility of a certain death. He also left his pets on their fate though he showed great concern over their safety. He knew very well that there was nothing that he could do to save them same as the narrator was left with no option but to leave him on his fate.

3. How can you say that soldier was concerned about the old man's safety? What did he ask the old man to save himself?

Ans. The narrator in the story 'Old Man at the Bridge' is the soldier who comes in contact with the old man at the bridge which people are crossing to flee from the Spanish civil war.

Following are the points that show the soldier's concern towards the old man's safety.

Backdrop of the Story The soldier is a scout whose duty is to cross the bridge and find out how far the enemy has advanced. He engages himself in a conversation with the old man.

Anxiety of the Old Man During conversation he comes to know that the old man is worried more about the safety of his animals whom he has left behind in his hometown than his own safety.

Though knowing the certain fate of animals of the old man the narrator assures him that his animals would be safe. He knows the truth may hurt the old man but he has already got concerned about him and does not want him to suffer the pain of imaginary slaughter of his dear pets but all his efforts to assure the old man about the safety of his animals fail.

Advise by the Soldier The narrator saw the old man sitting near the pontoon bridge all by himself. After listening to the old man's story, he requests the old man to board a truck and go to Barcelona as enemy might attack the place anytime. He appears concerned about the old man and advises him to save his life at that moment. He tried to assure the old man that except goat pigeons and cat will take care of themselves.

4. In your opinion what could have happened to the old man at the end of the story? Did he die or survive?

Ans. It is speciality of Hemingway that he leaves so many things on the readers to assume. Here in this story also, no definite conclusion or ending has been given. So reader themselves have to make their own assumptions.

According to me, the old man at the end must have died as he resigned to his fate. Following reasons may prove this.

Old Man too Tired The narrator meets this old man sitting near the pontoon bridge where everyone seems to be in a hurry to go away from the enemy targets. But he finds that this old man is 76 years old who has walked 12 kilometres from his home San Carlos. The narrator comes to know that the old man was too tired and did not have any stamina to walk any farther.

Old Man's Concern He was very much bothered about his animals because he very well knew that cat could take care of itself, the pigeons could fly but the goats were the only animal which had no place to go.

A Fatalist Old man had the chance but he was a fatalist and without his animals he had no reason to live, they were his only family. They gave him the meaning of life but the war had snatched them also. He was scared of the impending death of his animals.

No Hope for Life He was worried more about his animals' safety than his own safety. Moreover he had lost all hope by that time, so seeing his condition it is very clear that he might have surely died on the bridge sitting in the same position.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. That was his native town and so it gave him pleasure to mention it and he smiled.

“I was taking care of animals,” he explained.

“Oh,” I said, not quite understanding.

“Yes,” he said, “I stayed, you see, taking care of animals. I was the last one to leave the town of San Carlos.”

He did not look like a shepherd nor a herdsman and I looked at his black dusty clothes and his gray dusty face and his steel rimmed spectacles and said, “What animals were they?”

“Various animals,” he said, and shook his head. “I had to leave them.”

1. Who is ‘I’? in the above extract? [3]
2. What animals did the old man leave behind in his hometown? [3]
3. Describe the scene at the bridge. [3]
4. What was the narrators occupation and what was he doing near the bridge? [3]
5. How old was the old man? How did he reach the bridge? [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. What did the old man worry about and why? How did the soldier console him?
2. Why cannot the old man walk further? What was stopping him?
3. How did the old man relieve himself by sharing his worries with narrator? When did he feel the happiest?
4. Which animal was the old man most worried about and why? Did they have anything that could save them?

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. Why was the old man asked to leave his hometown? Why was he the last to leave?
2. Comment on the old man’s appearance. What impressed you most about him?

A Horse and Two Goats

RK Narayan

About the Author

RK Narayan was born on 10th October, 1906 in Madras. His full name was Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami. His father was a school headmaster and Narayan did some of his studies at his father's school. He was interested in English literature since he was very young. He was a leading author of early Indian Literature in English. He was also awarded Padma Vibhushan, Sahitya Akademi Award and Benson Medal. He is best known for his novels such as *Mr Sampath* (1949), *The Financial Expert* (1952), *The Guide* (1958) for which he received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961 and *The Man Eater of Malgudi* (1961) and the stories, *Malgudi Days* (1982). He died on 13th May, 2001.

About the Story

The story 'A Horse and Two Goats' is the clash of cultures, specifically the clash of Indian and Western cultures. Using humour instead of anger, Narayan demonstrates just how far apart the two worlds are. The two main characters in this story couldn't be more different. Muni, a poor and illiterate villager unknown of English grammar and manner, represents Indian culture of his age. On the other hand, the American, rich and educated, travelling India to understand life in a better way, represents American culture.

Each man has no clue about the other's way of life. Though either of the two men is not really satisfied with the conversation, they do not realise that there is actually no communication happening between them. Their meeting ends on a good note, Muni goes back his home assuming that he has sold his goats while the American stays there thinking him to be going to bring some men to help him detach the horse statue from the pedestal. At the end not only does each man get what he wants but also neither has lost anything of value.

Character Introduction

Major Characters

Muni

Muni is a poor old man, who lives in a tiny South Indian village, Kritam. He is the main character of the story. Once, he was a rich man and had a flock of fourty sheep and goats. He is left with only two goats. Muni has no formal education as he could not go to school because he belonged to lower caste. Although, Muni had no formal education, he has a lot of knowledge of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

The American

He is a businessman from New York city. He is dressed in Khaki clothes and comes in a yellow station wagon. He is a typical American, who speaks only English, but is surprised to find that Muni can speak only Tamil. He liked the

statue of the horse so much that he decide to buy it from Muni. He gives one hundred rupees to Muni and considers that he has bought the statue.

Muni's Wife

She is an honest woman. She lives with her husband in poverty although she has lived with him through prosperity. She does odd jobs such as grinding corn, sweeping, scrubbing or buying food stuff at the big house to earn her livelihood. She is a typical Indian wife, who is ready to cook what her husband wants to eat.

Minor Character

The Owner of the Shop

The shop man is a man whose mood swings frequently. He has given Muni food and other things on credit, but now has refused to give anything to Muni as he has crossed his limit. He sends him back disappointed when his wife ask for some ingredients to prepare drumsticks.

Summary of the Story

Muni's Village

The main character of the story is Muni, who lives in a tiny South Indian village named Kritam. There are about thirty houses in the village and only one called the Big House which is made up of bricks whereas the other houses are made of bamboo, straw and mud. There is no water and no electricity in this village.

Muni's Life in Village

Muni with his wife lives in a hut. There was a time when he had a flock of fourty sheep and goats. His fortune had declined gradually, unnoticed. Presently, Muni is left with two goats. Their only support system is from the odd jobs that his wife does at the Big House. He purchases his daily household needs from a local shop and that too on credit.

One day, when he goes to get the items, (his wife required to cook the drumsticks) the shopkeeper insults him and sends him away and says that he has exhausted his credit limit. When he returns home without the material for cooking drumsticks, his wife ask him to go away with goats and keep a fast till evening. Muni takes the goats to the usual spot which is a few miles away and sits in the shade of a statue of a horse and a warrior.

Arrival of an American in a Yellow Station Wagon

As Muni was sitting idle and watching trucks and buses, a yellow station wagon comes down the road and stops right in front of him. A red faced American dressed in Khaki clothes comes out and asks Muni about the nearest gas station. He notices the statue and finds it marvellous, then he enquires Muni about the statue. Muni gets scared and thinks that this foreigner in Khaki must be a policeman.

Conversation between Muni and the American Businessman

The American businessman offers Muni his business card, but Muni gets scared as he thinks that it is a warrant of some kind. Muni commences a lengthy explanation to establish his innocence. He says he knows nothing about the crime the man in Khaki is investigating. The American was actually asking questions about the statue of the horse and the warrior which he would like to buy. The American is actually convinced that Muni is the owner of the statue. But the biggest irony is that they both do not understand each other's language.

Muni Interpreting Statue

Muni gives information about the statue to the American that he had from his ancestors. Although, the American does not understand Muni's language, he enjoys the words. Muni interprets the statue, "This is our guardian. At the end of Kali Yuga, this world and all other worlds will be destroyed and the Redeemer will come in the shape of a horse."

Confusion due to Difference in Language

The American after listening to Muni says that "I assure you that this will have the best home in the USA." Finally, the American gives him one hundred rupees. The American considers that he has bought the horse and Muni believes that he has sold his two goats.

Muni Returns Home

Muni goes back home and hands over the money to his wife whereas the American flags down a truck and gets help to break the horse off his pedestal and drives away with his purchase. Muni's wife does not believe his story. Her suspicion is confirmed when the goats find their way home. At the end of the story, Muni's wife says "If you have thieved, the police will come tonight and break your bones. Don't involve me. I will go away to my parents....."

Word Meanings

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Grandiose—pretentiously imposing in appearance, **Brow**—the top part or edge of something high, **Gargoyles**—an ugly carved human or animal face, **Balustrade**—a railing or wall, **Thatch**—a roof covering of straw, **Sallied**—set out from a place to do something, **Pedestal**—a base or support on which a statue is mounted, **Foliage**—plant leaves collectively, **Faggots**—a bundle of sticks bound together used as fuel.

Page No. 53

Tethered—tie with a rope to restrict its movement.

Page No. 54

Credit—take or buy on the promise of paying later, **Mumbled**—speaking indistinctly, **Sneered**—smiled in mocking manner, **Parapet**—a protective wall along the edge of a well or roof, **Unobtrusively**—not noticeable.

Page No. 55

Conjure up—arrange, **Accosted**—approached boldly, **Cronies**—close companions, **Lounging**—stand and sit in lazy manner, **Progeny**—children or offspring, **Meandered**—wander at random.

Page No. 56

Prancing—move with high springy steps specially of a horse, **Scythe**—a tool for cutting crops or grass, **Aquiline**—like an eagle, **Sash**—a long strip worn over one's shoulder or around the waist, **Vandals**—a person who deliberately destroys public property, **Gashed**—cut deeply, **Topple off**—fell, **Lewd**—offensive in derogatory way, **Scrounge**—seek to obtain through the generosity of others, **Intriqued**—arouse the curiosity.

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Sputtered—create a series of soft explosive sounds, **Fidgeted**—make small movements, **Slanderer**—fellow with damaging image.

Page No. 58

Flicked—strike with a sudden sharp movement, **Inquisitor**—a person making an inquiry, **Potent**—effective.

Page No. 59

Speculation—false news with no firm evidence, **Ingratiatingly**—in the manner of getting someone's favour, **Scruples**—a feeling of doubt, **Sidled**—walked in timid manner.

Page No. 60

Mincing—grind food or meat into very small pieces, **Driftwood**—wood that is floating on the sea or brought on to the beach by the sea.

Page No. 61

Pinioned—hold the arms or legs of someone, **Urchin**—a mischievous young child, **Souvenir**—a thing that is kept as reminder of a person, place or thing.

Page No. 62

Adversaries—opponents, **Redeemer**—God, **Gallop**—the fastest pace of a horse, **Brooding**—displaying deep unhappiness of thought.

Page No. 63

Whiskered—long-beared, **Voyaging**—sailover, **Pad**—fill or cover with soft material to protect something.

Page No. 64

Mystification—the state of feeling very confused, **Bearish**—related to falling sharp prices.

Page No. 65

Reared—bring up and care for until they are fully grown, **Gunny**—coarse fabric used for sacks, **Famished**—extremely hungry.

Page No. 66

Clump—compacted mass of something, **Thicket**—a closed group of bushes or trees, **Perched**—to sit on or near the edge of something, **Ruminated**—think deeply, **Siphoned**—pumpout.

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Bleating—wavering cry of sheep, goat or calf, **Wriggled**—twist and turn with quick movements.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. The village consisted of less than thirty houses, only one of them built with brick and cement. Painted a brilliant yellow and blue all over with gorgeous carvings of Gods and gargoyles on its balustrade, it was known as the Big House. The other houses, distributed in four streets, were generally of bamboo thatch, straw, mud and other unspecified material. Muni's was the last house in the fourth street, beyond which stretched the fields.

1. What was the name of the village being referred here? Who lived here? [3]

Ans. The story starts with the mention of an Indian village name Kritam. It was a very small village of Tamil Nadu which hardly finds a place on the map or atlas. The protagonist of the story Muni lived in the village with his wife. His house was made of bamboo, thatch, straw and mud indicating that owner was poor.

2. How was Muni prosperous life? How did he feed his sheep? [3]

Ans. When Muni was prosperous, he was the proud owner of a flock of forty sheep and goats. He used to take them to the highway, a couple of miles away. He carried a crook at the end of a bamboo pole and snapped foliage from the avenue tree to feed his flock.

3. How did Muni's wife carry out her daily household work? [3]

Ans. Muni's wife was a homely woman. In the morning, she prepared meals for her husband and herself and carried out various kinds of works at the Big House to run her home. As Muni was not earning, it was she who was managing the food for both of them by doing odd jobs.

4. What did Muni's wife cook for him in the morning? How did she cook it? [3]

Ans. In the morning Muni's wife used to prepare balls of millet flour for him. She boiled water in a mud pot. Then, she threw a handful of millet flour into it and added salt in it. Then, she made balls of millet flour.

5. How was the Big House? What was the difference between the Big House and the other houses in the village? [4]

Ans. The Big House was built with bricks and cement. It was painted beautifully with bright yellow and blue colour. There were carvings of Gods and gargoyles on several pillars. The other houses are made up of bamboo, thatch, straw and mud. The Big House indicates that its owner must be a wealthy man but rest of them were poor.

- II. He flung himself down in a corner to recoup from the fatigue of his visit to the shop. His wife said, "You are getting no sauce today, nor anything else. I cannot find anything to give you to eat. Fast till the evening, it will do you good. Take the goats and be gone now", she cried and added, "Don't come back before the sun is down."

1. What was Muni craving for and why? [3]

Ans. Muni was tired of eating boiled leaves everyday. He wanted the drumsticks to be cooked in a sauce. His wife angrily told him to bring all ingredients like dhall, chilly, curry leaves, mustard, gengelly oil and one large potato as in her house her store was empty. She told him to go to the shopkeeper and get all the stuff on credit.

2. What fatigue was referred here? Why did Muni experience it? [3]

Ans. The insult faced by Muni is referred to as fatigue. Muni had gone to the shop to buy some articles for making sauce but the shopkeeper refused him to give any item on credit. In fact the shopkeeper insulted him.

3. Why was Muni's wife upset and angry? [3]

Ans. Muni's wife was upset and angry due to poverty and absence of eatables in the house. She asked Muni to get the essential items from the shopkeeper on credit but the shopkeeper refused to give him any item on credit as he had already taken so much on credit.

4. How did she plan to earn enough money to buy food stuff for the evening meal? [3]

Ans. She planned to work hard in the Big House by doing odd jobs such as grinding corn, sweeping, scrubbing for buying food stuff. She was ready to do as much work to buy the foodstuff and keep the dinner ready for her husband.

5. How did Muni's wife show her annoyance over his husband's failure of getting the ingredients? [4]

Ans. Muni had gone to the shop to bring required ingredients to prepare drumsticks sauce, but the shopkeeper denied to give any item on credit. He had to come back home empty handed. When his wife found him returning empty handed from the shop, she became annoyed and refused to give him anything to eat. She told Muni to keep fast till evening and asked him to take the goats for grazing.

III. Unleashing the goats from the drumstick tree, Muni started out, driving them ahead and uttering weird cries from time to time in order to urge them on. He passed through the village with his head bowed in thought. He did not want to look at anyone or be accosted. A couple of cronies lounging in the temple corridor hailed him, but he ignored their call. The shopman had said that he was seventy. At seventy, one only waited to be summoned by God.

1. How was Muni driving the goats? Why was he using weird sound? [3]

Ans. Muni was left with only two goats. He was driving them to the highway for grazing. While doing this, he was using weird cries as the goats were used to them and understood when to move and when to stop.

2. Who all hailed Muni on his way? Why did he ignore their calls? [3]

Ans. A couple of Muni's companions lounging in the temple corridor hailed him, but he was lost in his thought and was walking with his head bowed. That's why he ignored their calls and kept moving towards his destination.

3. What thought was disturbing Muni? [3]

Ans. Muni was quite old, but was not sure about his exact age. When the shopman told him that he was not less than seventy years old, he felt bad and was not ready to accept this. Thus, he was continuously thinking about this.

4. What thought disturbed Muni while thinking about his age? [3]

Ans. While thinking about his age, a thought came across his mind that being too old, he could be summoned by God and his wife would have to live alone with no one to look after because they had no child. He was worried about his wife.

5. What was his usual place for grazing of cattles? [4]

Ans. There was a deserted area near the highway. It was visited by a few people. There was a pedestal on which statues of a horse and warrior stood. There was a little grass on the field. So, Muni used to take his goats there for grazing. Muni sat near the horse statue for the whole day and the goats would graze in the meantime.

IV. The horse was nearly life-size, moulded out of clay, baked, burnt and brightly coloured, and reared its head proudly, prancing its forelegs in the air and flourishing its tail in a loop; beside the horse stood a warrior with scythe-like mustachios, bulging eyes, and aquiline nose. The horse itself was said to have been as white as a dhobi-washed sheet, and had on its back a cover of pure brocade of red and black lace, matching the multi-coloured sash around the waist of the warrior. But none in the village remembered the splendour as no one noticed its existence.

1. Describe the statue of the horse. What was beside it? [3]

Ans. The statue of the horse was nearly life size. It was made out of clay which was baked, burnt and brightly coloured. Beside it, there stood a warrior with scythe-like moustache, bulging eyes and a curved nose like an eagle.

2. Describe the splendor of the horse. [3]

Ans. The horse was as white as a washerman's washed sheet and had on its back a cover of pure brocade of red and black lace matching the multi-coloured waist band around the waist of the warrior.

3. How did Muni pass his time while sitting near the grazing place? What did he think? [3]

Ans. Muni sat on the pedestal of the statue of warrior and horse. Muni watched the highway and saw lorries and buses passing through the hills. In this way, he passed his time throughout the day thinking that he also belonged to the outside world.

4. What did the statue makers believe in? [3]

Ans. The statue makers believed in indicating a man of strength by bulging out his eyes and sharpening his moustache tips and by decorating his chest with coloured beads.

5. Why no damage was made to the statue by the villagers? [4]

Ans. The place where the statue was located, was far from the village so no one noticed the statue. Even it was not touched by the young boys of the village who preferred cutting tree trunks with knives and tried to topple luckily they had spared the statue and had not spoilt it off milestone and inscribed lewd design on the walls.

V. The foreigner faithfully looked in the direction indicated by Muni's fingers, gazed for a while at the two goats and the rocks, and with a puzzled expression took out his silver cigarette case and lit a cigarette. Suddenly remembering the courtesies of the season, he asked, "Do you smoke?" Muni answered, "Yes, no." Whereupon the red-faced man took a cigarette and gave it to Muni, who received it with surprise, having had no offer of a smoke from anyone for years now.

1. What strange thing did Muni notice while sitting idle near the statue? [3]

Ans. While sitting near the statue the strange thing noticed by Muni was a new type of vehicle which looked like both a motor car and a bus. It was a station wagon in reality. Though everyday he used to see passing buses and cars through the highway but this type of vehicle was new for him so it appeared strange to Muni.

2. Describe the physical appearance of foreigner. What did he ask Muni? [3]

Ans. The foreigner was a red-face man wearing khaki clothes and from his appearance he seemed to be a policeman. He came out from his yellow station wagon and asked Muni for a nearby gas station.

3. Explain the funny incident which happened when Muni met American for the first time? [3]

Ans. The funny incident that took place when Muni and the American began to converse with each other. Both didn't understand each other's language. The American said "Namaste! How do you do?". Muni responded with the only English words he knew : "Yes, No".

4. What happened when the American offered cigarette to Muni? [3]

Ans. When the American offered a cigarette to Muni, at first he was surprised but took it. He felt so confused about how to lit it. When he drew a deep puff he started coughing, but found the cigarette extremely pleasant.

5. What led to the confusion that occurred? How were Muni and the American talking? [4]

Ans. Soon after a conversation started between the two, it was clear that neither of them was understanding what the other spoke. Muni mistook him a policeman while the American mistook him the seller of the horse statue. Moreover, the inability to understand each other's language led to the confusion. Both were expressing each others' point but in vain. The American spoke in English whereas Muni spoke in Tamil.

VI. "I am sure you know when this horse was made," said the red man and smiled ingratiatingly. Muni reacted to the relaxed atmosphere by smiling himself, and pleaded, "Please go away, sir, I know nothing, I promise we will hold him for you if we see any bad character around, and we will bury him up to his neck in a coconut pit if he tries to escape; but our village has always had a clean record. Must definitely be the other village."

1. Where are Muni and the American businessman when this conversation is taking place? [3]

Ans. Muni was setting on the pedestal of the statue of a horse and warrior. The statue is situated on the outskirts of his village near the highway where he had taken his goats for grazing. The American businessman had also stopped there for asking near by gas station and got enchanted by the horse's statue.

2. What was the visitor actually interested in? How did his dress confuse Muni? [3]

Ans. The visitor was actually interested in the clay horse statue. He wanted to buy it and take it as a show piece for his home. The visitor was wearing Khaki uniform which misguided Muni. He thought that the person was a police inspector who had come to investigate a case of murder which had taken place in the village some days ago.

3. Why was Muni not able to understand what visitor was asking him? [3]

Ans. Muni was not able to understand the English language being spoken by the visitor. He knew only Tamil and he could neither speak nor understand any other language. Moreover, the visitor could not comprehend the Tamil language.

4. What did Muni request the visitor? What was the assumption that was being explained by Muni to him? [3]

Ans. As Muni could not understand the English language spoken by the visitor, he could not understand the question being asked by the visitor. Muni assumed that the visitor was a policeman and was investigating the case of murder. So, he requested him to go away and

promised to handover any bad character if he finds or bury him if he tried to escape. He gave a long explanation of his innocence.

5. The American seemed to be a bit annoyed by Muni's conversation. Why? [4]

Ans. The American with a red face was somewhat irritated as he was not getting a proper answer from Muni. Therefore, he talked very slowly and carefully. He was irritated at the fact that Muni was not able to understand even the little English words which he was speaking. In rest of the places in India he has met people who could interact with him in English. He also made a remark if he was against English language due to some religious or spiritual reasons.

VII. The old man now understood the reference to the horse, thought for a second, and said in his own language, "I was an urchin this high when I heard my grandfather explain this horse and warrior and my grandfather himself was this high when he heard his grandfather, whose grandfather....."

The other man interrupted him, "I don't want to seem to have stopped here for nothing. I will offer you a good price for this," he said, indicating the horse.

1. How did the American businessman conclude that Muni was the owner of the statue of the horse? [3]

Ans. The American had seen many Indian sellers sitting in front of their shops and goods. They were sitting just like Muni was sitting on the pedestal of the statue of the horse. So, the American businessman concluded that he was the owner of the statue of the horse.

2. What made Muni understand that American was asking about the horse statue? [3]

Ans. As the American pointed towards the horse, Muni understood that he was inquiring about the statue. He asked Muni, "Isn't this statue yours? Why don't you sell it to me?". Muni now perhaps understood that instead of murder case the visitor was enquiring about the horse statue.

3. Why did Muni begin to talk about the horse enthusiastically? [3]

Ans. When the American started pointing his finger towards the statue of the horse, Muni felt relieved that the theme of the murder had been abandoned so he began to talk about the horse enthusiastically. But as he did not understand the exact question, he started relating the history of the statue.

4. What did the visitor tell Muni while interrupting him in between his description of the horse's history? [3]

Ans. As the visitor was very keen to buy that horse, he was really got bored by the long explanation being given by Muni about the horse's statue. He interrupted in between and offered him to pay a good amount of money if Muni agree to sell the horse to the visitor. The visitor was really fascinated by this statue of horse and wanted to buy it even at a high cost.

5. Why was the foreigner fascinated with Muni's language? What did he understand? [4]

Ans. Muni spoke Tamil in a stimulating manner and the foreigner listened to the sound of the language with fascination. He, loved the sound of the language very much. He mistook it as the description of the horse which he wanted to buy and according to him Muni was the seller of it.

VIII. In answer to these questions, the red man dashed his hand into his pocket and brought forth his wallet in order to take immediate advantage of the bearish trend in the market. He flourished a hundred-rupee currency note and said, "Well, this is what I meant."

The old man now realised that some financial element was entering their talk. He peered closely at the currency note, the like of which he had never seen in his life; he knew the five and ten by their colours although always in other people's hands, while his own earning at any time was in coppers and nickels.

1. Explain the misunderstanding which took place when the American gave him one hundred rupee note.

Ans. The American put one hundred rupee note into Muni's hands and considered that he had bought the statue as he thought that Muni was the owner of the statue. Muni thought that American had bought his goats.

2. How did the foreigner plan to carry away the horse statue to his home? [3]

Ans. The foreigner knew that such a large piece of art as was the statue of horse could not be taken to his country, the USA by air in the plane so he decided to carry it away by sea in a ship so that he could get it in one piece at his home.

3. How did Muni describe the village headman? What could he do? [3]

Ans. Seeing the note of hundred rupees, Muni thought that the American was in need of change money. He found it to be humorous and made mention of the headman of his village. Muni told the American businessman that the headman was a moneylender and he could change a lakh of rupees in gold sovereigns.

4. What joke did Muni crack about his only treasure? [3]

Ans. When the American businessman gave Muni a one hundred rupee note, he was assured that he was buying his goats. He felt extremely joyful and joked that it was the goats' first ride in a motor car and they would follow him to the path of Yama Loka if not carried away from his sight.

5. How the American detach the horse statue? Who helped him? [4]

Ans. When Muni had left the sight, the American thought that he had gone to bring some men to help him detach the statue. Meanwhile a truck came. He stopped it and pump out gas from the truck to start the engine of his wagon. A couple of men helped in detaching the statue from its pedestal and placed it in his station wagon.

IX. Munni hurried homeward with the cash securely tucked away at his waist in his dhoti. He shut the street door and stole up softly to his wife as she squatted before the lit oven wondering if by a miracle food would drop from the sky. Muni displayed his fortune for the day. She snatched the notes from him, counted them by the glow of the fire, and cried, "One hundred rupees! How did you come by it? Have you been stealing?"

1. Describe the conversation between Muni and his wife. [3]

Ans. Muni believed that he had sold his goats, so he went home to give the money to his wife. Muni's wife did not believe his story. Her suspicion was confirmed when the goats found their way home. She thought that Muni had stolen the money from somewhere.

2. Why did Muni get irritated on seeing his goats back? What did he believe? [3]

Ans. When the American businessman handed over a one hundred rupee note to Muni, he believed that he had sold his goats to him, but when they returned home and bleated outside Muni's house, he got irritated. He cursed them and caught the goat by its ears screaming that where was their owner? Why have they come back?

3. How did Muni's wife react after seeing the goats back home? [3]

Ans. When Muni's wife saw that the goats had returned home, she could not believe what the old Muni was telling her. She thought that he had stolen hundred rupees from somewhere. She shouted at him and told him if police came to catch him for stealing, and break his bones, he need not to involve his wife. She further told Muni that she would abandon him and go to her parents' home.

4. In the end, it appears that Muni's financial troubles were over. Comment. [3]

Ans. At the end, it appeared that Muni's financial troubles were over because he had received one hundred rupees from the American, but his bad luck continued as his wife suspected him of theft and threatened to leave him and go away to her parents.

5. What can you say about Muni's wife in the context of the story? [4]

Ans. Muni's wife has been depicted as a powerful character in the story. She represents rural woman of India. She scolds Muni for not being able to arrange necessary items to prepare food and asks him to do his daily business. She does care for her husband as she says that she will somehow arrange food. In the end, she demonstrates her honesty and determination when Muni gives her one hundred rupees and she doubts him rather than getting happy though this money could solve all their problems.

b Short Questions [4 Marks each]

1. Why is Muni's wife upset and angry? Comment.

Ans. Muni and his wife lead a poor life. They don't have anything to eat. When Muni asks her wife to cook drumsticks in a sauce she asked him to get the essential ingredients required for making sauce. Muni goes to the shop to get the essential items on credit, but the shop man refuses to give him any item on credit. When Muni's wife see him returned empty handed she gets upset and angry.

2. Give character sketch of the American businessman.

Ans. The foreigner is a typical American, who can communicate only in English. He has been exploring India so when he sees the statue of horse, he forgets his trouble instead gets attracted towards it. He is a good judge of art as he finds the statue very attracting which may enhance the decoration of his room. Unlike the other foreigners, he is not proud, he sits next to Muni, holds his shoulders and even offers him cigarette which shows his humane side. Though, not knowing what is being spoken by Muni, he appreciates his gestures. Hence, we can say that the character of the American wins our favour and we feel connected to him.

3. Comment on the few words of appreciation spoken by the American for the statue. How did he describe it?

Ans. The American stood up on the pedestal of the statue and ran his fingers along the curved decorations around the horse's neck and appreciated it at length. He praised the vibrant colours of the statue although they were faded. The foreigner told Muni that the horse statue would find the best accommodation in the USA. He further told Muni that he would have to cancel his air ticket and would take a boat to home to carry the horse statue.

4. What case does Muni refer to? Why is he afraid to confront the American businessman?

Ans. Muni refers to the case of murder that had taken place few days ago. He tells the American businessman that he knows nothing of the case. But the murderer will not be able to escape the Law. He swears by God and says that he knows nothing about the murder. He is afraid to confront the American businessman because he thinks the American businessman to be either a policeman or a soldier as he was wearing khaki coloured clothes.

5. What reason did Muni put forth for not going to school? What knowledge did he have?

Ans. Muni told the American that he had never been to school because in the earlier days they had to go out to work in the field since morning till night for sowing during harvest time. Muni did not have a formal education and had not travelled beyond his village. But he had a lot of knowledge of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. He further concluded that he could not go to school because he belonged to lower caste.

6. Comment on the theme of the story.

Ans. The story is about the obvious clash of cultures as exhibited by white American and Muni who is a poor uneducated Hindu. Muni speaks Tamil while the American businessman speaks English. The two are unable to communicate with each other. Muni speaks about his own life while the American speaks about his which leads to confusion. Both have different attitudes towards life and things.

7. Which part of RK Narayan's short story, 'A Horse and Two Goats' is most amusing according to you? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans. According to me, the most amusing part of the story 'A Horse and Two Goats' is towards the end where Muni mistakenly thinks the American was offering him hundred rupee note to buy his two goats, though the money was meant to buy the clay horse statue. As both people are not able to understand each other's language,

they are not able to communicate the real thoughts to each other. But this part is really amusing as the way Muni convinces himself that the visitor was offering him money to buy his two goats and he convinces himself that he has finally understood the matter.

C Long Questions [8 Marks each]

1. Give a character sketch of Muni.

Ans. Muni is the protagonist of the story. The whole story revolves around him. We see different forms of his character in different situations. These are some points which gives the characteristics of Muni.

A Poor Typical Villager Muni is a poor typical villager of a tiny village of Southern India. From a prosperous man, he has become a poor shepherd due to an unknown reason. He is not able to arrange square meal for him and his wife, the only family member after him.

An Unpleasant Fellow His poverty has made him an unpleasant fellow as no one offers him tobacco and he has to roam alone, even the shopman does not want to acknowledge his presence due to his habit of borrowing on credit. To keep his body and soul together, he is totally dependent on his wife who arranges food for both of them by working in the Big House and doing some petty works in the fields. The result of this is that he dare not argue with her out of the fear that he might not get food if she gets irritated with his words.

Concerned for his Wife and Age Though she is dominating, he loves her as he gets worried for her future by the thought that at the age of seventy he might be summoned by Almighty, leaving her alone. He is concerned towards his age too because when the shop man told him that he must be around seventy, it hurts him and he starts thinking about his age and strength.

A Natural Believer He is a natural believer as whatever he is told he holds true. He has never gone to school yet he possesses good knowledge of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata because he has heard them being cited by the priest of the temple and has learnt them by heart. Thus, Muni's character has many shades that enhance the charm of the story.

2. What message is conveyed through this story? Relate the story with its message.

Ans. In the story, the author conveys a message that each individual should follow his own culture. Muni, the poor South Indian Hindu follows his own Indian culture while the American businessman follows his own.

Miscommunication leads Confusion As a good Hindu, Muni accepts his fate. Muni speaks Tamil while the American businessman speaks English. The two are

unable to communicate with each other. Muni speaks about his own life while the American speaks about his own which leads to confusion. Both are unintelligible to each other.

The American gives one hundred rupees to Muni and thinks that he has bought the statue, but Muni thinks that he has sold his goats. So, the story revolves around the horse and the goats and there is clearly a misunderstanding between Muni and the American businessman.

There is no Escape from Destiny The other message that the story conveys is that no man can escape his destiny whether good or bad. Muni and the American are destined to meet at the same place owing to their circumstances. No matter how distinguished they are from each other, they try their utmost to understand each other regardless of their different languages. Muni has been dreaming of having a shop of his own, but is unable to cater money in any way possible whereas the American thousands of mile away from his country happens to stop near the pedestal and being attracted towards the horse statue, he misunderstands Muni to be its seller and hands him one hundred rupees in lieu of the horse statue. Finally, both have their wish fulfilled. Truly, a game of destiny for both of them.

3. The story deals with the best misunderstanding between an Indian and an American. Discuss.

Ans. The story deals with the misunderstanding that takes place between a South Indian Hindu name Muni and an American businessman. Muni lives with his wife in a small village.

Encounter of Muni and the American One day, while he has taken his goats for grazing and he is sitting around a statue of a horse, a yellow station wagon comes and stops right in front of him. A red faced American dressed in khaki clothing comes out and enquires about the nearest gas station. There he notices the statue which he finds marvellous. He asks questions about the statue which he would like to buy.

Muni's Misunderstanding Muni does not understand his language and gets scared as he thinks that he must be a policeman. The American gives him his business card, but Muni thinks that it is a warrant of some kind.

Execution of the Deal Finally, the American gives one hundred rupees to Muni and considers that he has bought the statue, as he thinks that Muni is the owner of the statue. Muni thinks that American has bought his goats.

Muni goes home to give the money to his wife while the American flags down a truck, gets help to detach horse statue off its pedestal and drives away with the purchase.

Muni's wife does not believe his story. Her suspicion is confirmed when the goats find their way home. She yells at him.

So, the whole story is full of misunderstanding and still we find that actions take place and poor Muni gets money which he could have never earned if he had not meant this American or if both had understood each other's language. Even the American would not have acquired the horse statue if Muni had understood his language.

4. The story creates a series of humour in the form of conversation. Elaborate.

Ans. The story is filled with elements of humour. RK Narayan has artistically created the comic characters of Muni and the American and he laughs at them in a general and kind manner.

The funniest incidents from the text are

At Home In the very beginning, when Muni shows his craving to chew the drumstick mixed with sauce, his wife replies "you have only four teeth in your jaw, but your craving is for big things".

At Shop Next time when Muni went to the shop man to borrow items which his wife required to make drumstick sauce, to draw the shopkeepers attention, he kept clearing his throat, coughing and sneezing until the shopkeeper could not tolerate it any more and said "What ails you? You will fly off that seat into the gutter if you sneeze so hard, young man". Here we are entertained at two points first 'sneezing hard that would fly Muni' and second the shopkeepers calling Muni 'young man' despite he being around seventy.

Reply to the American When the American questions him whether he smokes or not, he only answers "yes, no" without understanding the real matter of conversation. This situation is really humorous.

Returning of the Goats In the end, when Muni returns home with one hundred rupees and tells his wife that they were given by the American in lieu of goats and then only they hear the bleating of goats, he questions them, "Where is that man? Don't you know you are his?".

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I.** Muni repeated weakly, not being sure of it himself, “Fifty.” He always calculated his age from the time of the great famine when he stood as high as the parapet around the village well, but who could calculate such things accurately nowadays with so many famines occurring? The shop man felt encouraged when other customers stood around to watch and comment.
1. Why did Muni go to the shop man? What was his motive? [3]
 2. How did he draw shop man’s attention? Was he successful? [3]
 3. What excuse did Muni make? How did the shopkeeper know that he was lying? [3]
 4. Why did Muni tell his age fifty years? [3]
 5. What made him think the shop man was not about to give him items on credit? [4]
- II.** While he was brooding on this pleasant vision, the foreigner utilised the pause to say, “I assure you that this will have the best home in the USA. I’ll push away the book case, you know I love books and am a member of five book clubs and the choice and bonus volumes mount up to a pile really in our living room, as high as this horse itself.
1. How did the foreigner praise the horse? [3]
 2. What did Muni say about the horse? [3]
 3. What assurance did the foreigner give to Muni with regard to the horse? [3]
 4. What does Muni say about the pundits’ discourse in the temple? [3]
 5. What reply did the foreigner give to Muni when he was telling him about the pundits view about the horse? [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. Who was Muni? Where did he live and with whom? How do we know that he was poor?
2. What was the reaction of Muni’s wife when he showed her a one hundred rupee note? How was her suspension cemented?
3. Why did the American make plan for India on the pretext of visiting other civilisations.
4. Why did the American businessman stop where Muni was sitting? What did he offer to Muni? Why did the offer surprise Muni?

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. Describe the life of Muni and his wife in this small village?
2. How does the story reflect a clash between the two cultures? How does the writer use human or humour in the story?
3. Who is the main character in the story, Muni or the horse? Why?

Hearts and Hands

O Henry

About the Author

O Henry was born on 1st September, 1862 under the name William Sydney Porter in Greensboro, North Carolina. He is famous for writing short stories which are full of witticism, clever wordplay and unexpected twist endings. O Henry's career aspirations were unfocussed and after trying hands at many different activities and professions, he started writing for a newspaper in 1895. His prolific writing period began in 1902 in New York city where he wrote 381 short stories. Some of his best and least known work is contained in 'Cabbages and Kings', his first collection of published stories. His second collection of stories 'The Four Million' was released in 1906. This collection contained several short story masterpieces including 'The Gift of the Magi', 'The Cop and the Anthem' and many others. Henry died in 1910 due to several complications and ill health.

About the Story

The title 'Hearts and Hands' suggests the theme that people will display 'heart', or 'kindness', for others with no self-interest. The story describes an encounter in the train between two acquaintances Miss Fairchild and Mr Easton. Miss Fairchild started speaking to Mr Easton and then she is surprised to discover that he is handcuffed to the man seated besides him. The man with Easton senses the embarrassment and gives an explanation that, Easton is the marshal and the two are headed for the prison. The man's intervention saves Easton from embarrassment and prevents the girl from discovering the truth about Mr Easton. It is only through the observation of her fellow passengers that reader is made aware of the reality that Easton was a prisoner and the other person was his Marshal, who was escorting Easton to the prison.

Characters Introduction

Mr Easton

He is the main character of the story. He is a handsome person with good manners. Mr Easton is as quick thinker as the real Marshal. He is also quite the opportunist. He does not flinch to lie and continuously lied Miss Fairchild.

Miss Fairchild

She is a pretty young woman and is elegantly dressed. She is travelling in a train to Denver. After seeing Mr Easton handcuffed, she becomes pale and feels uncomfortable.

The Other Man (Marshal)

He plays a very important role in this story. He is heavily built and roughly dressed up. The real Marshal is a selfless, humble and kind hearted man. He is intelligent to sense the embarrassment and saves Mr Easton from the unpleasant and uncomfortable situation.

Summary of the Story

Journey in a Train

The story revolves around three main characters. It is set in a train to Denver. An elegantly dressed woman named Miss Fairchild is seated in the train when two men arrive and take the seat facing her. One of the men is Mr Easton. He is handcuffed to the other man seated beside him and therefore, he feels embarrassed and uncomfortable before the lady. Then she begins to chat with him, but continues to stare at the handcuffs.

The other Man lies to Save Easton from Embarrassment

As the conversation continues, the young lady is surprised to learn that Easton has discarded his life in Washington to become a Marshal in the West. The young woman finds it fascinating and continues to chat with her acquaintance, with continual stare at the handcuffs. To ease the situation the rough looking man interrupts and tells Miss Fairchild that “Don’t you worry about them, all Marshals handcuff themselves to their prisoners to keep them from getting away”. After some time both leave the coach on pretext of going to smoke room.

Shocking Revelation at the end

The two passengers sitting nearby have listened to all the conversation and one of them remarks that Mr Easton seems too young to be a Marshal. The other passenger concluded that Mr Easton is the counterfeiter. He says that “Have you ever seen an officer handcuffing himself to a prisoner to his right hand?”. This situation is not at all expected by the readers and deepens the mystery.

Word Meanings

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Influx—arrival or entry of a large number of people, **Elegant**—pleasingly graceful and stylish personality, **Luxurious**—extremely enjoyable involving great expense, **Countenance**—someone’s facial expression, **Ruffled**—disordered by running hands, **Glum-faced**—dejected looking face, **Aisle**—a passage between rows of seats **Tingeing**—trace of some colour, **Gray-gloved**—gloved with the gloves of gray colour.

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Bewildered—become perplexed, **Vague**—not clear, **Forestalled**—stop an action by taking step ahead of time, **Veiled**—covered or hidden, **Counterfeiting**—imitate fraudulently, **Handcuffs**—hand are tied with chain.

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Growled—sound of hostility in the throat, **Petition**—a formal written request to an authority.

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Chap—a man or a boy.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow

- I. In one coach there sat a pretty young women dressed in elegant taste and surrounded by all the luxurious comfort of an experience traveller. Among the newcomers were too young men, one of handsome presence with a bold Frank countenance and manner, the other a ruffled, glum-faced person, heavily build and roughly dressed. The two were handcuffed together. As they pass down the aisle of the coach the only vacant seat offered was a reversed one facing the attractive young woman. Here the link couple seated themselves. The young woman’s glance fell upon them with a distant

Swift disinterest, then with the lovely smile brightening her countenance and tender pink tingeing her rounded cheeks, she held out a little grey gloved hand. When she spoke her voice, full, sweet and deliberate, proclaimed that its owner was accustomed to speak and be heard.

1. Describe the opening scene of the story. [3]

Ans. The opening scene of the story presents the scene of a railway carriage. There is a crowd of passengers into the coaches in the eastbound B and M Express. In one coach, a very pretty young woman dressed in elegant taste and surrounded by all the luxurious comforts is sitting on a seat. The two new passengers enter, one of them with handsome and bold looks, the other with heavy structure and dressed roughly. They were handcuffed together and seated themselves on the vacant seat just opposite to that elegant lady.

2. Describe the young girl. How is she dressed? [3/]

Ans. The young girl is Miss Fairchild who is pretty and elegantly dressed. She has a lovely smile and pink cheeks. She is one of the main characters of the story. She is already sitting in the compartment where the story takes place.

3. Who are the two new passengers that enter the train? [3/]

Ans. The two new passengers are two young men who enter the train. One is a handsome man and the other one seems to be heavily built and well mannered. The handsome man's name is Mr Easton while the name of the other man is not known but he is the real marshal who is taking Mr Easton to the prison.

4. Why are the two passengers called the 'linked couple'? [3/]

Ans. They are called linked couple because they are handcuffed together. After seeing them, it is very clear that one of them must be a criminal and the other a policeman. As both of them are handcuffed they have to walk or sit together.

5. How does the young woman initiate a chat with Mr Easton? What is her tone? [4/]

Ans. The young lady initiates a chat with Mr Easton by addressing him by his name and then by asking him, if he does not ever recognise his old friends when they meet in the West. She speaks in a very friendly manner. Her way of talking compliments her western attire. Thus, she becomes successful to draw the attention of the young man who is looking quite handsome.

II. The younger man roused himself sharply at the sound of her voice, seemed to struggle with a slight embarrassment which he threw off instantly and then clasped her fingers with his left hand. It's Miss Fairchild he said, with a smile. I will ask you to excuse the other hand, it's otherwise engaged just at present.

He is slightly raised his right hand down at the rest by the shining bracelet to the left one of his companion. The glad look in the girls eyes slowly changed to a bewildered horror. The glow faded from her cheeks. Her lips parted in a vague, relaxing distress. Easton, with a little laugh, as if amused, was about to speak again when the other forestalled him.

1. Why does Mr Easton feel embarrassed? [3/]

Ans. After being recognised as an old acquaintance by the pretty woman the young man feels happy but soon his happiness turns into embarrassment as he is handcuffed with other man, a situation when one does not want to be recognised by a beautiful woman like her.

2. Why does he tell Miss Fairchild "I will ask you to excuse the other hand"? [3/]

Ans. He tells Miss Fairchild to excuse the other hand because it is tied by the hand of the other man, who is sitting next to him hence cannot reach to her hands. He is politely referring to one of his hands being handcuffed with his partners hand.

3. Why does the glad look in young woman's eyes change to a bewildered horror? [3/]

Ans. Young woman notices that her old friend is handcuffed to the man seated beside him. When he greets her, he raises his right hand down and the wrist tied by the handcuff to the left one of his companion. When she sees this, the glad look in her eyes changes to bewildered horror.

4. How does the other man save Mr Easton from embarrassment? What does he tell the girl? [3/]

Ans. The other man comes forward with an explanation and says that Easton is a Marshal and the two are headed for prison. This suddenly changes the mood of the situation and saves both of two from embarrassment.

5. What effect does his remark have on the young woman? [4/]

Ans. When the other man tells the young woman, that Mr Easton is a Marshal and that they are headed for a prison, his remark relieves the young woman of her horror because her acquaintance is not a convict rather he is a Marshal, a job one should be proud of. Hence she feels a bit proud rather than feeling embarrassed.

III. You will excuse me for speaking, miss, but, I see you're acquainted with the marshal here. If you will ask him to speak a word for me when he gets to the pen he will do it, and it will make things easier for me there. He is taking me to leavenworth prison. Its 7 years for counterfeiting.

1. What does the other man present himself as? [3]

Ans. Seeing the expression of Miss Fairchild who was looking uncomfortable having spotted the handcuff around Mr Easton's wrist, the other man presents himself as a convict in front of the young lady in order to save Easton from embarrassment so that she cannot doubt Mr Easton's marshalship.

2. What all does the other man tell Mrs Fairchild? [3]

Ans. The other man tells Miss Fairchild that she seems to be an acquaintance of Mr Easton who is the Marshal. If she wants Mr Easton to speak a word for him she will have to give him a pen so that Mr Easton may write whatever he wishes to say. Mr Easton is taking the other man to Leavenworth prison for seven year's imprisonment.

3. What reason is given by Mr Easton for not going to Washington? [3]

Ans. Mr Easton tells Miss Fairchild that in order to live in Washington, a lot of money is required. He sees the opportunities in the West pretty well. Moreover, the job of a Marshal is not worth the respect there. Hence, he chooses not to go to Washington.

4. Why does the other man tell that Mr Easton is taking him to the prison? [3]

Ans. In order to prove Miss Fairchild that Mr Easton is a Marshal and he himself as a convict, he tells her that he is taking him to the prison. This statement convinced her and she becomes happy and talks to Mr Easton without any inhibition.

5. How does the young woman react to the remark of the glum-faced man? [4]

Ans. The young woman is fully convinced that Mr Easton is a Marshal and is doing his duty because no man on the Earth would like to call himself a convict in front of the pretty woman like her nor does convict dare to call himself a Marshal in front of a real Marshal.

IV. "Well, Mr. Easton, if you will make me speak first, I suppose I must. Don't you ever recognise old friends when you meet them in the West?" The younger man roused himself sharply at the sound of her voice, seemed to struggle with a slight embarrassment which he threw off instantly, and then clasped her fingers with his left hand. "It's Miss Fairchild." He said, with a smile. "I'll ask you to excuse the other hand, "It's otherwise engaged just at present." [ICSE 2020]

1. Describe Miss Fairchild and Mr. Easton. [3]

Ans. Miss Fairchild is an attractive young woman with a lovely smile who is accustomed to speak and being heard. She is also an experienced traveller.

Mr. Easton is a young man with a handsome presence and a bold, frank expression on his face.

2. Where does the above conversation occur? Why was Mr. Easton embarrassed when Miss Fairchild addressed him?

Ans. The above conversation occurred in a coach on a train. Mr. Easton was embarrassed when Miss Fairchild addressed him because he was found handcuffed by Miss Fairchild who had previously known him as a gentleman.

3. How was Mr. Easton's other hand 'otherwise engaged'? How does Miss Fairchild react when he raises his right hand to show her what he meant?

Ans. Mr. Easton's other hand was 'otherwise engaged' because it was handcuffed with a fat, glum-faced man seated beside him. When he raises his right hand to show her what he meant, the glad look in the eyes of Miss Fairchild slowly changed to a bewildered horror. The glow faded from her cheeks and her lips parted in a vague look of relaxing distress.

4. How does Miss Fairchild feel about Mr. Easton? How does she try to convey these feelings to him?

Ans. Miss Fairchild was attracted to Mr. Easton and wanted to have a romantic relationship with him. She tries to convey her feelings by saying that she loves the West and wants to live there when Mr. Easton mentions that he had settled down in the West.

5. The story has a surprise ending. How is the surprise revealed to the reader? [4]

Ans. The surprise ending is revealed to the reader in the end when a passenger in the train remarks that he had never seen an officer handcuff a prisoner to his right hand. Usually a prisoner's right hand is handcuffed to the left hand of an officer/marshal. By this the reader gets to know that Mr. Easton was the criminal as his right hand was handcuffed and the old and grumpy man was the real marshal.

V. "I love the west", said the girl relevantly. Her eyes were shining softly. She looked away out of the car window. She began to speak truly and simply without the gloss of style and manner. "Mamma and I spent the summer in Denver She went home a week ago because father was slightly ill. I could live and be happy in the west. I think the air here agrees with me. Money is not everything. But people always miss understand things and remain stupid".

1. What does Mr Easton tell his friend to confirm that he is the Marshal? [3]

Ans. Mr Easton is quick in lying. He tells her that his butterfly days were over in Washington. Literally, it meant that he would be spending time (7 years) in Leavenworth prison but he presented the situation in another way by telling his friend that he could not Give in Washington as he has to find ways to earn money for his survival.

2. What is the girl's opinion about the West? Why does she love the place? [3]

Ans. The girl seems to be fascinated by the West. Perhaps she has been living in the West and is quite used to the western way of life. It is seen by her attire. She has adopted herself to this life and even enjoys it so she says that she loves the West where she can live her life the way she wants.

3. Why does she speak simply to Mr Easton? [3]

Ans. Mr Easton is an old acquaintance of hers so she is not hesitating in talking with him. As the conversation progresses, she becomes more casual and starts talking simply without concerning about her style and speaking manner. She considered him as her friend.

4. Where did she go and why? [3]

Ans. Miss Fairchild has spent last summer in Denver her native place where her parents reside. She went there because her father was ill and there was no one who could look after him. She loves the climate of the West and she does not give much preference to earning money by going away from the West.

5. Why does she call people stupid? Who are the people she is referring? [4]

Ans. When Mr Easton tells her that in the West one has to earn enough money to keep up with the status, she calls the people of the West stupid as they give more attention to money than the people. In this way she suggests that she is not among the people who hanker after money leaving their relatives and friends behind.

VII. "Say, Mr Marshal", growled the glum-faced man. This isn't quite fair. I'm needing a drink, and haven't had a smoke all day. Haven't you talked long enough? Take me in the smoker now, won't you? I'm half dead for a pipe.

1. Why does the glum-faced man call Mr Easton Marshal? What does he do so? [3]

Ans. The glum-faced man has been calling Mr Easton as the Marshal because he has presented him as Marshal before the young lady who was quite embarrassed to see Easton in handcuffs.

So, to assure her, he was addressing him Marshal. The real Marshal did everything to save Mr Easton from embarrassment of his friend coming to know that he was an offender.

2. What remark is made by the passenger seated nearby? [3]

Ans. The two passengers who are sitting on the other seat, have heard the conversation among the three. When Mr Easton and the other man have left the compartment, one of them exclaims that Mr Easton is too young to be a Marshal. He is seeing first time a Marshal as young as Mr Easton.

3. What does the other passenger exclaim? [3]

Ans. The other passenger exclaims "Did you ever know an officer to handcuff the prisoner to his right hand"? He further adds that Mr Easton is not a Marshal infact he is the counterfeiter, a truth that surprises everybody. The passenger could make out who the real offender was.

4. What excuse does Mr Easton make to say goodbye to the young girl? Where does he go? [3]

Ans. The glum-faced man asks Mr Easton to accompany him to the smoker room to smoke. So, Mr Easton tells the young lady that he is going to the smoker room to smoke so that she cannot suspect anything amiss. He did so to prevent Mr Easton from revealing to Miss Fairchild that he is a convict.

5. What effect does the remark of other passenger have on the young lady? [4]

Ans. The other passengers remarks that he is not the Marshal but a counterfeiter deepens the mystery and points out the irony. After listening this, young lady is confused and heartbroken. She feels that she has been made fool by the two men. It leaves her in sheer disappointment.

b Short Questions [4 Marks each]

1. Which part of the story do you find the most amusing in the lesson 'Hearts and Hands'. [1]

Ans. The part where the real Marshal pretends to be the prisoner and Mr Easton has been described as Marshal is very amusing. So many people know that it takes years of rough and sturdy work before one becomes a Marshal. But the ease with which the real Marshal lies is really amusing as Miss Fairchild completely believes what he was saying. Another part when Mr Marshal

asks Mr Easton to take him to smokeroom is very amusing as the real reason of going to smokeroom was that Mr Easton may not speak any truth in front of Miss Fairchild.

2. How does the glum-faced man save Mr Easton from embarrassment? What does it show?

Ans. When Miss Fairchild sees that her old friend Mr Easton is handcuffed then Mr Easton feels embarrassed. The glum-faced man has been watching Miss Fairchild's face. Therefore in order to save Mr Easton from embarrassment he comes forward with an explanation and says that Easton is a Marshal and the two are headed for Leavenworth prison. He wants to lighten the mood of both Miss Fairchild as well as of Mr Easton.

3. What do the other passengers sitting nearby say about the Marshal? What is the effect of it?

Ans. Two passengers seated nearby have listened to all the conversation. One of them remarks that Mr Easton seems to be too young to be Marshal. The other remarks that he is not the Marshal, he was a counterfeiter. He says, "Did you ever know an officer to handcuff a prisoner to his right hand?" This unexpected remark deepens the mystery and points out the irony. Listening to this Miss Fairchild must have got disappointed and unhappy.

4. What is the significance of the words 'Hearts and Hands' in the story? How is it related to the story?

Ans. The title of the story 'Hearts and Hands' is suitable and suggestive. The story revolves around a young girl who is emotionally attached to her old friend. She meets her old friend in a railway carriage, but is surprised to see that he is handcuffed to the man seated beside him. She gets hurt and becomes tense. To ease her tension, the man with her friend gives an explanation that Mr Easton is the Marshal and the two are headed for Leavenworth prison. Miss Fairchild is relieved of the tension.

C Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. Give the short summary of the story.

Ans. The author presents an identical situation in the story 'Hearts and Hands'. The comments made by the two passengers at the end of the story make it more interesting. The initial start of the story is set in a train to Denver. An elegantly dressed woman named Miss Fairchild is seated on the train when two men arrive and take the seat facing her.

The Lady knows the Handsome Man It quickly becomes apparent that the woman knows one of them as she started talking to him but on discovering that he is handcuffed to the man seated beside him she feels embarrassed. As Mr Easton greets the young woman he slightly raises his right hand bound and the rest by the shining handcuffs to the left of his companion.

Role of Other Man The man with Easton senses the embarrassment and gives an explanation that Easton is the Marshal and the two are headed for Leavenworth prison. The young lady continues to stare at the handcuffs. To ease her concern, the other man tells her that all Marshals handcuff themselves to their prisoners to keep them from getting away.

Conversation Between two Passengers Two passengers seated nearby have listened to all the conversation and one of them remarks that young Easton seems to be too young to be a Marshal. The other one exclaimed that he is not the Marshal, but is the counterfeiter. He says "Did you ever know an officer to handcuff a prisoner to his right hand?" This unexpected remark deepens the mystery and points out the irony.

2. Give a character sketch of the real Marshal.

Ans. The other man, the real Marshal plays a significant role in the story.

Physique and Nature of Other Marshal Man He is a ruffled, glum-faced person. He is heavily built and roughly dressed, but is very kind and helpful. He is a very kindhearted person and therefore extends a helping hand to his companion. He is handcuffed with Mr Easton. Both are going to Leavenworth prison in a train.

Encounter with Miss Fairchild They enter the train and seat themselves in front of an elegantly dressed woman named Miss Fairchild. Mr Easton and Miss Fairchild engage themselves in conversation because they know each other. Miss Fairchild is surprised to see Mr Easton in handcuffs. She becomes embarrassed and stares at him.

Observant and Intelligent The other man is observant and intelligent and he observes that both of them are feeling awkward. So, he comes to the rescue and to ease the concern of Miss Fairchild he comes out with an explanation that Mr Easton is a Marshal and is taking him to Leavenworth prison.

Sympathetic and Witty He is sympathetic and helpful and saves the unpleasant and uncomfortable situation. He is witty too. He knows if they continue talking, Miss Fairchild may somehow know the truth making the situation very awkward. So, to deter such situation he cunningly takes Mr Easton to smoker room.

3. The main interest of the story 'Hearts and Hands' lies in the story's irony at the end. Elucidate.

Ans. The story depicts a brief episode in a train to Denver. It involves three main characters and two minor characters. A young and pretty lady with the name of Miss Fairchild is seated in the train when two men arrive and take the seat facing her. She started conversing with one of them who is her friend but becomes baffled and surprised on seeing him in handcuffs. Mr Easton also feels embarrassed. The other man who himself is the Marshal comes to the rescue and gives an explanation that Mr Easton is the Marshal and is taking him to Leavenworth prison.

About the elements The story presents an ironical situation with the surprise end. The unexpected revelation about Mr Easton surprises the young lady. The story is narrated in a simple language and the episode begins and ends in a straightforward manner. The remarks made by the two passengers at the end of the story are significant because they reveal the irony in the story.

4. Give the character sketch of Mr Easton.

Ans. Mr Easton is the main character in the story. He is the real counterfeiter. He must have done something illegal so has been caught by the police. He is travelling with the Marshal, who is taking him to Leavenworth prison. He is a tall and handsome man, who can draw anybody's attention which we may see when the elegantly dressed Miss Fairchild herself starts talking to him though she was ignoring other men. This shows that he possesses a charming personality.

Embarrassed on his Condition He is very embarrassed too as he finds himself in a very awkward situation when his acquaintances, a beautiful woman sees him handcuffed. He has nowhere to escape but to face the situation as it is.

A Good Actor He is a good actor too and demonstrates his art by playing the role of a real Marshal. When the other man understanding the awkwardness of the situation, calls him the Marshal, he does not counter him instead shows himself as Marshal and tries to convince Miss Fairchild that he is a real Marshal in

every way possible. He is an apt liar as the way he talks is commendable.

He does not let Miss Fairchild suspect him as long as he talks to her. He makes the statements supporting his fake identity which can be done only by an apt liar.

Possesses no Romantic Feeling His character does not possess any romantic side as does Miss Fairchild. He pays no attention to the lady in fashionable dress and is even unfazed by her presence. This again resurfaces when he does not reply enthusiastically on being asked to meet again by the beautiful woman.

5. Write the character sketch of Miss Fairchild.

Ans. Introduction Miss Fairchild, an important character of this chapter was an attractive young woman who was elegantly dressed and spoke in a sweet and yet firm voice. She is a simple person but has some peculiarities **She Believes Others Easily** When the real Marshal tells her that Easton was a Marshal and was taking him to escort up to the Leavenworth prison, she believes him easily. She does not use her common sense in analysing that Easton was too young to be a Marshal. Moreover, she is unaware of the fact that a Marshal ties his left hand with the right hand of the prisoner, so we can call her gullible.

Blinded by her Feelings Miss Fairchild is too blinded by her feelings that she could not see past them and allowed herself to be lied to. She is also a normal human being who does not and cannot always act with a gloss of style and manner. This characteristic was showed when she began to talk simply about the West to the two men with shining eyes and said that money is not everything. So, we can say that all traits being rich, elegant, stylish, in love and being human describe Miss Fairchild.

She is Horrified to Know the Truth In the end when Easton and Marshal leave for smokeroom, she hears other passengers making their own remarks. She is horrified to know that Mr Easton was being handcuffed for counterfeiting. The other rough person was a Marshal in reality who he was escorting Easton to the prison.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. “Oh! said the girl, with a deep breath and returning colour. “So that is what you are doing out here? A Marshal!”

“My dear Miss Fairchild”, said Easton, calmly , “I had to do something. Money has a way of taking wings unto itself, and you know it takes money to keep step with our crowd in Washington. I saw this opening in the west and Marshal ship isn’t quite as higher position as that of ambassador, but–”

1. What relieved the girl and how? [3]
2. Why was Mr Easton lying to her that he was the Marshal? [3]
3. What does he say about money? Why does he say so? [3]
4. Why according to him the job of a Marshal is not so high as that of an ambassador? [3]
5. What is opinion of the girl about the job of a Marshal? [4]

- II. The two passengers in a seat nearby had heard most of the conversation. Said one of them : “That Marshals a good sort of chap. Some of these Western fellows are all right”.

“Pretty young to hold an office like that, isn’t he?” Asked the other.

“Young! exclaimed the first speaker, “why-oh! didn’t you catch on? Say - did you ever know an officer to handcuff a Prisoner to his right hand?”

1. What remark of one of the two passengers makes us doubt about Easton being a Marshal? [3]
2. How do the two passengers reveal the story’s irony? [3]
3. How do the remarks of the two passengers reveal the true character of Easton? [3]
4. Comment on the surprise ending of the story. [3]
5. What remark of the other passenger confirms our doubt that Easton is not a Marshal? [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. Who were the two new passengers that entered the train? Where did they be seated themselves?
2. What comment does the other man make on the handcuffs? Why does he praise Easton in handcuffs?
3. What does Easton tell Miss Fairchild to confirm that he is the Marshal?
4. How did Miss Fairchild support the life of West? Give reasons.

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. Why does Easton feel embarrassed, uncomfortable and tensed? How did the real Marshal tackle the situation?
2. What role does the real Marshal play in the story? How is he successful to impress you?
3. Give a critical appreciation of the story ‘Hearts and Hands’.

A Face in the Dark

Ruskin Bond

About the Author

Ruskin Bond was born on 19th May, 1934 in Kasauli. He is an Indian author of British descent. The Indian Council for Child Education has recognised his role in the growth of children's literature in India. He did his schooling from Bishop Cotton School in Shimla, from where he graduated in 1950 after winning several writing competitions in the school including the Irwin Divinity Prize and the Hailey Literature Prize. He wrote one of his first short stories, 'Untouchable', at the age of sixteen in 1951. He got the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1992 for 'Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra', for his published work in English.

He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2014.

About the Story

'A Face in the Dark' by Ruskin Bond is a very popular short story that falls in the purview of mystery and suspense genre. Through this story, the author asserts that even powerful people and non-believers of evil spirits go blank when confronted by strange and horrible situations. The story set on a windy night when Mr Oliver, an Anglo-Indian teacher, dares to walk through the pine forest on his way back to the school after an evening at Shimla Bazaar. He comes across a weeping boy who lifts his face, which is not a face but a flat something without eyes, nose or mouth. Mr Oliver runs towards the school for help, there he finds a watchman who again had a face like that of the faceless boy. Oliver was horrified to see watchman's face which was exactly like the boy. The story, hence, has a terrible theme which is basically to bring a horrifying effect and thrill to the reader.

Characters Introduction

Mr Oliver

Mr Oliver was an Anglo-Indian teacher, who used to teach in a public school, located 3 miles away from Shimla. He was a bachelor and was staying alone in the premises of the school. He was a courageous man and did not believe in imaginary or ghost stories.

The School Boy

The faceless school boy, who is depicted as a supernatural being is indeed scary and seemed quite sad about something. Although, he could have been crying to get Mr Oliver's attention, we cannot say for certain if that was indeed the cause.

The Watchman

The faceless watchman, was quite like the boy, though no signs of sadness had overshadowed him. He did not forget his manners and kept on addressing Mr Oliver as 'Sahib'.

Summary of the Story

Mr Oliver's Lifestyle

The story revolves around an Anglo-Indian teacher named Mr Oliver. He has been teaching in a school in Shimla. Mr Oliver is a bachelor, who usually walk into the town in the evening. One day Mr Oliver is returning to his school late one night on the outskirts of the hill-station of Shimla. He is returning after dark and so takes a shortcut through the pine forest.

Encounter with Featureless Boy

When there is a strong wind, the pine trees make sad, terrible sounds that keep most people to the main road, but Mr Oliver is not a nervous or imaginative man so he takes the narrow forest path. He carries out a torch all along with him. There in the forest he sees the figure of a boy in the light of the torch. He finds him sitting alone on a rock. He stops there.

Horrible Experience

Mr Oliver moves closer to the figure in order to recognise it and says, "What are you doing here?" He senses that something is wrong. The boy appears to be crying and his head hangs down and he holds his face between his hands and his body shakings continuously. It is a strange soundless weeping and Mr Oliver feels uneasy.

The boy neither answers, nor looks up, but continues crying. He tells the boy that he should not be out there at that time and asked him, "Why are you crying?" The boy finally takes his hands from his face and looks up at the

teacher. The torch from Mr Oliver's hand falls down. The boy has no eyes, ears, nose or mouth. It is just around a smooth head with a school cap on top of it!

Mr Oliver Got Scrambled

The torch falls from his trembling hands and he turns down the path, running blindly through the trees, calling and crying for help. He runs towards a school building and sees a lantern swinging in the middle of the path. There he finds a watchman standing near the school gate. The watchman asks him, "What happened?"

He says, "I see something- something horrible, a boy weeping in the forest and he has no face!"

The watchman shows his face and says, "Do you mean it was like this?" He too has no eyes, no ears, no features at all- not even an eyebrow! And that's when the wind blows the lamp out. The story ends up with suspense to what might have happened to Mr Oliver and leaves the reader in confusion.

Word Meanings

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Outskirts—the outer area of a town or city, **Strolled**—a small leisurely walking, **Eerie**—frightening, **Gleam**—a dull light, **Fitfully**—not regularly, **Flickering**—release light unsteadily, **Miscreant**—a person who behaves badly, **Convulsively**—violent movement, **Distinctly**—in a clear way.

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Racked—cause extreme physical or mental pain, **Sobbing**—cry with sound, **Trembling**—shake involuntarily, **Scrambling**—make one's way quickly or awkwardly up, **Stumbled**—nearly fall, **Gasping**—inhale suddenly with the mouth open.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I.** The Shimla bazaar, with its cinemas and restaurants, was about 3 miles from the school and Mr Oliver a bachelor, usually strolled into the town in the evening, returning after dark, when he would take a shortcut through the pine forest.

1. Who was Mr Oliver? What was his profession? [3]

Ans. Mr Oliver was the main character of the story. He was an Anglo-Indian teacher in a school boarding on the outskirts of Shimla. He was a bachelor, who used to stroll into the town in the evening. The whole story revolves around him and contrast of his character that took place when he encountered the unexpected situations.

2. How did Mr Oliver usually spend his evenings? [3]

Ans. Mr Oliver usually spent his evenings in the Shimla bazaar, which had cinemas and restaurants. He used to stroll into the town in the evening as he was a bachelor and returned after dark taking a shortcut through the pine forest to the school.

3. What route did he take while returning? Why did he take it? [3]

Ans. While returning to school in the night, after spending time in Shimla bazaar, Mr Oliver used to take a shortcut through pine forest. Mr Oliver was quite bold and did not fear the terrible sounds made by pine trees when strong winds blew. As he wanted to reach the school in less time, Mr Oliver used to take this shortcut.

4. What did Oliver carry with him when he walked through the pine forest? [3]

Ans. Unlike most of people, Mr Oliver used to take shortcut through the pine forest, but the forest was dark and full of zig-zag ways so he carried a torch with him when he walked through the pine forest.

5. What did Mr Oliver see when he was returning back while passing through the pine forest? [4]

Ans. Mr Oliver was returning through the pine forest as usual. He was holding a torch to see the path but the

light was quiet dim as battery was low. Suddenly, something drew his attention. When he threw the light of his torch on it, he found it to be a figure of a boy sitting on a rock and weeping with his hands on his face. He was surprised as at this time boys were not supposed to be out of school.

- II.** When there was a strong wind, the pine trees made sad, eerie sounds that kept most people to the main road. But Mr Oliver was not a nervous or imaginative man. He carry the torch and it's green the batteries were running down moved fitfully down the narrow forest path. When its flickering light fell on the figure of a boy, who was sitting alone on a rock Mr Oliver stopped. Boys were not supposed to be out after dark.

1. Why did Mr Oliver feel uneasy when he walked through the pine forest? [3]

Ans. While walking back through the pine forest, he saw a strange figure of a boy. He was weeping and producing strange soundless voice. This made Mr Oliver felt uneasy.

2. Describe the posture of the boy. Where was he sitting? [3]

Ans. The boy sat on the rock with his head down and he held his face in his hands and his body shook continuously. It seemed an indication that the boy was either in some pain or freezing with cold.

3. Why did Mr Oliver move closer to the boy? [3]

Ans. Mr Oliver moved closer to the boy in order to recognise him. While coming back through the pine forest, Mr Oliver spotted a figure of a boy sitting on a rock. Though he was in hurry and wanted to reach under warmth of quilts, he stopped and to get a better view of his face he moved closer to him.

4. What did Mr Oliver ask the boy? [3]

Ans. When Mr Oliver moved closed to the boy he realised that he was crying. This made Oliver believe that the boy was in trouble so to know the reason of his trouble, he asked him why he was crying.

5. How did Mr Oliver react when he saw the face of the boy? [4]

Ans. While passing through the pine forest, Mr Oliver saw a boy sitting alone on a rock. Initially, he was angry but when he saw the boy crying continuously, he went near him and asked him to look up. As the boy lifted his face which was without any eyes, nose or lips, the torch fell from Mr Oliver's hands and he ran towards the school building crying for help.

III. "What are you doing out here, boy?" Ask Mr Oliver sharply, moving closer so that he could recognise the miscreant. But even as he approached the boy, Mr Oliver sensed that something was wrong. The boy appeared to be crying. His head hung down, he held his face in his hands and his body shook convulsively. It was a strange soundless weeping and Mr Oliver felt distinctly uneasy.

1. Why did Mr Oliver tell the boy that he should not be out there at this hour? [3]

Ans. When Mr Oliver saw the boy sitting alone on the rock at the night in the pine forest, it appeared strange to him. He felt that the young boys should not stay away from their homes at that time of the night. So, he told him that he should not be out there at that time.

2. What did Mr Oliver sense when he saw the boy crying? [3]

Ans. Mr Oliver sensed that there was something wrong when he saw the boy crying. Mr Oliver moved closer to the boy so that he could know that exactly who he was, but the boy was holding his head down. When he realised that he was weeping, he felt something was wrong there as why would a boy weep sitting on a rock in such a terrible weather.

3. How did the boy's body shake? Why was it shaking? [3]

Ans. The boy was sitting alone on the rock while Mr Oliver was passing from there. He saw that the boy was crying and his head hung down and he held his face between his hands and his body shook continuously. The boy was sitting on a rock amid the pine forest. The weather was extremely cold forcing Mr Oliver to reach his destination fast. This bitter cry was also making the body of the boy shake continuously.

4. Why did Mr Oliver think the boy to be a miscreant? What does the word indicate? [3]

Ans. Mr Oliver thought the boy to be a miscreant as he was sitting on a rock amid the pine forest. It was late evening and the boys of his school were not supposed to be out as it was considered a punishable misdeed. The student who dared to be out at night must have been called a miscreant.

5. When did Mr Oliver's anger give way to the concern? [4]

Ans. Mr Oliver thought the boy to be a miscreant, who should not be out at night so he felt angry. He asked the boy the reason of his sitting there, but when he realised that he was weeping, his anger changed into concern. The weeping of the boy made him feel he might be in trouble so was in need of his help.

- IV.** It had no eyes, ears, nose or mouth. It was just a round smooth head- with a school cap on top of it! And that's where the story should end. But for Mr Oliver it did not end here.

The torch fell from his trembling hand. He turned and scrambled down the path, running blindly through the trees and calling for help. He was still running towards the school buildings when he saw a lantern swinging in the middle of the path. [ICSE 2019]

1. Who was Mr Oliver? Where did he encounter 'It'? [3]

Ans. Mr Oliver was an Anglo-Indian teacher. He encountered 'it' in the pine forest through which he was taking a short cut to school on the way back from Shimla.

2. Where did Mr Oliver work? Why did *Life* magazine describe this place as the 'Eton of the East'? [3]

Ans. Mr Oliver worked as a teacher in a public school located three miles from Shimla. *Life* magazine described this school as 'Eton of the East' because the school was conducted on the lines of English public schools. The boys, most of whom were from well-to-do Indian families, wore blazers caps and ties, another characteristic of English public schools such as Eton.

3. Why had Mr Oliver approached 'It' in the first place? What had he mistaken it for? [3]

Ans. Mr Oliver had approached 'it' initially because 'it' appeared to be a boy who was crying and Mr Oliver wanted to know why 'it' was crying so that he could offer help. Mr Oliver had mistaken 'it' as a boy from the school, and no boy was allowed to be out of the school at that time as a matter of discipline.

4. What is a lantern? Who was holding the lantern? Why did Mr Oliver feel relieved at the sight of the lantern? [3]

Ans. A lantern is a kerosene lamp with a transparent case to protect the flame. It appeared to Mr Oliver as if a watchman was holding the lantern. Mr Oliver felt relieved on seeing the lantern because he had been terribly frightened. He felt that he had just then seen a ghost when he saw a boy without any facial features.

5. Briefly describe the meeting between the lantern-bearer and Mr Oliver. State one reason why 'A Face in the Dark' could be considered a horror story. [4]

Ans. When Mr Oliver stumbled up to the watchman with the lantern, the watchman asked him what had happened and why he was running. When Mr Oliver told him that he had just seen a ghost, the watchman raised his lantern to his own face, which was also featureless. The story ends here. The reason that the story 'A Face in the Dark' should be considered a horror story is that Mr Oliver encounters two ghosts within a short time, which are enough to scare anyone who goes through Mr Oliver's experiences.

b Short Questions [4 Marks each]

1. Which horrible sight frightened Mr Oliver? What happened after this?

Ans. When Mr Oliver saw the boy sitting alone on the rock at night in the pine forest, it appeared strange to him. He went to him and saw the face of the boy which had no eyes, nose or mouth. He got extremely frightened. His torch fell down from his trembling hand. He ran blindly through the trees and called for help.

2. Contrast the two different aspects of Mr Oliver's character as a fearless man and a haunted fellow.

Ans. Mr Oliver is the protagonist of the story. The sudden change in his character surprises us. First, he is depicted as a fearless man, who bothers nothing while taking a path dark and full of eerie sounds, but just at the view of the boy's face with no features, he gets frightened and starts running out of fear. He does not think even

for a second to find the truth, instead cries for help, a sharp contrast to the fact that he is not nervous or imaginative man.

3. According to you, what type of the teacher Mr Oliver is? What do you like most about him?

Ans. Mr Oliver is an Anglo-Indian teacher. He is a bachelor. He has been teaching in an English Public School near Shimla. Though no incident related to school is given. We may conclude that he is a soft-hearted teacher, who is concerned about his pupils' well being. Seeing the figure of the boy, he thought him to be one of the students of his school. He stopped to know the reason of his sitting there. His anger changed into concern when he listened the boy's crying.

4. What answer did Mr Oliver give when the watchman asked him why he was running?

Ans. Gripped in fear Mr Oliver was running and crying for help. He was stopped by the watchman holding a lantern in the middle of the path, who asked him the reason of his running. At this, he replied him that he had seen a boy sitting on a rock and weeping, but he was without any eyes, ears, mouth and nose.

5. What message does the story convey? How does it affect you?

Ans. The message that the story conveys is man finds himself helpless in front of ghosts and supernatural things. In different course of time, a man may behave differently not holding to his permanent character. One should not boast of one's good habits nor should he be ashamed of his shortcomings. The character of Mr Oliver strengthen our point when he runs away from the boy with no feature out of fear, though we have been told that he is not a nervous or imaginative man. All of Mr Oliver's courage vanishes at the sight of a ghost.

c Long Questions [8 Marks each]

1. 'A Face in the Dark' is a supernatural story. Comment on it.

Ans. The story revolves around an Anglo-Indian teacher name Mr Oliver. It is set in a pine forest outside Shimla. It deals with the elements of supernaturalism, mystery and strangeness.

An Unusual Sight Mr Oliver was returning to his school late one night from the outskirts of hill station of Shimla. He took a shortcut and was returning through the pine forest. There he saw the figure of a boy in the light of the torch. He found him sitting alone on a rock. He stopped there. He went closer to the boy in order to recognise him and said, "What are you doing out here, boy?"

Unexpected Situation Faced by Mr Oliver When the boy looked up Mr Oliver, he got frightened to see that the boy had no eyes, ears, nose or mouth. It was just around smooth head with a school cap on top of it. He got frightened and the torch fell from his trembling hands. He started running towards the school and cried for help. This description of the boy's face makes the story supernatural.

Face of the Watchman Secondly, when he bumped into the watchman, he told him that he saw something very horrible—a boy weeping in the forest who had no face. The watchman was surprised to listen to this and asked him “Did he have the face like this?” The watchman had no eyes, no ears, no features at all and not even an eyebrow, which again shows supernatural element.

2. Draw the character sketch of Mr Oliver.

Ans. Mr Oliver is the main character of the story. The story represents the sharp contrast of his character as a fearless fellow. In the first few paragraphs, we are made to believe that he is not a nervous or imaginative man but as the story progresses we get to see a complete reversal of what we have been told.

No Family Responsibility Mr Oliver is a bachelor so does not have any family responsibility. He may roam wherever and whenever he wants and this is the main reason why he strolls at Shimla Bazaar daily. He has no one to spend time with.

A fearless person In the beginning, we are impressed with the fearlessness of his character when unlike the other passerby, he takes the path of pine forest. This shows that he is not a nervous and imaginative man, a quality that only a few men possess.

Concern for Others To show concern for others is also one of his characteristics and it surfaces when he stops for a strange boy. He goes closer to him to know his problem. His anger changes into concern as soon as he realises that the boy is crying. He does not have control over his emotions.

Unreasonable and Timid When the boy looks up and he finds that there is no eyes, ears, nose and mouth in the face, he becomes extremely afraid without thinking that it might have been some trick to frighten him. It shows that he jumps into the conclusion at once.

3. The story did not end here for Mr Oliver when he saw the boy's face? What was the hidden trouble? Can you guess what would have happened after Mr Oliver saw the faceless watchman?

Ans. Exactly, the story didn't end here. After encountering a boy with featureless face, Mr Oliver was badly frightened. Although, he was a very strong man.

Plight of Mr Oliver He was gripped with fear. The torch fell from his trembling hand and he ran towards the school building. He cried for help. This strange and mysterious experience in the forest made him tense. He was puzzled and stumbled upto the watchman. And another shocking incident happened that the watchman too was without any features.

First Possibility This incident would have left him in shock. He might have fainted at the same point where he saw that watchman. And next morning, some students and teachers from his own school might have found him lying unconscious there. They must have taken him to the hospital. And when he regained senses, he found himself lying in the hospital bed. Then he must have narrated the whole incident to doctor and his fellow teachers.

Second Possibility The other chances are there that he might have got a heart failure after encountering two featureless persons.

Third Possibility Possibility could be that somebody might be playing some prank or trick with him in order to frighten him and he sensed that and acted very smartly.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. It had no eyes, ears, nose or mouth. It was just a round smooth head-with a school cap on top of it! And that's where the story should end. But for Mr Oliver it did not end here.

The torch fell from his trembling hand. He turned and scrambled down the path, running blindly through the trees and calling for help. He was still running towards the school buildings when he saw a Lantern swinging in the middle of the path. Mr Oliver stumbled up to the watchmen, gasping for breath. 'What is it, Sahib?' asked the watchman. 'Has there been an accident? "Why are you running? Sahib".

1. Why did Mr Oliver want to see the face of the boy? [3]
2. What the strangest thing did he see? [3]
3. Why was he afraid? What did he do? [3]
4. Where was he running to? Why did he choose that place? [3]
5. What did he encounter in the middle of the path? [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. Why did Mr Oliver tell the boy that he should not be out there at this hour? Who was he thinking the boy to be?
2. When did Mr Oliver feel uneasy? What was he sensing?

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. How does Ruskin Bond create an atmosphere of strangeness, mystery and supernaturalism in the story?
2. Do you think someone was playing a trick on Mr Oliver or was it really a supernatural event?

An Angel in Disguise

TS Arthur

About the Author

Timothy Shay (TS) Arthur a very popular 19th century American author was born on 6th June, 1809 in Newburgh, New York, United States. He is most famous for his novel, *'The Nights in a Bar-Room and What I Saw There'* (1854). His contributions as a journalist to Godey's Lady's books journal are also well known. Eventually, he edited his own Arthur's Home Magazine in 1852 that particularly emphasised to women—the societal burden created by drunkenness. Arthur's eminence in the literary world is incomparable. He died on 6th March, 1885.

About the Story

'An Angel in Disguise' is set against the backdrop of a poor rural village. It's the kind of place where everyone has problems of their own. Everyone tries to be good while living within their means. That's why the death of a drunken poor woman brings little sympathy from the villagers. The three orphaned children she leaves behind, deserve charity because they can't fend for themselves. 'An Angel in Disguise' plucks at the heartstrings, making readers question their capacity for charity and compassion.

Character Introduction

Major Characters

Maggie

She was the youngest of the three orphans, who were left in a miserable condition after the death of their mother. She was bedridden as two years ago she has fallen from a window.

Mr Thompson

Joe Thompson's character is a symbol of unconditional love and compassion. He found it cruel to leave Maggie all by herself and therefore decided to take the lonely child to his own house. His decision to bring Maggie to his house proved that he was a very kind-hearted man.

Mrs Thompson

She was a childless woman. She was hard hearted and ill-tempered. Mr Thompson, therefore, had well placed doubts about taking Maggie to his home. However, shortly Maggie was able to find in Mrs Thompson, the comfort she found in her mother's arms.

Minor Characters

John

He was the eldest of the three orphans and the elder brother of Maggie. He was eleven to twelve years old and was believed to be a hard working boy, who could have managed to earn a living by working in the field.

Kate

She was the second orphan, Maggie and John's sister. She was ten or eleven years old. She was understood to be a bright and active girl.

Farmer Jones

Jones is believed to be a charitable neighbour who takes John with him, though not without a purpose. He wanted John to work for him in his fields.

Mrs Ellis

She is another of the charitable neighbours, who was believed to have done a service to the orphans by agreeing to take Kate with her, for she had been looking for a suitable bound girl.

The Village Neighbours

The other village neighbours can be put together in the category of the charitable folks who came to the hut of the dead lady, in order to help her children. They brought clothes and food for the children.

Summary of the Story

The Helpless Orphans

The story opens with the death of an unnamed poor woman. She left behind her three children John, Kate and Maggie in an extremely miserable condition. The dead mother left nothing for the children and they could starve to death if the neighbours refused to help them.

The Charitable Neighbours

Though the dead woman was hated by many, yet her death roused the neighbours pity, who came to her hut to provide for the burial and look after the lonely children. Some came with clothes and others with food, but the chief question remained, "What is to be done with the children?" Therefore, it was decided that farmer Jones would provide for John, who would in return work for the farmer in his fields. Mrs Ellis, who had been looking for a bound girl thought of taking Kate along with her.

Maggie's Condition after her Mother's Death

Maggie, the youngest of the three, was hopelessly diseased after she fell off from the window two years ago and had been bedridden ever since. Unlike her older brother and sister, Maggie failed to find a refuge with any of the neighbours. It was, therefore, decided that she should be sent to the poorhouse. Most villagers agreed that though the poorhouses were a sad place, but for Maggie, the daughter of a poor woman, it would prove better than her own house. She would get food, clothing and medical care in a poorhouse. Both John and Kate had to bid a hasty goodbye to their sister, Maggie, and leave behind crying Maggie who was feeling sad and sorry for her condition.

Mr Thompson Compassion for Maggie

Mr Thompson, the wheelwright, felt it was cruel to leave behind Maggie in that state. When he entered the hut where Maggie was lying, he saw fear in Maggie's eyes and Maggie pleaded with him not to leave her alone. Mr Thompson was fond of children and he felt compassion for Maggie and decided to take her to his own home.

Mrs Thompson Grew Angry

On seeing her husband bring a diseased child to their home, Mrs Thompson grew angry. She wanted to know why her husband had brought Maggie to their house and quickly wanted Maggie to be dropped to the poorhouse. Mr Thompson, in order to pacify his angry wife, told her that Maggie was to stay in their house only for a day, till he got her guardian's permission to send her to the poorhouse.

Mrs Thompson's Anger Turned into Affection towards Maggie

Mr Thompson left for work after requesting his wife to look after the poor and suffering child and to be kind to her. Mrs Thompson too realised Maggie's pain of having lost her mother and being separated from her siblings so the thought of being kind to her till she was in their house came into her mind. However, after spending a day with Maggie, Mrs Thompson, too, developed tender feelings for the child. She looked after Maggie, talked to her, gave her supper to eat and so on. When Mr Thompson returned from work, Mrs Thompson told her husband that Maggie was very weak and therefore should not be sent to the poorhouse for a couple of days.

An Angel in Disguise

The Thompsons postponed sending away Maggie not just for a couple of days, in fact, they never sent Maggie away after that. Maggie became a part of their house and was taken care of like their own child. The poor and lonely child whom no one wanted to take responsibility of, became an angel in disguise for the Thompsons. Being a childless woman, there was no one on whom Mrs Thompson could shower her love and care. Mr Thompson, too, was now delighted, to know that his house was no longer a sad and dull place.

Word Meanings

Page No. 77

Intemperance—lack of moderation or restraint, **Wretched**—an extremely unfortunate state, **Threshold**—a frame of entrance made of wood or iron, **Drunken fit**—outbreak of intense emotion in drunken condition, **Despised**—hated, **Scoffed**—taunted, **Subdued**—soft and restrained, **Tumbled**—down-fallen.

Page No. 78

Bound girl—confined girl, **Wan**—pale and showing the impression of illness, **Alms house**—orphanage, **Brat**—a badly behaved child, **Hovel**—cottage.

Page No. 79

Ere—before, **Straining**—stressing, **Wheel wright**—a person who makes and repairs wooden wheels, **Hoarded**—stored, **Sixpences**—a coin worth six old pence.

Page No. 80

Saintly temper—low temper, **Corded**—attached a cord to, **Cautionary**—full with warnings.

Page No. 81

Fool's errands—a task that has no hope of success, **Irrepressible**—not able to be controlled, **Saviour**—Jesus Christ, **Disciples**—pupils or follower.

Page No. 82

Dusky—darkish, **Omen**—an event regarded as a portent of good or evil.

Page No. 83

Manifest—display or show, **Bustle**—move in an energetic way, **Asperity**—harshness of tone or manner, **Obliterate**—wiped out, **Struck a chord**—speak in a same tone.

Page No. 85

Relish—taste, **Slumbering**—sleeping or dozing, **Abode**—residence,

Page No. 86

Self-afflicting—one who hurt oneself, **Desolation**—a state of complete emptiness or destruction.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow

- I. Idleness, vice, and intemperance had done their miserable work, and dead mother lay cold and still amid her wretched children. She had fallen upon the threshold of her own door in a drunken fit, and died in the presence of her frightened little ones. Death touches the spring of our common humanity. This woman had been despised, scoffed at, and angrily denounced by nearly every man, woman, and child in the village; but now, as the fact of her death was passed from lip to lip, in subdued tones, pity took the place of anger, and sorrow of denunciation.

1. Describe the opening of the story. [3]

Ans. The story begins by highlighting the sad state in which the mother has left behind her little children in poverty and without care. By highlighting vices such as idleness and drunkenness, the story tries to showcase the devastation caused by them, which is both annoying as well as pitiable.

2. Whose death is being described and what are the reasons behind her death? [3]

Ans. A poor and anonymous woman has died at the door of her own hut. She has died due to excessive drinking and now her body lies at the door in a cold state. The young and unfortunate children are left alone and didn't know what to do with the dead mother who lies there.

3. What were the reasons of hatred towards the dead woman? [3]

Ans. The people hated the dead woman while she was alive because she devoted herself not to hard work but to idleness. Despite having three children to look after, the woman rather than working to earn a living to provide for her children spent her days drinking alcohol and perhaps troubling everyone around. That is why everyone hated and taunted her.

4. What led to the transformation of the village folks? [3]

Ans. Though the village folks hated the dead woman while she lived and scoffed her, her death roused pity in them. The spring of humanity could not be stopped for death as it is a universal truth. The village folks, therefore, who earlier avoided the dead woman came rushing to her hut with an aim to provide her a decent burial and to console and look after her children.

5. Why were the children called wretched here? What does it indicate? [4]

Ans. The children were called 'wretched' because their condition was miserable. The only person who took care of them, had died leaving them on their fate. The woman herself was a drunkard and jobless so she was not feeding her children properly. After her death, there was no one left to look after the children who were starving due to extreme poverty. Moreover, the children were too young to take care of themselves.

- II. Two years before a fall from a window had injured her spine, and she had not been able to leave her bed since, except when lifted in the arms of her mother. "What is to be done with the children?" That was the chief question now. The dead mother would go underground and be forever beyond all care or concern of the villagers. But the children must not be left to starve. After considering the matter, and talking it over with his wife, farmer Jones said that he would take John, and do well by him, now that his mother was out of the way; and Mrs Ellis, who had been looking out for a bound girl, concluded that it would be charitable in her to make choice of Kate, even though she was too young to be of much use for several years.

1. Who were the older siblings of Maggie? [3]

Ans. Maggie had two older siblings. Her brother, John, was twelve years old and her sister, Kate, was ten to eleven years old. Her brother was a healthy and robust boy, who was capable of earning a living with any farmer. Kate, too, was a bright and active girl, capable of doing something worthwhile, if guided properly.

2. What did the villagers decide about the children? [3]

Ans. After the death of the mother the biggest question was what to do with those three orphan children. The villagers discussed between themselves and it was decided that John would be taken by farmer Jones, who would help him work on his fields. Mrs Ellis, seeing that no one was willing to take Kate, thought of taking Kate along with her. Maggie, however, managed to touch many people's hearts, but no one was willing to take her. As she was a bedridden child.

3. What had happened with Maggie? Why was no one willing to adopt her? [3]

Ans. Maggie had fallen from a window two years ago. She had injured her spine and was unable to leave the bed on her own. She needed someone to carry her from one place to another and usually it was her mother who carried Maggie in her arms. No one was willing to adopt Maggie because no one wanted the burden of a bedridden child.

4. What did the neighbourhood women bring for Maggie? What did they believe? [3]

Ans. The neighbourhood women brought old clothes for Maggie. They changed her dirty and torn clothes with cleaner ones. People were worried about her, they pitied her, they were keen on giving her food and clothes, but most believed that she was 'hopelessly diseased' and therefore a burden. Despite receiving the pity of the neighbours, she was left alone.

5. What can we deduce about the neighbours? [4]

Ans. The readers can easily believe that though the neighbours were charitable and full of sympathy towards the three orphans of the dead drunken woman, while deciding the fate of the children they had their own interests in mind too. That is why John and Kate managed to find caretakers for themselves on the other hand, Maggie being a diseased child, was left. However, knowing the times in which the story is set, it would not be wrong to state that though death managed to rouse the humanity of neighbours but, poverty left them with meaner choices.

III. For a little while the man stood with a puzzled air; then he turned back, and went into the hovel again. Maggie with painful effort, had raised herself to an upright position and was sitting on the bed, straining her eyes upon the door out of which all had just departed, A vague terror had come into her thin white face. "O, Mr Thompson!" she cried out, catching

her suspended breath, "don't leave me here all alone!" Though rough in exterior, Joe Thompson, the wheelwright, had a heart, and it was very tender in some places.

1. What decision was taken for Maggie by the neighbours? Where was she about to be put? [3]

Ans. The neighbours decided that Maggie must be sent to the poorhouse as her physical condition was not good. A poorhouse was a sad place, but most villagers thought it to be suitable for Maggie because she was a poor and diseased child. They felt that she would get better treatment in the poorhouse.

2. Why did Mr Thompson stand puzzled outside Maggie's hut? [3]

Ans. Mr Thompson stood puzzled outside Maggie's hut because he was not convinced that a poorhouse was a place where Maggie should be sent. Even though the villager's believed that she would receive food, clothing and medical treatment in the poorhouse, Mr Thompson felt it cruel to leave Maggie alone. He was puzzled with all these thoughts, thinking about what to do.

3. Describe Maggie's state of mind after the villagers left. [3]

Ans. On seeing all the neighbours going back and knowing that her brother, John and sister, Kate, had left already, Maggie grew worried. She was patiently waiting for someone to take her too, but was getting scared that she might be left all alone, with no help.

4. What reactions Maggie showed after she saw Mr Thompson? What did Maggie ask of Mr Thompson? [3]

Ans. Maggie had her eyes positioned on the door from where she saw everyone leaving. At that moment, when she saw Joe Thompson entering her hut, she breathed a sigh of relief and hoped that he would understand her fear. She called Mr Thompson, and asked him not to leave her alone.

5. What kind of person was Joe Thompson? What factors influenced him in taking the decision regarding Maggie? [4]

Ans. Joe Thompson was a wheelwright. He appeared a rough man from outside, but in reality he was a man of tender heart. Almost like a mother, his affections for Maggie arose when he saw that everyone had abandoned her. He was a childless man and was fond of children. He thought that if he took Maggie to his own house, Maggie would find a safe refuge and his empty house too would be lit with a child's innocent laughter.

IV. Joe Thompson's wife, who happened to be childless, was not a woman of saintly temper, nor much given to self-denial for others' good, and Joe had well-grounded doubts touching the manner of greeting he should receive on his arrival. Mrs Thompson saw him approaching from the window and with ruffling feathers met him a few paces from the door, as he opened the garden gate, and came in. He bore a precious burden, and he felt it to be so. As his arms held the sick child to his breast, a sphere of tenderness went out from her, and penetrated his feelings.

1. What kind of woman was Mrs Thompson? [3]

Ans. Mrs Thompson was a woman, who did not have good temper. She was hardhearted, ill-tempered and an irritable woman. Also, it was known that she was not a person who could lay down her comfort for the sake of others.

2. Why was Mr Thompson afraid of introducing Maggie to his wife? [3]

Ans. Mr Thompson had well placed doubts about introducing Maggie to Mrs Thompson for he was aware of her nature. She was a ill-tempered woman, quick to give in to anger. He knew that she would not receive Maggie with kindness and would want her to be dropped to the poorhouse.

3. What does the phrase 'ruffling feathers' mean? Why did Mrs Thompson come out to meet her husband? [3]

Ans. The phrase 'ruffling feathers' means with great or extreme anger. On seeing her husband approaching with Maggie in his arms, Mrs Thompson impatiently came out to stop her husband from bringing the girl to their house. She could not wait for the explanation her husband had to offer on entering the house.

4. Describe Mr Thompson's state of mind as he carried Maggie in his arms. [3]

Ans. Mr Thompson's embrace around Maggie was similar to that of a mother's embrace around her child. With great love and affection, he carried Maggie in his arms. Though, he was afraid of his wife's temper, a bond between him and Maggie had already been formed and he was prepared to confront his wife for Maggie's sake.

5. What tone did Joe adopt to pacify his wife? How did it affect Mrs Thompson? [4]

Ans. Joe Thompson was well aware of his wife's temper. However in Maggie's case he had decided to keep her in his house. For once he adopted a firm stance which was clear through his determined eyes. Mrs Thompson had never seen her husband in such form. So, instead of getting angry, she remained silent.

V. I read in the Bible sometimes, and find much said about little children. How the Savior rebuked the disciples who would not receive them; how he took them up in his arms, and blessed them; and how he said that "whoever gave them even a cup of cold water should not go unrewarded." Now, it is a small thing for us to keep this poor motherless little one for a single night; to be kind to her for a single night; to make her life comfortable for a single night." The voice of the strong, rough man shook, and he turned his head away, so that the moisture in his eyes might not be seen. Mrs Thompson did not answer, but a soft feeling crept into her heart.

1. Why did Mr Thompson use examples from the Bible? [3]

Ans. Mr Thompson used examples from the Bible to convince his wife to give shelter to Maggie in their house. He believed that listening to the word of God would make his wife less harsh towards the little child.

2. What message did he intend to give to his wife? [3]

Ans. Mr Thompson wished his wife to be kind towards Maggie and look after her in his absence. Therefore, he adopted the Biblical tone to make his point. He wanted his wife to follow after the saviour and serve little children as he did.

3. Why did Mr Thompson look away? What did he not want? [3]

Ans. Mr Thompson, after having given his sermon, looked away from Mrs Thompson in order to hide his emotions. The conviction and determination with which he spoke to his wife was giving desired results. He did not want her to see him crying.

4. Did Mr Thompson's sermon have the desired effect? [3]

Ans. Mr Thompson's sermon had the desired results as his wife's temper and anger reduced. A soft and tender feeling that had gone from Maggie to Mr Thompson, crept into Mrs Thompson's heart too. She was not angry now and her heart softened a little towards Maggie.

5. What did Mrs Thompson do after her husband left for work? What does it show? [4]

Ans. After Mr Thompson left for work, Mrs Thompson went to interact with the child. She tried to comfort and console Maggie by talking to her. She even gave her food to eat, and milk to drink. Mr Thompson's trick had worked. It appeared that Mrs Thompson and Maggie were getting along well.

b Short Questions [4 Marks each]

1. Describe the woman who was dead now. What were her main vices?

Ans. The woman who was dead now was a poor lazy lady and mother of three children. She never worked hard to provide sufficient food to her children. Her main vices were drunkenness and idleness and probably under the influence of alcohol, she must have fought with people in the village. That's why she was despised by the village people.

2. What brought a change in the attitude of the neighbours in the story 'An Angel in Disguise'?

Ans. The news of the poor woman's death roused the pity and humanity of the neighbours. Even though they did not like the woman, they hastily came to her hut carrying with them food and clothes for the children as well as a garment for the dead woman's decent burial. The villagers were kindhearted people and they were worried about the future of these children who were now orphans.

3. Why were the neighbours convinced that a poorhouse was a good place for Maggie?

Ans. The villagers knew that the poorhouse was a sad place for a sick and helpless child. However, they felt that for disabled child, like Maggie, it would prove a blessing. She would receive healthy food, decent clothing and even doctors in the poorhouse. The neighbours convinced themselves of all this because they were not willing to take her responsibility.

4. Why did Joe Thompson not see the guardians of the poor girl ever?

Ans. Mr Thompson had made an excuse for keeping Maggie in his house for a day. He was hopeful that on interacting with Maggie, his wife might want to keep Maggie for a longer period. The fact that he had to take the permit from the guardians of the poor girl was his trick to buy sometime, which worked well in his

favour. Mr Thompson was never required to meet them because neither he nor his wife ever wanted to part with Maggie.

5. How did Mr Thompson convince his wife to not send Maggie to the poorhouse?

Ans. Seeing his wife's temper rising, Mr Thompson, very smartly, mocked the hardheartedness of woman in general. This gave him a certain control over his wife, who now wanted to prove herself otherwise. He, next, quoted examples from the Bible saying that Lord rewards those who look after children well and are kind to them. Lastly, he left Maggie and his wife together allowing the child's innocence to work its charm over Mrs Thompson.

6. What did Mr Thompson notice on returning from work that evening?

Ans. On returning from work that evening, Mr Thompson saw his wife talking to Maggie. Though Mrs Thompson had her back towards the window and Mr Thompson could not see her face, he noticed the expressions on Maggie's face. He saw Maggie's eyes fixed upon his wife and even when her eyes were sad, there was no pain or bitterness. Mr Thompson was relieved seeing his wife and Maggie getting along well with each other.

c Long Questions [8 Marks each]

1. Write a character sketch of Maggie.

Ans. Maggie is the youngest of the three orphans, who were left in a desolate state after the death of their mother due to drunkenness. *Following are the various points that describe her character in the story.*

A bedridden Child Maggie was bedridden and hopelessly diseased. Two years ago, she had fallen from a window and hurt her spine. Thereafter, she could not stand on her own and had to be carried in her mother's arms.

Well Mannered In the story, there was no one who wanted to bear the responsibility of a diseased child. However, Maggie proves that the societal assumptions about her were not entirely true. She was well behaved and well mannered. When her brother and sister left her, she was patiently waiting for someone to come to her rescue, though she was afraid to be left alone, all by herself. She always spoke to Mr Thompson in a respectable manner.

Bearer of Love and Compassion With her childlike innocence, she managed to arouse love and compassion in Mr Thompson's tender heart. Even, the hardhearted and ill-tempered Mrs Thompson could not remain untouched by her gentleness. While the society believed her to be a burden, she was in reality a blessing for the Thompsons. From the story, especially having read its ending, it appears that more than Maggie, it were the Thompsons who were in need of her. The innocence of a child's heart lit their house with cheer forever. She was truly an angel in disguise.

2. Describe Mrs Thompson's transformation.

Ans. The narrator introduces Mrs Thompson as a childless woman, and as one who does not have a very amiable temper. *Following are the points that describe transformation of Mrs Thompson from an ill-tempered to a kindhearted woman.*

Hardhearted and Ill-tempered She is hardhearted, ill-tempered, and irritable. Mr Thompson, therefore, has well placed doubts about taking Maggie to his home. Not to her husband's surprise, on seeing Maggie, Mrs Thompson becomes furious and asks her husband to drop Maggie at one of the poorhouses.

Process of Transformation As the story progresses, we see a very different Mrs Thompson. On being reminded by her husband that Maggie has just lost her mother and has been separated from her siblings and having received a few quotations from Bible, Mrs Thompson's heart melts too. Soon, she is seen conversing with the child, comforting her, getting her food and water, and so on.

Motherly Feelings The tender motherly feelings that had remained buried deep within her heart are soon aroused by Maggie and to such an extent that she no longer wishes to be parted with Maggie. In Mrs Thompson, Maggie is able to find the comfort she found in her mother's arms, for Mrs Thompson's temper has been fully transformed.

3. Which character is perfect for describing TS Arthur's message of humanity?

Ans. The character of Mr Thompson, a rough man from appearance having a tender heart is perfect for describing message of humanity. *Following are the various points describing Mr Thompson as the perfect character in the story.*

Perfect Character Joe Thompson's character is a symbol of unconditional love and compassion. For the style of writing in which the author, TS Arthur has championed, the fiction, Mr Thompson is its perfect creation.

His Concern for Maggie He finds it cruel to leave Maggie all by herself after the death of her mother and having been separated from her brother and sister. Knowing that poorhouses are not good places and do not offer much comfort to children, he is not convinced to leave Maggie in one such place. Therefore, despite knowing the temper of his wife, he decides to take the alone child to his house to provide her love and comfort.

His Reasons for the Decision The depths of his love can be understood in the firm tone he adopts while speaking to his wife about Maggie's stay with them. The conviction in his tone puts an end to Mrs Thompson's questions about Maggie. He seems to be following the message of the Bible and demonstrates to his wife the love and compassion of Jesus Christ towards children. He is no less than a saviour for Maggie.

Noble Result of his Noble Work Though Mr Thompson is described as a rough man in the story, his humanity proves him to be a very kind man and his decision to bring Maggie to his house proves noble both for Maggie as well as for him and his wife.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. After considering the matter, and talking it over with his wife, farmer Jones said that he would take John, and do well by him, now that his mother was out of the way; and Mrs Ellis, who had been looking out for a bound girl, concluded that it would be charitable in her to make choice of Kate, even though she was too young to be of much use for several years. "I could do much better, I know," said Mrs Ellis; "but as no one seems inclined to take her, I must act from a sense of duty expect to have trouble with the child for she's an undisciplined thing—used to having her own way."

1. Why were the children being separated from each other? [3]
2. What does farmer Jones decide about John? [3]
3. Why does Mrs Ellis agree upon taking Kate? [3]
4. Why does Mrs Ellis feel that Kate would be of no help to her for many years? [3]
5. Can we use the word 'charitable' for farmer Jones and Mrs Ellis? State yes or no with reason. [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. The village neighbours believed that the three orphans were unruly and undisciplined. Were they right in their assumptions?
2. Describe the first encounter between Maggie and Mr Thompson.
3. Why does Mrs Thompson make an enquiry about the other two children?
4. What did Mrs Thompson tell her husband while they were having their supper?

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. Describe the manner in which Mr Thompson wins over his wife.
2. Justify the title of the story, 'An Angel in Disguise'.

The Little Match Girl

Hans Christian Andersen

About the Author

Hans Christian Andersen was born in Odense, Denmark on 2nd April, 1805. He was a Danish writer popularly known for his influential children's stories, such as The Little Mermaid, The Ugly Duckling, and Thumbelina. Andersen was introduced to literature by his father, who used to read out passages from the Arabian Nights for him.

In 1829, he published his first important literary work, 'A Journey on Foot from Holmen's Canal to the East Point of Amager'. Afterwards Christian, Andersen published a play, a book of poetry and a travelogue. He soon won a grant from the King and began writing fairy tales from 1835 and after this he kept writing both for children as well as for adults. It is surprising to note that most of his stories were published in America before being available in his native country, Denmark. He died in 1875.

About the Story

The Little Match Girl shows how a little girl transforms herself from hopeless to hopeful on the very cold last night of her life. The little girl is trying to sell matches on New Year's Eve but eventually decides to burn her matches for warmth; as she does so she has visions of feasts and family, of warmth and happiness. She does not realise that she is actually dying when she sees the falling star and then the vision of her grandmother, so there is a smile on her face when people find her dead the next morning.

The next day, when passersby find her dead body they think she got burnt to death in an attempt to keep herself warm. She looks serene and peaceful because she died while having happy visions, feeling the warmth of the matches' fire and thinking about joining her beloved grandmother.

Character Introduction

Major Character

The Little Match Girl

The little match girl is the only major character in the story. The girl is forced to sell the matchsticks in the winter chill on the eve of New Year, without a hat or shoes to shield her.

Minor Characters

The Grandmother

The readers are informed that in the life of the little match girl the grandmother was the only person who loved her dearly. She is now dead. Before the death of the little match girl, she sees a beautiful vision of her old grandmother.

The Father

The father is not a present character in the story, but the readers are told that he is not a caring father. He sends the little girl to sell matchsticks in the harsh weather. He beats her if she is not able to sell any match boxes in the evening.

Summary of the Story

The Cold Winter Evening

The story opens by describing the extreme winter chill on the last evening of the year. It was also getting darker when a poor little girl was seen walking along the street struggling to sell matchsticks. She was wearing neither hat nor any shoes to save herself from bitter cold.

The Girl Appeared a Personification of Sorrow Herself

While stepping out of the house, the little girl was wearing slippers, though they were much larger for her small feet as they belonged to her mother. However, while struggling in the marketplace, she lost one of the slippers somewhere on the way; and the other one was picked up by a mischievous kid. She was now dragging her carriage bareheaded and barefoot and the cold had turned her feet red and blue. Nevertheless, it was not the cold that made her so sad as the fact that no one had bought anything from her the whole day and therefore she had no money to carry back home. Cold, hunger and grief made her look like a figure of sorrow herself.

With the Night, the Fear Came Marching Too

As she moved along the street, she could see bright light everywhere around as it was the New Year's Eve. The candles gleaming, the smell of roasted goose coming from the parlour perhaps added to her misery. She was feeling cold as well as hungry, but could not consider going back home. She feared that she might receive a beating from her father as she hadn't sold any matchsticks that day and had also lost her mother's slipper. Also, her house was not a great place to protect her from severe winter anyway as there were large cracks in the roof.

The Beautiful Dream Visions

To relieve herself from the terrible cold, the little girl, hesitatingly, burnt one matchstick from the bundle she had. She held her hands over the bright light. She felt as if she were sitting beside a large iron stove. Thereafter, one by one she began lighting the matchsticks, for with each burning matchstick she saw a beautiful vision.

The Vision of the Restaurant Room

On lighting the second matchstick, it appeared to the girl as if the wall between her and the restaurant room had become translucent and she could see into the room. She saw a table on which was spread a beautiful table cloth and

food was served in magnificent ceramic crockery. She could smell and see the roasted goose with the filling of apple and dried prunes. In her imagination she could see all of this, the goose hopping down from the table, with knife and fork in its breast, came running towards her. But then, the matchstick burnt out, and nothing but the cold and damp wall remained.

The Another Vision

To keep her visions alive, the girl rubbed another matchstick against the wall. This time she saw a large and beautiful Christmas tree. It was huge, strikingly decorated and was larger than any Christmas tree, she had seen so far in any rich man's house. She saw innumerable lights burning on the green branches of the Christmas tree and she saw beautiful pictures hanging from it. As soon as she extended her hand to touch them, they disappeared because the flame of the matchstick had burnt out. She lighted another matchstick and this time saw the lights as stars rising higher and higher in heaven. One star fell down. She had heard her grandmother saying that the falling star signifies death.

The Vision of the Old Grandmother

The only person who was close to the heart of the little match girl and loved her dearly was her grandmother, who now was dead. The little girl struck another matchstick and soon began talking to the vision of her grandmother. Bright and radiant, with a mild expression, her grandmother stood before her; but just like other visions, the grandmother too vanished and disappeared when the matchstick burnt out. So, in order to keep her grandmother close to her, she struck one matchstick after the other and in this way, burnt out the whole packet.

The Peculiar Death

The visions gave immense joy to the little girl. She saw her grandmother picking her in her arms and both flew high into the heaven. They were extremely happy as they were together and in heaven there was neither cold nor hunger, nor fear. It appears that the falling star had foreshadowed the little girl's own death, for when the passersby saw the little girl the next morning, she had frozen to death. They saw her dead but failed to notice her smiling face. Many pitied her, but did not know that it was the most unusual death, a death that freed her from all worries and a death in which her own grandmother came to take her and that now they both were happy to be in each other's company.

Word Meanings

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Gloom—complete darkness, **Bareheaded**—without covering one's head, **Cradle**—a child's bed or crib, **Apron**—a protective garment worn over in the front of one's clothes, **Penny**—a one-cent coin, **Roasted**—cook by prolonged exposure to heat, **Huddled**—crowd together.

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Tucked—push or fold something so as to hide it in the place, **Numb**—without the power of sensation, **Spluttered**—make a series of soft explosive sounds, **Knobs**—a rounded lump or ball at the end or on the surface of something, **Gauze**—a thin translucent fabric of silk, **Prunes**—a plum preserved by drying, **Hopped**—jumping on one foot to move ahead, **Waddled**—walk in small steps and a clumsy manner.

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Gaily—with a bright or attractive appearance, **Streaking**—move with great speed in a direction, **Flared up**—burn with sudden intensity, **Stately**—with a dignified and grand manner.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. In the cold and gloom a poor little girl walked, bareheaded and barefoot, through the streets. She had been wearing slipper, it is true, when she left home, but what good were they? They had been her mother's, so you can imagine how big they were. The little girl had lost them as she ran across the street to escape from two carriages that were being driven terribly fast. One slipper could not be found, and a boy had run off with the other, saying that it would come in very handy as a cradle some day when he had children of his own.

1. Describe the weather on the last evening of the year. [3]

Ans. On the last evening of the year, as described in the story, it was terribly cold. It had been snowing and it was getting darker and colder, forcing people to desert the streets and stay indoors to protect themselves from cold.

2. Why were the slippers not good for the little maiden? Whose slippers were they? [3]

Ans. The slippers that the little girl wore while stepping out of the house were her mother's slippers. They were just too large for her. Rather than giving any comfort to her

feet, they were more of a burden as she went along the street trying to sell the matchsticks. She did not realise when she lost them.

3. What happened to the slippers of the little girl? [3]

Ans. The girl lost her slippers somewhere along the street when two large carriages passed by. They were rolling awfully fast. The girl was unable to find one of the slippers and the other one was picked up by a naughty child, who ran away with it.

4. A good deal of humour has been employed in the passage. Can you comprehend? [3]

Ans. The narratorial voice employs a lot of sarcasm while narrating the tale of the second slipper, picked up by the naughty child. The child thinks it profitable to run away with one slipper assuming that it might help him when he will have children of his own. There's a lot of humour in these lines.

5. What does the passage tell us about the social background of the little girl? [4]

Ans. Clearly, the little match girl belongs to a very poor family. The fact that she is bareheaded and barefoot, trying to sell matchsticks in an extremely harsh weather is a strong indication of it. The family cannot even afford a decent pair of shoes for the little girl and therefore, she has been sent out wearing her mother's slippers. The house that she lives in has large cracks in the roof and though it has been mended with straw and rags, it can not keep out the blowing wind that comes whistling through.

II. Her thin hands were almost numb with cold. If only she dared pull just one small match from the packet, strike it on the wall and warm her fingers! She pulled one out—scr-r-ratch! how it spluttered and burn! It had a warm, bright flame like a tiny candle when she held her hand over it—but what a strange light! It seemed to the little girl as if she were sitting in front of a great iron stove with polished brass knobs and brass ornaments.

1. Why did the little girl not think of going back home despite the numbing cold? [3]

Ans. The girl was afraid to go back home. She hadn't managed to sell a single matchstick the whole day. She was afraid that she might get a beating from her father. She had lost her mother's slippers also so she was afraid to go back home.

2. Why do you think, the word 'dared' has been used to describe the act of pulling out a single matchstick? [3]

Ans. The girl belonged to a poor family and was perhaps forced to sell the matchsticks in order to sustain her family. She had not sold any matchsticks that day and was therefore afraid to receive beating for the same. Using a matchstick for herself and wasting it was, therefore, a courageous step.

3. What was the girl's reaction when she lighted first matchstick? [3]

Ans. When the girl lighted one matchstick, it spluttered and burnt. She felt as if she was holding her hand on a warm bright flame like a tiny candle. She imagined that she was sitting in front of an iron stove which was burning nicely and giving out lovely warmth.

4. What imagery has been used to describe the flame of the matchstick? [3]

Ans. The girl, first, uses the burning matchstick like a tiny candle and holds her hands over it. Sitting with the lit matchstick she feels as if she were sitting beside a large iron stove, with shiny brass feet and top. She imagined that the stove was burning nicely and providing her with much needed warmth.

5. Why the burning matchstick is called a blessing? [4]

Ans. The small flame of the burning matchstick appears no less than a blessing to the little girl because she is able to hold her hands over it. Her hands have become numb because of biting cold. Even in her house, she may not have received any relief from cold because of

the cracked roof. However, sitting in the street besides a corner, she is able to warm herself a bit with the flame of the matchstick.

III. She struck another—it burnt clearly and where the light fell upon the wall, the bricks became transparent, like gauze. She could see right into the room, where a shining white cloth was spread on the table. It was covered with beautiful china and in the centre of it stood a roast goose, stuffed with prunes and apples, steaming deliciously. And what was even more wonderful was that goose hopped down from the dish, waddled across the floor with carving knife and fork in its back, waddled straight up to the poor child! Then—out went the match, and nothing could be seen but the thick, cold wall.

1. What happens every time the girl lights the matchstick? What becomes translucent? [3]

Ans. Every time the girl lights the matchstick she sees a new vision before her. She feels that the wall between her and the dining room becomes translucent and she could see what is going inside. As she was hungry she saw a table laden with food roasted goose and this delicious dish was itself reaching in her mouth. But it was girl's imagination only. In reality, she was feeling cold and hungry.

2. What does she see inside the room? [3]

Ans. In the room, the little girl sees a table with a beautiful snow-white table cloth spread over it and magnificent ceramic crockery laid on its top. She could see the steaming hot goose with its filling and the reeling and running around of the table.

3. What happened when the matchstick burnt out? [3]

Ans. Every time the matchstick burnt out, with the flame the images that the girl was able to see vanished too. Her strain of thoughts got broken and she came back to her reality, with nothing but the cold, damp walls before her.

4. Were the images that she saw real? What was the girl forced to do? [3]

Ans. No, the images that the girl saw on lighting the matchsticks were not real but a figment of her imagination. The little girl was young and in an age when she should have turned about the streets carelessly and playfully, she was forced to shoulder the responsibilities of earning money. The images that she saw were actually the hidden desires of her heart.

5. What all visions does she see? [4]

Ans. The girl, first, sees the wall between her and the dining room disappear. She sees the table and its magnificent spread. She is able to smell the roasted goose and sees it reeling on the floor and hopping on the girl, with fork and knife in its breast. Next, she sees a large Christmas tree, larger than she has ever seen. In the last vision she sees the figure of her grandmother.

IV. One of them fell, streaking the sky with light.

“Now someone is dying”, said the little girl, for her old grandmother, the only one who had ever been good to her but who was now dead, had said, “Whenever a star falls, a soul goes up to God.”

She struck another match on the wall. Once more there was light and in the glow stood her old grandmother, oh, so bright and shining and looking so gentle, kind and loving.

1. What did the little girl’s grandmother say about the falling star? [3]

Ans. The little girl recalled her grandmother telling her that the falling star signifies death. Whenever a star falls, a soul climbs to heaven. On seeing a falling star, therefore, the girl thought that someone must have died somewhere.

2. Whose death does the falling star signify? [3]

Ans. Superstitious as it might appear, in the story, the falling star does signify death. Strangely, the little girl dies in the end. The soul of her grandmother comes to take the little girl with her to heaven. Hence, the falling star signifies the death of the little matchstick girl.

3. Whom does the girl see this time? How is her image? [3]

Ans. The little girl, in the final vision, sees her grandmother. The tall and beautiful image of her grandmother with her most loving and pleasing expressions stands before her. Against the bright flame of the matchstick, the reflection of grandmother looks bright too.

4. Why was the last image so important for the little girl? [3]

Ans. The last image, being the vision of her grandmother, was the most important to the little girl for there was no one in the world who loved her more than her grandmother. Her grandmother was now dead and therefore on seeing her image, the girl became extremely happy.

5. Why did she rub the whole bundle of matches against the wall? [4]

Ans. The little girl on seeing her grandmother was extremely happy, but at the same time, she was upset that just like the images of the stove, the Christmas tree, the roasted goose and so on, the image of her grandmother could vanish too as the matchsticks burnt out. In order to keep the image of her grandmother close to her and not to lose her again, she burnt the whole bundle of matches.

V. But in the cold dawn, in the corner formed by the two houses, sat the little girl with rosy cheeks and smiling lips, dead–frozen to death on the last evening of the old year. The dawn of the new year rose on the huddled figure of the girl. She was still holding the matches and half a packet had been burnt.

“She was evidently trying to warm herself”, people said. But no one knew what beautiful visions she had seen and in what a blaze of glory she had entered with her dear old grandmother into the heavenly joy and gladness of a new year.

1. What happens to the little girl in the end? [3]

Ans. Trying to retain the image of her grandmother, the girl ends up burning all the matchsticks. In the final passage of the story, the girl has died. It is difficult to say whether she died of winter cold or of flaming matchsticks.

2. Discuss the last image of the child. How was the girl looking after death? [3]

Ans. The last image of the dead child is peculiar because even while she had frozen to death, her cheeks were rosy and she had a smiling face. Leaning against the wall, the dead child looked beautiful and aroused the sympathy of passersby.

3. What did the people think? Why did they think so? [3]

Ans. The passersby thought that the girl must have died while trying to keep herself warm by lighting the matchsticks. The people felt pity on the little girl but no one knew that whenever the girl lighted a matchstick, she could see a beautiful vision be it Christmas tree or delicious food laid on the table or her loving grandmother who was the only person who loved her.

4. Why were they wrong in their estimate? [3]

Ans. The passersby were pitying the death of the girl, making assumptions about what led her to death. They were wrong in their estimate because the girl’s death was not to be pitied, as the girl had seen the most beautiful visions before dying. The girl’s face was smiling even in her death.

5. Was it possible that the girl was happy on the New Year?

[4]

Ans. Most likely, the girl was happy on the New Year. In death, she had been freed from her poverty and isolation and a life of baldness. Unknown to all, the girl had seen the most beautiful visions before dying. This perhaps explains that even in death she had a smiling face. Most importantly, the girl had now been united with her grandmother. Symbolically, the soul of the grandmother herself descended to take the little girl along with her to heaven.

- VI. So the little girl walked about the streets on her naked feet, which were red and blue with cold. In her old apron she carried a great many matches, and she had a packet of them in her hand as well.

[ICSE 2020]

1. Who was 'she'?
What can you conclude about her condition from the above description?

Ans. 'She' in the extract is the little girl. As the little girl walked barefoot in the extremely cold weather selling matches, it can be concluded that she was very poor.

2. What time of the year was it? Why did she not want to go home?

Ans. It was New Year's eve. The little girl did not want to go home as she feared that she might receive a beating from her father because she had not managed to sell even a single matchstick the whole day.

3. What did she use the matches for? What happened when she lit the first match?

Ans. She used the matches for keeping herself warm. When the little girl lighted the first match, it spluttered and burnt. She felt as if she was holding her hand on a warm bright flame like a tiny candle.

4. Whom did she love dearly? What did she say when this person appeared before her?

Ans. She loved her grandmother dearly. When her grandmother appeared before her, she requested her to take her with her. This was because she feared that her grandmother would disappear as soon as the match burns out.

5. What happened to the little girl at the end of the story? Would you consider this a happy ending or a sad one? Give one reason for your answer.

Ans. The little girl died at the end of the story. It was a happy ending because in death, she had been freed from her life of poverty and isolation.

b

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. The events in the story, 'The Little Match Girl' were set on a single day, what day it was and what was the weather on that day?

Ans. It is true that all the events in the story occurred on a single day, that was, on the New Year's Eve. The weather on that day was particularly cold. It had been snowing and the snowflakes fell on the hair of the little girl. It was evening time and the freezing cold was forcing people to stay indoors.

2. The girl's appearance was directly opposite to that of the weather. Is it true? Why?

Ans. The girl's appearance and dress-up was strangely opposite to that of the weather. Despite the freezing cold, the girl moved along the streets bareheaded and barefooted. She had neither a hat nor any shoes to protect her from the cold. This conveyed a lot about her miserable condition.

3. What was the first image that the girl saw on rubbing the matchstick against the wall?

Ans. In the first image, the girl saw the wall between her and the dining room disappeared. She saw a table with a beautiful tablecloth and the most magnificent crockery displayed over it. She also saw the roasted goose filled with apple and dried plums hopping from the table to the floor with carving knife and fork in its back, hopped towards the little girl.

4. Why did the girl see the vision of her grandmother? Why was this vision proved the last one for her?

Ans. The girl saw the vision of her grandmother in the end. She saw it as she was very fond of her grandmother. She only loved the little girl. Now perhaps the grandmother had come to take the girl with her to end her sufferings at this Earth.

5. Where did the grandmother and the child go? What was the place like?

Ans. The grandmother descended from heaven. She carried the girl in her arms and together both rose higher and higher into the sky and entered the gates of heaven, a place with no misery. There would be no cold, no starvation and no beating but love of which the girl seemed to have been deprived of throughout her life.

c Long Questions [8 Marks each]

1. What all visions does the girl see on burning the matchsticks? How are they important to her?

Ans. The little match girl is the central character of the story The Little Match Girl.

Life of Little Girl She has been living in acute poverty struggling to make both ends meet. Struggling with severe cold the girl took shelter in the corner made by the joint of two building. The cold forces the girl to dare to lit a matchstick in the light of which she sees some beautiful visions. The girl sees several images on burning the matchsticks.

The First Vision First, she sees the inside of a place to which she could have never gained access. She sees a dining parlour; a table with a fine spread and delicious food. She, then, sees the roasted goose with knife and fork in its breast, hopping at the girl.

Other Visions With the next matchstrike, she sees a grand and larger than live Christmas tree. The girl has not ever seen such a huge and beautiful Christmas tree. Thereafter, the girl sees a falling star and her mind is immediately taken to the image of her grandmother.

The Final Vision She sees the most beautiful and charming image of her grandmother. This final vision, she wants to hold on to and therefore keeps burning the matches.

Importance of Visions Through her visions her happy moments have been shared. The visions gave immense joy to the little girl. Imaginary visions played a very important role to set the background of the story so their role cannot be ignored.

2. Were the images that the girl saw real? What were they actually?

Ans. The images seen by the girl were not real but imaginary. They were fragments from the girl's hidden desires.

Life of Little Girl Living a life of complete deprivation, the girl did observe the pretties that life offered some. Marching along the streets to sell the matchsticks, she could not escape the fun and frolic that marked the New Year's Eve. She could smell the roasted goose, hear the happy rubbish of the people. The images of the fine table, with its magnificent spread and delicious food were all dreams that came true in the girl's imagination.

Desire for Love Love was the other missing aspect of her life. With her grandmother, now dead, there was no one who cared for her. Rather, she feared beating from her father and thus, chose to stay back in the streets. That is why, along the other images that she saw, she also envisioned her grandmother as the girl wished to be united with her.

3. Discuss the role of the people in the story 'The Little Match Girl'.

Ans. The role of the people in the story bears no significance as the story is set in a background where people cannot notice the little girl until she is discovered dead yet there are some points that should be discussed to throw light on the people's apathy towards her.

People Fail to Notice the Girl The story revolves around a cold and gloomy place where it is quite impossible for the people to spot the girl so they cannot be blamed for her pitiable condition. It seems the girl has been trying to sell matchsticks since morning in a market place, crowded with people who are preparing for the celebration of the New year's Eve. The people must have seen her bareheaded and barefoot but no one has come forward to help her or has even noticed her condition just opposite to the weather. It is a sheer demonstration of apathy on the part of civilised human towards a helpless poor girl.

Self-centered and Apathetic The people are so absorbed in their own joy that the miserable condition of the girl could not draw the attention of any of them. Had any of the people helped her, she could have been saved. Later, when the girl dies with cold, the people notice her and guess that she has died trying to warm herself but nobody bothers why a little girl has to spend night in such a terrible cold that has claimed her life. The people do not seem to be noticing her rosy cheeks and smiling lips which are looking alive even after she has passed away. Thus, we may conclude that the people in the story are ignorant and apathetic. Had people bothered to buy matchsticks from her so that, she could be helped monetarily, perhaps she would have returned home. People spend lots of money on themselves and family while celebrating New years Eve, but not a single soul bothered about the little girl who was turning on the streets of a market place bareheaded and barefoot.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. She crept along, shivering and hungry, the picture of misery, poor little thing!

The snowflakes fell on her long golden hair which curled so prettily about her neck, but she did not think of her appearance now. Lights were shining in every window and there was a glorious smell of roast goose in the street, for this was New Year's Eve and she could not think of anything else.

1. Did the girl belong to a poor or a rich family? [3]
2. Why does the narrator say that she did not care about her appearance? [3]
3. Despite being the New year's Eve, why was the girl outside in the unbearable cold? [3]
4. What did the girl see from the windows? [3]
5. How did it impact her? [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. Why did the grandmother take the child with her? What does it mean?
2. What makes you feel that the girl belonged to a poor family? Describe her condition as a poor child.

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. Discuss the significance of the matchsticks in the story.
2. The ending of the story is heart-breaking. Elucidate.

The Blue Bead

Norah Burke

About the Authoress

Norah Burke was born on 2nd August, 1907 in Bedford, England. Her father, Redmond St. George Burke was a forest officer, who served in India during Norah Burke's early childhood. Lots of travelling made education difficult for her. However, she learnt to write at the age of 8, and immediately began writing stories. Soon, she edited her own little magazine, 'The Monthly Dorrit'.

In 1933, at the age of 26, she published her first novel, 'Dark Road'. In 1935, she co-authored 'Jungle Days: A Book of Big Game Hunting' with her father. This novel shared the details of their sporting trips in India. In fact, most of her writing revolves around descriptions of life in India in the early twentieth century. She was most famous for her novels and non-fictional descriptions. She was also an enthusiastic travel writer. She died in 1976.

About the Story

The story is full of description and tells us "Good things came from Bad Situations." The Blue Bead, opens with a vivid description of a large crocodile and the habitat in which he lived. Another description of the story a young girl named Sibia who is very poor and wants something valuable in her life. The centre of the story is towards its end when the crocodile leaps at one of Gujar women and Sibia jumps to action in order to save her. At the end, the woman is saved and while Sibia is returning, she finds a blue bead. While getting back home she met her mother and told her all about it and blue bead that she found in the river.

Character Introduction

Major Characters

Sibia

Sibia was a young brave girl, hardly twelve years old who belonged to a poor nomadic tribe. In the narrative, she is referred as the 'child-woman'. It seems that ever since she started to walk she had to set out for work. Like any young girl, she was lured by fineries in the bazaar, such as glass bangles, silk and cotton clothes, the smell of sweets prepared for sale and so on.

The Crocodile

In the story, the crocodile was presented almost as a character. He was larger than life, and a lot of details had been shared describing his present length and thickness. The crocodile's size was in direct proportion to the courage shown by the young girl, Sibia.

Minor Characters

The Gujar women

The Gujar women are shown as a group. They were distinct from the women of Sibia's community in the dressing style. Gujar women wore tight trousers and lots of silver ornaments.

Sibia's Mother

Sibia's mother was any ordinary woman from her community. She was poor but was shown as a loving mother who got worried for her child's safety.

Summary of the Story

The Crocodile and his Life

The story starts with the description of a crocodile who is twice as large as a tall man. He has fully grown up and his skin has developed in to solid wall of armoured hide that cannot be passed through even with a bullet shot. He has no issue with his meal as he eats almost everything offered to him by nature from fish to skeleton cows and halfburned dead bodies cast into the stream. He passes his days lying on warm rocks and sandbank where the sun dries the clay.

The Girl, her Life and Poverty

The name of the little girl is Sibia. She is a twelve year old girl. She has been living in a mud house located in a village near the river where the great crocodile resides. Sibia wears an earth-coloured rag torn as skirt and sari. Her life is hit by extreme poverty yet she has visited the local market with her parents and brothers witnessing everything that came under her gaze. There seems no rest in her life as she has been performing all the household tasks from husking corn to cut grass for fodders.

Sibia goes to Fetch Paper Grass

It is the regular routine of Sibia to go to get paper grass from the cliffs above the river with her mother and other women of their community. They sell the grass to an agent who arranges its dispatch to the paper mills.

Sibia's Desire

Due to poverty Sibia is deprived of everything. What she longs for is only a necklace made of beads the shiny scarlet seeds which are found everywhere in the Jungle. But making the necklace of beads is not easy as one needs a red-hot needle to drill it across but she has to wait as the needle they have, has broken.

The Gujar

On their way to the cliffs above the river, they come across camps of grass huts where reside the Gujar. They are a nomadic community and make a place their home until their animals finish the grass within reach or there is no market for their milk or butter to be sold. Sibia notices the attire of the women who bring water for their animals in clay made pitchers while the men and the boys go to market to sell their products.

Sibia Stays Back

Sibia has been cutting grass with her mother and being watched by her so that she may not ignore working, yet she is thinking about the moulded bowls which have been kept in the cavelets to harden. She is dying to have a look on them so as soon as the time of toiling is over, she goes to see them while her mother moves away with loaded grass.

Crocodile Attacks the Gujar Woman

After Sibia's mother has gone along with other women, Sibia comes down to the stepping-stones with the load of grass on her back. The load forces her to rest on a big boulder. This is the time when she notices a Gujar woman with two pitchers, to take fresh and clean water from the river. She is ignorant of the fact that the crocodile is a yard away from her. The crocodile attacks her slashing at her legs with his mighty jaws. He is trying to drag her into the river.

Sibia's Heroism

Any other person may not have dared to reach such a predator as the crocodile is or may have run away to call for help but Sibia, a girl of only twelve does not know such things as fear. She reaches the spot at once and attacks the eyes of the crocodile with the hayfork. The animal being hurt in eyes looses his grip on the legs of the woman and swims away into the water. Sibia dresses the leg with rag and helps her to reach the hut.

Sibia Finds a Blue Bead

On reaching the sight where Sibia saves the woman, she finds her fork lying in the river, near it she sees a blue bead just like the one desired by her, perfect and even pierced ready for use. While coming back home, she meets her worried mother who asks her if something has happened with her. She replies in positive and shows her the blue bead found in the water of the river.

Word Meanings

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Whirlpools—a rapidly rotating mass of water in a river or sea, **Rippled**—form and flow with small waves on the surface, **Trilling**—create a quavering sound, **Antediluvian**—related to the period before the biblical flood, **Saurian**—like a lizard, **Propelled**—force to move in a particular direction, **Throb**—a strong constant beat, **Tinged**—to colour something.

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Fend—look after and provide for oneself, **Putrid**—rotting and producing a fetid smell, **Tepid**—slightly hot, **Armoured**—covered with a tough surface for protection, **Snouted**—animals having a projecting nose or mouth, **Plop off**—fall with a plop, **Ford**—a shallow place in a river and stream, **Skeleton cow**—a very thin cow, **Glimmered**—shine faintly with a wavering light, **Perforated**—pierced and holed.

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Smear—coat something messily with a greasy or sticky substances, **Rancid**—smelling or tasting unpleasant as a result of being old, **Ebony**—heavy blackish or very dark, **Goosey**—a quality considered to be characteristic of a goose, **Fleas**—a kind of insects that lives on larger animals, **Hubbub**—a chaotic noise caused by a crowd of people, **Abuzz**—full of humming sound.

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Turquoises—a greenish-blue colour, **Hayfork**—a semicircular blade fixed a short handled farming tool.

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Rattling—a rapid succession of short, sharp, hard sounds, **Swish**—a hissing sound, **Encampment**—a temporary staying place by making huts or tents, **Nomadic**—a tribe or community that moves place to place, **Clinking**—beating something to produce sound, **Bred**—reared in specified environment.

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Stepping stones—a series of raised stones in a river or stream, **Bicker about**—argue about petty and trivial matters, **Girded**—encircle

with a belt or band, **Slabs**—a large thin flat piece of stone, **Swoopings**—move rapidly downward through the air.

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Cavelets—small caves, **Gorge**—the narrow path in the mountain, **Squeaked**—make a high pitched sound.

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Gurrahs—pitchers, water jugs, **Darkling**—related to growing dark, **Slushing off**—making a splashing sound, **Livid**—dark bluish gray in colour, **Clatter**—a continuous rattling sound, **Bob away**—moving away, **Recoiled**—suddenly spring back in fear, **Tugging**—pull something hard.

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Prong—each of two or more projecting pointed parts at the end of a fork, **Horny**—resembling horn, **Convulsion**—a sudden, violent and irregular movement of limb, **Litter**—vehicle containing bed to carry someone, **Wobbling**—an unsteady movement from side to side.

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Smudged out—cause something to become messily smeared by rubbing it, **Wriggle**—twist and turn with quick writhing movements, **Morose**—sullen and ill-tempered.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I.** From the day, perhaps a hundred years ago, when the sun had hatched him in a sandbank, and he had broken his shell, and got his head out and looked around, ready to snap at anything before he was even fully hatched—from that day when he had at once made for the water, ready to fend for himself immediately, he had lived by his brainless craft and ferocity. Escaping the birds of prey and the great carnivorous fishes that eat baby crocodiles, he had prospered catching all the food he needed, and storing it till putrid in holes in the bank. Tepid water to live in and plenty of rotted food grew him to his great length.

- 1.** How has the crocodile been described? [3]

Ans. The crocodile has been described in all its glory, as larger than life creature. From the time when he first hatched from his shell to his present length. It appeared to be an ancient creature, blackish brown in

colour with yellowish white underside. He was twice as large as the tallest man and had a thick skin that couldn't be pierced through.

- 2.** What were sleepers? How were they? [3]

Ans. Sleepers were heavy pieces of timber or wood. They were large in size and could not be moved till a lot of force was applied to dislodge them from their original position. They were stuck around the stones, where the crocodile came and enjoyed.

- 3.** How did crocodile manage to grow to its present length? [3]

Ans. As a baby crocodile, he managed to escape the birds of prey and the larger fishes, and for his food he depended on anything that he could swallow; from small fishes to insects, and deer and monkeys, everything lay rotten inside his stomach.

- 4.** How did crocodile permanently settle in the water? [3]

Ans. The crocodile rested in the depths of water from the point of his birth. He managed to rest in the grassy shallows, along the logs and other stones. He decided to remain in the lukewarm water and made it his permanent home, and therefore pushed out only his eyes and nostrils from the water.

5. Was the crocodile invincible? How could he be hit? [4]

Ans. The thick skin of the crocodile made him invincible. There was nothing that could pierce through his thick skin, which was almost an inch dense. Even rifle bullets, if shot at him, could bounce off. Only his eyes and soft underarms were vulnerable and could lead to his death, if hit at.

II. Sibia was eating the last of her meal, chappati wrapped round a smear of green chilli and rancid butter; and she divided this also, to make it seem more, and bit it, showing straight white teeth. With her ebony hair and great eyes, and her skin of oiled brown cream, she was a happy immature child-woman about twelve years old. Barefoot, of course, and often goosey-cold on a winter morning, and born to toil. In all her life she had never owned anything but a rag. She had never owned even one anna—not a pice, not a pi, even, to buy, say a handful of blown glass beads.

1. What was Sibia eating for the last of her meal? Why did she tear it? [3]

Ans. Sibia had a chapatti with green chilli paste spread over it as the last of her meal. The dry chapatti with a little butter that had an offensive smell was all that her family could afford. But Sibia was a happy child and in order to feel that she had a lot of food, Sibia tore the chapatti into several parts.

2. What does it tell about her economic background? [3]

Ans. The coarse meal that Sibia enjoyed was a clear indicator of her humble economic background. She belonged to a poor family and therefore there was scarcity of food. Even there is mention of her wearing only rags and that is another indication that Sibia belonged to a poor family. She has to keep her mother in cutting grass, which could be sold off to earn some money. All these indicate that Sibia's family was poor.

3. What did Sibia do with her only possession, the rag? [3]

Ans. Sibia had no possessions, nor did she have any money to buy anything. All she possessed was an old tattered earth coloured rag. The child tore the rag into two parts to make do for both skirt and sari. She had no other set of clothes to wear except this rag.

4. What did all Sibia desire to buy from the stall in the bazaar? [3]

Ans. Sibia had seen many fancy goods like anklets, earrings, nose rings, bangle being sold at the stalls in the bazaar.

However, her heart was set upon colourful glass beads that she wished to string together for her necklace. She wanted to wear a new necklace made of those new beads.

5. Why is Sibia called a 'child-woman'? When did she begin to work? [4]

Ans. Sibia, though was only twelve years old, had a certain maturity about her. For instance, breaking her food into several parts to feel happy that she had a lot of food to enjoy, were some tactics that she practised in order to deal with her situation. Also, she started working when she could toddle to support her family. Therefore, though she had the innocence of a child, she had the maturity of a grown up woman.

III. There was no end to the wonders of the world. But Sibia, in all her life from birth to death, was marked for work. Since she could toddle, she had husked corn, and gathered sticks, and put dung to dry, and cooked and weeded, and carried, and fetched water, and cut grass for fodder. She was going with her mother and some other women now to get paper grass from the cliffs above the river. When you had enough of it, you could take it down by bullock cart to the railhead and sell it to the agent who would arrange for its dispatch to the paper mills. The women often toiled all day at this work, and the agent sat on silk cushions, smoking a hookah. Such thoughts did not trouble Sibia.

1. What do you understand by 'wonders of the world'? What lured Sibia? [3]

Ans. The 'wonders of the world' were the fineries that were sold at the stalls in the bazaar. They were the glass bangles, the silk and the cotton cloth, the sweets and other confectionaries prepared with brilliant honey and so on. These were the things that lured Sibia.

2. What daily chores did Sibia take care of? [3]

Ans. Sibia from very early childhood was made to work. Sibia had a lot of responsibility to shoulder. She was required to husk the corn gather sticks, cook, wash and weed, and also fetch water and cut grass for fodder. She had to go out to get paper grass which would fetch some money to the family.

3. What work did Sibia do with her mother? [3]

Ans. Sibia went up to the cliffs above the river with her mother to fetch paper grass. The grass was to be sold to an agent who would sit on silk cushion, smoking a hookah.

4. What was the work of the agent? What did he do? [3]

Ans. The agent arranged for the paper grass collected by the women to be dispatched to the paper mills. Unlike, the toiling and sweating women who did a lot of work, he hardly did anything. He merely sat on silk cushions and earned profit.

5. Why didn't Sibia care much about the work done by her? [4]

Ans. Sibia did not care much about the work done by her because most women of her community toiled in the same fashion. She also did not care much about the disproportionate work done by the agent because she was a happy child. Though she desired fineries, she was also content with her situation.

IV. Sibia glanced at the Gujar women as she went past. They wore trousers, tight and wrinkled at the ankles, and in their ears large silver rings made out of melted rupees; and one of them was clinking a stick against the big brass gurrals in which they fetched water from the river for the camp, to see which ones were empty. The men and boys were out of camp just now with the herd or gone to the bazaar to sell produce, but one or two buffaloes were standing about, creatures of great wet noses and moving jaws and gaunt black bones.

1. Who were the Gujar? Why were they called nomadic? [3]

Ans. The Gujar were a nomadic tribe, who did not stay at one place for a long time. They roamed from one place to another. They lived in one place for a while, till their animals had finished all the grass within their easy reach or there is no market for their milk or butter to be sold. Then, they moved on in search of newer pastures.

2. What did Gujar women look like? [3]

Ans. While going to fetch grass for fodder, Sibia noticed the Gujar women while passing from their place. Their attire drew her attention. Gujar women dressed in used to be trousers, wrinkled at the ankles. They wore large silver earrings made of melted rupees. They used to go to river to fetch water in vessels called 'gurrals'.

3. What work did the Gujar men do? [3]

Ans. The work had been divided between the women and the men. The women were to handle household works while the men were to take care of the animals and sell

produce. Gujar men went out of the camp to tend the animals while they grazed in the fields and to sell their products in the bazaars.

4. What possessions did the Gujar have? [3]

Ans. Gujar were the nomadic tribe who had to shift from one place to other constantly so they possessed only necessary articles. They possessed a few brass pots and animals. They had a herd of cows and buffaloes. They used the products of the animals such as milk and butter to sell in the bazaar.

5. Why did Sibia look intently at the Gujar women? What attracted her attention? [4]

Ans. Sibia looked intently at the Gujar women because they looked different from the women of Sibia's community. They dressed up differently and wore a lot of silver ornaments. Sibia stared at them while she passed for she did not have any ornaments but she wished to wear a necklace.

V. Sibia got her arms round the fainting woman, and somehow dragged her from the water. She stopped her wounds with sand, and bound them with rag, and helped her home to the Gujar encampment where the men made the litter to carry her to someone for treatment. Then Sibia went back for her grass and sickle and fork. The fork was lying in the river, not carried away, luckily, and as she bent to pick it up out of the water, she saw the blue bead. Not blue now, with the sun nearly gone, but a no-colour white-blue, and its shape wobbling in the movement of the stream.

1. Describe Sibia's act of courage. How did she save the woman? [3]

Ans. Sibia left the group of women on their way back home. While she was sitting on one of the stones she saw a Gujar woman being attacked by the crocodile, she jumped to help her. The crocodile's tail could have killed Sibia, but unconcerned Sibia saved the Gujar woman.

2. In what manner did Sibia help the woman reach back to her camp? [3]

Ans. Sibia attacked the crocodile with her hayfork, into his eyes. The giant crocodile disappeared in the water. Sibia pulled the bleeding woman from the water. She stopped her wounds with sand and bound them with rag and helped her home by putting her arms across her shoulders.

3. Why did Sibia go back to the river side? [3]

Ans. Sibia went back to the river to pick her sickle, hayfork and grass. She was happy that her sickle and hayfork did not sink in the water and she was able to find them. She picked these up and went back.

4. What did Sibia find there? How did she react? [3]

Ans. On returning to collect her sickle and hayfork, Sibia finds a gleaming blue glass bead near the river. It was the blue bead. It did not look blue anymore but was nonetheless beautiful. She went up with joy as she wanted a bead to make her necklace and now she could make her own necklace.

5. What was the greatest triumph of Sibia that day? Why did she ignore her heroism? [4]

Ans. To an ordinary reader, Sibia's biggest triumph that day should have been her courageous act of saving the Gujar woman and also herself from the jaws of the crocodile. However, seeing Sibia and the kind of life she lived, it seemed an ordinary event to her. For Sibia, her greatest triumph that day was finding the blue bead; a bead for her necklace, that too the one that did not need piercing. This made her immensely happy.

b Short Questions [4 Marks each]

1. Describe the glory with which the crocodile has been described in the story.

Ans. The mugger crocodile was blackish brown in colour and had a yellowish underside. The narrative describes him as the most ancient creature ever, for hundred years ago it hatched from its shell under the sun. The crocodile is described in all its glory, larger than life and twice as large as the tallest man. The description of the crocodile is awe-inspiring, the narrative recounts that some power propels him.

2. Describe the habitat in which the crocodile lived.

Ans. The crocodile lived in the lukewarm water that travelled between cliffs and forested hills. A jungle track came out of scrubs from either sides. He rested in the grassy shallows, among logs and rippled sand. The place was quite suitable for him. The sun dried the clay on him quite white and from here he could pop off into the water immediately if a danger appeared.

3. Describe Sibia's experience at the Bazaar. What were the things that filled her with wonder?

[ICSE 2020]

Ans. Sibia had a great experience at the Bazaar. The things that filled her with wonder were the fineries that were sold in the bazaar. They were the glass bangles, the silk

and the cotton cloth, the sweets and other confectioneries, satin sewn with real silver thread and tin trays from Birmingham.

4. Discuss the formation of the blue bead.

Ans. The blue bead was not a bead, nor was it a gem nor a semi-precious stone. The blue bead was basically a piece of glass that had broken off a bottle. Running through the river, it had been worn out by the sand. By chance, it had been pierced right through its center. Lying in the water, it glimmered like a blue bead.

5. Why did Sibia not go back home with the other women? What stopped her?

Ans. Sibia's imagination took her to the bright waters, and golden air. In the cliffs she had hidden little bowls moulded of clay. She would stay back to rest on the stepping stones near the water and to examine her clay bowls. She thought if she could ever find something to paint them with, they would look extremely beautiful.

6. What did Sibia do to injure the crocodile? Was the crocodile killed?

Ans. Sibia injured the crocodile by push in her hayfork into the eyes of the crocodile. The crocodile leaped up and down in pain and crashed back, exploding the water with his tail, and went back into the depths of the water, now turned bloody. He did not die at the spot but sooner or later he would meet his end due to pus in his eyes.

c Long Questions [8 Marks each]

1. Describe the crocodile mentioned in the story. How is his life?

Ans. The crocodile mentioned in the story is quite large. He is twice as large as a tall man scaling over twelve feet. His mouth is running almost the whole length of his head. He has a long powerful tail that helps him to sail faster and drive off unwanted little dangers.

How He Survives When he came out of his egg by breaking his shell, he was a tiny creature that could be hunted by a bird, by the great carnivorous fish that eat baby crocodiles. But he escaped their sight and fend for himself. He ate whatever he could get by catching fish and devouring leftover by the other big fellows until he himself learned to hunt. Now he hunts everything that comes within his reach from fish to monkeys and dogs. Sometimes at the ford he gets to eat a pi-dog full of parasites and a skeleton cow. Sometimes, his hunger force him to go down the burning ghats and find the half burnt bodies of Indians cast into the stream. With no threat of scarcity of food, he is prospering well.

His Surrounding The river where the crocodile resides is an ideal location for him with plenty of food and secure place to have sunlight to warm his body. Adjacent to the river, there is a forest. The timber logs come down from the forest and struck around the stones. The crocodile comes to rest in the place where water is not deep and enjoys sunny air. He lays on a place where rocks and sandbanks are warm with sunlight and from where he may go in to the water as soon as he realises that a danger is approaching.

His Vulnerability The crocodile is of full grown size. His armoured hide is so thick that even a bullet shot cannot penetrate it, so attacking him on upper side is vain. His weakest area are his eyes and underarms. If one becomes successful hitting him on these places, one may have a stand against him.

2. Why is Sibia ignorant of her poverty? Describe.

Ans. Sibia was born in a poor family. Her parents are extremely poor and they have other children too. Her house is located near the river far from the civilisation where children are pampered. On the name of clothes she possesses a rag. She seems to be very well aware of her parents condition hence has no problem with poverty.

No Requirement of Money Sibia does not require money to buy anything so she does not value money. She is quite young and does not have to deal anything in money. She is happy whatever she has or has not, she does not wish anything more. She has been living in the jungle so whatever she needs the jungle provides her free of cost. Thus, she does not need money so knows no poverty.

Stays Busy Sibia has been performing all the household work from husking corn to cut grass for fodder since the day she started toddling regardless of her age and size. Her work keeps her busy without allowing her to think of playing and recreation. She eats whatever and whenever she is given and again works. Thus, she has no time to think about anything but her work.

Belongs to a Poor Community Sibia belongs to a poor community. In her village, houses are made of mud. Her surroundings is full with the people of the same condition as of her family. She sees no one getting better facility than her so finds everybody of same status. Thus, she sees no role of poverty in her life.

3. How does Sibia save the Gujar woman?

Ans. Sibia is going to fetch grass from the cliffs above the river. On the way, she notices an encampment of Gujar

people who have made the place their temporary home. The women carry water in earthen pitchers and look after animals, the men and the boys go to market to sell their products.

A Gujar Woman Comes to the River While sitting on the boulder, Sibia watches a Gujar woman coming to the river. She has two gurrals to be filled with clean water. She seems to be in hurry as she walks on the stepping-stones where the danger of aquatic brutes looms constantly.

The Attack The great crocodile is hiding in the water. He cannot be spotted easily as the sun is going down and it is getting dark. The waves of the river cannot be seen properly. So the crocodile, finding the woman within his reach; lunges at her and grabs her leg with his mighty jaws yawning and all his teeth flashing as he slashes at her leg.

Heroism of Sibia Sibia who has seen all of this at once comes in her rescue and reaches the spot where the woman is struggling to get free from the clutches of the crocodile's jaws. With amazing speed Sibia drives her hayfork at his eyes and the prong goes right into the eyes. In utter pain the crocodile releases the woman and swims away into the water.

Sibia takes the Woman Home After the crocodile disappears, Sibia gets her arms round the fainting woman and drags her out from the water. She dresses her legs with sand and rag. She helps her to reach home and leaves her with her people.

4. Describe how Sibia rescued the Gujar woman from the crocodile. What did Sibia regard as the highlight of that fateful day? What does this tell us about Sibia?

[ICSE 2020]

Ans. When Sibia saw the Gujar woman being attacked by the crocodile, she leapt forward from boulder to boulder. She threw her hayfork at the crocodile and it wedged right in its eye. Groaning in agony, the crocodile lets go of the woman. Then Sibia dragged the woman from the water by putting her arms around her. She stopped the blood coming out of her wounds by putting sand on them and tied them with a rag. After that Sibia helped the woman to reach her home. Sibia regarded the finding of the blue bead by her as the highlight of the fateful day.

This tells us that Sibia was a humble and brave girl who was delighted to find the blue bead. She considered it worthy as she was a poor girl who could not afford buying it.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I. Up out of the darkling water heaved the great reptile, water slushing off him, his livid jaws yawning and all his teeth flashing as he slashed at her leg. The woman screamed, dropped both her brass pots with a clatter on the boulder, from whence they bounced to the water, and Sibia saw them bob away in the current. Oh! The two good vessels gone. The Gujar woman recoiled from the crocodile, but his jaws closed on her leg at the same moment as she slipped and fell on the bone-breaking stone, and clutched one of the timber logs to save herself.
1. What did the women do to frighten the crocodile? [3]
 2. What happened to the Gujar woman? [3]
 3. What did she do to save herself? [3]
 4. Who came to rescue her? [3]
 5. How did Sibia save the Gujar woman? [4]
- II. Then she picked up her fork and sickle and the heavy grass and set off home. Ai! Ai! What a day! Her bare feet smudged out the wriggle-mark of snakes in the dust; there was the thin singing of malaria mosquitoes among the trees now; and this track was much used at night by a morose old makna elephant-the Tuskless One; but Sibia was not thinking of any of them. The stars came out : she notice.
1. Why does Sibia stay back near the river while other women return home? [3]
 2. What happens while she stays back? [3]
 3. What other dangers does she cross on her way back to home? [3]
 4. What is Sibia thinking about? [3]
 5. Discuss the ending of the story. [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. Did the crocodile die in the story, 'The Blue Bead'?
2. Why was Sibia's mother worried when Sibia did not return home till late?

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. Discuss the significance of the blue bead for Sibia.
2. What kind of life did Sibia live?

My Greatest Olympic Prize

Jesse Owens

About the Author

James Cleveland 'Jesse Owens' was born on 12th September, 1913 in Oakville, Alabama. He was a son of a sharecropper and the grandson of a slave and managed to accomplish what no Olympian had done before him, winning four gold medals in the 1936 olympic games. He became a renowned American athlete. He specialised in the sprints and in the long jump. His achievement of making three world records and trying the fourth one in less than an hour is popularly known as "the greatest 45 minutes ever in sports." Owens success at the games is even more significant because being a 'black' man, he managed to crush Hitler's myth of Aryan supremacy. He died on 31st March, 1980.

About the Story

This story tell us that 'the essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well'. Through his lesson Jesse Owens, an American Negro narrated his personal experience. The German President, Hitler, insisted that the games must be held in Berlin and believed that his countrymen and players were far superior to any other racial group. Owens was full of anger thinking a lot about Hitler's Theory of Aryan Supremacy which adversely affected his game. Strangely, his competitor, German athlete, Luz Long came to him and shared with him a piece of advice, which boosted Owens' focus. Owens, went on not only to win the trials and the game but also establish a lifelong friendship with Luz Long.

Characters Introduction

Major Characters

Jesse Owens

Jesse Owens is both the writer as well as a character in his story, 'My Greatest Olympic Prize'. Jesse describes his state of mind during the trials for the Olympics and the pressure, he was facing till Luz Long walked up to him and relieved him of his fears about being inferior just because he was a black man.

Luz Long

He was a tall and lean German Athlete. Going against his training in the Nazi Youth Movement, he put down Hitler's theory about the Aryan supremacy. He helped Jesse overcoming his inferiority and showed true sportsman's spirit.

Minor Character

Hitler

A German politician and leader of the Nazi party, Hitler was the Chancellor of Germany from 1933 to 1937. In the story, Hitler has an impact on the major character, namely Jesse Owens, because of his theory of racial superiority of one ethnic group over the other.

Summary of the Story

The 1936 Olympic Games

Jesse Owens' account of the 1936 Olympic Games opens in the summer of 1936. Hitler had insisted that since his performers were a member of a 'master race', the games must be held in Berlin. This roused the nationalistic feelings not just of the Germans but of all the others' who had come to participate in the games.

Jesse's Confidence in his Victory

Jesse had worked hard for the Games. He had disciplined himself for six years and was therefore well prepared for any competition. He had already proved himself at Ohio State University, where as a second year student he had set the world's record in the 26 range long jump. Jesse was, therefore, filled with confidence and very certain of his victory. All he was thinking about was carrying home a few gold medals.

Hitler's Theory of Aryan Supremacy

As Jesse stepped onto the fields, he saw a tall German practising in the same 26 range long jump. He was surprised to see this athlete as he was not expecting any competition in this category of long jump earlier. Hitler, had strategically, kept this German player hidden till the day of trials. Suddenly, seeing this German athlete, Jesse Owens got very nervous. He was familiar with Hitler's Theory of Aryan Supremacy. Hitler believed that white men were far superior to black men. Being a black himself, it put a lot of pressure on Owens to suddenly find this white German in competition.

Jesse's Anger had an Adverse Effect on his Game

Thinking of all this, when Jesse entered the field, his focus had changed. More than winning the game, his focus was now on defending or proving his racial superiority. In retrospect, Jesse felt that his anger became his biggest mistake because on his first jump he fouled. He had lost one of the three chances as he jumped ahead from the take-off point. It was further disappointing because Jesse fouled in his second attempt too. He was frustrated because even before the beginning of the games, he could have lost the entire series for not having qualified the trials.

Jesse's Encounter with Luz Long

Disappointed with himself, Jesse kicked the dirt, a few yards away from the pit. At that moment, Luz Long came upto Jesse and both shook hands with each other. Luz Long had

qualified for trials on the very first attempt. Jesse was trying to hide his nervousness while talking to Luz. However, Luz made a strange remark. He told Jesse that "something must be eating you," else Jesse would have easily qualified. Luz understood what had been troubling Jesse and reassured him that there's nothing like Aryan Supremacy. Soon, both were laughing together. On seeing that Jesse had now relaxed, Luz suggested Jesse to make a start off line a little before the take-off. Luz's advice made a lot of sense and helped Jesse not just in his game, but also in releasing a lot of tension he had about himself.

Friendship between Luz Long and Jesse

In the third jump, Jesse followed Luz's advice and qualified the trials. Jesse walked down to Luz's room to thank him for he could now participate in the finals. Both of them spent time laughing and talking to each other. A beautiful bond had been formed between the two, though they were competitors. Next day, both would play the game, trying to win, but none wanted the other to lose.

Jesse Learns an Important Lesson

The next day, Luz Long broke his past record. This compelled Jesse to give his best too and Jesse won. He set the Olympic record of 26 feet 16 inches. Immediately, he saw Luz by his side congratulating him. Both shook hands again and Jesse knew that it was not a fake smile that Luz passed at him. Luz was genuinely happy for him, even though Hitler looked at the two angrily. Jesse won not just the game, but also a friend for life. That day, Jesse learnt a very important lesson, what the founder of Olympic Games must have had in his mind.

Word Meanings

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Master race—pure race. **Sophomore**—the second year college student, **Startled**—feel sudden shock, **Leaps**—jump with force **Determined**—firm on decision, **Bitterly**—with sour feelings.

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Movement—participation of mass to follow a common ideology, **Muscular**—affecting the muscles, **Strikingly**—surprisingly, **Chiselled**—shaped beautifully.

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Ebb—decrease, **At the instant**—immediately, **Glared**—stared, **Epitome**—symbol, **Conquering**—winning.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow

I. I was in for a surprise. When the time came for the broad jump trials, I was startled to see a tall boy hitting the pit at almost 26 feet on his practice leaps! He turned out to be a German named Luz Long. I was told that Hitler had kept him under wraps, evidently hoping to win the jump with him. I guessed that if Long won, it would add some new support to the Nazis' Aryan-superiority theory. After all, I am a Negro.

1. Why was Jesse Owens in for a surprise? [3]

Ans. Jesse Owens was confident of his victory in the 26 feet long jump category till he saw Luz Long. So far, Jesse had been thinking that he had no competitor, but on seeing Luz Long, a tall, white German athlete, he got startled and angry also.

2. Who was Luz Long? How was he in his practice trials? [3]

Ans. Luz Long was a German athlete. He was tall, lean, muscular in build. He was called a fine example of Coubertin's ideal. A tall boy hitting the pit at almost 26 feet on his practice leaps on the broad jump trials surprised Jesse Owens.

3. Why had Hitler kept Luz Long hidden? What was his intention? [3]

Ans. Hitler wanted to show the world that the Aryans belonged to superior race and could not be defeated. To prove his point he had hidden his best athlete only to perform in the Olympics Games. Through Luz Long, Hitler wanted to win the track jumps category and take back gold medal from the Olympics.

4. What does Jesse mean by, 'After all, I am a Negro'? [3]

Ans. When Jesse says 'After all, I am a Negro', he was showing his reaction of seeing Luz Long, a tall thin athlete of Germany who was till now hidden from the world by Hitler. As Hitler was always proud of members of his own race and thought meanly about the black, Jesse Owens' reaction was natural. But he became angry, lost his cool and came under pressure there by making many mistakes during trials.

5. What was the Theory of Aryan Supremacy? [4]

Ans. Hitler believed in the Theory of Aryan Supremacy. According to him, the Germans were the purest stock of Aryans and were meant to be the most pure race in the entire humanity. Therefore, Hitler believed his German players to be of a better race and made them to perform the best during the Games. He had little faith in the capacities and capabilities of the others.

II. For the next few minutes we talked together. I didn't tell Long what was 'eating' me, but he seemed to understand my anger, and he took pains to reassure me. Although, he'd been schooled in the Nazi Youth movement, he didn't believe in the Aryan-supremacy business any more than I did. We laughed over the fact that he really took the part, though. An inch taller than I, he had a lean, muscular frame, clear blue eyes, blond hair and a strikingly handsome, chiseled face.

1. Why did Jesse Owens foul the first two jumps in the trial? [3]

Ans. Despite knowing that anger spoils the spirit of an athlete, forcing him to make mistakes, he was angered at Hitler's sly introduction of Luz Long to prove Aryan superiority. Owens, being a Negro, hated it and his anger at Hitler's way decreased his determination to win the Olympics. Anger ruled his mind and made him foul in the first two attempts in the trials.

2. Did Luz Long understand the situation? How did he help Owens to regain his confidence? [3]

Ans. Luz Long understood that something was troubling Jesse. Even though Jesse did not mention it, Luz tried to reassure Jesse that he was doing well and would manage to qualify the trials if he played with a little precision. He explained the technical point of view also to Owens.

3. How did Luz Long help Jesse Owens? [3]

Ans. Luz Long, a true sportsman and an amazing human being, eased Owens' tension by being compassionate. He gave him a genuinely friendly advice to draw a line a few inches from the takeoff board to avoid over-stepping and thus fouling. Owens took his advice and was able to qualify with a clean mind.

4. Did Luz Long believe in the Aryan Supremacy Theory? [3]

Ans. Luz Long, just like Jesse Owens, did not believe in the Theory of Aryan Supremacy. Though schooled in the Nazi Youth Movement, Luz understood that not birth or ethnicity, but character and skills make one a better person and any one who could perform well, could win the medal.

5. What did Luz Long share with Jesse Owens? How did his advice affect Jesse's performance? [4]

Ans. Luz Long could perhaps understand Jesse's nervousness. He first comforted Jesse on the grounds of racial superiority/inferiority by exposing the falseness of the myth of Aryan Supremacy. He, then, went on to advise Jesse that if he started a little before the take-off line, he was sure not to foul. He also tried to relieve Jesse's tension by saying that today they were merely playing to qualify the trials. The real match was on the next day. This hit Jesse and helped him qualify the trials in his third attempt.

III. An angry athlete is an athlete who will make mistakes, as any coach will tell you. I was no exception. On the first of my three qualifying jumps, I leaped from several inches beyond the take-off board for a foul. [ICSE 2019]

1. When and where is this story set? What reason does the narrator Jesse Owens give for the heightened nationalistic feelings at this time? [3]

Ans. This story is set in the summer of 1936. It is set at the Olympic Games being held in Berlin, Germany. The reason Jesse Owens gives for the heightened nationalistic feelings at that time was that Hitler childishly insisted that his performers were members of a "master race".

2. In which event had Owens been confident of winning a gold medal? Why? [3]

Ans. Owens had been confident of winning a gold medal in the running broad jump because, just a year before the Olympic Games, he had set the world's record of 26 feet 8¼ inches and everybody expected him to win this event easily.

3. What had made Owens angry enough to make mistakes? [3]

Ans. Hitler had kept a good athlete, Luz Long, away from publicity till the Olympics so that he could win the running broad jump as a surprise element in the event. This angered Jesse Owens enough to make mistakes while jumping in the qualification jumps.

4. Name Owens' rival who approached him at this point. What advice did this athlete give Owens? [3]

Ans. Owens' rival who approached him at this point was named Luz Long. He advised Owens to prevent fouling his jumps by drawing a line a few inches behind the board and aim at making his takeoff from there.

5. How did the two athletes perform in the finals? What does Jesse Owens consider his 'Greatest Olympic Prize'? Why? [4]

Ans. In the finals, Luz Long broke his past record. However, Owens performed better than him and jumped to an Olympic record distance of 26 feet 5-5/16 inches to win the gold medal. But Jesse Owens considers his 'Greatest Olympic Prize' as his friendship with Luz Long, the German athlete. That was because Luz Long was the symbol of the spirit of the Olympic Games, i.e. the important thing is not winning but taking part.

b Short Questions [4 Marks each]

1. Why were the Olympic Games being held in Germany? What did Hitler assert?

Ans. Hitler had been publicising the Aryan Supremacy Theory. He found the Olympic Games the best opportunity to showcase the supremacy of Aryans over the other races. So, in a childish manner he insisted that the Olympic Games should be held in Berlin. Hitler asserted that the German players were members of a 'master race.' Therefore, the games must be held in Berlin, Germany.

2. Why was Jesse confident of his victory? How had he trained himself?

Ans. Jesse had trained and sweated himself for six years. He had been working hard for the games. Thus, he was certain of his victory. Also, he had already set a world record of 26 feet 8-1/4 inches in long jump. It appeared a length that was impossible to scale by no other than him. Moreover there was no other competitor of his match on International level. Hence, he was certain to take back home one or two gold medals.

3. Why was he startled to see Luz Long? How was it a surprise?

Ans. Hitler had kept Luz Long hidden with an intention that Luz would win the Olympics. Jesse was startled to see Luz's splendid performance. Not having seen this German athlete before, Jesse was not anticipating a competitor in the broad jump. It came as a surprise that affected his game adversely.

4. What was the most important advice given by Luz to Jesse?

Ans. Luz must have seen and heard about Jesse Owens so he was very well aware of his potentials as a long jumper. When he saw him making fouls he had understood his feelings. So to boost his confidence he went to him and advised him to start a little before the take-off boundary in order to prevent fouling. Also, Luz tried to calm down Jesse's nervousness by saying that today it was important to qualify the trials. He could save his energy for the real match.

5. What all did Jesse and Luz talk about? What made Jesse to visit Luz?

Ans. Luz had been observing Jesse, his nervousness, his fouls. Luz, therefore, spoke to Jesse about fouls, skill, patience, nationalism, the Aryan theory, and so on. Immediately, a bond between the two had been established. After qualifying the trials, Jesse went to Luz's room to thank him. There they spent a couple of hours talking about tracks, fields, the world picture and anything and everything that friends would talk about.

C Long Questions [8 Marks each]

1. How was Luz's behaviour different from that of the other Germans? How did Jesse and Luz become friends?

Ans. At the onset of the story when Jesse first meets Luz, he sees in him an arch-rival, whom he has to defeat anyhow. Luz's sudden appearance on the field adds tension to Owens' game to such an extent that he begins to foul in his trials.

Luz's Approach Luz Long observes Jesse's tension, anger, nervousness and problem. He offers to help Jesse by talking to him, sharing with him his experience and advice and tries to calm down the angry Jesse Owens. Seeing the friendly behaviour of Luz, a bond has been struck between the two. Jesse was assuming Long to be an example of Hitler's Aryan Supremacy.

Luz's Advice and Views Contrary to his views, Luz advises him to mark a line a few inches in back of the take off board and aim at making his take-off from there. This trick works and Jesse clears the trial. At this point, Jesse realises that the Luz is different from the other people of his race so he approaches his room and spends a quality time with him. They talk about various subjects like games, politics, the world situation and many other things. By now, Jesse has understood that Luz Long does not believe in Aryan's Supremacy Theory. According to

him, good nature and purity of mind decide the mastery of humans.

Friendship Between Luz and Jesse The common perceptions over many subjects make the both develop a tight bond in their friendship. After this point they are no longer rivals but friends, hoping the good for each other. Even before the match the next day, Jesse is convinced that Luz will play his best, but will not wish his friend to lose. In his account, Jesse admits that the friendship established between the two is precious than all the gold medals and cups he has ever won.

2. In what way did Hitler try to publicise his theory of the Aryan- supremacy? Did he succeed?

Ans. Hitler believed in the theory of Aryan Supremacy, according to which the Germans were the purest of all the human races. They were, therefore, better in all possible ways from people of other ethnicities. No, Hitler did not succeed in it.

His Secret Plan During the 1936 Olympic Games, Hitler secretly kept the German athlete, Luz Long, under the wraps, hoping to win the jump with him. Hitler did this strategically to build pressure on the rival teams and to demotivate them. Doing so, he thought it would be an easy victory for his player. This would help him further in promulgating his theory of Aryan Superiority.

Failure of his Theory However, Luz Long was commendable in his performance, he did not win the match. Jesse who was upset in the beginning at the sudden appearance of Luz Long, finally won the match. This left Hitler disappointed and his theory of Aryan Superiority in shreds.

Theory Proved to be Fake and

Unimpressive Hitler did succeed to publicise his Theory of Aryan Supremacy through the 1936 Olympic Games, but his propaganda failed and he could not prove how his theory was correct. Jesse Owens who was a black and did not agree with his theory, crushed his arrogance by winning four gold medals in the same Olympic Games. In one of the events, he defeated Luz Long, the hidden weapon of Hitler. Luz Long who himself was an Aryan did not believe in the theory. He shook hands with Jesse after his winning the gold in long jump event ignoring Hitler's glare. It shows that the Aryan Supremacy theory could not impress even the Germans, Hitler's own people, the Aryans.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

- I. You can melt down all the gold medals and cups I have, and they couldn't be a plating on the 24- carat friendship I felt for Luz Long at that moment. I realised, then, too, that Luz was the epitome of what Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, must have had in mind when he said, "The important thing in Olympic Games is not winning but taking part. The essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well.
1. What symbolism does Jesse use to describe his friendship with Luz? [3]
 2. What is Luz an epitome of? [3]
 3. How did Luz Long react to Jesse is winning of gold? [3]
 4. Why did Hitler glare at both of them? [3]
 5. What did Pierre de Coubertin say about the Olympic Games? [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. According to Jesse Owens, what mistake an athlete should never commit?
2. Who was Pierre de Coubertin?

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. Who was Luz Long? Draw his character sketch.
2. What is the significance of '24 carat friendship' in the story?

All Summer in a Day

Ray Douglas Bradbury

About the Author

Ray Douglas Bradbury an author as well as a screen writer was born on 22nd August, 1920 in Waukegan, Illinois. He was among the most celebrated authors of the 20th and 21st century American writers. He worked on a variety of genres such as Science fiction, horror, mystery and fantasy story collections. Published in 1953, 'Fahrenheit 451' is his most popular novel. 'The Martian Chronicles', 'The Illustrated Man', and 'I Sing the Body Electric' are his other popular works. He also wrote screenplays and television scripts for popular works like Moby Dick and it came from outer space. He was also a recipient of several awards, such as the 2007 Pulitzer. He died on 5th June, 2012.

About the Story

The story suggests, when people can't get over their own pain, they sometimes end up hurting others. All summer in a day is a work of science fiction set in an elementary school. Venus, a planet that sees the Sun only once in seven years. These children who are nine years old therefore cannot remember what the Sun or sunshine looks like. They are against a nine year old girl, Margot, who has come from Earth and distinctly knows what the Sun is. Unable to believe Margot's account of the Sun, they fight with her and isolate her. Only when they finally see the Sun and see it disappearing again the children realise what they did to Margot and felt ashamed.

Character Introduction

Major Characters

Margot

Margot, the protagonist of the story, was a nine year old young girl. She lived in Ohio, America upto the age of four. Thereafter, she moved to the planet Venus with her parents. Yet, there was one thing that made her enthusiast, talking about the Sun.

William

He is another nine year old boy from Margot's class. His character is striking in the story for his roughness and callousness towards Margot. There is an unspeakable jealousy and hostility that he feels towards Margot and his actions make him the antagonist of the story.

Minor Characters

Other School Children

William, and the other children of his class, are children of rocket men. These children last saw the Sun when they were two years old and thus have no memories of it.

The School Teacher

The school teacher is hardly present in the story. Never the less she is there in the background, making arrangements for the children to be able to play in the Sun, disciplining them, keeping an eye on them.

Summary of the Story

The Hidden Sun

'All Summer in a Day', opens with a group of children on planet Venus waiting for the scientists' predictions to come true and be able to see the hidden Sun. Unlike on the Earth, the Sun on this planet makes an appearance only once in every seven years. Therefore these children, barely nine years old, had seen rains and only rains. They had seen the rapid stream tides, continuous pouring of rains, storms; but never the sunlight. Seven years ago, when they were hardly two years old, Sun came out perhaps for an hour, but obviously these young children could not remember.

Margot had Seen the Sun

Margot stood apart from the crowd for she came to Venus only five years ago. So, the four years that she had spent on Earth, she had seen the Sun, bathed in it, felt its warmth every single day. And, unlike the other children in her class, she did not have to depend on a vague image of the Sun, but distinctly knew what it looked like. While other children in her class had to depend on the teacher's lessons about it. Margot could fall upon her own remembrance of it. She had written poems describing the beauty and warmth of the Sun.

Margot Looked Apart

Since, today was the eventful day when Sun was supposed to reappear, the other children were excitedly and impatiently waiting for it. Margot, stood alone and apart. She appeared like a weak child, who had seen the Sun and the absence of it for so many years had drained her of all colour and energy from her body.

Margot would Miss the Sun all the Time

When Margot stood alone, staring at the rain, William asked her what she was doing, but she did not speak. She was in different to this and this irritated the children of her class. She would not play with them nor participate in their games. The only time Margot would join the group is when they talked about the Sun. She was four years old when she had come from Ohio, Earth to Venus. The other children of her class, on the other hand, were two when they had last seen the Sun. So, they remembered nothing; while Margot had seen the Sun, so she missed it too.

The Children were not Friendly to Margot

When Margot would tell the other children what the Sun exactly looked like, they did not believe her. They would tell her that she was lying. Unlike the other children, Margot would refuse to take the school shower and would avoid rains. She was also getting paler and paler. For these, and many other petty reasons, the children disliked her. They had heard that her parents were taking her back to Earth. They were perhaps jealous of her. The sunlight, it seemed, was of vital importance to Margot's existence and even when it meant loss of money, it was essential that her parents took her back to the Earth.

The Children Call Scientists' Prediction a Joke

This was the day predicted by the scientists that the Sun would show and while Margot was desperately waiting for the Sun to shine, the children called it a joke and pushed her away. They tried to tell her that she was waiting for nothing. They had never seen the Sun on the planet and they had little faith that the Sun would make an appearance. It was true that their teacher had told them about the Sun and while they were excited too, they wanted to mock Margot at the same time. So, refused to believe that the Sun would appear.

The Children Lock Margot in a Closet while the Sun Appeared

The mischievous children decided on locking Margot in a closet before their teacher arrived. Margot pleaded and requested, but to no purpose. The children were resolute on troubling her. They heard her knocking the door from the inside, but left her crying and went out in the open. And, soon, in the midst of immense downpour suddenly there was complete silence, for rains made way for the shining Sun.

A Spring Day

The children were overjoyed to see the shining Sun. It was flaming bronze and the sky against it looked bright blue. They were running around and feeling the warmth of the Sun, taking off their jackets, allowing the Sun to burn them. Children were having fun to the hilt. It was spring and Sun had added beautiful colours to the ash white landscape around them.

The Sun Shone Only for an Hour

While the children were playing and making merry in the Sun, one girl began to cry. She felt the rain drop falling on her and it was true; the Sun had shone only for an hour and now it was fading away. Rain was back. The cold wind and the fog began to wrap around yet again. With the Sun fading, the smiles on the children's faces were fading too.

The Children Feel Ashamed about What They did to Margot

They were upset and wondered if they were required to wait for the Sun for another seven years. They were looking at each other with gloomy faces and could see their faces getting dull. At this point, they remembered Margot. They were ashamed for what they had done to her and as they entered the room in which Margot was locked inside the closet, they could hear nothing, no banging of the door or her pleading cries. They unlocked the door and freed Margot.

Word Meanings

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Weeds—wild unwanted plant, **Peering**—look something with difficulty, **Gush**—a rapid and plentiful stream, **Concussion**—a forceful shock, **Tidal**—related to tides.

Page No. 109

Tatting—tied knots in thread and using small shuttle to form lace, **Feverish**—uncontrolled, **Tumbling**—fall suddenly, **Frail**—weak and delicate.

Page No. 110

Edged—moved in particular direction, **Drenched**—wet, **Patterning**—decorate with recurring design.

Page No. 111

Savagely—in a cruel manner.

Page No. 112

Pleading—requesting, **Closet**—a wardrobe especially one full enough to walk in to, **Muffled**—not loud sound because of some reasons, **Slacked**—slow down, **Avalanche**—a mass of snow falling rapidly down, **Tornado**—a violent rotating wind, **Hurricane**—a storm with a violent wind, **Eruption**—explosion, **Repercussions**—unintended effect/ actions, **Ripped**—badly torn, **Tremour**—shake.

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Tumultuously—with clamour, **Clustering**—grouping up, **Squeak**—a high-pitched sound or cry, **Squinted**—love eyes that look in different directions, **Savoured**—taste and enjoy completely.

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Wailed—give a cry or pain, **Gigantic**—huge.

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Solemn—formal and dignified.

EXAM PRACTICE

a Extract Based Questions [16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

I. It had been raining for seven years; thousands upon thousands of days compounded and filled from one end to the other with rain, with the drum and gush of water, with the sweet crystal fall of showers and the concussion of storms so heavy they were tidal waves come over the islands. A thousand forests had been crushed under the rain and grown up a thousand times to be crushed again. And this was the way life was forever on the planet Venus and this was the schoolroom of the children of the rocket men and women who had come to a raining world to set-up a civilisation and live out their lives.

1. Describe the nature of life on Venus. [3]

Ans. The life on Venus was difficult as all the days were filled with cloudburst and torrent of rain water. There was water all over and continuous storms and tidal waves marked the existence of life on this planet.

2. Who are these children? Where were they living? [3]

Ans. These children are the children of rocket men and women. They have been living on Venus since birth. They last saw the Sun when they were only two years old and therefore had no memories of the Sun.

3. What had these children been waiting for? [3]

Ans. The children had been waiting for the Sun to appear after seven years. They were only two years old when they last saw the Sun and that day was the day predicted by the scientists when the Sun would shine again. The children were excited to see the Sun.

4. Why were the children in doubt? When did the Sun reappear? [3]

Ans. While the children were excited to see the Sun, at the same time they had their doubts whether the Sun would appear or not. They had no memories of the Sun and therefore were confused whether the Sun really appeared after every seven years.

5. Why had these children come to Venus? [4]

Ans. The children had come to the planet along with their parents, who had come to Venus to set-up civilisation and had settled there forever. It was part of a mission in which humans were sent to Venus to locate and find the possibilities of life there at Venus.

II. They were all nine years old, and if there had been a day, seven years ago, when the Sun came out for an hour and showed its face to the stunned world, they could not recall. Sometimes, at night, she heard them stir in remembrance, and she knew they were dreaming and remembering gold or a yellow crayon or a coin large enough to buy the world with. She knew they thought they remembered a warmness, like a blushing in the face, in the body, in the arms and legs and trembling hands. But then they always awoke to the tating drum, the endless shaking down of clear bead necklaces upon the roof, the walk, the gardens, the forests and their dreams were gone. All day, yesterday they had read in class about the Sun.

1. What all did the children remember about the Sun? [3]

Ans. The children remembered the Sun as a gold or a yellow crayon, while some remembered it as a large gold coin. However, they had hardly any remembrance of the Sun; so each child made his own estimate.

2. Did Margot remember the Sun? When did she come to Venus? [3]

Ans. Margot remembered the Sun as she had come to Venus at the age of four. During her stay at earth, she had enjoyed the warmth of the Sun on each day. Therefore, she was very certain of how the Sun looked like and what she missed on Venus. She came to Venus because she was sent there and her parents were paid for this.

3. Why were the dreams of the children shattered? [3]

Ans. The dreams of the children shattered as that morning too it was raining heavily. The children were disappointed. They thought that though the scientists had predicted the appearance of the Sun, the Sun would not shine amidst heavy downpour.

4. What did the children do to keep the memory of the Sun alive? What were they taught? [3]

Ans. In order to keep the memory of the Sun alive, the children wrote stories and essays describing the Sun. Also, the students had lessons about the Sun. They were taught what the Sun looked like, its characteristics and so on. Margot, too, wrote a poem about the Sun.

5. Describe the varied imagery used to describe the Sun. [4]

Ans. Each child had his/her own perspective of the Sun. Some called it a bright yellow and golden crayon, while some called it a large coin with which the entire world could be bought. At school, they were taught that it was like a big lemon and was very hot. For Margot, the Sun was a flower that bloomed for just an hour.

III. It's like a fire, she said, 'in the stove.' 'You're lying, you don't remember!' cried the children. But she remembered and stood quietly apart from all of them and watched the patterning windows. And once, a month ago, she had refused to shower in the school shower rooms, had clutched her hands to her ears and over her head, screaming the water mustn't touch her head. So after that, dimly, she sensed it, she was different and they knew her difference and kept away. There was talk that her father and mother were taking her back to Earth next year; it seemed vital to her that they do so, though it would mean the loss of thousands of dollars to her family.

1. How was Margot so certain what the Sun looked like? [3]

Ans. Margot had spent four years on Earth, where the Sun shined every single day. Thus, unlike the children living on Venus, who could see the Sun just once in seven years, she was clear how the Sun looked and how it felt to live in the summer.

2. Why the children refused to believe her? [3]

Ans. The children refused to believe Margot because they could never think that anyone could have seen the Sun. The children on the Venus were confused about the Sun and when Margot spoke with certainty, they could not digest it.

3. Why were Margot's parents taking her back to Earth? What did they feel? [3]

Ans. Margot's parents felt that the Sun was vital for Margot. Margot was becoming paler and paler. Her eyes had lost their blue and her cheeks their red colour. Also,

Margot would usually gaze out of the windows, perhaps she was always waiting for the Sun. So, even when it meant loss of money, they decided to take her back.

4. Why did children make fun of Margot? [3]

Ans. The children made fun of Margot because she was different from them. She neither talked to them, nor played with them. She would only talk about the Sun as she used to miss it very badly.

5. What happened during the school shower? What did Margot understand? [4]

Ans. During the school shower, she refused to shower in the school shower and clutched her hands to her ears and screamed that water shouldn't touch her head. This was a very strange behaviour. The children laughed at her, while Margot understood that she was different from them.

IV. It was the colour of flaming bronze and it was very large. And the sky around it was a blazing blue tile colour. And the jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling into the springtime. "Now, don't go too far," called the teacher after them. "You've only two hours, you know. You wouldn't want to get caught out!" but they were running and turning their faces up to the sky and feeling the Sun on their cheeks like a warm iron; they were taking off their jackets and letting the Sun burn their arms. Oh, it's much better than the Sun lamps, isn't it?

1. Was the Sun finally out? What did it look like? [3]

Ans. The Sun finally shone brightly. It was very large and it had the colour of flaming bronze. Against the bright blue sky, it looked very beautiful. With the coming of the Sun, finally the spring had come too.

2. In what manner did the children enjoy the Sun? [3]

Ans. The children enjoyed the Sun by lying out in the open fields. They ran among the trees, removed their jackets allowing the Sun to burn their bodies. There was fun and frolic everywhere around. That's the cheer that the Sun added.

3. Where was Margot when the Sun came out? [3]

Ans. The school children, pushed by William, had locked Margot inside a closet. So, while all the children ran here and there and were enjoying the Sun, Margot was lying helpless behind the locked closet doors.

4. Comment on the role of the school teacher. [3]

Ans. The school teacher has a minor role in the story. However, she is seen disciplining the students, trying to protect them from any dangers, warning them to mind the time while the Sun is out and so on. However, the teacher fails to protect Margot.

5. Describe the diverse imagery used by the children to describe the Sun. [4]

Ans. The children described the Sun as flaming bronze against a bright blue tile. The Sun brought a lot of cheer and smiles on the faces of the children. They wanted to play under the Sun, see it, feel it and absorb it. The Sun was a missing vital element that enlivened all of them.

- V. They stood as if someone had driven them, like so many stakes, into the floor. They looked at each other and then looked away. They glanced out at the world that was raining now and raining and raining steadily. They could not meet each other's glances. Their faces were solemn and pale. They looked at their hands and feet, their faces down. 'Margot' One of the girls said, "Well...?" no one moved. "Go on," whispered the girl. They walked slowly down the hall in the sound of cold rain. They turned through the doorway to the room in the sound of the storm and thunder, lightning on their faces, blue and terrible. They walked over to the closet door slowly and stood by it.

1. What happened when the Sun disappeared again? [3]

Ans. As soon as the Sun disappeared, rains set in again. The cold wind and mist returned casting a gloomy spell on everything yet again. Along with the fading Sun, the smiles on the children's faces began to blur too.

2. Who reminded children of Margot? Where was she? [3]

Ans. One of the young girls, who saw the Sun fading away, reminded everyone of Margot. In one breath, she wailed seeing the Sun retreat; and in the other remembering that Margot was still locked.

3. Why were the children ashamed of themselves? [3]

Ans. The children were ashamed of themselves because while they were playing and enjoying in the Sun, Margot remained behind closed doors, unable even to see the Sun even for an hour.

4. Why does the colour of children's faces change? [3]

Ans. The fading Sun again caste a gloom on everything around. The colour of the children's faces becomes pale seeing the Sun retreat. Also, because they were apologetic of their behaviour. They were uncertain what to do.

5. Discuss the ending of the story. Why does the story not have certain end? [4]

Ans. The ending of the story is slightly ambiguous. Though the children realised their mistake. They were unnecessarily making fun of Margot because Margot believed in the prediction about the Sun. Secondly, they had snatched away her chance to enjoy the Sun. At the same time, on opening the doors, they encountered complete silence. It is difficult to understand the reasons behind this silence. It could be that Margot was dead or perhaps she had lost all hope of seeing the Sun again.

b Short Questions [4 Marks each]

1. Name the planet on which this story is set. Describe everyday life on this planet. [ICSE 2019]

Ans. This story is set on the planet Venus. The everyday life on this planet differs from life on Earth because it is continuously raining on Venus for seven years due to the dense clouds. The Sun is visible only once in seven years, and that also only for an hour or two. The people there lived underground because of the water on the ground everywhere.

2. Describe the weather conditions on Venus. Why is it so?

Ans. In the absence of Sun, Venus was a wet and gloomy planet. There were continuous rains on the planet which led to storms and tides. The forests grew and got crushed under intense rains and everything had dull ashy colour. The rainy condition had confined the habitants to their habitates as it was too dangerous to go out. The children were deprived of the sight of the Sun due to continuous raining.

3. Describe Margot's poem about the Sun. What does she describe about the Sun?

Ans. In Margot's poem, the Sun is both a figure of joy as well as of sorrow. She describes the Sun as a flower, which is a thing of beauty. However, this flower blooms only for an hour. Thus, it gives pleasure for a brief period only. Margot further describes that only the Sun could cure her of his pathetic condition because of which she was to be transported back to Earth where she would have plenty of sunny sights.

4. Why was sunlight vital for Margot? How does it help her?

Ans. It is a universal fact that Sun is a very important source of life and energy. Having lived in the Sun daily for four years of her life, Margot missed the sunlight these five years that she had spent on Venus. It was vital for her in order to restore the lost energy and zeal in her.

5. Why was there so much excitement in the school room that morning? What set Margot apart from the other children?

[ICSE 2019]

Ans. There was much excitement in the school room that morning because the Sun was going to appear after seven years. Margot is different from the other children because she had come from Earth five years ago and remembers the sight of the Sun. The other children in her class are different from her because they were all born on Venus. Her behaviour sets her apart from the other children because she does not participate in any activities with them, whether it is playing, singing songs or anything else.

6. Discuss the imagery used to describe Venus.

Ans. Venus is described as a great jungle, that grew and never stopped growing. It was like the nest of octopus, with its arms and weeds spread all around. In the absence of Sun, the landscapes on Venus had taken the colour of rubber and ash, the colour of stones and white cheeses and ink.

C Long Questions [8 Marks each]

1. How does the writer describe the Sun? How did the children enjoy when the Sun appeared?

Ans. The Sun is almost personified in the story. The narrator talks about the Sun 'showing its face' just once in every seven years. Margot saw the school children remembering Sun as a gold or yellow crayon and sometimes as a large gold coin. The school taught them that it was like a lemon, but only hot. Margot called the Sun a temporarily blooming flower in her poem. At another time, she called the Sun a penny and a fire in the stove. When the children did see the Sun, they saw it as flaming bronze against a blazing blue tile.

The Sun Appeared While it was raining and raining, suddenly the rain stopped, there was dead silence. It appeared as if the picture of downpour had been replaced by a picture of spring and suddenly there was a bright golden glory changing the entire landscape and bringing

bright warmth to everything around. These were the changes that occurred as the rains stopped and when the Sun came out. The children could not believe the silence. They felt as if something had been stuffed in their ears and they had lost their hearing power, but the truth was that a silent, beautiful world awaited them.

The Children Enjoyed the Sun They enjoyed the Sun by lying out in the open fields, laughing and running around. They ran among the trees, played hide-and-seek, tears of joy fell from their eyes as they welcomed the Sun. They removed their jackets to feel its warmth. They allowed the Sun to burn their skin, they wanted to absorb this heat and warmth. They put their hands to see the amazing yellow and bright blue that they had never seen earlier. They breathed the fresh air and listened to the silence which was so soothing that they didn't wish to let it go. Like animals set free from the jail, they ran hither and thither. The children were so happy that they didn't even realise that the Sun was again fading away and the raindrops had begun to fall.

2. Describe how the planet was transformed when the sun came out and shone briefly over it.

Why was Margot not able to witness this phenomenon?

What emotion do you suppose the other children experienced when Margot emerged at the end of the story?

[ICSE 2019]

Ans. When the Sun came out and shone briefly on the planet Venus, the continuously falling rain stopped. The world ground to a standstill. The silence was immense and unbelievable. When the Sun came out, it was the colour of flaming bronze and it was very large. The sky around it was a blazing blue tile colour. The jungle burned with sunlight as the children, released from their spell, rushed out, yelling into the springtime.

Margot was not able to witness this phenomenon because the other children had locked her in a closet. When Margot emerged from the closet at the end of the story, the other children were ashamed of themselves for having locked Margot inside the closet for the time when the Sun came out. They were apologetic for their behaviour.

SELF ASSESSMENT

Extract Based Questions

[16 Marks]

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

- I.** A few cold drops fell on their noses and their cheeks and their mouths. The Sun faded behind a stir of mist. A wind blew cold around them. They turned and started to walk back toward the underground house, their hands at their sides, their smiles vanishing away. A boom of thunder startled them and like leaves before a new hurricane, they tumbled upon each other and ran. Lightning struck ten miles away, five miles away, a mile, a half mile. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.
1. Who tells everyone about the retreating Sun? [3]
 2. Why don't the children realise that the weather is changing again? [3]
 3. Describe the children's reactions on seeing the Sun disappear. [3]
 4. Discuss the phrase, "Will it be seven more years?" [3]
 5. Describe the changes that occur in the weather as the Sun disappears. [4]
- II.** When the class sang songs about happiness and life and games her lips barely moved. Only when they sang about the Sun and the summer did her lips move as she watched the drenched windows. And then, of course, the biggest crime of all was that she remembered the Sun and the way Sun was and the sky was when she was four in Ohio. And they had been on Venus all their lives and they had been only two years old when last the Sun came out and had long since forgotten the colour and heat of it and the way it really was. But Margot remembered.
1. Why Margot never sang songs of happiness? [3]
 2. What, according to the narrator, was Margot's biggest crime? [3]
 3. Why did the other children fail to remember the Sun? [3]
 4. Why did the children dislike Margot? [3]
 5. What was the key distinction between Margot and the other children? [4]

Short Questions

[4 Marks each]

1. What did Margot look like? Why had her condition become so?
2. Who was William? Why was he troubling Margot?

Long Questions

[8 Marks each]

1. Describe the geographical distinctions that occurred on Venus after the appearance of the Sun.
2. What is the central message of the story?

ICSE

SAMPLE PAPER 1

Fully Solved

Literature in English-X (Paper-2)

Time : 2 hrs

Max Marks : 80

1. Answer to this Paper must be written on the paper provided separately.
2. You will not be allowed to write during the first 15 minutes. This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.
3. The time given at the head of this paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.
4. Attempt five questions in all from only three text books.
5. You must attempt at least one question from each of the Sections A, B and C and not more than two other questions from the same books you have already compulsorily chosen.
6. The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

SECTION A : DRAMA

Answer one or more questions from only ONE of the following plays.

The Merchant of Venice

by Shakespeare

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

SHYLOCK O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man,
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:

- (i) Which Christians in particular are referred to in the extract? Why, according to Shylock, are Christians suspicious? [3]
- (ii) What does Shylock mean when he says, "If he should break his day, what should I gain/ By the exaction of the forfeiture?" [3]

- (iii) What steps does Shylock take to ensure that Antonio is bound to the conditions in the bond? [3]
- (iv) What instructions does Shylock give to Antonio immediately after their conversation? What would Shylock himself do then? [3]
- (v) What do you think of Antonio and of Shylock with regard to their signing of the bond? [4]

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

LAUNCELOT Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnation;
 and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience,
 to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew.
 The fiend gives the more friendly counsel:
 I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

- (i) What is meant by the speaker when he says 'devil incarnation'? Why does Launcelot say this about the Jew? [3]
- (ii) What is the relationship between Launcelot and the Jew? Who tempted Launcelot to run away from the Jew? What advice has Launcelot's conscience given him? [3]
- (iii) Why does Launcelot think it wise to run away from the Jew? [3]
- (iv) Who enters immediately after this? What has he brought for the Jew? What does Launcelot advise him to do instead? Why? [3]
- (v) How is the theme of racial discrimination brought out in Launcelot's decision to run away? To whom or where does he want to go? What instructions does that person give to him a little later in the same scene? [4]

3 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

PORTIA You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
 Such as I am: though for myself alone
 I would not be ambitious in my wish,
 To wish myself much better; yet, for you
 I would be trebled twenty times myself;
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich;
 That only to stand high in your account,
 I might in virtue, beauties, livings, friends,
 Exceed account; but the full sum of me
 Is sum of something, which, to term in gross,
 Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised;
 Happy in this, she is not yet so old
 But she may learn; happier than this,
 She is not bred so dull but she can learn;

- (i) Where is Portia speaking these lines? What has happened just before she speaks these lines? Describe Portia's feelings at this time. [3]
- (ii) From what she says, can you say that Portia is a proud woman? What is her description of herself? [3]
- (iii) What do the last four lines of the extract reveal about Portia's character? [3]
- (iv) Which persons enter soon after Portia speaks these lines? What news do they bring? [3]
- (v) What is the effect of the news on Bassanio? How does Portia react to Bassanio's explanation of the news? What does this reveal about Portia's character? [4]

SECTION B : POETRY

Answer one or more questions from this Section.

A Collection of Poems

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,
In love of home and loyalty
And far-cast thought of civic good—
His blessings on the neighbourhood,
Who in the hollow of His hand
Holds all the growth of all our land—
A nation's growth from sea to sea
Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.

(*The Heart of the Tree*, Henry Cuyler Bunner)

- (i) Explain "And far-cast thought of civic good—". In what sense does a tree planter do civic good? [3]
- (ii) How does a tree convey 'love of home and loyalty' of a tree planter, as hinted at here? [3]
- (iii) How does the poet prove that trees are important for us to survive in this world? What are the benefits of plantation according to him? [3]
- (iv) What is the theme of the poem 'The Heart of the Tree', as given in this stanza? [3]
- (v) In what way is the poem "The Heart of the Tree" relevant in our times? [4]

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

Bangle sellers are we who bear
Our shining loads to the temple fair...
Who will buy these delicate, bright
Rainbow-tinted circles of light?
Lustrous tokens of radiant lives,
For happy daughters and happy wives.

(*The Bangle Sellers*, Sarojini Naidu)

- (i) Where are the bangle sellers going? What are they carrying and how are they feeling? [3]
- (ii) What figure of speech is used by the poet in mentioning "Rainbow-tinted circles of light"? What is this referring to and describing? [3]
- (iii) What is the use of bangles? Why has the poet repeated the word 'happy' in the sixth line? [3]
- (iv) Why are the bangles called 'lustrous tokens of radiant lives'? [3]
- (v) What is the rhyme scheme followed in the poem? What is it responsible for? [4]

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

(*Daffodils*, William Wordsworth)

- (i) What does the poet compare the stars to? Why? [3]
- (ii) What does the poet want to say in the third line of the extract? [3]
- (iii) What figure of speech has the poet used in the third line? How has he used it? [3]
- (iv) What is the peculiarity about the dance of the daffodils? What effect does this dancing give? [3]
- (v) How is sight of the daffodils remembered by the poet later on? What feeling does it give him at that time? [4]

SECTION C : PROSE

Answer one or more questions from this Section.

A Collection of Short Stories

7. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

Yonder sky that has wept tears of compassion upon my people for centuries untold, and which to us appears changeless and eternal, may change. Today is fair. Tomorrow it may be overcast with clouds. My words are like the stars that never change. Whatever Seattle says, the great chief at Washington can rely upon with as much certainty as he can upon the return of the sun or the seasons. The white chief says that Big Chief at Washington sends us greetings of friendship and goodwill. This is kind of him for we know he has little need of our friendship in return.

- (i) Who is the speaker of the above lines? What is the occasion for the speech? [3]
- (ii) Explain the beginning of the speech, which says, "Yonder sky that has wept tears of compassion upon my people for centuries untold, and which to us appears changeless and eternal, may change." [3]
- (iii) Explain the speaker's words 'tomorrow it may be overcast with clouds'. Why is he much respected for this statement? [3]
- (iv) Who is the 'Big Chief at Washington'? Why does this person have "little need of our friendship in return"? [3]
- (v) Briefly describe what you conclude about the character of the speaker and his feelings at the time when he gave this speech. [4]

8. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

"Oh!", said the girl, with a deep breath and returning colour. "So that is what you are doing out here? A Marshal!"

"My dear Miss Fairchild", said Easton, calmly, "I had to do something. Money has a way of taking wings unto itself, and you know it takes money to keep step with our crowd in Washington."

- (i) Name the story in which this conversation occurred. Where are the two characters at this time? How did they know each other? [3]
- (ii) What was the name of the girl? Why did the girl say "Oh!"? What had she heard just before this extract which made the colour in her face return? [3]
- (iii) Easton says, "It takes money to keep step with our crowd in Washington." What does he mean by this? How is this true in his case? What were the consequences for him? [3]
- (iv) How did the girl come across Easton? What did she say that was highly ironic in the case of Easton? [3]
- (v) Why do Marshals handcuff themselves to their prisoners? What was different about the handcuffing in this case? What were the true identities of the two persons handcuffed to each other? [4]

9. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

On the way back, she met her mother, out of breath, come to look for her, and scolding. "I did not see till I was home, that you were not there. I thought something must have happened to you."

And Sibia, bursting with her story, cried, "Something did! I found a blue bead for my necklace, look!"

- (i) What had happened to Sibia? Why did she not mention the other important event that happened? [4]
- (ii) Describe the crocodile in the story. [4]
- (iii) Draw a character sketch of Sibia by quoting incidents from the chapter. [8]

Answers

- 1** (i) Bassanio and Antonio are the Christians referred to in the extract. According to Shylock, Christians are suspicious because, when he lends them three thousand ducats without charging any rate of interest but only asks them to sign a simple bond with him, thus extending a hand of friendship because a pound of human flesh is of no use to him, they still suspect his intentions to be villainous.
- (ii) Shylock asks a rhetorical question to which there is no answer. What he means is that if Antonio fails to pay his three thousand ducats on the stipulated date and breaks the condition of the bond, what would he gain by taking such a penalty as a pound of human flesh?
- (iii) To ensure that Antonio is bound to the conditions in the bond, Shylock pretends that he is not asking for interest on three thousand ducats, so as to buy Antonio's favour and to extend a hand of friendship so that past grievances can be forgotten.
- (iv) Immediately after their conversation, Shylock instructs Antonio to meet him 'forthwith at the notary's' and asks him to 'give him direction for this merry bond'. Shylock himself would 'go and purse the ducat straight' and 'see to his house, left in the fearful guard of an unthrifty knave'.
- (v) Antonio appears to be over-confident, imprudent, lacking in common sense and a poor judge of characters. On the other hand, Shylock appears to be a crafty person wanting to take advantage of others who are at in an awkward position. He is a shrewd and cunning person who knows how to trap people. He is a down-to-earth and practical person.
- 2** (i) By 'devil incarnation', Launcelot actually wants to say 'devil incarnate', which means that the devil has taken birth in the form of Shylock, the Jew. He calls Shylock the devil in human form because Shylock is very cruel and hard-hearted.
- (ii) Launcelot is the servant of Shylock. The 'fiend' (meaning his reasoning) tempted Launcelot to run away from the Jew. However, Launcelot's conscience advises him not to run away because he himself is 'an honest man's son'.

- (iii) Launcelot considers it wise to run away because he thinks Shylock is an incarnation of the devil, rather than follow the advice of conscience and stay with the devil himself.
 - (iv) Old Gobbo, Launcelot's father, who is totally blind, enters shortly. He has brought a present of a dish of doves for the Master Jew, Shylock. Launcelot tells him not to give any present to the Jew. Instead, he should give the Jew a halter to hang himself because Launcelot had been so much 'famished in his service' that every rib in his body could be counted by feeling with the fingers. He advises Gobbo to give that present to Bassanio instead, because he gave 'rare new liveries' to his servants.
 - (v) Launcelot's words that Shylock is a 'very Jew' and 'devil incarnation' bring out the theme of racial discrimination. It shows that Jews were seen with hatred and contempt in Venice. He wants to leave Shylock's service and become a servant of Bassanio. Later on in the same scene, Bassanio instructs him to take leave of his old master and join his service as Shylock has given the permission to do so.
- 3**
- (i) Portia is speaking these lines in a room at her house in Belmont. Just before she speaks these lines, Bassanio has chosen the lead casket which contains her portrait, thus winning her hand in marriage. Portia's feelings at this time are that she is very happy, as she always wanted to marry Bassanio because she had fallen in love with him. She was elated to realise that Bassanio had chosen the correct casket.
 - (ii) From what she says here, she is a model of humility. She describes herself as being uneducated and inexperienced. She is neither proud of her riches, nor of her beauty. She wants to become better so as to make Bassanio, her would-be-husband, happier.
 - (iii) The last four lines of the extract reveal her humility, as she says that she is uneducated and inexperienced, whereas her wisdom at the end of the play is proved to be the most of all. She also says that she wants to learn, showing another positive trait in her character.
 - (iv) The persons who enter soon after Portia speaks these lines are Lorenzo, Jessica and Salerio. The news that they brought was not good news. Salerio brought a letter from Antonio for Bassanio in which Antonio informed him that all his trading ships got wrecked and he has lost all his money. Thus, he will have to forfeit the bond he made with Shylock and suffer the consequences.
 - (v) The effect of the news on Bassanio is that he grows pale and sad because Antonio is his dear friend and now Antonio may even lose his life due to the conditions of the bond. Portia reacts to Bassanio's explanation of the news by offering all her riches for relieving Antonio of the bond's conditions, as now Bassanio will be her husband and all the riches will belong to him. Here she shows her generosity of character. She also says that she will not celebrate her wedding just now, but later on when Antonio is freed from the bond, showing her consideration for others.
- 4**
- (i) A man who plants a tree helps many people in the neighbourhood by providing them with oxygen, cool shade, rain and greener and cleaner surroundings. He also helps future generations, as explained in the second stanza of the poem. Thus he performs his duty towards society by planting a tree. Moreover, plantation is a symbolic act of goodness which alone can generate many other acts of goodness. So, the attitude of the entire society would change to a positive and helpful one. It leads to the nation's growth in the long term. That is why the poet opines that a tree planter does it "from far-cast thought of civic good".
 - (ii) By planting a tree, a man not only helps himself, but also his fellow men and those of the coming generations. He helps in the growth of his nation and the entire world in turn. All this is a selfless effort on his part. He is not doing it from a materialistic outlook to gain something for himself, but to help all. Thus, the man does it from his love and loyalty to his 'home' — his society, his nation and the world.
 - (iii) In this poem, the poet has tried to give a glimpse of how trees are crucial for our lives on Earth. Trees are useful to beat the scorching heat of the Sun and to transform the light of the Sun to glucose through the process of photosynthesis. All the energy for life on Earth comes through this way. More importantly, trees supply oxygen and keep us safe from pollution. In short, without trees, life on Earth would not have been possible.
 - (iv) The theme of the poem 'The Heart of the Tree', as given in this stanza, is that a man can perform his duties towards his neighbours and to his nation by planting a tree. "In love of home and loyalty / And far-cast thought of civic good-", "His blessings on the neighbourhood", "A nation's growth from sea to sea" — all these lines convey the theme of responsibility to our fellow men and to our nation.
 - (v) The poem 'The Heart of the Tree' is relevant in our times because it delivers the poet's message that a tree not only helps us survive in this world, but also brings us joy, secures the life of our future generations and has a direct connection to a nation's growth. Plantation is also a symbolic act of goodness that can inspire many other people to do good to others. Thus this message is universal and for all times. Moreover, in the 21st century, an age in which rapid and reckless development and urbanisation are taking their toll on the environment, this becomes quite relevant.

- 5** (i) The bangle sellers are going to the temple for the fair, which is being held there. They are happy and contented despite the heavy load of various bangles of multiple designs and colours on their shoulders.
- (ii) 'Rainbow-tinted circles of light' is referring to the bangles of different colours in the rainbow. This is a type of metaphor for describing the physical appearance of the bangles and their beauty.
- (iii) These bangles are made for women to wear. The poet has repeated the word 'happy' in the sixth line, so as to give a human emphasis on the bangles, as they are worn by women throughout their life.
- (iv) The bangles are called 'lustrous tokens of radiant lives' or bright symbols of shining lives because they symbolise 'radiant lives' — lives full of joy and happiness. Colourful bangles are generally worn by 'happy daughters and happy wives' to adorn themselves, to mark any special occasion or just to express their happiness.
- (v) The rhyme scheme followed in the poem in each stanza, is 'aabbcc', which is couplet form and is mainly responsible for the melodious effect and fast rhythm of the poem.
- 6** (i) The poet compares the daffodils to the stars because of their beauty. He says so since the numerous daffodils around a tree appear to form the Milky Way, with every daffodil a star.
- (ii) Through the third line in the extract, the poet is saying that the daffodils were stretched in such a long line along the shore of a lake that he thought the line was endless.
- (iii) The poet used a hyperbole as a figure of speech. He has exaggerated the actual number of the daffodils by saying that there are ten thousand daffodils that he sees at once.
- (iv) The peculiar thing about the dance of the daffodils is the fact that their dance is happening because of the wind. Although the daffodils are not moving by themselves, still it seems very beautiful.
- (v) The sight of the daffodils comes to the poet's mind later on in the poem, since he describes that whenever he is sad or thoughtful, the sight of the daffodils in his mind makes him feel happy again.
- 7** (i) The speaker of the above lines is Chief Seattle, a Native American Chief of the Suquamish tribe. The occasion for the speech is when during 1854-1855 the Governor of Washington territory wanted to negotiate a settlement with the Native American Chiefs in the area for settling the native Indians in reservations of their own. After the Governor had given his proposal, Chief Seattle spoke these words.
- (ii) Chief Seattle says in these lines that nature has been very kind not only to the Native American Indians but also to the entire human race for centuries. Nature has given us everything we need to live on this Earth. But it may not always remain so. Though the Earth's condition appears to be unchanging, it may finally change if we do not respect nature. This is Seattle's warning against the rapid progress of Western civilisation and the methods White people use for progress by disregarding the need to protect nature.
- (iii) In these lines, Chief Seattle warned the listeners against the reckless progress of urban civilisation. Seattle wanted to say that if we do not respect nature and its ways, the entire human race might be on the verge of extinction. In fact, Seattle's speech was the earliest instance of such warning against environmental degradation. That is why Chief Seattle was regarded with high respect.
- (iv) The 'Big Chief at Washington' is the President of the United States of America (USA) at that time, Franklin Pierce. The President of the USA had "little need of our friendship in return" because the White settlers were more in number and more powerful than the people of the Suquamish tribe of the Native American Indians and could thus dominate them without needing their friendship.
- (v) We can conclude about the character of Chief Seattle that he was a passionate environmentalist who wanted mankind to respect nature. In this speech, he was arguing in favour of ecological responsibility and respect of Native Americans' land rights. He wanted to express the idea that Native Americans had natural wisdom about the land and the tragedy is that it was being taken away from them. His feelings at this time were defeatist in nature, as he knew that he could not oppose the White settlers from occupying the Native Americans' land, as the White settlers were more in number as well as being more powerful.
- 8** (i) The story in which this conversation occurred is named 'Hearts and Hands'. The two characters are at Denver while travelling East on the B & M Express train. They know each other because both of them had been living in Washington, DC, where they had met some time ago.
- (ii) The name of the girl is Miss Fairchild. She said "Oh!" because she was surprised to hear that Easton had become a Marshal. Just before this extract, the glow from her cheeks faded when Easton showed the handcuffs with which he was bound to his companion because she assumed that Easton was a criminal. Then the man handcuffed to Easton informed the girl that Easton was taking him to prison for the crime of counterfeiting. Consequently, she was relieved, which made the colour return to her face.

- (iii) What Easton is referring to is the upper class lifestyle that many of his earlier friends in Washington lived. He means that social status and money are important to that group. This is true in his case because he tried to make money illegally by counterfeiting, so as to keep up with his friends. However, the consequences in his case were that he had been caught by the law and was being taken to prison.
- (iv) The girl came across Easton because she was in the same train compartment as him and was sitting opposite to him. She had spent the summer in Denver and was going back to Washington. Then she said, "Money isn't everything. But people always misunderstand things and remain stupid -" before she was interrupted by Easton's companion. What she said was highly ironic in the case of Easton because he had fallen into the trap of trying to win esteem in Washington by using dishonest means to earn money; thus, according to the girl, he was stupid, but the girl did not know it.
- (v) Marshals handcuff themselves to their prisoners to prevent them from escaping. The difference in this case was that Easton's left hand was handcuffed to the right hand of his companion, a ruffled glum-faced person. Normally Marshals handcuff their right hand to their prisoner's left hand. Thus, Easton was the real prisoner, but his companion, the real Marshal, pretended to be a criminal so that Easton was not embarrassed in front of the young girl who was his acquaintance.

- 9** (i) Sibia had fallen behind the other women carrying the cut grass with her. Two events further delayed her. The first one was that she saved a Gujar woman from the jaws of a crocodile by killing the crocodile, using her hayfork to pierce its eyes. Then she gave first aid to the woman before taking her to the Gujar village nearby. The other event was that she found a blue bead for her necklace. She did not mention the first event to her mother because, to her, the necklace was more important, as she loved to decorate herself, just like any other girl of her age.
- (ii) The crocodile in the story 'The Blue Bead' is a mugger crocodile. It is blackish brown above and yellowy white underneath. It had a thick hide and was twice the length of a tall man. It had a tail with a lot of power. Its mouth, running almost the whole length of its head, was closed and fixed in an evil bony smile, and where the yellow underside came up to it, it was tinged green.
- (iii) Sibia's character has a lot of admirable characteristics that many of us try to achieve our whole lives, thus making her a great character. She is a poor child who has never owned much in her whole life. The author says about her ".... thin starveling child dressed in ... earth coloured (rags)", which shows that Sibia cannot pay for her clothing. It also shows us that she is starving. Another attribute of Sibia is that she is hard-working because "... all her life from birth to death, (she) was marked for work". Sibia would help her mother to make money by picking paper grass for hours on end. It was difficult because the loads of grass to be carried back were heavy. Sibia also demonstrates characteristics like bravery, youth and heroism. The author implies that the character is brave when she writes "With all the force in her little body, she drove the hayfork at the eyes (of the crocodile)". It takes a lot of bravery for a 12 year old girl to carry out an act like that. The author states that she is young by writing "She was a happy immature, child-woman about twelve years old."

Sibia's character was also very heroic when she got the chance. However, she was also very innocent. When the author writes, "Sibia got her arms round the fainting woman, and somehow dragged her from the water", it shows that she put her own life in danger to save someone else's life, a person who she did not even know. That is the true embodiment of a hero.

ICSE

SAMPLE PAPER 2

Unsolved

Literature in English-X (Paper-2)

Time : 2 hrs

Max Marks : 80

1. Answers to this Paper must be written on the paper provided separately.
2. You will not be allowed to write during the first 15 minutes. This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.
3. The time given at the head of this paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.
4. Attempt five questions in all from only three text books.
5. You must attempt at least one question from each of the Sections A, B and C and not more than two other questions from the same books you have already compulsorily chosen.
6. The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

SECTION A : DRAMA

Answer one or more questions from only ONE of the following plays.

The Merchant of Venice

by Shakespeare

- 1** Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

PORTIA Such a hare is madness the youth - to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word "choose!" I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike - so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

NERISSA Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations. Therefore the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

- (i) Portia's father had, in his will, asked Portia's suitors to successfully undergo a test if they wanted to marry Portia and inherit the fortune he was leaving behind. What was the test? What oath did they have to take before attempting the test? [3]
- (ii) How does Nerissa cheer up Portia? What is her profession? [3]
- (iii) Name the suitors who are already there, as mentioned by Nerissa. What was Portia's answer to Nerissa's question at the end of the extract? [3]
- (iv) Mention any one negative quality of each of the suitors, as mentioned by Portia, who have already arrived. Do any of them pass the test devised by Portia's father? [3]
- (v) Which suitors take the test and fail? How do they describe themselves to Portia? [4]

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

SHYLOCK To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies – and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

- (i) Who are with Shylock when he says the words in this extract? Where are they? What are they talking about? [3]
- (ii) What has one of those persons said to get such a reply from Shylock? Why did the person say it? [3]
- (iii) Who is Shylock talking about? Why does Shylock dislike this person? [3]
- (iv) How has this person insulted Shylock and affected his business adversely? [3]
- (v) Is it true that Shylock has been greatly wronged? Can you justify Shylock's behaviour because of his perceived insult? [4]

3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

SHYLOCK I have them ready.

PORTIA Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge, to stop his wounds lest he do bleed to death.

SHYLOCK Is it so nominated in the bond?

PORTIA It is not so expressed, but what of that? 'Twere good you do so much for charity.

SHYLOCK I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

PORTIA (to Antonio) Come, merchant, have you any thing to say?

ANTONIO But little. I am armed and well prepared. Give me your hand, Bassanio. Fare you well. Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you, for herein Fortune shows herself more kind than is her custom. It is still her use to let the wretched man outlive his wealth, to view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow an age of poverty – from which lingering penance of such misery doth she cut me off.

- (i) Who or what are 'them' in the first line of the extract? Why are they needed? What will be done before they are used? [3]

- (ii) Why does Portia ask Shylock to have a surgeon ready? What or who is she representing here? [3]
- (iii) What does Antonio say in his defence? What does it reveal about his character? [3]
- (iv) How does Antonio console Bassanio? What does he want Bassanio to do after his death? [3]
- (v) What does Bassanio say after this extract to show that he loves Antonio deeply? [4]

SECTION B – POETRY

Answer one or more questions from this Section.

A Collection of Poems

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

But a bird that stalks His wings are clipped and
Down his narrow cage His feet are tied
Can seldom see through So he opens his throat to sing.
His bars of rage

(I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou)

- (i) What is the plight of the caged bird? What are the feelings of the bird here? [3]
- (ii) How is the plight of the caged bird different from that of the free bird? What advantages does the free bird have over the caged bird? [3]
- (iii) What do the two types of bird symbolise? What activities of the people symbolised by these two birds do not match with the actual activities of the birds? [3]
- (iv) Despite the bird being unable to fly and move freely, it sings. What does the singing symbolise? What does the bird want by singing? [3]
- (v) What do the phrases 'bars of rage', 'wings are clipped' and 'feet are tied' signify? [4]

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
Paid by the world, what dost thou owe?
"Me?" – God might question; now instead,
'Tis God shall repay: I am safer so.

(The Patriot, Robert Browning)

- (i) Why does the patriot treat both his entry into the world and his departure from it as similar? Why is he not ashamed of being branded as a criminal? [3]
- (ii) What does the poet mean by the second line of the extract? How can they die suddenly during their victory? [3]
- (iii) Why did the patriot wish that he had died while being in power? How is his death now, as a criminal being hanged, different? [3]
- (iv) Why does the patriot feel that God will repay him for what he has done? Why does he feel safe with God? [3]
- (v) How does this stanza reflect the poet's feeling of trust in God? What does the patriot think God will ask him when they meet? [4]

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

(*Abou Ben Adhem, Leigh Hunt*)

- (i) What was the appearance of the angel like on the first night? What did the angel write? [3]
- (ii) What is the meaning and significance of 'a great wakening light' in the second line? [3]
- (iii) How has Abou Ben Adhem been rewarded for his feelings, as given in the last line? [3]
- (iv) What are the character traits of Abou Ben Adhem, as brought out in the poem? [3]
- (v) What is the theme of the poem, 'Abou Ben Adhem'? How is this highlighted in the last line of the extract? [4]

SECTION C – PROSE

Answer one or more questions from this Section.

A Collection of Short Stories

7. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

Mr Oliver stumbled up to the watchman, gasping for breath. "What is it, Sahib?" asked the watchman, "Has there been an accident? Why are you running?"

"I saw something – something horrible – a boy weeping in the forest – and he had no face!"

"No face, Sahib?"

"No eyes, nose, mouth – nothing!"

"Do you mean it was like this, Sahib?" asked the watchman, and raised the lamp to his own face.

- (i) Why was Mr Oliver running? What had happened to make him so scared? [3]
- (ii) Where did Mr Oliver meet the watchman? What did the watchman have in his hand which guided Mr Oliver to meet him? [3]
- (iii) Describe the appearance of the boy in the forest who was weeping. [3]
- (iv) When the watchman raised the lamp to his own face, what did Mr Oliver see? What did he conclude from what he saw? [3]
- (v) How does the face of the watchman make the story more mysterious? How can the story be made to end with a rational explanation of what Mr Oliver saw? [4]

8. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

Mrs Thompson saw him approaching from the window and, with ruffling feathers, met him a few paces from the door, as he opened the garden gate and came in. He bore a precious burden, and he felt it to be so. As his arms held the sick child to his breast, a sphere of tenderness went out from her, and penetrated his feelings. A bond had already corded itself around them both, and love was springing into life.

- (i) Describe the character of Mrs Thompson as given by the author so far in this story. How does this character change at the end? [3]
- (ii) Why was Joe Thompson afraid of taking Maggie home to his wife? What strategy had he worked out so that his wife would accept Maggie initially? [3]
- (iii) What does the phrase 'with ruffling feathers' mean? Why was Mrs Thompson impatient to stop her husband from entering the house with Maggie? [3]
- (iv) What was Joe Thompson's state of mind while he was carrying Maggie home? What does this reveal about his character? [3]
- (v) What is the meaning and implication of the last sentence in the extract? What has changed to make their final decision inevitable? [4]

9. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

She drew another match against the wall: it was again light, and in the lustre there stood the old grandmother, so bright and radiant, so mild, and with such an expression of love. "Grandmother!" cried the little one. "Oh, take me with you! You go away when the match burns out; you vanish like the warm stove, like the delicious roast goose, and like the magnificent Christmas tree!" And she rubbed the whole bundle of matches quickly against the wall, for she wanted to be quite sure of keeping her grandmother near her. And the matches gave such a brilliant light that it was brighter than at noon-day: never formerly had the grandmother been so beautiful and so tall.

- (i) Why does the girl initially choose to light the matches one at a time (one match can't keep her warm), rather than try to start a fire (by finding paper and kindling from the alley)? [3]
- (ii) Why was the grandmother looking more beautiful and taller than ever to the little girl? What does it signify? [3]
- (iii) How is the setting in the alley, the cold, and darkness, symbolic of the girl's isolation and sadness? [3]
- (iv) What do the girl's matchsticks symbolise? (Recall that to sell the matchsticks was the source for her livelihood) [3]
- (v) Why did the girl finally rub the whole bundle of matches quickly against the wall? Why does she want to keep her grandmother near her? [4]

ICSE

SAMPLE PAPER 3

Unsolved

Literature in English-X (Paper-2)

Time : 2 hrs

Max Marks : 70

1. Answers to this Paper must be written on the paper provided separately.
2. You will not be allowed to write during the first 15 minutes. This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.
3. The time given at the head of this paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.
4. Attempt five questions in all from only three text books.
5. You must attempt at least one question from each of the Sections A, B and C and not more than two other questions from the same books you have already compulsorily chosen.
6. The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

SECTION A : DRAMA

Answer one or more questions from only ONE of the following plays.

The Merchant of Venice

by Shakespeare

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

BASSANIO Of it please you to dine with us.

SHYLOCK Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you.

- (i) Why does Shylock not want to have dinner with Bassanio? What is Shylock's compulsion in this regard? [3]
- (ii) What does Bassanio want from Shylock at the time this conversation takes place? Why does he need this? [3]
- (iii) Does Shylock show interest in what Bassanio desires? What objection does Shylock have to what Bassanio offers as guarantee?
- (iv) Who meets them soon after this extract? Finally, on what condition does Shylock agree to give Bassanio what he desires? [3]
- (v) Does Bassanio accept Shylock's proposal? Why is he confident about Antonio's fortunes? [4]

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

"All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms enfold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been inscrolled.
Fare you well. Your suit is cold."

- (i) Who is the speaker? Who is he speaking these words to? Who else is there in the room at this time? [3]
- (ii) What has the speaker done just before he speaks these lines? Why did he do so? [3]
- (iii) What is the background of what the speaker has just done? What conditions have been specified for the speaker's action? [3]
- (iv) What is the meaning and implication of these lines for the speaker? [3]
- (v) Why is the listener happy when the speaker speaks these lines? What qualities of the speaker cause this happiness? [4]

3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

PORTIA Speak not so grossly. – You are all amazed.
 (takes out a letter)
 Here is a letter. Read it at your leisure.
 It comes from Padua, from Bellario.
 There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
 Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here
 Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
 And even but now returned. I have not yet
 Entered my house. Antonio, you are welcome.

- (i) Where is this scene being enacted? What time of the day or night is it? Who are the persons who Portia is speaking to? [3]
- (ii) What does Portia reveal about the past events which most of them did not know? [3]
- (iii) After this extract, what good news does Portia give to Antonio? What is Antonio's response? [3]
- (iv) What other good news is given to two of the other listeners? How are they benefited? [3]
- (v) "Shakespeare has no heroes – he has only heroines." Would you agree with this criticism as applied to the play? Why? [4]

SECTION B – POETRY

Answer one or more questions from this Section.

A Collection of Poems

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

He gave out a cry in frustration and anguish
His dreams and his efforts all dashed in the dirt
But as sure as I'm standing here telling this story
The same goes for what next occurred.

(*Nine Gold Medals, David Roth*)

- (i) Who is 'he'? Why did he cry out in frustration and anguish? [3]
- (ii) Why were his dreams dashed to the ground? What had he hoped to achieve? [3]
- (iii) What happened after this stanza, as hinted at in the last line of the stanza? [3]
- (iv) How many persons were competing with the person who cried out? How can you tell this? [3]
- (v) Were the other competitors selfish? If not, what qualities of character did they display? [4]

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

Some are like fields of sunlit corn,
Meet for a bride on her bridal morn,
Some, like the flame of her marriage fire,
Or, rich with the hue of her heart's desire,
Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear,
Like her bridal laughter and bridal tear.

(*The Bangle Sellers, Sarojini Naidu*)

- (i) Why has the word 'some' been used repeatedly in the poem? [3]
- (ii) What is the meaning of the phrase 'fields of sunlit corn'? How can this be related to a bride just before her marriage? [3]
- (iii) The phrase 'flame of her marriage fire' suggests what colour? What poetic device has been used here? [3]
- (iv) What do the phrases 'bridal laughter' and 'bridal tear' mean? What have they been compared with? [3]
- (v) What is 'the hue of her heart's desire'? How is it relevant here? [4]

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

Oh yes, we know it keeps them still,
They don't climb out the window sill,
They never fight or kick or punch,
They leave you free to cook the lunch
And wash the dishes in the sink -
But did you ever stop to think,
To wonder just exactly what
This does to your beloved tot?

(*Television, Roald Dahl*)

- (i) Who are 'them' in the extract? What keeps them still? Why? [3]
- (ii) What benefits do the parents get while their children watch television, as given in the extract? [3]
- (iii) What has happened to 'them' just before this extract? What is its effect on their minds? [3]

- (iv) What 'this does' is explained just after this extract. List three effects which have been mentioned. [3]
- (v) Is it possible to remove the TV set from the home in today's circumstances? What should be the parents' approach to this problem? [4]

SECTION C : PROSE

Answer one or more questions from this Section.

A Collection of Short Stories

7. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

As if happened, Luz broke his own past record. In doing so, he pushed me on to a peak performance. I remember that at the instant I landed from my final jump – the one which set the Olympic record of 26 feet 5 inches – he was at my side, congratulating me. Despite the fact that Hitler glared at us from the stands not a hundred yards away, Luz shook my hand hard – and it wasn't a fake 'smile with broken heart' sort of grip, either.

- (i) Why did Jesse Owens foul the first two jumps in the qualifying round? [3]
- (ii) How could Jesse tell that Luz Long was not heartbroken that he had lost? [3]
- (iii) Why was Hitler glaring from the stands? What was intolerable for him? [3]
- (iv) How did Luz Long help Jesse Owens to give his peak performance? [3]
- (v) How did the rivalry of Owens and Long end? [4]

7. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

The foreigner faithfully looked in the direction indicated by Muni's fingers, gazed for a while at the two goats and the rocks, and with a puzzled expression, took out his silver cigarette case and lit a cigarette. Suddenly remembering the courtesies of the season, he asked, "Do you smoke?" Muni answered, Yes, no." Whereupon the red-faced man took a cigarette and gave it to Muni, who received it with surprise, having had no offer of a smoke from anyone for years now.

- (i) While Muni was sitting idly near the statue, he noticed something strange. What was it? [3]
- (ii) What did Muni think when he saw the foreigner for the first time? What did the foreigner ask Muni initially? [3]
- (iii) What had Muni indicated to the foreigner with his fingers? Why had he done so? [3]
- (iv) What happened when the foreigner offered Muni a cigarette? Did Muni take it? [3]
- (v) Why was there confusion in the conversation between Muni and the foreigner? What did this confusion finally result in? [4]

9. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

With her ebony hair and great eyes, and her skin of oiled brown cream, she was a happy, immature child-woman about twelve years old. Barefoot, of course, and often goosey-cold on a winter morning, and born to toil.

In all her life, she had never owned anything but a rag. She had never owned even one anna – not a pice, not a pi even, to buy, say, a handful of blown glass beads from that stall in the bazaar where they were piled like stars,

- (i) What was Sibia eating at this time? Why did she tear it into two parts? [3]
- (ii) The passage describes her economic background. What does it tell about her? [3]
- (iii) How did Sibia use the only possession that she had? [3]
- (iv) What would Sibia have bought from the bazaar if she had the money for it? [3]
- (v) Why is Sibia called a 'child-woman'? Since when has she started working? [4]

Latest ICSE SPECIMEN PAPER

Fully Solved

Literature in English-X (Paper-1)

Time : 2 hrs

Max Marks : 80

1. Answers to this Paper must be written on the paper provided separately.
2. You will not be allowed to write during the first 15 minutes. This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.
3. The time given at the head of this paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.
4. Attempt five questions in all from only three text books.
5. You must attempt at least one question from each of the Sections A, B and C and not more than two other questions from the same books you have already compulsorily chosen.
6. The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

SECTION A : DRAMA

Answer one or more questions from only ONE of the following plays.

The Merchant of Venice

by Shakespeare

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

MOROCCO Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath feared the valiant. By my love I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too. I would not change this hue
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

PORTIA In terms of choice I am not solely led
 By nice direction of a maiden's eyes.
 Besides, the lottery of my destiny
 Bars me the right of voluntary choosing.

- (i) Where is this scene set? Account for Morocco's presence in this place. [3]
- (ii) What can you assess of Morocco's appearance and character based on the given extract? [3]
- (iii) Mention any three actions that Morocco says he would be happy to perform in order to win Portia. [3]
- (iv) What does Morocco have to swear before he makes his 'hazard'? [3]
- (v) Portia speaks of 'the lottery of my destiny'. What exactly is she referring to? What in your opinion are Portia's feelings regarding this matter? [4]

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

SHYLOCK Shall I not receive my principal?

PORTIA Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
 To be taken at thy peril, Jew.

- (i) Explain what Portia means by the above words. [3]
- (ii) How does Shylock respond to her words? [3]
- (iii) What more does Portia tell Shylock about the Laws of Venice as applicable to an 'alien' (foreigner)? [3]
- (iv) What does Antonio propose to do with his share of Shylock's goods? [3]
- (v) What role does Portia play in this scene? What does this reveal of her character? [4]

3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

ANTONIO But little : I am arm'd and well prepared.
 Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
 Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;
 For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
 Than is her custom: it is still her use
 To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
 To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
 An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
 Of such misery doth she cut me off.

- (i) Where is this scene set? To whom are these words addressed? To what question does Antonio respond with the words, 'But little:'? [3]
- (ii) What does Antonio mean when he says, "Grieve not that I have fallen to this for you"? [3]
- (iii) What does Antonio instruct Bassanio to do immediately after speaking these lines? [3]
- (iv) What is Bassanio's response to this speech? [3]
- (v) On what note does Antonio conclude his speech? What does this reveal of Antonio's attitude to life and death? [4]

SECTION B : POETRY

Answer one or more questions from this Section.

A Collection of Poems

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh –
“Tis some poor fellow’s skull,” said he,
“Who fell in the great victory.”

(After Blenheim, Robert Southey)

- (i) Who is the old man? What causes him to sigh? [3]
- (ii) What incident prompted the old man to give an account of the Battle of Blenheim? [3]
- (iii) How did the battle affect the old man’s family? [3]
- (iv) Name the two countries that fought each other in the battle. Which army won? What reason does the old man give for the victory? [3]
- (v) Point out the refrain in the poem. What effect does the refrain have on the reader? What do you think is the poet’s attitude to war? [4]

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

‘All right!’ you’ll cry. ‘All right!’ you’ll say,
‘But if we take the set away,
What shall we do to entertain
Our darling children? Please explain!’

(Television, Roald Dahl)

- (i) What important lesson does the poet say he has learnt at the start of the poem? [3]
- (ii) Describe some of the scenes that the poet says he has seen in houses which have televisions. [3]
- (iii) List the ways in which television viewing affects the mind of a ‘beloved tot’. [3]
- (iv) What other activity does the poet recommend to entertain children? Mention two ways in which this activity would benefit them. [3]
- (v) What does the poet advise readers to do at the end of the poem? What does he assure them will happen if they followed his suggestion? What would you say is the central idea in this poem? [4]

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

Their logs held tight in death’s still hands
Was proof of human sin.
They didn’t die from the cold without
They died from the cold within.

- (i) What was the weather like when the six people found themselves together? [3]
- (ii) Why wouldn’t the third man put his piece of log in the dying fire? [3]
- (iii) What did the black man see in his piece of wood? Give an instance from the poem to show that his feelings were somewhat justified. [3]
- (iv) Who among the gathering was an opportunist? How can you say so? [3]
- (v) Would you say that ‘The Cold Within’ is an apt title for this poem? Give reasons for your answer. [4]

SECTION C : PROSE

Answer one or more questions from only ONE of the following books that you have studied.

A Collection of Short Stories

7. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

He gave her a shove. But she did not move, rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else. They edged away from her; they would not look at her. She felt them go away.

- (i) Who is 'she'? Describe her. [3]
- (ii) Where is this story set? Mention any two ways in which the way of life on their planet differs from life on Earth. [3]
- (iii) To what does she compare the sun? What does this tell us about her? [3]
- (iv) Why did the other children not come to her aid when William shoved her? [3]
- (v) How does her behaviour set her apart from the others? Why do you suppose the other children treat her the way they do? [4]

8. Answer the following questions with reference to RK Narayan's short story entitled 'A Horse and Two Goats'.

The foreigner followed his look and decided that it would be a sound policy to show an interest in the old man's pets. He went up casually to them and stroked their backs with every show of courteous attention. Now the truth dawned on Muni. His dream of a lifetime was about to be realised.

- (i) What did Muni often dream of? [3]
- (ii) How was the foreigner dressed? Why did Muni feel the urge to run when he first laid eyes on him? What stopped him from doing so? [3]
- (iii) Muni assumed that a recent incident had brought this visitor to his village. Give details of this incident. [3]
- (iv) What was the visitor actually interested in? What did he offer Muni soon after they met? Why did the offer surprise Muni? [3]
- (v) Which part of the story do you find most amusing? Give reasons for your answer. [4]

9. Answer the following questions with reference to Ernest Hemingway's short story, 'The Old Man at the Bridge'.

- (a) Explain why the narrator takes so much time to converse with the old man. Use details from the story to support your answer. [4]
- (b) What statements from the story suggest that the old man is about to give up on life? Quote specific statements to back your answer. [4]
- (c) How does Hemingway show that war disrupts the lives of ordinary people? Is this portrayal realistic? Explain why you think so. [8]

Answers

- 1 (i) This scene is set in a room in Portia's house at Belmont. The Prince of Morocco is there because he wants to take up the casket challenge to win Portia's hand in marriage.
- (ii) Based on the given extract, we can judge that the Prince of Morocco is dark-complexioned and has a large and imposing physical presence. He boasts about his bravery and of the redness of his blood. He says that he is also loved by the nobles as well as the ladies in his land.
- (iii) Three actions that the Prince of Morocco says he would be happy to perform in order to win Portia are
 - (a) Tease a lion who is roaring for his prey,
 - (b) Snatch away bear cubs who are being suckled by their mother, and
 - (c) Make a cut on his hand to show the colour of his blood to Portia.
- (iv) Before he makes his 'hazard', the Prince of Morocco has to swear that, if he loses, he will never marry another lady later on in life.
- (v) Portia is referring to her dead father's will, in which any person who wants to marry her has to choose the correct casket, which contains Portia's portrait, from three caskets. One casket is made of gold, another of silver and another of lead.
Portia's feelings regarding this matter are that, due to this condition in her father's will, she is not able to marry a person of her own choice.
- 2 (i) What Portia means by the above words is that Shylock can only take a pound of Antonio's flesh (as this was agreed as the 'forfeiture' in the bond signed by Antonio) and nothing more. If he spills even a drop of Antonio's blood in taking this flesh, he will have to obey the laws of Venice about aliens (Shylock, being a Jew, is considered an alien in Venice) attacking Christians. The laws say that Shylock's entire properties shall be confiscated by the State.
- (ii) Shylock responds to her words by saying that he will not stay to hear any more of the case. He suddenly realised that he may lose more if he tries to argue any further.
- (iii) Portia tells Shylock that the laws of Venice as applicable to an alien state that if it is proved that an alien directly or indirectly threatens the life of any citizen, half of the alien's property will be seized and given to the affected citizen and the other half will be confiscated by the State. Further, the offender's life will be at the mercy of the Duke of Venice.
- (iv) With his share of Shylock's goods, Antonio proposes to set up a trust to use the goods and on Shylock's death, the goods and Shylock's balance money should be gifted to Lorenzo and Shylock's daughter Jessica, who plan to get married.
- (v) Portia (disguised as a man) plays the role of a lawyer in this scene. This reveals the versatility and smartness in her character. She not only was clever enough to save her husband's best friend, but she also ensured that both her husband and Antonio are forever indebted to her.
- 3 (i) This scene is set in a Court of Justice in Venice. These words are addressed to Portia disguised as a lawyer. The question to which Antonio responded with the words, 'But little:' was asked by Portia when she asked Antonio if he had anything to say in the matter regarding the bond.
- (ii) When Antonio said to Bassanio, "Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you", he meant that Bassanio should not feel sad that Antonio is to suffer for helping his friend.
- (iii) Immediately after speaking these lines, Antonio instructs Bassanio to convey his best wishes to Bassanio's wife (Portia) and tell her how he died. Antonio also tells Bassanio to tell her that Antonio was a true friend of Bassanio, as he willingly sacrificed his life for his friend.
- (iv) Bassanio's response to this speech is that his wife is as valuable to him as his life. However, his life, his wife and all the world are not more than Antonio's life and Bassanio is willing to sacrifice all of them to save Antonio's life.
- (v) Antonio concludes his speech on a note of optimism, as he says that he is fortunate to not outlive his wealth and die in poverty, like many other people. He is saved from this misery by dying now.
- 4 (i) The old man was Kaspar, the grandfather of the children. The memory of the Battle of Blenheim caused him to sigh as he remembered what had happened there when he was a child.
- (ii) The incident which prompted the old man to give an account of the Battle of Blenheim was the discovery by his grandson Peterkin of the skull of a soldier who had been killed in that battle.

- (iii) The speaker says that during the war his father lived with his family next to a stream at Blenheim. As a result of the war, his father's house was burnt, which forced him to run away from there with his wife and child, Kaspar. They were thus rendered homeless.
 - (iv) The allied army led by the English fought the battle against the French army. The English won the battle. The old man says that the reason for the victory of the English was the leadership of the Duke of Marlborough (England) and Prince Eugene (France).
 - (v) The refrain in the poem is 'It was a famous victory'. The effect on the reader is horrifying, as many soldiers lost their lives in the battle; thus, it could not be really called a victory. The poet's attitude to war is to condemn it because many lives are lost in it. Instead, it is a defeat of innocence, human dignity and humanity.
- 5** (i) The important lesson that the poet says he has learnt at the start of the poem is that parents should never ever allow their children to watch television programmes. It is even better not to install a TV set in the house at all.
- (ii) Some of the scenes that the poet says he has seen in houses which have television are children gaping at the screen. They were staring with their eyes wide open and with absolute concentration of mind until their eyes were too tired to watch any more.
- (iii) The ways in which television viewing affects the mind of a 'beloved tot' are that it damages the senses in the head. Children are drawn away from the real world around them. They believe what they watch without considering the context. Their own environment hardly matches with the ones seen on screen, but still they think all that they see is real and applicable to them. It also kills their imagination.
- (iv) To entertain children, the poet recommends that they should read books. Two ways in which reading books will benefit them are
- (a) Their hearts will be filled with joy when they read the interesting stories in books.
 - (b) They will grow very inquisitive and keen to acquire more knowledge.
- (v) At the end of the poem, the poet advises the parents to throw away their television set and install a bookshelf in its place.
- He assures them that, if they followed his suggestion, after a week or two, the children would find nothing to do without a TV set around. Then they will discover the real joy of reading books and love their parents for giving them the opportunity to read books.
- The central idea in this poem is that children should read books instead of watching the television, otherwise the TV will hinder the development of their imagination and creativity.
- 6** (i) The weather was bleak and it was bitterly cold when the six people found themselves together around a fire that was dying due to lack of more wood to keep it alight.
- (ii) The third person, who was a poor man, did not put his piece of log in the dying fire because he did not want his action to benefit the rich, who he thought as idle. He felt that the rich do not deserve his meagre contribution.
- (iii) The black man saw in his piece of wood an agent for taking revenge against the whites, who had made him a victim of racism. His feelings were somewhat justified because he saw that the white woman had not put her stick in the fire after noticing that he was black.
- (iv) The black man was an opportunist. We can say so because the last two lines of the sixth stanza say "for all he saw in his stick of wood was a chance to spite the white".
- (v) 'The Cold Within' is an apt title for this poem because it was not the cold weather outside that really killed the group of people gathered around the dying fire. It was the cold in their hearts, the lack of warm human spirits, the lack of caring for other human beings or "the cold within" which killed all of them.
- 7** (i) 'She' is Margot, a nine year old frail girl with a pale face who had come from Earth five years ago and remembers the sight of the Sun. The other children in her class are different from her because they were all born on Venus, where the Sun is visible only once in seven years for an hour or two.
- (ii) This story is set on the planet Venus. The way of life on their planet differs from life on Earth in the following ways
- (a) It is continuously raining on Venus for seven years due to the dense clouds. The sun is visible only once in seven years, and that also only for an hour or two.
 - (b) The people there lived underground because of the water on the ground everywhere.

- (iii) She compares the Sun to a penny coin and also to a fire in the stove. This tells us that her memory of the Sun is excellent, as she has described the shape of the Sun and also its heating effect.
 - (iv) The other children did not come to her aid when William shoved her because she did not play any games with them in the echoing tunnels of the underground city. She did not sing songs with them except when they sang about the Sun. But the biggest reason was that she was not born on Venus. She had come from Earth five years ago and remembered how the Sun and sky looked on Earth. The other children were too small when they last saw the Sun and did not remember what it looked like.
 - (v) Her behaviour sets her apart from the others because she does not participate in any activities with them, whether it is playing, singing songs or anything else. The other children treat her the way they do because they hated her for being different from them for various reasons.
- 8**
- (i) Muni often dreamt of selling his goats for a good sum of money and opening a small shop with the money.
 - (ii) The foreigner was dressed in khaki clothes, which meant to Muni that he was either a policeman or a soldier. Muni wondered what crime he had committed to be addressed by a policeman. That is why he had felt the urge to run when he first laid eyes on the visitor. What stopped him from doing so was his age, as he could not run fast. Also, he could not leave his goats behind, as they were his only source of livelihood.
 - (iii) Muni assumed that the recent incident of a dead body being found near his village a few weeks ago must have brought this visitor to his village. The body was mutilated and thrown under a tamarind tree at the border of Muni's village, Kristam, and Kuppam, a neighbouring village.
 - (iv) The visitor was actually interested in buying the mud statue of the horse from Muni, as Muni was sitting on its pedestal and the foreigner thought that Muni must be its owner. He offered Muni one hundred rupees for the horse soon after they met. Just before this, the visitor had been stroking Muni's two goats and Muni assumed that he wanted to buy the goats. The amount he offered was much more than what Muni expected and so Muni was surprised.
 - (v) The part of the story that I find the most amusing is when the goats return to Muni's home just when he has given to his wife the money he earned by selling the goats. The reasons are
 - (a) Muni is unable to understand how the goats did not go with the foreigner and so he scolds the goats.
 - (b) His wife does not trust him, thinks he has stolen the money from someone and is afraid that the police will arrest him.
 - (c) His wife is totally unsympathetic and also says that if he is arrested, she will go to live with her parents.
- 9**
- (a) The narrator takes a lot of time to converse with the old man because he was waiting to see the enemy, which would be advancing towards the bridge. The story mentions that he was listening for the noises that would signal contact with the enemy. As he had no other work to do but wait, he was passing time by talking to the old man.
 - (b) The statements from the story which suggest that the old man is about to give up on life are
 - (i) "But the old man sat there without moving. He was too tired to go on any farther."
 - (ii) "I have come twelve kilometres now and I think now I can go no further."
 - (iii) "... and got to his feet, swayed from side to side and then sat down backwards in the dust."
 - (iv) "I was taking care of animals", he said dully, but no longer to me. "I was only taking care of animals".
 - (c) Hemingway shows that war disrupts the lives of ordinary people by describing the men, women and children migrating away from the war area along with mule-drawn carts and trucks carrying their belongings. He describes the peasants plodding along in ankle deep dust. He also describes the old man moving from San Carlos without the animals he was looking after, thus disrupting the old man's life.
- This portrayal is realistic because civilian people living in an area where war is going on are likely to be killed and their property damaged or destroyed if they do not shift from there. When they move, they have to carry their valuable possessions with them while leaving behind other things as, after the war is over, they may want to come back to their earlier residence.

ICSE

SOLVED PAPER 2020

Fully Solved

Literature in English-X (Paper-2)

Time : 2 hrs

Max Marks : 80

1. Answers to this paper must be written on the paper provided separately.
2. You will **not** be allowed to write during the first **15** minutes. This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.
3. The time given at the head of this paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.
4. The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

SECTION A : DRAMA

Answer one or more questions from this section.

The Merchant of Venice

by Shakespeare

- 1** Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Launcelot : But, I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo,
I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gobbo : Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Launcelot : Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of
Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman,
according to Fates and Destines, and such odd
sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of leaning.
is indeed, deceased; or as you would say
in plain terms gone to heaven.

- (i) What information does Gobbo seek from Launcelot at the beginning of this scene? What does Launcelot say has happened to Gobbo's son ? [3]
- (ii) What are the 'Sisters Three'? What role were they thought to play in the lives of humans? [3]
- (iii) Who was Launcelot's master? What gift had Gobbo brought him ? What does Launcelot want him to do with it? [3]
- (iv) What reasons does Launcelot give for wanting to leave his present master's service? Whom does he wish to serve instead? [3]

- (v) Why does Gobbo have trouble recognising Launcelot? What purpose does this scene serve in the context of the play? [4]

2 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Shylock : To bait fish withal. If it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?

- (i) Who is 'He'? What does Shylock want from him ?
What does Shylock mean by 'to bait fish withal' ? [3]
- (ii) Explain in your own words any three ways in which 'he' had wronged Shylock. [3]
- (iii) According to Shylock, in what other ways did Jews resemble Christians ? [3]
- (iv) How does Shylock use Christian example to justify his desire for revenge? [3]
- (v) The given extract reveals two distinct emotions that Shylock experiences.
What are they? Give one reason to justify each of these emotions. [4]

3 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Portia : The quality of mercy is not strained.
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice blessed;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest, it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown.

- (i) Where does this scene take place? Why is Portia here?
Why does Bassanio not recognise her? [3]
- (ii) To what is mercy compared in these lines?
Why is mercy said to be 'twice blessed'? [3]
- (iii) Explain the lines :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest, it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown. [3]
- (iv) Later in her speech Portia mentions a sceptre. What is a sceptre?
How, according to Portia, is mercy above the 'sceptred sway'? [3]
- (v) To whom are these words addressed?
What does the person say in response to Portia's words?

Portia is seen as the dramatic heroine of the play. Using references from the text mention any two aspects of her character that appeal to you most. [4]

SECTION B : POETRY

Answer one or more questions from this section.

A Collection of Poems

4. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Bangle sellers are we who bear
Our shining loads to the temple fair...

—The Bangle Sellers, Sarojini Naidu

- (i) Why does the poet use the word 'delicate' to describe the bangles?
How is 'rainbow-tinted circles of light' an appropriate description of bangles? [3]
- (ii) Explain the following phrases from the poem in your own words.
 - Shining loads
 - Lustrous tokens of radiant lives
 - For happy daughters and happy wives
 [3]
- (iii) The poet uses several images of sight and sound to create a musical effect in the poem. Mention any three examples of these images. [3]
- (iv) What are the emotions that the poet associates with a bride on her wedding day? What colours are the bangles on her wrist that reflect these emotions? [3]
- (v) What colours does the poet associate with : [4]
 - a maiden
 - a middle aged woman
 How does the poet describe the thoughts and concerns of women in both these stages of life?

5. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sing.

—I know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelo

- (i) In the context of the poem who is a 'free bird' and who is a 'caged bird' ?
What mood do the above lines convey? [3]
- (ii) How does a free bird live his life?
What are the things he thinks of and dreams about? [3]
- (iii) What does the caged bird sing about?
What are the restrictions that a caged bird has to deal with? [3]
- (iv) What do you understand from the title of the poem?
What do you like about the poem ? [3]
- (v) Explain what you understand by the following lines :
'... a bird that stalks

down his narrow cage'
 'he names the sky his own' [4]

6. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase !)
 Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace.

—Abou Ben Adhem, Leigh Hunt

- (i) What did Abou Ben Adhem see when he woke from a deep sleep one night? [3]
- (ii) What did Abou Ben Adhem ask the angel?
 What was the angel's response? [3]
- (iii) What did Abou request the angel to do when he learnt that his name did not appear among the names of those who loved the Lord?
 What does this reveal to us of Abou Ben Adhem's character? [3]
- (iv) When and how did the angel appear to Abou Ben Adhem again?
 What did the angel show Abou this time? [3]
- (v) What does the poet mean by 'May his tribe increase !'
 Why do you think he says this?
 What is the central message of the poem? [4]

SECTION C : PROSE

Answer one or more questions from this section.

A Collection of Short Stories

7 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

"Well, Mr. Easton, if you will make me speak first, I suppose I must. Don't you ever recognise old friends when you meet them in the West?"

The younger man roused himself sharply at the sound of her voice, seemed to struggle with a slight embarrassment which he threw off instantly, and then clasped her fingers with his left hand.

"It's Miss Fairchild." He said, with a smile. 'I'll ask you to excuse the other hand, "It's otherwise engaged just at present."

- (i) Describe Miss Fairchild and Mr. Easton. [3]
- (ii) Where does the above conversation occur?
 Why was Mr. Easton embarrassed when Miss Fairchild addressed him ? [3]
- (iii) How was Mr. Easton's other hand 'otherwise engaged' ?
 How does Miss Fairchild react when he raises his right hand to show her what he meant ? [3]
- (iv) How does Miss Fairchild feel about Mr. Easton ?
 How does she try to convey these feelings to him? [3]
- (v) The story has a surprise ending. How is the surprise revealed to the reader? [4]

8 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

So the little girl walked about the streets on her naked feet, which were red and blue with cold. In her old apron she carried a great many matches, and she had a packet of them in her hand as well.

(i) Who was 'she'?

What can you conclude about her condition from the above description? [3]

(ii) What time of the year was it? Why did she not want to go home? [3]

(iii) What did she use the matches for? What happened when she lit the first match? [3]

(iv) Whom did she love dearly? What did she say when this person appeared before her? [3]

(v) What happened to the little girl at the end of the story? Would you consider this a happy ending or a sad one? Give one reason for your answer. [4]

9 Answer the following questions with reference to Norah Burke's short story 'The Blue Bead'.

(i) Describe Sibia's experience at the Bazaar.

What were the things that filled her with wonder? [4]

(ii) Who were the Gujars? Give a brief description of their lifestyle. [4]

(iii) Describe how Sibia rescued the Gujar woman from the crocodile.

What did Sibia regard as the highlight of that fateful day?

What does this tell us about Sibia? [8]

Answers

- 1** (i) At the beginning of the scene, Gobbo asks Launcelot the way to Shylock's residence. Launcelot says that Gobbo's son has died.
- (ii) The 'Sisters Three', according to the Greek mythology, were the fate or destiny. They were lotho, the one who spins the thread of life, Lachesis, the one who measures the thread of life and Atropos, the one who cuts the thread of life. After every birth of a child, for seven nights afterwards they (the three sisters) visit the child to determine his or her fate to see how to spin their life line.
- (iii) Shylock was Launcelot's master. Gobbo had bought a dish of doves for Launcelot's master. Launcelot wants that his father should give the gift to him so that he can give it to Bassanio (his new master).
- (iv) Launcelot states that he wants to leave his present master's service because Shylock was a Jew and if he stays a little longer with him, then he would become a miserly Jew like Shylock. He also says that his master (Shylock) is starving him to death. He has become so thin that his ribs can be counted easily. Instead of serving Shylock, Launcelot wishes to serve Bassanio.
- (v) Gobbo has trouble recognising Launcelot because he is half-blind and hence is unable to see Launcelot clearly. This act serves the purpose of supporting the play structurally as Launcelot leaving the service of Shylock prepares for a similar defection of Jessica.
- 2** (i) 'He' is Antonio. Shylock wants to take revenge from Antonio. He wants to cut a pound of Antonio's flesh to take revenge from him.
- 'To bait fish withal' means to use as a bait for fishing. By this Shylock means that he would use the pound of flesh that he would cut from Antonio's body as a bait to catch fish.

- (ii) The three ways in which 'he' (Antonio) had wronged Shylock are:
 - (a) Antonio has harmed Shylock's business interests because of Antonio's practice of lending money without interest.
 - (b) Antonio has insulted and abused Shylock many times in public.
 - (c) Antonio curses Shylock's religion (Judaism) and has laughed at Shylock's losses.
- (iii) According to Shylock, Jews resembled Christians because they have eyes, hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections and passions just like Christians have.
- (iv) Shylock says that if a Jew wrongs a Christian, revenge is inevitably sought. So, he does not see a reason why the same rule should not work both ways. In this way, Shylock uses Christian example to justify his desire for revenge.
- (v) In the given extract, Shylock is happy and sad at the same time. Shylock is happy to know that Antonio's fortunes have been ruined by the loss of his ships. On the other hand, he is sad to know that Jessica, his daughter has eloped with Lorenzo taking his money and jewels.

3. (i) This scene takes place at a court in Venice. Portia is here to fight the case of Antonio.

Bassanio does not recognise her because she is dressed as a lawyer.

- (ii) In these lines, mercy is compared to a soft rain that falls from the heaven and nourishes the earth.

Mercy is said to be 'twice blessed' as it blesses the one who gives it and the one who receives it.

- (iii) These lines mean that mercy is a quality which only someone with supreme power can portray. The time might of a king is exhibited by his merciful demeanour even more than his crown.

- (iv) A scepter is a decorated stick that is carried by a queen or a king during some official ceremonies as a symbol of their authority.

A king's 'spectred sway' represents the control he has on earth and adds to his majesty. But, according to Portia, mercy is more powerful than any earthly control as it is a quality attributed to God who is the King of all kings. So, anyone who shows mercy likens himself to God.

- (v) These words are addressed to Shylock.

In response to Portia's request for mercy, Shylock insisted on the justice of his cause. He was determined to get a pound of flesh from Antonio's body as a penalty.

Portia's compassionate nature and her cheerful and optimistic disposition appeal to me the most. Her famous 'Quality of Mercy' speech is a proof of her compassionate nature. She is always cheerful and optimistic and only in one occasion in the whole play she feels melancholic. This is when she is unable to choose her husband.

4. (i) The poet uses the word 'delicate' to describe the bangles as they are made of glass and hence can break easily. 'rainbow-tinted circles of light' refers to the round shaped, multi-coloured bangles that glow in sunlight. Therefore, it is an appropriate description of the bangles.

- (ii) • 'Shining loads' means the bangles which are sparkling in sunlight.

- 'Lustrous tokens of radiant lives' means bright symbols of shining lives.

- 'For happy daughters and happy wives' means that the radiant bangles are meant for happy daughters and happy wives. It expresses the happiness of daughters at young age and the joys a married woman has in her marital life.

- (iii) The examples of these images are : 'shining loads', 'Tinkling, luminous, tender, and clear' and 'Rainbow-tinted circles of light'.

- (iv) The poet associates the emotions of happiness and sadness with a bride on her wedding day. She is happy as she is getting married and entering into a life of her dreams. She is sad because she is going to leave her parental home. The bride is wearing bangles that are deep red in colour which express the passion of her heart.

- (v) • Blue, green, red and silver colours are associated by the poet with a maiden.

- Purple and gold-flecked grey colours are associated by the poet with a middle-aged woman.

The maiden is fresh and beautiful and dreams of getting married. The middle-aged woman is mature and responsible. She is concerned about fulfilling her household duties.

- 5** (i) The white people in America are referred as 'free bird' and the blacks in America are referred as 'caged bird'. The lines convey the angry and sad mood of the 'caged bird'.
- (ii) The free bird enjoys his freedom fearlessly. He thinks of another breeze through the trees and dreams of good eatables like fat worms waiting on a bright lawn.
- (iii) The caged bird sings about 'things unknown'. 'Things unknown' refers to the fact that the caged bird has never enjoyed freedom before and has no idea of what it tastes like.
- The caged bird is unable to see the open sky as through the cage only limited vision is possible. His wings are dipped and feet are tied and hence he cannot move or fly.
- (iv) The title of the poem compares the life of the bird who lives freely to the one who is confined to a cage. The poet uses the metaphor of a bird struggling to escape its cage. The caged bird represents the poet's confinement resulting from racism and oppression.
- I like the way in which the poet has described the caged bird and the free bird.
- (v) (i) '..... a bird that stalks down his narrow cage' means that the bird in the cage is unable to move freely and is angry at his helplessness.
- (ii) 'he names the sky his own' means that the free bird has all the freedom and so he thinks that the sky belongs to him.
- 6** (i) Abou Ben Adhem saw an angel when he woke from a deep sleep one night. The angel was as beautiful as the lily flower in bloom. She was writing something in a book of gold (a divine book containing the names of people who love God).
- (ii) Abou Ben Adhem asked the angel what she was writing in the book. The angel responded by saying that she was writing the names of those people who love God.
- (iii) When he learnt that his name did not appear among the names of people who loved the Lord, Abou requested the angel to write his name among those who love their fellow men.
- Abou Ben Adhem did not lose his spirit when he came to know that his name was not in the list of people who loved God. He still spoke to the angel with cheer and joy.
- (iv) The angel appeared to Abou Ben Adhem again the next night. It appeared with a great awakening light which was so bright that it awoke Abou Ben Adhem.
- The angel showed him the names of those people whom God had blessed with his love and affection.
- (v) By 'May his tribe increase', the poet wishes for the growth of people who followed the teachings of Abou Ben Adhem. He says this because Abou loved his tribesmen and helped them greatly so he (the poet) wanted the tribe of Abou (the followers of Abou) to increase.
- The central message of the poem is that God blesses and loves those people who love and serve their fellowmen. If one wants to please God, one must please one's fellow men.
- 7** (i) Miss Fairchild is an attractive young woman with a lovely smile who is accustomed to speak and being heard. She is also an experienced traveller.
- Mr. Easton is a young man with a handsome presence and a bold, frank expression on his face.
- (ii) The above conversation occurred in a coach is a train.
- Mr. Easton was embarrassed when Miss Fairchild addressed him because he was found handcuffed by Miss Fairchild who had previously known him as a gentleman.
- (iii) Mr. Easton's other hand was 'otherwise engaged' because it was handcuffed with a fat, glum-faced man seated beside him.
- When he raises his right hand to show her what he meant, the glad look in the eyes of Miss Fairchild slowly changed to a bewildered horror. The glow faded from her cheeks and her lips parted in a vague look of relaxing distress.
- (iv) Miss Fairchild was attracted to Mr. Easton and wanted to have a romantic relationship with him.
- She tries to convey her feelings by saying that she loves the West and wants to live there when Mr. Easton mentions that he had settled down in the West.
- (v) The surprise ending is revealed to the reader in the end when a passenger in the train remarks that he had never seen an officer handcuff a prisoner to his right hand. Usually a prisoner's right hand is handcuffed to the left hand of an officer/marshall. By this the reader gets to know that Mr. Easton was the criminal as his right hand was handcuffed and the old and grumpy man was the real marshall.

- 8** (i) 'She' in the extract is the little girl. As the little girl walked barefoot in the extremely cold weather selling matches, it can be concluded that she was very poor.
- (ii) It was New Year's eve.
The little girl did not want to go home as she feared that she might receive a beating from her father because she had not managed to sell even a single matchstick the whole day.
- (iii) She used the matches for keeping herself warm.
When the little girl lighted the first match, it spluttered and burnt. She felt as if she was holding her hand on a warm bright flame like a tiny candle.
- (iv) She loved her grandmother dearly. When her grandmother appeared before her, she requested her to take her with her. This was because she feared that her grandmother would disappear as soon as the match burns out.
- (v) The little girl died at the end of the story. It was a happy ending because in death, she had been freed from her life of poverty and isolation.
- 9** (i) Sibia had a great experience at the Bazaar. The things that filled her with wonder were the fineries that were sold in the bazaar. They were the glass bangles, the silk and the cotton cloth, the sweets and other confectioneries, satin sewn with real silver thread and tin trays from Birmingham.
- (ii) Gujars were the nomadic graziers. Nomadic graziers refer to that tribe of people which roam around from place to place frequently, or without a fixed pattern of movement. They could live at one place for a long time unless and until their animals had finished all the easy grazing within reach or they were not able to sell enough of their white butter and white milk in the district. The other reasons for their movement could be that there was no one to buy their young male buffaloes for tiger-bait or perhaps a cattle-killing tiger was making a nuisance of himself.
- (iii) When Sibia saw the Gujar woman being attacked by the crocodile, she leapt forward from boulder to boulder. She threw her hayfork at the crocodile and it wedged right in its eye. Groaning in agony, the crocodile let go of the woman. Then Sibia dragged the woman from the water by putting her arms around her. She stopped the blood coming out of her wounds by putting sand on them and tied them with a rag. After that Sibia helped the woman to reach her home.
Sibia regarded the finding of the blue bead by her as the highlight of the fateful day.
This tells us that Sibia was a humble and brave girl who was delighted to find the blue bead. She considered it worthy as she was a poor girl who could not afford buying it.

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SPECIMEN PAPER

SEMESTER
1 & 2

Latest ICSE SPECIMEN PAPER

Semester 1

Literature in English-X (Paper-2)

Time : 1 hr

Max Marks : 40

1. All questions are compulsory.
2. The marks intended for questions are given in brackets [].
3. Select the correct option for each of the following questions.

SECTION A

[10 × 1]

- 1 The story, The Little Match Girl, was written by _____.
(a) Hans Christian Andersen (b) Roald Dahl
(c) Ruskin Bond (d) J.K. Rowling
- 2 The visions seen by the little girl in the short story, 'The Little Match Girl' reveal the four things she needed the most. They were _____.
(a) warmth, food, love and freedom from fear
(b) food, shelter, warm clothes and a mother
(c) roast goose, new slippers, candy and a warm cup of tea
(d) a warm over coat, food, a scarf, a pair of socks
- 3 Maya Angelou has used the caged bird as a symbol for _____.
(a) the oppressed (b) the oppressors
(c) feminist writers (d) writers and activists
- 4 The central message of Browning's poem, 'The Patriot' is _____.
(a) public adulation and glory are short lived
(b) as you sow, so you reap
(c) death comes to all people, even the rich and famous
(d) God helps those who help themselves
- 5 The Gujars mentioned in Norah Burke's story, 'The Blue Bead' were _____.
(a) wandering herdsmen (b) Stone age hunters
(c) Hunter gatherers (d) Primitive cultivators

- 6 Sibia lingered behind after the other women had left because _____.
 (a) she didn't want to have to help her mother with preparing the evening meal
 (b) she wanted to check if her little clay cups were still in the cave where she had left them
 (c) she wanted to chat with the Gujar women who came to draw water from the river
 (d) she was exhausted and she wanted to rest for a while
- 8 Tubal returns from Genoa with news both good and bad, for Shylock. Which of the following did he NOT say to Shylock?
 (a) That he had met Jessica, Shylock's daughter in Genoa.
 (b) That in Genoa, he had heard news of Antonio's misfortunes.
 (c) That Jessica had spent eighty ducats in one night in Genoa.
 (d) That he had been shown Shylock's ring that Jessica had traded in Genoa for a monkey.
- 8 Soon after Portia and Bassanio declare their love for each other, another pair also declare their love for each other and ask to be married at the same time as Portia and Bassanio. They are _____.
 (a) Gratiano and Nerissa (b) Gratiano and Jessica
 (c) Lorenzo and Nerissa (d) Lorenzo and Jessica
- 9 Bassanio rejected the golden casket because _____.
 (a) he knew that Midas had found gold hard to digest
 (b) he knew that outward appearances are often deceptive
 (c) he found gold too shiny for his taste
 (d) he had been told which casket contained Portia's portrait
- 10 When Portia left for Venice she put _____ in charge of her house.
 (a) Lorenzo (b) Jessica
 (c) Gratiano (d) Launcelot

SECTION B

- 1 Read the following extract from *The Merchant of Venice* (Act 3) and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate response from the choices given below. [5 × 1]

Salarino : Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou
 Wilt not take his flesh: What's that good for?
 Shylock : To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing
 Else it will feed my revenge.

- (i) Where does the above exchange between Salarino and Shylock take place?
 (a) On a street in Venice (b) On the Rialto
 (c) On a street outside Shylock's house (d) On a street in Belmont
- (ii) What is Antonio required to forfeit if he fails to repay the amount he borrowed from Shylock within the time specified in the bond?
 (a) A pound of his flesh
 (b) Three times the sum that he had borrowed
 (c) His friendship with Bassanio
 (d) All his wealth and property

- (iii) A little later in his speech, Shylock compares Christians with Jews. Which of the following comparisons does he NOT make?
- Both Jews and Christians bleed when cut
 - Both Jews and Christians die if poisoned
 - Both Jews and Christians treat each other with humility
 - Both Jews and Christians seek revenge when wronged
- (iv) What recent event in his personal life does Shylock lament earlier in the conversation?
- His wife's death
 - His daughter's death
 - The loss of an expensive diamond
 - His daughter eloping with a Christian
- (v) Which of the following words would you use to describe Shylock's state of mind after this impassioned speech?
1. hurt 2. angry 3. vindictive 4. resourceful
- 1, 2 and 3
 - 2, 3 and 4
 - 3, 4 and 1
 - 4, 1 and 2

2 Read the following extract from Act 3 of 'The Merchant of Venice' and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate response from the choices given below: [5 × 1]

Portia : Away, then! I am locked in one of them:

If you do love me, you will find me out.-

Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.

- (i) Portia says, "I am locked in one of them." The word 'one' refers to _____.
- a silver casket
 - a silver casket
 - a bronze casket
 - a lead casket
- (ii) A little later, Portia compares Nerissa and the rest to _____.
- Alcides and the sea-monster
 - Alcides and the Dardanian wives
 - Alcides and Hesione
 - the Dardanian wives with tearstained faces
- (iii) Which of the following statements is NOT true?
- At the beginning of the scene Portia urges Bassanio to wait a while before taking the casket test.
 - At the beginning of the scene Bassanio is eager to take the test as he finds the waiting a form of torture.
 - At the beginning of the scene Bassanio wants to wait and take the test later as he wants to spend some time with Portia.
 - At the beginning of the scene Portia is afraid that Bassanio might choose the wrong casket and be lost to her forever.
- (iv) Who arrives from Venice towards the end of the scene bringing news of Antonio's misfortunes?
- Salerio, Lorenzo and Jessica
 - Salerio, Gratiano and Nerissa
 - Salerio, Lorenzo and Nerissa
 - Salerio, Gratiano and Nerissa
- (v) The word, 'aloof' in the extract can best be replaced by _____.
- arrogant
 - remain silent
 - condescending and distant
 - aside

- 3** Read the following extract from the short story, 'The Little Match Girl' and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate response from the choices given below. [5 × 1]

"She was evidently trying to warm herself," they said. But no one knew what beautiful visions she had seen and in what a blaze of glory she had entered with her dear old grandmother into the heavenly joy and gladness of a new year.

- (i) Who said "She was evidently trying to keep herself warm"?
- Her grandmother
 - The little girl's father
 - Her mother
 - The people who found her lying dead on the street
- (ii) The vision that the little match girl saw when she lit the first match was of
- an iron stove
 - a beautiful Christmas tree
 - a delicious meal laid out on a table
 - her kind and loving grandmother
- (iii) When the little girl saw the shooting star earlier that night, she realised _____.
- that someone was dying
 - that someone has just been shot
 - that someone has just been born
 - that misfortune awaited her
- (iv) How many matches did the little girl light that night?
- Two
 - Four
 - Three
 - Several
- (v) When the little girl left home that morning, she _____.
- was barefoot and bareheaded
 - was wrapped in a warm woollen shawl
 - had on an old apron and oversized slippers
 - had eaten a hearty breakfast

- 4** Read the following extract from the short story, 'The Blue Bead' and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate response from the choices given below. [5 × 1]

Beside him in the shoals as he lay waiting glimmered a blue gem.

- (i) Who is 'he'?
- Sibia's father
 - Her brother
 - The man-eating tiger
 - The crocodile
- (ii) What was he waiting for?
- Any creature that he could catch unawares and feed on
 - Sibia and her mother
 - To sun himself on the warm rocks
 - A shoal of fish to come swimming by
- (iii) The word closest in meaning to, 'glimmered' in the above line is
- glimpsed
 - glittered
 - half-hidden
 - glued
- (iv) What exactly was, the 'blue gem'?
- A blue diamond
 - A shiny blue pebble
 - A piece of sand-worn blue glass
 - An enormous sapphire
- (v) The only parts of 'him' that were soft and vulnerable were _____.
- his eyes and nose
 - his nose and mouth
 - the undersides of his arms and tail
 - his eyes and the undersides of his arms

- 5 Read the following extract from the poem, 'I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate response from the choices given below. [5 × 1]

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage

- (i) The caged bird sings about _____.
(a) the unknown things that he longs for and for freedom
(b) shadows and unknown things
(c) freedom and fat worms
(d) fear and rage
- (ii) What prevents the caged bird from flying?
(a) The narrow cage and clipped wings
(b) His broken wings and his inability to sing
(c) His trimmed feathers and his damaged throat
(d) His rage at being held captive
- (iii) In this poem, Maya Angelou compares the caged bird with _____.
(a) the free bird
(b) freedom fighters
(c) children in school
(d) the distant hill
- (iv) Who, according to Maya Angelou 'dares to claim the sky'?
(a) The caged bird
(b) The free bird
(c) The angry bird
(d) The song bird
- (v) The closest in meaning to the word 'seldom' in the above context is
(a) Solitary
(b) Solemn
(c) Rarely
(d) Lonely

- 6 Read the following extract from the poem, 'The Patriot' and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate answer from the choices given below. [5 × 1]

It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad:
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

- (i) The speaker is describing _____.
(a) the scene of his welcome the previous year
(b) an outbreak of rioting in his town
(c) a time when people lost their minds and attacked rose and myrtle bushes
(d) the collapse of houses under the weight of the crowds
- (ii) The speaker is now _____.
(a) on his way to be greeted by the cheering crowds
(b) on his way to the gallows
(c) on his way to a political rally
(d) on his way to prison

- (iii) The closest in meaning to, 'heave and sway' in the above extract is
- to move in a restless manner
 - to rise up higher and higher
 - to sink down under a heavy weight
 - swing wildly
- (iv) All the images used by the poet in this stanza are _____ images.
- sound
 - visual
 - tactile
 - colourful
- (v) The mood described in this opening stanza of Browning's poem, 'The Patriot' is _____.
- noisy
 - celebratory
 - gloomy
 - filled with regret

Answers

Section A

1. (a) 2. (a) 3. (a) 4. (a) 5. (a) 6. (b) 7. (a) 8. (a) 9. (a) 10. (a)

Section B

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------|----------|-----------|----------|---------|
| 1. | (i) (a) | (ii) (a) | (iii) (c) | (iv) (d) | (v) (a) |
| 2. | (i) (d) | (ii) (d) | (iii) (c) | (iv) (a) | (v) (d) |
| 3. | (i) (d) | (ii) (a) | (iii) (a) | (iv) (b) | (v) (c) |
| 4. | (i) (d) | (ii) (a) | (iii) (b) | (iv) (c) | (v) (d) |
| 5. | (i) (a) | (ii) (a) | (iii) (a) | (iv) (b) | (v) (c) |
| 6. | (i) (a) | (ii) (b) | (iii) (c) | (iv) (b) | (v) (b) |

Latest ICSE SPECIMEN PAPER

Semester 2

Literature in English-X (Paper-2)

Time : 1 hr

Max Marks : 40

1. The Paper has four sections.
2. Section A is compulsory-All questions in Section A must be answered.
3. You must attempt one question from each of the Sections B, C and D.
4. The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].

Section A

1 Choose the correct answers to the questions from the given options.

- (i) What was announced on the loudspeakers before the start of the race in the poem, 'Nine Gold Medals'? (1)
 - (a) The nationalities of the runners
 - (b) The age of the runners
 - (c) The names of the runners
 - (d) The gender of the runners
- (ii) Which of the following words would best describe Abou Ben Adhem? (1)
 - (a) Bold and brash
 - (b) Devout and compassionate
 - (c) Prayerful and anxious
 - (d) Dreamy and peaceful
- (iii) What event were the children in Ray Bradbury's story, 'All Summer in a Day' eagerly awaiting? (1)
 - (a) Their return to the Earth
 - (b) The arrival of the Rocket people
 - (c) Their teacher's return
 - (d) The appearance of the Sun
- (iv) How old was Margot when she first arrived on his distant planet? (1)
 - (a) Five
 - (b) Seven
 - (c) Four
 - (d) Nine
- (v) What made Jesse Owens one of the best remembered athletes of all time? (1)
 - (a) His remarkable achievement of winning four gold medals at the 1936 Olympic Games
 - (b) The amazing bond of friendship that he developed with arch rival Luz Long
 - (c) His struggle to qualify for the finals of the broad jump at the 1936 Olympic Games
 - (d) His anger at the rising nationalistic feelings that characterised the 1936 Berlin Olympics
- (vi) "You should be able to qualify with your eyes closed." Who said these words and to whom?(1)
 - (a) Jesses Owens' coach to Jesse Owens
 - (b) Luz Long to Jesse Owens
 - (c) Jesse Owens to Luz Long
 - (d) Hitler to Luz Long

- (vii) Antonio says that trying to reason with Shylock was like (1)
- standing on the beach and ordering the waves to wash away the sands
 - reasoning with a ewe which was crying out in distress at the loss of her lamb
 - trying to soften a rock
 - commanding the pine trees on the mountain side to remain quiet and motionless when battered by strong winds
- (viii) Which of the following characters can be described as quick-witted, daring and loyal? (1)
- Nerissa
 - Jessica
 - Portia
 - Leah
- (ix) Name the young lovers whose lives ended tragically because of a misunderstanding caused by the appearance of a lion. (1)
- Troilus and Cressida
 - Pyramus and Thisbe
 - Dido and Aeneas
 - Medea and Aeson
- (x) What special 'deed of gift' does Jessica give to Lorenzo at the end of the play? (1)
- The news that Shylock had forgiven Jessica and Lorenzo for eloping
 - The bond signed by Shylock making Lorenzo heir to all his wealth
 - The three thousand ducats that Antonio owed to Shylock
 - The news that Shylock had agreed to become a Christian

Section B : Drama

(The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare -Acts 4 and 5)

2 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Portia The quality of mercy is not strained ; It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice blessed : It blesseth him that gives and him
that takes . Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes The throned monarch better
than his crown.

- Where does this scene take place? Why is Portia here? (2)
- To what is mercy compared in these lines? (2)
- Why does Portia call mercy 'twice blessed'?
Explain the lines: 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes the throned monarch better
than his crown: (3)
- Later in her speech Portia mentions a sceptre. What is a sceptre?
How, according to Portia, is mercy above the 'sceptred sway'? (3)

3 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

Gratiano O learned judge! – Mark, Jew: a learned
judge!

Shylock I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.

- Why does Shylock suddenly decide to accept this offer? (2)
- Who has made this offer? Who stops Shylock from accepting this offer? (2)
- Shylock decides to leave the court without even receiving the principal amount. What other
crime is he accused of? What further punishment does he face for this crime? (3)
- Later in this scene, how does the Duke show that he is merciful? What does Shylock say in
response to the Duke's act of mercy? (3)

Section C : Prose-Short Stories

(Treasure Trove – A Collection of ICSE Poems and Short Stories)

4 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow

He gave her a shove. But she did not move, rather she let herself be moved only by him and nothing else. They edged away from her; they would not look at her. She felt them go away.

- (i) Who is 'she'? On which planet is this story set? (2)
- (ii) Mention any two ways in which life on this planet differs from life on Earth. (2)
- (iii) Who are 'they'? Why did 'they' not come to her aid when William shoved her? (3)
- (iv) What do 'they' do to her at the end of the story? Why did they behave in this manner? (3)

5 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

An angry athlete is an athlete who will make mistakes, as any coach will tell you. I was no exception. On the first of my three qualifying jumps, I leaped from several inches beyond the take-off board for a foul.

- (i) When and where is this narrative set? (2)
- (ii) What reason does the narrator Jesse Owens give for the heightened nationalistic feelings at this time? (2)
- (iii) In which event had Owens been confident of winning a gold medal? Why? (3)
- (iv) What had made Owens angry enough to make mistakes? Name Owens' rival who approached him at this point. (3)

Section D : Poetry

(Treasure Trove – A Collection of ICSE Poems and Short Stories)

6 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said, "What writest thou?"

— Abou Ben Adhem, Leigh Hunt

- (i) To whom did Ben Adhem address these words? Mention the context in which he said this. (2)
- (ii) What was the 'presence' doing in Ben Adhem's room? What did the presence say in response to Ben Adhem's question? (2)
- (iii) What did Abou ben Adhem say after this exchange? How did the presence respond to his words? (3)
- (iv) Describe the events of the following night. (3)

7 Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

All round the field spectators were gathered
Cheering on all the young women and men
Then the final event of the day was approaching
The last race about to begin. — Nine Gold Medals, David Roth

- (i) Where had the 'young women and men' come from? What had brought them together? (2)
- (ii) What was the last event of the day? How many athletes were participating in this event? (2)
- (iii) What happened to the youngest athlete half way through the race? How did he respond with the situation? (3)
- (iv) Describe the manner in which the race ends. (3)

Answers

- 1
 - (i) (a) The nationalities of the runners
 - (ii) (b) Devout and compassionate
 - (iii) (d) The appearance of the Sun
 - (iv) (c) Four
 - (v) (a) His remarkable achievement of winning four gold medals at the 1936 Olympic Games.
 - (vi) (b) Luz Long to Jesse Owens
 - (vii) (d) Commanding the pine trees on the mountain side to remain quiet and motionless when battered by strong winds.
 - (viii) (c) Portia
 - (ix) (b) Pyramus and Thisbe
 - (x) (b) The bond signed by Shylock making Lorenzo heir to all his wealth.
- 2
 - (i) The scene takes place at the court of Venice where the hearing of the case of Antonio and Shylock is being done by the Duke of Venice.
Portia, dressed as a learned doctor of laws named Balthazar sent by Dr. Bellerio in his place to settle the case.
 - (ii) The mercy is compared to the way gentle rain drops on the ground. It is said to be the strongest in the strongest people. It looks better in a king than his own crown looks on him.
 - (iii) Portia calls mercy 'twice blessed' because it blesses the one who gives it and the one who receives it.
The given lines mean that the mercy is the quality of the strongest people. It looks good in a king, makes him look better than the crown on his head.
 - (iv) A scepter is a staff or wand held in the hand by a ruling monarch as an item of royal or imperial insignia. The king's scepter represents his earthly power, the symbol of majesty, the focus of royal authority. But, according to Portia, mercy is higher than the scepter. It's enthroned in the hearts of kings, a quality of God himself. Kingly power seems most like God's power when the king mixes mercy with justice.
- 3
 - (i) Shylock suddenly decides to accept this offer because Portia tells him that the contract does not mention giving him any blood at all. The words clearly specify 'a pound of flesh.' So, she asked Shylock to take his penalty of a pound of flesh, but if he shed one drop of Christian blood when he cut it, the state of Venice will confiscate his land and property under Venetian law.
 - (ii) Bassanio makes this offer to Shylock.
Portia stops Shylock from accepting this offer so that he can get his justice and forfeiture of his bond – one pound of Antonio's flesh without shedding a drop of his blood.
 - (iii) Shylock decides to leave the court without even receiving the principal amount because he was accused of another crime. He was accused of trying to put the life of a Venetian in danger and attempting his murder.
His further punishment was that half of his wealth was confiscated by the state as a penalty and the other half was signed as a deed to be given to Jessica and Lorenzo after his death. And his life was at the mercy of the Duke of Venice. He was also asked to change into Christianity.
 - (iv) Later in the given scene, the Duke shows that he is merciful by letting Shylock go even before he asks for it. He asks Shylock to see the difference in their souls. The Duke further inform him that if Shylock is ready to show humility, then the state's half can be reduced to a penalty.
Shylock in response asks the Duke not to pardon his wealth and take his life. He further says to take away his house since he is not left with any means of living.
- 4
 - (i) 'She' is Margot.
The story is set on the planet Venus where the rocket men and women have come to set up their lives.
 - (ii) The life on Venus was different than that of the Earth in the following ways
 - (a) There was no Sun on Venus. It was only raining, tides, thunderstorms and cold winds. People used to live undergrounds because there was water everywhere. Rocket men and women used to live there with their children.

- (b) The children did not know how Sun felt or looked like. There was no spring on Venus. The jungle on Venus was always growing and crushing with the rains. The stones, trees and everything had the colour of ash and dull grey or black because of absence of the Sun.
- (iii) 'They' are the classmates of Margot. 'They' did not come to her aid when William shoved her because no one in the class used to talk to Margot. Margot also avoided everybody in the class and did not talk to or play with them. They were jealous of her because she was from Earth and had known how exactly Sun looked and felt like. They were envious of her description of Sun.
- (iv) 'They' locked her in a closet in the end of the story. They behaved in this manner because they were jealous of her and her descriptions about Sun. Since, Margot did not talk to anybody in the class or play with them, they also used to make fun of her. They were envious of the rumours about her that she was going back to Earth with her parents.
- 5** (i) The narrative is set in the summer of 1936 when the Olympic Games were being held in Berlin.
- (ii) Hitler had given a statement in which he declared his performers were from the 'master race'. He said that Aryan race was superior to all other races. This was the reason mentioned by the narrator Jesse Owen for heightened nationalistic feelings at this time.
- (iii) Owens had been confident of winning a gold medal in broad jump. He was confident because he had trained himself for the event from six years. He had set a world record at Ohio State University a year before and he wasn't expecting any opponent in the game because no other player's name was declared before the event.
- (iv) Hitler's childish theory that his was the 'master race' and Aryan race was superior to all other races made Owens angry enough to make mistakes during the trials. At this time, his German rival, Luz Long approached him to calm him down.
- 6** (i) Ben Adhem addressed these words to the angel sitting in his room. He said these words because he saw the angel writing something in his book of gold.
- (ii) The 'presence' was sitting in Ben Adhem's room writing something in his book of gold. The presence tells Ben Adhem that it was writing the names of the people who loved God. Then, Ben Adhem asks the angel to include his name in the list because he loved his fellowmen, the creations of God which is also a way to love God.
- (iii) Abou Ben Adhem asks the angel if his name was included in the list of those people who loved God. When the Abou Ben Adhem asked him if name is included in the list the presence replied to him in negation.
- (iv) On the following night, the angel came again in Abou Ben Adhem's room with a bright wakening light. The angel showed Abou the list of people whom the God had blessed with his love and blessings and Abou's name was written on the top in the list.
- 7** (i) The young women and men had come from all over the world to take part in the Special Olympics. The event of hundred meters race at the Special Olympics and an urge to win gold, silver and bronze medals had brought them together.
- (ii) The last event of the day was the hundred meters race. Nine athletes were participating in this event.
- (iii) Halfway through the race, the youngest athlete got stumbled and fell down on the ground. He was anguished and frustrated and gave out a cry of pain. He felt that all his dreams of winning a gold medal were shattered.
- (iv) The race ended in a very different manner. When the youngest athlete fell on the ground, all the other eight athletes came back to him and helped him in standing on his feet. Then, all nine of them joined hands together and proceeded towards the finish line. The hundred meters race reduced to a walk. All of them reached the finish line together and were happy and smiling. Their act of compassion made the Special Olympics all the more special. They showed what true victory was and each of them was awarded a gold medal.