

The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse

QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

A. Reading With Insight

Question 1. You will probably agree that this story does not have breathless adventure and exciting action. Then what in your opinion makes it interesting?

Answer: The story 'The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse' is a tale told from the viewpoint of a nine-year old boy. At that age, imagination is rich and one can romanticise even insignificant actions. To such a person the world is full of excellence and glory and life is delightful and a mysterious dream.

For the young poor boy, a ride on a beautiful white horse is a dream fulfilled. He had been always longing to ride and his cherished dream is realised when his cousin Mourad offers him a chance to ride on horseback—first with him and then alone. Riding the stolen horse and hiding it safely are great feats of adventure for the two boys. Though the story line is thin, we eagerly follow the course of action taken by the boys till they return the horse to its rightful owner.

The story provides us a peep into child psychology. For boys who are crazy about horses, stealing a horse for a ride is not stealing. Though they enjoy the thrill of riding, they are conscious of their family pride. The Garoghlanian family is well-known for honesty and trust. They would neither steal nor take advantage of anybody in the world.

Another point of interest is characterisation. The delineation of the common traits of uncle Khosrove and cousin Mourad is superb. The story also contains many purple passages full of pictorial description. All these heighten its appeal to the reader.

Question 2. Did the boys return the horse because they were conscience-stricken or because they were afraid?

Answer: The story gives no indication that the boys were afraid of anyone or anything. Hence the return of the horse was not directed by fear. Secondly, they were not at all conscience-stricken. They did not feel any pangs of repentance or remorse at their action of

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stealing a horse solely for the purpose of riding it. The narrator makes it amply clear when he asserts that stealing a horse for a ride was not the same thing as stealing something else, such as money. For him, it wasn't stealing at all as he and Mourad were so crazy about horses. In his opinion it would become stealing only when they offered to sell the horse, which he knew they would never do.

The last phrase gives a clue to their mental make up. Mourad had the horse for over a month when farmer John Byro visited the narrator's house. They retained it for two weeks more. Mourad outrightly rejected the narrator's suggestion of keeping the horse any longer. It was his family pride that would not let him steal. He decided that the horse must go back to its true owner.

The meeting with John Byro proved conclusive. He praised their family for its honesty. He trusted the boys as he knew their parents. Hence in order to uphold the family tradition and reputation, the boys returned the horse to its rightful owner.

Question 3. "One day back there in the good old days when I was nine and the world was full of every imaginable kind of magnificence, and life was still a delightful and mysterious dream The story begins in a mood of nostalgia. Can you narrate some incident from your childhood that might make an interesting story?"

Answer: I had just completed my primary education when I visited my uncle. He was a forest ranger in Dehradun. In those days there was a thick forest in the vicinity of the city and all sorts of wild animals prowled there. Uncle had advised us not to enter the deep forest, but forbidden fruit is sweet; My cousin Varun, a couple of his friends and I decided to explore the southern range. We had the kits of scouts and were fully prepared. In our boyish enthusiasm, we went deep into the jungle and reached a gorge. We were amazed to see a lioness with her cubs. One of us, perhaps, Mohit clicked his camera. The flashlight scared the lioness and she roared and leaped. Fortunately there was a big ditch and she fell into it. Meanwhile, we lit our torches, collected dry leaves and twigs and set them on fire. Momentarily, we got respite from our attackers. Then we threw some green leaves on fire to give smoke signal. A patrol party noticed it and rescued us. I shudder whenever I think of this adventure when we were close to death.

Question 4. The story revolves around characters who belong to tribe in Armenia. Mourad and Aram are members of the Garoghlanian family. Now locate Armenia and Assyria on the atlas and prepare a write-up on the Garoghlanian tribes. You may write about people, their names, traits, geographical and economic features as suggested in the story.

Answer: The Garoghlanian Tribes

The Garoghlanian family was an Armenian tribe. Eleven centuries ago it was the wealthiest family in that part of the world. However, now every branch of the Garoghlanian tribe was living in the most amazing and comical poverty in the world. These poor people had no money. Nobody could understand where they ever got money enough to keep them with food in their bellies.

The Garoghlanian tribes were famous for their honesty. It had been the hallmark of the tribe for many centuries. They were proud of their family. Honesty came next and then they believed in right and wrong. None of them would take advantage of anybody in the world. No member of the Garoghlanian family could be a thief.

The elders felt pained to remember that they had lost their homeland. These people shifted their residence from one place to the other. The narrator says, "That year we lived at the edge of the town, on Walnut Avenue." They loved countryside having vineyards, orchards, olives and Walnuts. The names of the people are semi- Arabic: Mourad, Aram, Khosrove etc.

MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

A. Short Answer Type Questions

Question 1. "I couldn't believe what I saw," says the narrator. What was so unbelievable?

Why?

Answer: The narrator saw his cousin Mourad sitting on a beautiful white horse. It was unbelievable, for they belonged to poor families and buying such a beautiful horse was beyond their means.

Question 2. What two character-traits of Mourad are hinted at by the narrator in the initial part of the story?

Answer: Mourad was considered crazy by everybody who knew him except the narrator. He was quite crazy about horses. Secondly, he enjoyed being alive more than any body else.

Question 3. "This was the part that wouldn't permit me to believe what I saw." What 'part' does the narrator hint at?

Answer: The narrator refers to their poverty. They had no money. They lived in extreme poverty and it was difficult to understand how they got food to satisfy their hunger. He frankly admits that every branch of the Garoghlanian family was living in the most amazing and comical poverty in the world.

Question 4. What traits of the Garoghlanian family are highlighted in this story?

Answer: The Garoghlanian family though now poor, were famous for their honesty even when they were wealthy. They were proud of their family first, honest next and after that they believed in right and wrong. None of them would take advantage of anybody in the world. They would not steal. No member of the Garoghlanian family could be a thief.

Question 5. How did the narrator react on seeing the horse and Mourad?

Answer: The horse was magnificent to look at, gave out a lovely smell and its breathing was quite exciting. Yet he couldn't believe that the horse had anything to do with Mourad, because he couldn't have bought it.

Question 6. What conflicting thoughts passed through the narrator's mind on seeing Mourad on a beautiful white horse early one morning?

Answer: The narrator was surprised. He knew that his cousin Mourad couldn't have bought the horse. Since he couldn't have bought it, he must have stolen it. However, family pride came in the way. He refused to believe that he had stolen it.

Question 7. What feelings did the sight of cousin Mourad and the horse arouse in the narrator?

Answer: The narrator stared first at his cousin and then at the horse. There was a pious stillness and humour in each of them. He was delighted as well as frightened.

Question 8. "It was true, then. He had stolen the horse. There was no question about it. He had come to invite me to ride or not, as I chose." How did the narrator convince himself to enjoy a horseride with cousin Mourad?

Answer: It seemed to him that stealing a horse for a ride was not the same thing as stealing something else, such as money. Since he and Mourad were quite crazy about horses, it wasn't stealing. He convinced himself with the thought that it would become stealing only when they offered to sell it.

Question 9. Give examples to show why cousin Mourad was considered one of the craziest members of the narrator's family?

Answer: Cousin Mourad had a crazy streak. He was quite crazy about horses. He kept the

stolen white horse for about six weeks, rode it, loved it, fed it well and hid it in a deserted yard. When he sang in the open countryside, it seemed as if he were roaring.

Question 10. Why does the narrator mention uncle Khosrove? Which characteristic features of the man are highlighted?

Answer: Cousin Mourad seemed to inherit the crazy streak of unde Khosrove. He was a big man with a powerful head of black hair and very large moustache. He was quite furious in temper, very irritable and impatient. He would stop anyone from taking by roaring his pet phrase, "It is no harm; pay no attention to it".

Question 11. Give an example to illustrate how uncle Khosrove's impatience sometimes worked to his own disadvantage?

Answer: Once unde Khosrove was getting his moustache trimmed in a barber's shop. Suddenly their house was on fire. His own son Arak ran eight blocks to the barber's shop to inform him. Khosrove got impatient and roared at his son. When the barber reminded him that his house was on fire, Khosrove roared at him and stopped him from talking.

Question 12. "The distribution of the various kinds of spirit of our tribe had been from the beginning capricious and vagrant. " Elucidate.

Answer: The Garoghlanian family had a crazy streak. Mourad was considered the natural descendant of uncle Khosrove as far as the crazy streak was concerned. Mourad's father, Zorab was practical and nothing else. But Mourad was his son only in flesh; in spirit, he was similar to unde Khosrove.

Question 13. Give a brief account of Mourad's joy ride.

Answer: Mourad kicked his heels into the horse and shouted, "Vazire run!" The horse stood on its hind legs, snorted, and ran forward at full speed. Mourad raced the horse across a field of dry grass to an irrigation ditch. He crossed the ditch on the horse. When he returned five minutes later he was dripping wet.

Question 14. How did Aram, the narrator, fare in his solo ride?

Answer: Aram leaped to the back of the horse, but it did not move. Then he kicked into the muscles of the horse. It reared and snorted. Then it began to run. Aram did not know how to ride. The horse ran down the road to a vineyard. It leaped over seven vines, threw the rider and ran away.

Question 15. "We'll either take him back or hide him until tomorrow morning". Which course of action did the speaker take and why?

Answer: Mourad took the latter option. He hid the horse in the bam of a deserted vineyard which at onetime had been the pride of farmer named Fetvajian. There were some oats and dry alfalfa in the bam. So Mourad did not seem worried about the horse.

Question 16. "I have an understanding with a horse."

"Horses understand me."

"I have a way with a horse. "

How do you think, had Mourad developed an understanding with the horse and what was the result?

Answer: Mourad had been quite tender and affectionate towards the horse. He would put his arms around it, press his nose into the horse's nose and pat it. It was not easy to tame some one else's horse and get it to behave nicely. At first it wanted to run wild. Gradually, Mourad was able to control the horse and do what he wanted. Even John Byro, the rightful owner, admitted that the horse had become better-tempered and stronger than ever.

Question 17. Contrast the two visitors to narrator's house who visited them one afternoon.

Answer: Uncle Khosrove was irritable, impatient and furious in temper. He stopped anyone from talking by roaring: "It's no harm; pay no attention to it." Farmer John Byro was a lonely Assyrian. He was sad at the loss of his horse and the uselessness of his surrey without a horse.

Question 18. How did uncle Khosrove react to John Byro's complaint about the steal of his horse ?

Answer: John Byro was sad that his white horse had been stolen last month and it was missing even then. Instead of showing any sympathy, uncle Khosrove became very irritated and shouted: "It's no harm. What is the loss of a horse?...What is this crying over a horse?"

Question 19. What arguments did farmer John Byro advance to prove the usefulness of a horse to a country dweller?

Answer: First, his surrey was no good without a horse. Second, he had to walk ten miles to get there and his left leg pained him. Thirdly, that horse had cost him sixty dollars. A city dweller like Khosrove may not realise the importance of a horse.

Question 20. Why did farmer John Byro stalk out of the house, slamming the screen door ?

Answer: Farmer John Byro visited the narrator's house. He was homesick, sad and lonely. His horse had been stolen for over a month. Instead of showing any sympathy or concern for his loss, uncle Khosrove repeated his catchword: "It's no harm. Pay no attention to it". When John Byro talked about the cost of horse, uncle Khosrove commented: "I spit on money." This was too much for John Byro to bear and so he left the house in disgust.

Question 21. How did Mourad help the wounded Robin to fly? What does this incident indicate?

Answer: The narrator noticed Mourad trying to cure the hurt wing of a young robin which could not fly. He was talking to the bird. After sometime, he threw the bird into the air. The bird tried hard and almost fell twice. However, at last it flew away, high and straight.

This incident shows that in spite of having a crazy streak, Mourad was kind at heart and gentle towards God's creatures.

Question 22. What request did the narrator make to his cousin Mourad about the horse? How did he react to it? What does this reveal?

Answer: The narrator requested his cousin Mourad not to return the horse to farmer John Byro till he learnt to ride. Mourad observed that it might take him a year. The narrator suggested to keep the horse for a year. Mourad shouted that he was inciting him to steal. He declared that the horse must go back to its true owner. This shows his honesty and sense of family pride.

Question 23. What did farmer John Byro observe after studying the horse the two boys had with them?

Answer: The farmer studied the horse eagerly and asked its name. Mourad said that they called it "My Heart". John Byro appreciated it as a lovely name for a lovely horse. He was ready to swear that it was the horse that was stolen from him many weeks ago.

Question 24. "A suspicious man would believe his eyes instead of his heart" In what context was this observation made and by whom?

Answer: This observation was made by farmer John Byro after looking into the mouth of the horse. It matched his horse tooth for tooth. He would have claimed it as his own horse if he had not known their parents or the fame of their family for honesty. The resemblance was so striking that he called it the twin of his horse.

Question 25. What do you think, induced the boys to return the horse to its owner?

Answer: The boys were impressed by John Byro's attitude towards their parents and family. He knew their parents very well and so believed whatever the boys said. Secondly, the fame of their family for honesty was well-known to him. The boys returned the horse to him for the sake of family pride and dignity.

B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. Narrate the story 'The Summer of the Beautiful White Horse' in your own words.

Answer: One summer morning narrator's cousin Mourad came to his house at four in the morning and woke him up by tapping on the window of his room. The narrator was surprised to see Mourad sitting on a beautiful white horse. Mourad asked him to be quick if he wanted to ride. The narrator, Aram, longed to ride and jumped down to the yard from the window and leaped up onto the horse behind his cousin Mourad. Since these Armenian families were quite poor, Aram concluded that Mourad must have stolen the horse.

They rode and Mourad sang. Then Mourad had a joy ride alone. It seemed he had a way with a horse, for when Aram tried to ride alone, the horse threw him off and ran away. Since it was broad day light, Mourad hid the horse in the ham of a deserted vineyard.

That afternoon, farmer John Byro visited the narrator's house and related his plight. His white horse had been missing for over a month. Uncle Khosrove silenced him with his roaring commands. Aram reported everything to Mourad and requested him to keep the horse till he learnt to ride. Mourad did not agree.

A chance meeting with farmer John Byro after a fortnight firmed up his decision. John Byro had believed the boys since he knew their fathers and was fully aware of the fame of their family for honesty. Mourad returned the horse to its owner then next morning.

Question 2. Relate some of the humorous incidents in the story. Which incident do you find the most amusing and why ?

Answer: The incidents related to uncle Khosrove are quite amusing. The repetition of his pet catchword: "It is no harm; pay no attention to it" causes humour whenever it is used in an incongruous context. For example, his own son Arak ran eight blocks to the barber shop where Khosrove was having his moustache trimmed to tell him that their house was on fire. This was a serious matter. Instead of leaving the place, he roared: "It is no harm; pay no attention to it." When the barber explained that his son was saying that his house was on fire, Khosrove silenced him by roaring: "It is no harm".

At the end of the story, uncle Khosrove again became irritated and shouted at farmer John Byro to be quiet. He said, "Your horse has been returned. Pay no attention to it." The incongruity is obvious. The most amusing incident is the conversation between farmer John Byro and uncle Khosrove when the farmer sighed sadly and bewailed the stealth of his horse. Uncle Khosrove remarked, "It is no harm. What is the loss of a horse? What is this crying over a horse?" John Byro tried to explain that his surrey was useless without a horse. Pat came Khosrove's catchword "Pay no attention to it." This phrase is repeated when the farmer complained that his left leg hurt him. When John Byro said that the horse had cost him sixty dollars, Khosrove remarked, "I spit on money." The incident ends as John Byro walked out angrily slamming the screen door.

Question 3. What impression do you form of cousin Mourad?

Answer: Mourad is a young boy of thirteen. He belongs to the Garoghlanian family of Armenia. Their whole tribe was poverty stricken. In spite of abject poverty, their family was famous for honesty. Mourad was quite adventurous and had a crazy streak in him. He enjoyed being alive more than anybody else. Mourad loved horse riding. He had a way with a horse. He had tamed the horse by his affectionate behaviour and now the horse was no longer wild. It obeyed Mourad faithfully. His love for the horse is evident in the last scene. While parting, he put his

arms around the horse, pressed his nose into the horse's nose and patted it. He also had a way with dogs. The dogs of John Byro followed them around without making a sound. He was kind. He treated a young robin which had hurt its wing. He was worldly-wise and knew how to talk to farmers. Though he loved horse-riding he was averse of keeping the horse for a long time. He is proud of his family which is well known for their honesty and trust. In short, he is a lovable chap.

Question 4. Comment on the role of Aram, the narrator, in the story.

Answer: Aram plays an important role in the story. Besides being the narrator, he is also a commentator. He not only narrates the various adventures, incidents and actions, but also provides useful information regarding the main characters and their behaviour. In fact, he is the fulcrum on which the whole story rests. He gives a graphic description of the Garoghlanian tribe, its members, their traits and economic features. Mom-ad's father Zorab is described as a practical person, whereas Mourad and uncle Khosrove represent the crazy streak in the tribe. Abject poverty of the family does not diminish his pride in his family which is famous for honesty. He says, "No member of the Garoghlanian family could be a thief." He makes a fine distinction between stealing a horse for a ride and stealing a horse to sell it off. He gives a fine description of the horse ride and country side with its vineyards, orchards, irrigation ditches and country roads.

Question 5. Compare and contrast uncle Khosrove and cousin Mourad.

Answer: Uncle Khosrove and cousin Mourad have one very important point in common— their craziness. Mourad was considered the natural descendant of uncle Khosrove in this respect. The second similarity is their dominating nature. Both use pet words and phrases and roar aloud to quieten the hearer. While uncle Khosrove says, "It is no harm; pay no attention to it," Mourad boasts, "I have a way with horses/dogs/farmers." Khosrove shouts at his son Arak, the barber and farmer John Byro. The narrator is a patient listener to Mourad's assertions. The difference lies in their age groups and physical build up. Uncle Khosrove, a middle aged person is an enormous man with a powerful head of black hair and very large moustache. Mourad is an athletic young chap of thirteen. Khosrove is irritable, impatient and furious in temper. Mourad is reasonable in conversation.

The Address

QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

A. Reading With Insight

Question 1. 'Have you come back?' said the woman, 'I thought that no one had come back.'

Does this statement give some clue about the story? If yes, what is it?

Answer: Yes, this statement gives some clue about the story. During the early part of the war Mrs Dorling had shifted the important belongings of her acquaintance Mrs S. from her house to 46, Marconi Street. These included table silver wares, antique plates and other nice things such as the iron anukkah candle-holder, woollen table-cloth and green knitted cardigan with wooden buttons. Since Mrs S. had died during the war, Mrs Dorling did not expect anyone to come back and claim her costly belongings as she thought no one else knew her address. The statement indicates the greedy and possessive nature of Mrs Dorling. She did not open the door to the daughter of her former acquaintance nor did she show any signs of recognition. She did not let the girl in. She refused to see her then saying it was not convenient for her to do. The narrator had gone to this address with a specific purpose—to see her mother's belongings.

Even when she told Mrs Dorling that only she had come back, the woman with a broad back did not soften a bit. Thus the clash of interests is hinted at by the aforesaid statement.

Question 2. The story is divided into pre-war and post-war times. What hardships do you think the girl underwent during these times?

Answer: During the pre-war times, the narrator lived in some other city far away from home and she visited her mother only for a few days. During the first half of the war the narrator's mother was always afraid that they might have to leave the place and lose all valuable belongings. The narrator lived in the city in a small rented room. Its windows were covered with blackout paper. She could not see the beauty of nature outside her room. The threat of death loomed large.

After the liberation, everything became normal again. Bread was getting to be a lighter colour. She could sleep in her bed without any fear of death. She could glance out of the window of her room each day. One day, she was eager to see all the possessions of her mother, which she knew were stored at number 46, Marconi Street. She went to that address. She felt disappointed when Mrs Dorling neither recognised her nor let her in. She asked her to come

again someday. It was evident she wanted to put her off. She was eager to see, touch and remember her mother's possessions. So, she had to take the trouble of visiting the place again.

Question 3. Why did the narrator of the story want to forget the address?

Answer: The narrator remembered the address her mother had told her only once. It was number 46, Marconi Street. Her mother's acquaintance Mrs Dorling lived there. She had stored the valuable belongings of the narrator's mother there. After her mother's death, the narrator had an urge to visit the place. She wanted to see those things, touch them and remember. She went to the given address twice. She was successful in her second attempt to enter the living room. .

She found herself in the midst of things she wanted to see again. She felt oppressed in the strange atmosphere. Everything was arranged in a tasteless way. The ugly furniture and the muggy smell that hung there seemed quite unpleasant. These objects evoked the memory of the familiar life of former time. But they had lost their value since they had been separated from her mother and stored in strange surroundings. She no longer wanted to see, touch or remember these belongings. She resolved to forget the address. She wanted to leave the past behind and decided to move on.

Question 4. 1116 Address is a story of human predicament that follows war. Comment.

Answer: The war creates many difficult and unpleasant situations for human beings. Sometime it becomes difficult to know what to do. The human predicament that follows war is amply illustrated through the experience of the narrator. The war had caused many physical difficulties as well as emotional sufferings to her. She had lost her dear mother. She went to 46, Marconi Street to see her mother's valuable possessions. How greedy and callous human beings can become is exemplified by the behaviour of Mrs Dorling. She had stored all the valuable belongings of the narrator's mother, but she refused to recognise the narrator. She did not even let her in. The presence of her mother's possessions in strange atmosphere pained her. Now these valuables had lost all their importance for her as they had been separated from her mother. She could get no solace or comfort from them.

MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

A. Short Answer Type Questions

Question 1. How did Mrs Dorling react when the narrator said, m Mrs S's daughter”?

Answer: Mrs Dorling held her hand on the door as if she wanted to prevent it opening any further. Her face showed no sign of recognition. She kept staring at the narrator without uttering a word.

Question 2. What two reasons did the narrator give to explain that she was mistaken?

Answer: She thought that perhaps the woman was not Mrs Dorling. She had seen her only once, for a brief interval and that too years ago. Secondly, it was probable that she had rung the wrong bell.

Question 3. How did the narrator conclude that she was right?

Answer: The woman was wearing the green knitted cardigan of the narrator's mother. The wooden buttons were rather pale from washing. She saw that the narrator was looking at the cardigan. She half hid herself again behind the door. Her reaction convinced the narrator that she was right.

Question 4. What was the outcome of the interview between Mrs Dorling and the narrator?

Answer: The interview was a flop as far as the narrator was concerned. Mrs Dorling refused

to see her and talk to her in spite of the narrator's repeated requests.

Question 5. Who had given the narrator the address, when and under what circumstances?

Answer: The narrator's mother had given her the address, years ago during the first half of the war. The narrator came home for a few days and missed various things in the rooms. Then her mother told her about Mrs Dorling and gave her the address.

Question 6. What did the narrator learn about Mrs Dorling from her mother?

Answer: Mrs Dorling was an old acquaintance of the narrator's mother. The latter had not seen her for several years. Then she suddenly turned up and renewed their contact. Every time she left that place she took something with her—table silver, antique plates, etc. –

Question 7. What reason did Mrs Dorling give for taking away the precious belongings of the narrator's mother?

Answer: Mrs Dorling suggested to the narrator's mother that she should store her belongings at a safer place. She wanted to save all her nice things. She explained that they would lose everything if they had to leave the place.

Question 8. What impression do you form of the narrator's mother on the basis of her conversation with (i) Mrs Dorling and (ii) the narrator?

Answer: The narrator's mother was a kind-hearted, generous and liberal lady. She was fond of collecting valuable things. She is more worried about the physical risk to Mrs Dorling than losing them to her. She thought it an insult to tell her friends to keep those things for ever.

Question 9. Did the narrator feel Up evinced about the views of her mother regarding Mrs Dorling? How do you know?

Answer: The narrator did not feel convinced about her mother's concern for Mrs Dorling. The latter was keen on removing the precious possessions of the narrator's mother to her own house. It seems that the narrator did not like Mrs Dorling's excessive interest in her mother's belongings. It is evident from the questions she puts to her mother. .

Question 10. What does the narrator remember about Mrs Dorling as she saw her for the first time?

Answer: Mrs Dorling was a woman with a broad back. She wore a brown coat and a shapeless hat. She picked up a heavy suitcase lying under the coat rack and left their house. She lived at number 46, Marconi Street.

Question 11. Why did the narrator wait a long time before going to the address number 46, Marconi Street?

Answer: Initially, after the liberation, she was not at all interested in her mother's belongings lying stored there. She was also afraid of being confronted with things that had belonged to her mother, who was now no more.

Question 12. When did the narrator become curious about her mother's possessions?

Answer: The narrator became curious about her mother's possessions as normalcy returned in the post-liberation period. She knew that those things must still be at the address her mother told her. She wanted to see them, touch and remember.

Question 13. "I was in a room I knew and did not know," says the narrator in the story 'The Address'. What prompted her to make this observation?

Answer: The narrator found herself in the midst of things she was familiar with and which she did want to see again. However, she found them in a strange atmosphere where everything

was arranged in a tasteless way. The ugly furniture and the muggy smell created the feeling that she didn't know the room.

Question 14. "I just looked at the still life over the tea table," says the narrator in the story 'The Address'. What does she mean by 'the still life'? What prompted her to make this remark?

Answer: By 'the still life', the narrator means the things over the tea table such as the table-cloth, tea pot, cups and spoons. The reference to antique box and silver spoons prompted her to make this remark.

Question 15. How was the narrator able to recognise her own familiar woollen table-cloth?

Answer: The narrator first stared at the woollen table-cloth. Then she followed the lines of the pattern. She remembered that somewhere there was a bum mark which had not been repaired. At last she found the bum mark on the table-cloth. This helped her to recognise her own familiar article.

Question 16. "You only notice when something is missing." What does the speaker exactly mean? What examples does she give?

Answer: The speaker says that one gets used to touching one's lovely things in the house. One hardly looks at them any more. It is only when something is missing that it is noticed either because it is to be repaired or it has been lent to someone.

Question 17. How did narrator come to know that the cutlery they ate off every day was silver?

Answer: Once the narrator's mother asked her if she would help her polish the silver. The narrator asked her which silver she meant. Her mother was surprised at her ignorance and replied that it was the spoons, forks and knives, i.e. the cutlery they ate off everyday.

Question 18. Why did the narrator suddenly decide to leave?

Answer: The narrator had visited 46, Marconi Street for a specific purpose—to see her mother's belongings and touch them. However, these objects seemed to have lost their value in strange surroundings and on being severed from the life of former times.

Question 19. How did the narrator reconcile herself to the loss of her mother's precious belongings?

Answer: The narrator felt that her mother had only lent them for safe custody and Mrs Dorling was not to keep everything. On seeing these objects, memories of her former life were aroused. She found no room for these precious belongings in her present life. So she reconciled to her fate.

Question 20. "Of all the things I had to forget, that would be the easiest". What does the speaker mean by 'that'? What is its significance in the story?

Answer: That' here stands for the address. The words: number 46, Marconi Street, i.e. the address recur throughout the story. The address is important for the narrator at the beginning of the story. However, at the end of the story she resolves to forget it as she wants to break off with the past and move on with the present into the future.

B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. How did the narrator come to know about Mrs Dorling and the address where she lived?

Answer: Years ago, during the first half of the war, the narrator went home for a few days to see her mother. After staying there a couple of days she noticed that something or other about

the rooms had changed. She missed various things. Then her mother told her about Mrs Dorling. She was an old acquaintance of her mother. She had suddenly turned up after many years. Now she came regularly and took something home with her everytime she came. She suggested that she could save her precious belongings by storing them at her place. Mother told her address, Number 46, Marconi Street. The narrator asked her mother if she had agreed with her that she should keep everything. Her mother did not like that. She thought it would be an insult to do so. She was worried about the risk Mrs Dorling faced carrying a full suitcase or bag.

Question 2. Give a brief account of the narrator's first visit to 46, Marconi Street. What impression do you form of Mrs Dorling from it?

Answer: In the post-war period, when things returned to normal, the narrator became curious about her mother's possessions that were stored at Mrs Dorling's house. Since she wanted to see them, she took the train and went to 46, Marconi Street. Mrs Dorling opened the door a chink. The narrator came closer, stood on the step and asked her if she still knew her. Mrs Dorling told her that she didn't know her. The narrator told her that she was the daughter of Mrs S. Mrs Dorling kept staring at her in silence and gave no sign of recognition. She held her hand on the door as if she wanted to prevent it opening any further. The narrator recognised the green knitted cardigan of her mother that Mrs Dorling was wearing. Mrs Dorling noticed it and half hid herself behind the door. The narrator again asked if she knew her mother. Mrs Dorling asked with surprise if she had come back. She declined to see the narrator or help her.

Question 3. In what respect was the second visit of the narrator to 46, Marconi Street different from the first one? Did she really succeed in her mission? Give a reason for your answer.

Answer: The second visit of the narrator to 46, Marconi Street, was different from the first one in one respect. During the first visit, the narrator could not get admittance in the house, whereas during the second one, she was led to the living room, where she could see and touch some of the things she had wanted so eagerly to see. She had visited this place with a specific purpose—to see her mother's belongings. The touch and sight of familiar things aroused memory of her former life. These objects had now lost their real value for her since they were severed from their own lives and stored in strange circumstances. Thus her mission to see, touch and remember her mother's belongings was partly successful. She resolved to forget these objects, and their past and move on. This is clear from her decision to forget the address.

Question 4. What impression do you form of the narrator?

Answer: The narrator leaves a very favourable impression on us about her emotional and intellectual qualities. We find her an intelligent but devoted daughter. She loves and respects her mother, but does not approve of her soft behaviour towards her acquaintance, Mrs Dorling. She puts a pointed question, which her mother thinks impolite.

The narrator has a keen power of observation. She notices during her brief stay at home that various things are missing from the rooms. She has a sharp power of judgment. She once sizes up Mrs Dorling. Her persistent efforts to remind Mrs Dorling of her own identity and the latter's relations with her mother reveal her indomitable spirit. She visits 46, Marconi Street twice to see, touch and remember her mother's belongings. She is a realist, who doesn't like to remain tagged to the past. Her resolution to forget the address and move on shows her grit and forward looking nature. She has a progressive personality.

Question 5. Comment on the significance of the title of the story The Address.

Answer: The title of the story The Address is quite apt. It is the spring wheel of the action. In fact the whole action centres round it. The title is quite suggestive and occurs at the

beginning, -middle and end of the story. Marga Minco focuses the reader's attention on it by the narrator's doubt whether she was mistaken and her self-assurance that she had reached the correct address.

The middle part of the story reveals how she came to know the address. It was her mother who informed her about the place where Mrs Dorling lived and asked her to remember it.

The story ends dramatically with the narrator's resolve to forget the address. The wheel comes full circle. She had remembered the address for so many years and now since the belongings of her mother stored there have lost their usefulness she finds that forgetting this address would be quite easy.

Ranga's Marriage

QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

A. Reading With Insight

Question 1. Comment on the influence of English—the language and the way of life— on Indian life as reflected in the story. What is the narrator's attitude to English?

Answer: The narrator says that during the last ten years English language has made inroads into Indian countryside. Now there are many who know English. During the holidays, one comes across them on every street, talking in English. They bring in English words even while talking in Kannada. The narrator considers it disgraceful. He illustrates his point of view by giving an example. A bundle of firewood was bought at Rama Rao's house. Rama Rao's son asked the woman how much he should give her. When she said, "Four pice", the boy told her that he did not have any "change" and asked her to come the next day. The poor woman did not understand the English word "change" and went away muttering to herself. Thus the use of English language before a native Kannada speaker caused confusion.

Ranga was influenced by the English way of life. Like them he wanted to marry a mature girl and not a young present-day bride. He told the narrator that he would marry when he grew a bit older. Secondly, he wanted to marry a girl he admired. He was not in favour of arranged marriages. This shows the influence of English way of life on modern young educated Indians. The narrator did not approve of it.

Question 2. Astrologers' perceptions are based more on hearsay and conjecture than what they learn from the study of the stars. Comment with reference to the story.

Answer: This story presents astrologers in an unfavourable light. The author seems to be having a dig at them through the words of the narrator. The story gives a graphic description of how the narrator employs the astrologer to trick an unwilling youngman to agree to marry a young girl. He tutors him in all that he wants him to say.

The narrator took Ranga to the astrologer. The Shastri took out his paraphernalia. These included two sheets of paper, some cowries and a book of palmyra leaves. He called astrology ancient science. He moved his lips fast as he counted on his fingers. He did some calculations before telling Ranga that he was thinking about a girl. She had the name of something found in the ocean. He assured them that their negotiations would definitely bear fruit. Ranga was

impressed by the science of astrology.

That evening the narrator congratulated Shastri for repeating everything he had taught without giving rise to any suspicion. He mocked astrology by saying, "What a marvellous shastra yours is!" The Shastri didn't like it and said that he could have found it out himself from his shastra. This shows that astrologers' perceptions are based more on hearsay and conjecture than what they learn from the study of the stars.

Question 3. Indian society has moved a long way from the way the marriage is arranged in the story. Discuss.

Answer: In the past, marriages in India were usually arranged by parents/relatives. The story 'Ranga's Marriage' shows how the narrator arranges Ranga's marriage with the help of the astrologer. After independence, certain changes have come in the economic and social set-up of the Indian society. Women empowerment has made women men's comrades and equals and not a mere prisoner confined within the four walls. Women education and access to jobs have changed the attitude of modern males towards them. A girl is now accepted as a partner in marriage for her worth or qualities rather than the dowry. Marriageable young boys and girls have now more say in the choice of partners. Early marriages have been banned legally. The minimum age for marriage for a girl is 18 and for a boy it is 21. By this time they attain physical, emotional and mental maturity. Indian society has certainly moved a long way from the time of arranged marriages when the formal consent of the bride/bridegroom was taken for granted and the elders fixed everything.

Question 4. What kind of a person do you think the narrator is?

Answer: The narrator, Shyama, is dark in colour. He calls himself 'a dark piece of oil-cake'. He is an elderly gentleman. He is keen observer of men and manners. He notices the influence of English—the language and the way of life on Indian society. He is a purist who is pained at the indiscriminate use of English words in Kannada conversation. He considers it disgraceful. He does not approve of the English custom of love-marriage either. He is a well-meaning gentleman who has the good of others in his heart. He learns of Ranga's views about marriage from Ranga himself. He is a good judge of human character. He thinks that Ranga would make a good husband. The narrator is a good strategist. He cleverly calls Ranga to his home when Ratna is singing a song. He notices Ranga's reaction and interest in her and arouses his curiosity by arranging a meeting with the astrologer. First he says that Ratna is married, but when he finds Ranga deeply interested in her, he confesses that he was wrongly informed. In short, the narrator tries his utmost to get the marriage settled.

The narrator loves fun and humour. He has the capacity to make others laugh at him. He employs a rambling style and gives many similes and metaphors to heighten the literary value of the story. The touches of local colour make the story full of ethnic colour and authentic.

MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

A. Short Answer Type Questions

Question 1. What does the narrator say about Hosahalli?

Answer: Hosahalli village is the scene of action. There is no mention of it in geography books written by the sahibs in England or Indian writers. No cartographer has put it on the map. The narrator highlights its importance by comparing it to the filling of the karigadubu—a festival meal.

Question 2. What are the two special produce of Hosahalli and in what respect ?

Answer: First is the raw mango. The sourness of its bite is sure to get straight to the brahmarandhra, i.e. the soft part in child's head where skull bones join later. Second specialty is a creeper growing in the water of the village pond. Its flowers are a feast to behold. You can

serve afternoon meal to the whole family on its two leaves.

Question 3. What exactly had happened ten years ago? How important was it then?

Answer: Ten years ago, there were not many people in the village who knew English. The village accountant was the first one who sent his son Ranga to Bangalore to pursue his studies. It was quite an important event then. The narrator highlights it by saying that the village accountant was the first one who had enough courage to send his son to Bangalore to study.

Question 4. What happened when Ranga returned to his village from the city of Bangalore?

Answer: Ranga's homecoming was a great event. The crowds milled around his house to see whether he had changed or not. People were quite excited as the boy was returning home after studying English at Bangalore. Everyone was surprised to see that Ranga was the same as he had been six months ago, when he had first left the village.

Question 5. How did the old lady satisfy herself about Ranga ?

Answer: The old lady ran her hand over Ranga's chest. She looked into his eyes. She was satisfied to find the sacred thread on his body. She was happy that he had not lost his caste.

Question 6. "What has happened is disgraceful, believe me" says the narrator. What does he refer to? How does he illustrate his point of view?

Answer: The narrator refers to the practice of young persons who during the holidays in village, go on talking in English or bring in English words while talking in Kannada. He calls this mixing up of languages 'disgraceful'. He gives the example of the use of the English word 'change' to an illiterate person. The old lady, being asked to come the next day, went away disgruntled.

Question 7. Why does the narrator refer to the Black Hole of Calcutta?

Answer: During the British rule, hundreds of persons were kept inside a single room. The next morning most of them were found dead due to suffocation. The narrator uses the expression 'Black Hole of Calcutta' to suggest the large number of people who had turned out to see Ranga.

Question 8. How did Ranga greet the narrator? In what respect did he differ from the present-day boys?

Answer: Ranga greeted the narrator with full devotion. He not only folded his hands, but also bent low to touch his feet. A present-day boy would stand stiff like a pole without joints, keep head towards the sun and jerk his body as if it were either a hand or a walking stick. The narrator, being old fashioned did not approve it.

Question 9. When did Ranga plan to marry and why?

Answer: Ranga did not want to get married at an early age. He wanted to find the right girl. She should be mature enough to understand his love talk. Secondly, he wished to marry a girl he admired. He was against marrying quite young girls who had no manners or were not careful of their face or figure.

Question 10. What examples did Ranga give to explain the importance of marrying late?

Answer: Ranga gave two examples. An officer about thirty, married a girl about twenty- five. Ranga hoped they would be able to talk lovingly to each other. The second example is that of Dushyanta falling in love with Shakuntala, who was quite mature.

Question 11. "Ranga was just the boy for her and she the most suitable bride for him" says the narrator. Who is 'she'? What led narrator to this conclusion?

Answer: 'She' here stands for Ratna, the niece of Rama Rao. She was a pretty girl of eleven. Both her parents having died, her uncle had brought her home. Being a girl from a big town, she knew how to play the veena and the harmonium. She also had a sweet voice. All these qualities made her a suitable bride for a young, educated man like Ranga.

Question 12. How did the narrator let Ranga have a glimpse of Ratna?

Answer: The narrator arranged the meeting very systematically. First he called Ratna on the pretext of sending buttermilk through her. Then he asked her to sing a song. Meanwhile Ranga, whom he had sent for, reached the door. He became curious to see the singer and peeped in. His presence at the door blocked the light and Ratna stopped singing abruptly. ~

Question 13. How did Ranga and Ratna react at their unexpected encounter?

Answer: Ratna stopped singing abruptly on seeing a stranger outside the room. Ranga felt disappointed when the singing stopped. Ratna stood at a distance with her head lowered. Ranga repeatedly glanced at her. He blamed himself for the singing to stop and offered to leave. Ratna was overcome by shyness and ran inside. Ranga enquired about her. .

Question 14. How did the narrator handle Ranga's inquiries about Ratna?

Answer: The narrator did not give him a straightforward reply. He said casually that it did not matter to either of them who she was. The narrator was already married and Ranga was not the marrying type. This aroused Ranga's interest and excitement. He expressed the hope that she was unmarried. His face showed signs of disappointment on learning that she was married a year ago.

Question 15. Why did the narrator tell Ranga that the girl was married a year ago?

Answer: The narrator had made up his mind that he would get Ranga married early. First he brought Ranga and Ratna face to face to arouse his interest in her. In order to test the strength of his emotions, he told Ranga that she was married a year ago. The shrivelled face of the young man betrayed his feelings.

Question 16. Why did the narrator visit the village astrologer?

Answer: The narrator wanted to exploit the common human weakness—eagerness to know the future. He went to the village astrologer and told him to keep ready to read the stars. He tutored him in all that he wanted the astrologer to say when he would revisit him with Ranga.

Question 17. In what mental /emotional state did the narrator find Ranga? What solution did he offer? How did Ranga react to it?

Answer: Ranga seemed to be lost in thought. Perhaps he was emotionally upset to learn that the girl he had seen that morning was already married one. The narrator offered to take him to Shastri to learn about the stars-whether Guru and Shani were favourable for him or not. Ranga accompanied him without any protest.

Question 18. "What? Only this morning..." Why was this sentence cut off and by whom? What would have been the likely impact if the speaker had completed the sentence?

Answer: The narrator got angry when the astrologer said with surprise that he had not seen the former for a long time. The narrator shouted these words. The astrologer cut this sentence off and completed it in his own way. If he had not done so, the narrator would have ruined their plan by blurting out everything.

Question 19. What according to the astrologer was Ranga's cause of worry? How did the name Ratna ' crop up ?

Answer: According to the astrologer the cause of Ranga's worry was a girl. She probably had

the name of something found in the ocean. When asked if it could be Kamla the astrologer did not rule out the possibility. When suggested if it could be Pacchi, moss, the astrologer put a counter question: "Why not pearl or ratna, the precious stone?" Thus the name Ratna cropped up.

Question 20. "There was surprise on Ranga's face. And some happiness." What do you think had caused these feelings?

Answer: When the narrator learnt from Shastri—the astrologer, that the name of the girl Ranga was worried about could be Ratna, he was at once reminded of Rama Rao's niece Ratna. He asked the astrologer if there was any chance of the marriage being fixed there, the astrologer gave a firm assurance. This caused happiness and surprise on Ranga's face.

Question 21. How did the narrator test the sincerity of Ranga's feelings about Ratna?

Answer: The narrator employed the age-old trick 'temptation for the unattainable'. He first mentioned that the girl had been married a year ago. He noticed Ranga's disappointment. Ranga's face fell when the narrator mentioned to the astrologer that Ratna was married. When he was sure of the sincerity of Ranga's feelings about Ratna, he disclosed that she wasn't married.

Question 22. "There's greater truth in that shastra than we imagine," says Ranga. What truth does he refer to and how was he made to admit it?

Answer: After their visit to Shastri, the narrator disclosed to Ranga that Ratna was not married. He observed that whatever Shastri told them had turned out to be true. Still he could not believe that Ranga had been thinking of her. He asked Ranga to confirm it. Ranga frankly admitted the truth that he was thinking of her.

Question 23. What did the narrator tell Shastri about his performance? How did the Shastri react to it?

Answer: The narrator told Shastri that he repeated everything he had told him without giving rise to any suspicion. He exclaimed "What a marvellous Shastra yours is!" Shastri did not like his berating astrology. He retorted that he could have found out himself from the Shastras.

Question 24. Comment on the ending of the-story 'Ranga's Marriage'.

Answer: The story has a happy ending. Ranga has been married to Ratna and they have a three year old golden boy named Shyama after their well-wisher, the narrator. Ratna is eight months pregnant and about to deliver another baby.

B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. "The best way of getting to know a place is to visit it." Which place does Masti Venkatesha Iyengar refer to? What do you know learn about it?

Answer: The author refers to Hosahalli, the village of Rangappa and the narrator. From the narrator's point of view it is an important village in the Mysore state. People may not have heard of it, as there is no mention of it in Geography books. The place has been ignored both by British and Indian authors. No cartographer has put it on the map.

The raw mangoes from the mango trees in the village are quite sour. The extreme potency of the sourness of these mangoes is amply illustrated by the comment: "Just take a bite. The sourness is sure to go straight to your brahmarandhra." The creeper growing in the village pond had beautiful flowers and broad leaves. The latter can serve as plates for serving afternoon meal. The village doctor Gundabhatta also speaks glowingly of Hosahalli.

Question 2. What was special about Rangappa? How did the villagers react to it?

Answer: Ten years ago, there were not many people in Hosahalli village who knew English. Rangappa, the accountant's son enjoyed a unique distinction. He was the first one to be sent to Bangalore to pursue his studies. This was considered an act of courage on the part of his father. It was an important event in the village—a sort of first of its type. Naturally, Ranga's homecoming was a great event. The crowds of villagers milled around his house to see whether he had changed or not. People were quite excited because Ranga had returned home after studying English at Bangalore. An old lady ran her hand over Ranga's chest. She looked into his eyes. She was satisfied to find the sacred thread on his body. She felt happy that he had not lost his caste. People disappeared from the scene, once they realised that Ranga had not undergone any material change.

Question 3. Give a brief account of the narrator's two meetings with Ranga after the latter's return from Bangalore. What opinion did he form about the young man?

Answer: When Ranga returned home after getting his education in Bangalore, crowds of people collected round his home to see him. The narrator was attracted by the crowd. He too went and stood in the courtyard. Ranga came out with a smile on his face. After every one had gone, the narrator asked Rangappa how he was. Ranga noticed him and came near him. He folded his hands and touched the narrator's feet. He said that he was all right, with the narrator's blessings. The narrator blessed him and wished that he might get married soon. They exchanged some polite friendly remarks. Then the narrator left. That afternoon, when the narrator was resting, Ranga came to his house with a couple of oranges in his hand. The narrator thought that Ranga was a generous, considerate fellow. He was of the opinion that it would be fine to have him marry, settle down and be of service to the society.

Question 4. What were Ranga's ideas about marriage? Do you find any change in them during the course of the story?

Answer: Ranga was influenced by the English way of life in the matter of marriage. He was not in favour of arranged marriages of the time where the brides were quite young. He told the narrator that he was not getting married just then. He gave two reasons. First, he must find the right girl. She must be mature enough to understand his love-talk. A very young girl might take his words spoken in love as words spoken in anger. He gives examples of a thirty year old officer who married a twenty-five year old lady and that of king Dushyanta falling in love with Shakuntla. The second reason he gave was that one should marry a girl one loves. During the course of the story we find a change in Ranga's ideas about marriage. Not only is he fascinated by Rama Rao's eleven year old niece Ratna, he also marries her in the old traditional way of arranged marriages.

Question 5. What steps did the narrator take to get Ranga married to Ratna?

Answer: The narrator was intimate with Rama Rao's family. He knew that his niece Ratna would be a suitable wife for Ranga. He proceeded systematically. First he created an opportunity where Ranga might listen to Ratna's song and have a glimpse of her. He arranged this sudden encounter of two strangers at his home. The reaction of two youngsters was on expected lines. Ranga felt interested in her. Ratna felt shy, lowered her head and went to the other room.

In order to test the intensity of Ranga's feelings towards Ratna, the narrator said that she had been married a year ago. Ranga looked crestfallen. Then the narrator tutored an astrologer and took Ranga to him. Shastri, the astrologer, gave sufficient assurance that there was no hitch in his marriage to a girl whose name was that of something found in the ocean. While returning from the Shastri's house, they saw Ratna standing alone in her uncle's house. The narrator went in for a moment and brought the news that Ratna was not married. After ascertaining Ranga's views, the marriage was settled.

Question 6. What estimate do you form of Ranga?

Answer: Ranga is a typical South Indian young man whose feet are firmly entrenched in the traditional Indian culture but head is swayed by the latest acquisition of English language and ways of life.

He seems to have attained marriageable age according to the norms prevalent in society at that time. The narrator finds him generous and considerate. The young man could rightly assess a person's worth and knew when it would be to his advantage to talk to someone. At first, Ranga seemed to be in favour of love marriage—marrying a girl of one's choice, whom one loved and who would be mature enough to understand love-talk and reciprocate it. The systematic steps taken by the narrator to rope in Ranga to marry Ratna shows that the young man has a sensitive heart. Ranga's act of naming his golden boy 'Shyama' after the dark coloured narrator Shyama shows his adherence to the English custom of naming the child after someone you like.

On the whole, Ranga appears as a smart but lovable fellow.

Question 7. Comment on the title of the story 'Ranga's Marriage'.

Answer: The title of the story is quite appropriate and suggestive. It at once sums up the theme of the story. The whole story has one central issue Ranga's marriage. It begins with Ranga's refusal to marry just then and ends with his blissful married life. All the incidents contribute to the central theme.

The writer has presented the working of a young educated Indian's mind and heart. He is easily influenced by the English way of life and customs. He wants to adopt them in his own life as well. The narrator, who is his well-wisher takes deep interest in him and takes active steps to wean Ranga away from the fantasy of love-marriage. By arousing his interest and fascination in a young girl, Ratna, he makes Ranga agree to marry her. Thus Ranga's one condition for marriage is fulfilled—he knows the girl and loves her. She does not fulfil the other condition of being a mature girl in twenties—she is just eleven at that time.

Question 8. Write a brief note on the ending of the story 'Ranga's Marriage'.

Answer: The ending of the story is superb. Like all the tales of romance where the hero and heroine are finally united, the caption "....and they lived happily ever after" is usually displayed. The writer goes here one step further. He presents Ranga as a happily married husband, a proud father and a good member of the joint family.

He has a three year old son, a golden child, whom he had named 'Shyam' after the narrator to express his love and gratitude to the elderly person. We also learn that Ratna is about to deliver another child and Ranga's sister has come there with his mother. They will not only look after household affairs but Ratna as well.

The scene of a toddler putting his arms round the legs of an elder and the latter kissing him on his cheek and placing a ring on his tiny little finger as a birthday gift presents a lovely emotional scene full of tender affection and love. What a happy ending!

Albert Einstein at School

QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

A. Reading With Insight

Question 1. What do you understand of Einstein's nature from his conversations with his history teacher, his mathematics teacher and the head teacher?

Answer: Exchanges between Einstein and History teacher show that Einstein is honest and truthful. He admits his shortcomings frankly. He has firm and well-defined opinions. He explains precisely what he thinks. Thus his basic intelligence, logical reasoning and lucid expression are highlighted. He showed the sparks of genius even at a young age. His maths teacher had a high opinion of him. He went to the extent of saying: "I can't teach you more, and probably you'll soon be able to teach me." When Albert said that it was excessive praise, the teacher acknowledged that it was only the truth. He made the point by saying that Albert was ready immediately to enter a college or institute for the study of higher mathematics. Albert himself said, "I've learnt all the maths, they teach at school and a bit more."

The head teacher told Albert that he was expelling him from school because his presence in the classroom made it impossible for the teacher to teach and other pupils to learn. No serious work could be done while he was in the class. Albert refused to learn and he was "in constant rebellion."

For a moment Albert felt tempted to tell the head teacher what he thought of him and his school. Then he stopped himself. He didn't say even a single word. Holding his head high, he went out with a sense of pride. Thus, he had a lot of self-control. Albert was not at all impolite. He addressed his teachers respectfully and answered the questions honestly.

Question 2. The school system often curbs individual talents. Discuss.

Answer: Albert Einstein's miserable five years' stay at school is a telling comment on the system of education prevailing then and existing even now. This system of education has no room for individual aspirations, brilliance or aptitude. It discourages genius and originality and encourages mechanical dullards or the so called 'average' students. This system lays stress on facts and dates rather than ideas. It ignores originality and creativity, which lead to progress and development.

No wonder then that most of the students manage to pass the examination by cramming—

learning things by heart and repeating it in the exams. This parrot like learning or learning without understanding may help to get the diploma but fails to enrich the mind or inculcate ideas.

The teachers and authorities insist on discipline and conformity. The history teacher and the Head teacher are sticklers for rules, pedagogy and discipline. Brilliant students like Albert Einstein are considered dullard, stupid, incompetent, unfit rebels whose very presence makes it impossible for teacher to teach and other pupils to learn.

Question 3. How do you distinguish between information gathering and insight formation?

Answer: Learning the dates of battles or the details about victorious armies are facts. These details are part of knowledge which are content-based. There is no point in spending precious years of student life on information gathering because dates or facts could be ascertained from the books any time by just looking them up. Learning facts or parrot-like learning i.e., learning without understanding is what we call information gathering.

Analysing the facts, ascertaining the causes that led to a certain incident such as an uprising or a war and learning the ideas that spring from such actions are part of insight information. It gives us a clear perception into the true nature of a thing. Such knowledge increases our logical reasoning, power of analysis interpretation and understanding and makes us think.

MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

A. Short Answer Type Questions

Question 1. Why was Mr Braun speechless for a few moments?

Answer: Mr Braun asked Albert in which year the Prussians defeated the French at Waterloo. Albert told him that he didn't know. Mr Braun said that he had told them so many times. Albert told him that he saw no point in learning dates. These could be seen in books. This made him speechless.

Question 2. Who asks for the Einstein theory of education? How?

Answer: Mr Braun, the History teacher asks for Einstein theory of education. He does so highly sarcastically and in a mocking tone. '

Question 3. What is Einstein's view about education? How far do you agree with it?

Answer: For Einstein ideas are important and facts do not matter. He considers learning the dates of battles or the details about victorious armies meaningless. He is more interested in the causes that led the soldiers to kill each other.

Question 4. How did the history teacher react to Albert's replies? Will a modern student agree with the teacher? Why /Why not?

Answer: The history teacher felt amazed as well as annoyed at Albert's stubbornness. It was because Albert challenged all the established norms of attaining knowledge. Modern students do not agree with the history teacher's view. Education is not a mere acquisition of certain facts and their verbatim reproduction.

Question 5. Why did Albert see no point in learning dates and facts?

Answer: Dates and facts are parts of knowledge which are content based. Albert thought that there was no point in learning dates and facts because firstly, these could be, ascertained from the books any time by just looking them up. Secondly, for him, learning facts was not education.

Question 6. Do you think Albert is being impolite while answering the history teacher's questions ? Give your reasons.

Answer: No, Albert is not at all impolite. He addresses his teacher respectfully. Secondly, he answers the questions honestly. He does not think that his free and frank opinion will annoy the teacher and will be construed as impoliteness.

Question 7. What was the history teacher's opinion of Albert?

Answer: The history teacher had a very low opinion of Albert. He called Albert an ungrateful boy who ought to be ashamed of himself. He suggested that Albert should ask his father to take him away from school.

Question 8. What punishment did the history teacher give to Albert for not answering his questions?

Answer: This history teacher's eyes got cold and cruel. He said he didn't want a lecture from him. He punished Albert by making him stay in for an extra period that day. He told him that he was a disgrace. Moreover, he didn't know why he continued to come.

Question 9. Why did Albert feel miserable when he left school that day?

Answer: Albert was punished for his 'insolence' that day. He had to stay in for an extra period after the school that day. Albert felt miserable because he hated the school and would have to return there the next day as well.

Question 10. 'Going back to his lodgings did not cheer him up.' Why?

Answer: He lived in an atmosphere of slum violence. His landlady beat her children regularly. Every Saturday her husband came drunk and beat her. The wailing and howling of kids got on his nerves. He couldn't stand the incessant loud noise.

Question 11. What did Albert conclude after six months alone in Munich? What reasons did he advance?

Answer: After six months alone in Munich, Albert concluded that he must get away from there. He thought it absurd to go on like that. He realised that he had been wasting his father's money and everyone's time. So he considered it better for all to stop just then. "

Question 12. Why does the biographer refer to Albert's interest in music as a 'comfort'?

Answer: Albert's lodgings as well as school made him feel miserable. He hated the school. Going to the lodging didn't cheer him up as he hated the atmosphere of slum violence. He soothed his tired nerves by playing on his violin. So music was a source of comfort for him.

Question 13. Who is Elsa? What does she think is enough to pass the examination?

Answer: Elsa is Albert's cousin. She normally lives in Berlin where her father has a business. She thinks that one can pass the examination simply by learning things by heart and repeating them in the exams. A student doesn't have to understand what he is taught.

Question 14. What sudden idea does Albert hit upon to get away from school?

Answer: Albert thought that if he had a nervous breakdown and a doctor certified that it was bad for him to go to school, he would be able to get away from the school. This would be better than leaving the school and then forced back to it by his father.

Question 15. Who is Yuri? What part does he play in Albert's plan?

Answer: Yuri is a senior student, perhaps of medical school. He knows a lot of medical students. It is he who introduces Albert to Dr Ernest Weil and helps further Albert's plan by getting him medical certificate he desires so earnestly.

Question 16. "Ugh!" Exclaimed Albert, "these are the students". Comment.

Answer: Yuri lived among poor students. Albert thought them 'civilised human beings'. Yuri told him that one of the students killed another in a duel and felt proud of it. At this Albert was filled with disgust because he hated violence.

Question 17. Yuri calls Albert 'the world's worst liar'—do you think this is an insult or a compliment to Albert? Why?

Answer: It is a compliment, Albert is honest and truthful. He can't tell a deliberate lie. He can't deceive anyone. He is so simple hearted that if he tries to tell a lie, his face betrays him at once.

Question 18. Why was Albert quite nervous when he met the doctor? What does this nervousness indicate about his nature?

Answer: Albert had been wondering all day what to tell the doctor. In fact, he had worried so much that when the time came to see the doctor he was quite nervous. His nervousness shows that he had a very sensitive nature. Even a minor worry would ruffle him up.-

Question 19. How did Albert hope to convince the doctor?

Answer: Albert declared humorously that he was going to have a real nervous breakdown. It would make it easier for the doctor to certify his illness. The next time Yuri saw Albert he found that the latter had lost his high spirits. Albert confirmed that he would really have a nervous breakdown which would satisfy any doctor.

Question 20. Who was Ernest Weil? How did he help Albert?

Answer: Ernest Weil was a doctor. He had qualified as a doctor only the previous week. He was a good friend of Yuri. Albert told Yuri of his plan to leave school. Yuri told him to go to Dr Ernest Weil to get a medical certificate for the purpose.

Question 21. What advice did Yuri give to Albert before meeting Dr Ernest Weil?

Answer. Yuri told Albert not to deceive Dr Ernest Weil. He should tell everything clearly. He should be frank with him. He shouldn't pretend that he had got what he hadn't.

Question 22. What opinion do you form of Dr Ernest Weil?

Answer: Young Ernest Weil had just qualified to be a doctor, but he was intelligent. He could not be deceived easily. He was frank, honest and sympathetic. He wins the confidence of his patient with his warm smile. His sharp analytical mind helps him in quick diagnosis and suggesting cure.

Question 23. What did Albert tell Dr Ernest Weil if he certified that he had a nervous breakdown?

Answer: Albert told him that he would go to Milan in Italy. His parents lived there. Dr. Weil asked him what he would do there. Albert told him that he would try to get admission into an Italian College or Institute.

Question 24. How, according to Yuri, could the medical certificate help Albert?

Answer: Yuri thought that the medical certificate would help Albert to enjoy six month's leave from the school. He would not actually be leaving the school and if the worst befell, he could return and continue studies for the diploma.

Question 25. How did Albert hope to get admission to an Italian college without a diploma from the German school?

Answer: Albert hoped to get a testimonial from his mathematics teacher about his work. He had learnt all the maths that is taught at school and a bit more. He hoped that this certificate

would help him to get admission to an Italian college without a diploma from the German school.

Question 26. What did Mr Koch think of Albert?

Answer: Mr Koch had a high opinion of Albert. He thought that he couldn't teach Albert any more and probably soon he would be able to teach his teacher. Mr Koch certified that Albert was ready immediately to enter a college or institute for the study of higher mathematics.

Question 27. What did Yuri suggest to Albert before seeking an interview with the Principal? How far did Yuri's efforts and suggestion prove useful during Albert's meeting with the Principal?

Answer: Yuri suggested that Albert should get a written reference from the mathematics teacher before seeing the head teacher. His mathematics teacher gave him a glowing reference. However, it failed to serve the purpose for which Albert wanted to use it.

Question 28. What reference did Mr Koch give to Albert regarding his wish to join a college in Italy?

Answer: Mr Koch wrote that Albert was ready to enter a college for the study of higher mathematics. He also said that he couldn't teach him any more and probably he (Albert) would soon be able to teach him.

Question 29. What did the head teacher tell Albert when he met him?

Answer: The head teacher told him that his work was terrible. He was not prepared to have him in the school any longer. He wanted him to leave the school then.

Question 30. What did the head teacher tell Albert when the latter asked him what 'crime' he had committed?

Answer: The head teacher told Albert that his presence in the class made it impossible for the teacher to teach. It was also impossible for the other pupils to learn. He refused to learn and rebelled constantly. No serious work could be done while he was there.

Question 31. "Albert felt the medical certificate almost burning a hole in his pocket." What does the author mean?

Answer: Einstein was eager to show the medical certificate to the head teacher and notice how he reacted. However, the certificate had now become unnecessary, because the head teacher had decided to expel Albert.

Question 32. How did Albert leave his school where he had spent five years?

Answer: Albert left his school without any regrets. He, in fact, left it arrogantly. It was because of the bad treatment meted out to him by the head teacher. He didn't turn his head to have even a last look at this school.

B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. Relate in your own words what transpired between the history teacher, Mr Braun and young Einstein.

Answer: Mr Braun, the history teacher laid stress on learning dates and facts. He repeated them often enough for his students to learn them. Young Albert Einstein was found wanting. He didn't know in what year the Prussians defeated the French at Waterloo. Albert frankly admitted that he didn't know. He said that he didn't ever try to learn dates. He claimed that he couldn't see any point in learning dates. One can always look them up in a book. The teacher felt angry as well as amazed at Albert's stubbornness. The boy insisted that learning facts is not education.

Mr. Braun then sarcastically asked Albert to tell the class the Einstein theory of education. Albert said that ideas are more important than facts. Instead of learning the dates of battles or which of the armies killed more men, he would be more interested in learning why those soldiers were trying to kill each other.

Mr Braun felt exasperated. His eyes were cold and cruel. He punished Albert by making him stay in for an extra period that day. He had a low opinion of Einstein and called him 'a disgrace'. He wondered why he continued to come to school. Albert politely replied that it was not his wish. Mr Braun angrily called him 'an ungrateful boy who ought to be ashamed of himself. He suggested that the boy, should ask his father to take him away.

Question 2. Where the teacher interested in understanding Albert and bringing out his potential ?

Answer: This extract mentions only two of the teachers of young Einstein. They are: Mr. Braun—the history teacher and Mr Koch—the mathematics teacher. The former was not at all interested in understanding Albert and bringing out his potential. He followed the traditional methods and philosophy of education which laid more stress on acquisition of knowledge. Dates and facts were more important to him than the causes which led to the events. Secondly, he had a sarcastic attitude and mocking tone towards Einstein. Instead of helping the development of a talented boy, he complained to the head teacher and got him expelled. Mr Koch appreciated Einstein's genius, and had a good opinion of him. But he too was confined to his subject and didn't take interest in the real person. All this was because of the curriculum centred approach.

Question 3. What factors made Einstein's life in Munich miserable? What did he realise after six months?

Answer: Two factors made Einstein's life in Munich miserable. These were his school and residential environment. The school was a hateful place. He had many bad days when he got punishment. He hated going back to school, but he had no option. He wishes that his father would take him away. However, he was forced to stay there and obtain diploma. Einstein found the system of education uninspiring and the teachers, unsympathetic. He had his lodging in the poorest quarters of Munich, the food was bad. Lack of comfort, dirt and squalor made his life miserable. The atmosphere of slum violence was oppressive. The landlady would beat her children. Her husband would come home on Saturdays. He would get drunk and beat his wife. Albert found young students fighting duels and killing others. The scars on the face were badges of honour for the victors.

Question 4. Comment on the role of Yuri as described in the extract.

Answer: Yuri performs an important function in young Albert's life. He is the friend, philosopher and guide for Albert. He is in fact Albert's confidant. He has won the love and trust of Albert to such an extent that he confides his miseries, problems and plans with him. Yuri is the only person in Munich that Albert likes. Yuri lives among poor students who frequently indulge in fighting duels. Yuri helps Albert in his plans to obtain a medical certificate of nervous breakdown advising rest for six months. He introduces Albert to Dr Ernest Weil and asks Albert to be frank with him. Dr Weil turns out to be a sympathetic soul and issues him the much needed certificate. Yuri again guides the course of Albert's ship of life. He advises Albert to obtain a written reference from the mathematics teacher before seeing the head teacher. Albert follows his advice faithfully. The certificate, however, proves useless because the head teacher has already decided to expel Albert for his undesirable activities. This, however, does not diminish Yuri's role in Albert's life. He is like a pillar of strength to the miserable young Albert in a foreign land.

Question 5. What stratagem (plan) did Einstein devise to stay away from school for six months? How far did he succeed?

Answer: Albert had told his father to take him away from the school. However, his father insisted that he should obtain a diploma first. Hence, he was unwilling to take Albert away from school. For Albert, staying at that school meant wastage of time and money. One day, he had a bright idea. He asked Yuri if he knew some friendly doctor. He could say that Albert suffered from nervous breakdown. The doctor would certify that the disease was 'bad for him to go to school'. They had to find a specialist in nerves. Albert began to look nervous and lost his high spirits. Yuri fixed appointment with Dr Ernest Weil and asked Albert to tell him the truth. Albert was frank and truthful. He could enter some Italian college or institution at Milan without diploma. The doctor issued a certificate advising him rest for six months. The certificate proved useless as the head teacher was bent on expelling Albert.

Question 6. I knew you were going to leave before you knew yourself. Who said it and how did he know it? Substantiate with example from the text.

Answer: Mr Koch was Albert's Maths teacher. He was genuinely interested in Albert. Yuri told Albert to get a written reference from him. He willingly gave Albert the reference he wanted. He made it clear that Albert was ready to enter a college or institute for the study of higher mathematics. Mr Koch regretted that Albert was leaving the school. His logic was correct. A reference is usually asked when one leaves. Albert is puzzled. There are more surprises in store for Albert. He is summoned by the head teacher before Albert's request for interview. The head teacher does not want Albert to stay there any longer. Perhaps the issue might have figured in the staff council. The Maths teacher was discreet. He did not reveal the confidential discussion. He gave plausible reasons for his observation.

Question 7. Describe how the head teacher made it easy for Albert to leave school.

Answer: Albert wanted to remain away from the school. He got a medical certificate from Dr Ernest Weil. It was certified that he had a nervous breakdown. So he must stay away from school. He wanted to see the head teacher. Next day the head teacher called Albert to his office. He told Albert that his work was terrible. So he was not prepared to have him in the school. Albert asked if he should think he was to be expelled. The head teacher told him that if he left the school of his own accord, the question wouldn't arise. Albert asked what crime he had committed. The head teacher told him that the teacher couldn't teach the class when he was in it. In his presence, the pupils couldn't learn. Albert wanted to tell the head teacher what he thought of him and the school, but he didn't say anything. The head teacher asked him to close the door behind him. But Albert didn't do so. Nor did he have the last look at his school. He met only Yuri.

Question 8. Suppose you were the Principal of young Albert's School. What changes in education system would you like to introduce to make it more effective, meaningful and purposeful?

Answer: If I were the Principal of Albert's school, I would bring in drastic changes. I have a clear concept of education. For me, education means drawing out the best in the student. I'll help to develop an individual's personality by encouraging the budding talent. I know that all are not cast in the same mould. Our old system talks of uniformity and average student level. These are abstract principles. Education will focus on individual's aptitude and talent. There will be no cramming of facts, dates or multiplication tables. The audio visual devices will be used as aids to learning. Computer will supplement knowledge. I will provide more facilities for self-expression. The atmosphere of the school will be relaxed. I'll act as a father figure— a friend, philosopher and guide rather than a tormentor. I hope to inculcate values through examples of personal conduct.

Mother's Day

QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

A. Reading With Insight

Question 1. This play, written in the 1950s, is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the mother in the family.

(i) What are the issues it raises?

(ii) Do you think it caricatures these issues or do you think that the problems it raises are genuine? How does the play resolve the issues? Do you agree with the resolution?

Answer: (i) The play raises many serious issues. The first and foremost is proper appreciation of a housewife's role and responsibilities. Those who work eight hours a day and forty hours a week treat the housewife as an unpaid domestic servant, who must carry out their orders. They neither request her nor thank her for her services. The second issue is the reciprocity of love and gratitude towards the mother or wife. The husband, son and daughter leave the lady of the house alone every night and go out to enjoy themselves in their several ways. They do not take any notice of her and have become thoughtless and selfish. The mother's excessive love, care and promptness to serve them also spoil them.

(ii) The problems the play raises are serious. The treatment is of course, comic. The playwright adopts an unusual method to resolve the issues. He takes the help of magic of the East. Incantation of a magical spell helps in the interchange of the personalities. Now Mrs Pearson, with the strong and sinister personality of Mrs Fitzgerald, gives rough treatment to the daughter, son and husband respectively. Her stern looks and commanding tone suggests to them that she can be really tough. The spoilt members are brought round by the heavy dose of exposure of reality to them. They agree to stay and help in preparing the supper while the housewife has a talk with her husband. .

The resolution of the issues seems far-fetched and unnatural but extreme means have to be adopted in disaster management.

Question 2. If you were to write these issues today, what are some of the incidents, examples and problems that you would think of as relevant?

Answer: Various responses are possible One such response is given below:

The incidents of unfair treatment to the fair sex at home, at work, in public transport and elsewhere will prove handy. The examples of exploitation of female workers with lower wages,

harassment by seniors, indecent remarks, eve-teasing and molestation can highlight the problems of social inequality that women face in practice. Even in the twenty first century women face the same problems in spite of the talk of women empowerment. The poor housewives have to bear the physical torment and mental anguish at the hands of bullish husbands who boast of their masculinity by inflicting physical violence, barbs and taunts on the defenseless women. Examples of rapes and sexual harassment which hug the limelight in daily newspapers can also be included to highlight the problems of insecurity of women in modern society.

Question 3. Is drama a good medium for conveying a social message? Discuss.

Answer: Yes, drama is certainly a good medium for conveying a social message. Direct moralising is often resented and usually ignored. Drama is a presentation of a slice of life through characters placed in various situations. The attention of the spectators centres round their actions and reactions. Most of them feel fully involved with the protagonists. The working out of the theme generally leaves a message—sometimes obvious and explicit but in most of the cases, indirect and implicit. The social message of these plays seems to come out of the interactions of the characters and their traits of character. The victory of evil over good is usually portrayed indirectly. These days we find many plays centred around themes creating social awareness such as evils of drinking and smoking; dangers of pollution, child labour, the decreasing female ratio and need to empower women.

Question 4. Discuss in groups plays or films with a strong message of social reform that you have watched.

Answer: For group discussion at class level. There can be varied responses. One such response is given below: The latest film I have watched recently is 'SWADESH'. It has a strong message of social reform. It tells the story of an Indian scientist at NASA (America) who visits his ancestral home in India. The poor condition of the villagers and lack of basic facilities fills him with deep agony. He resigns his job in America and returns to his native country (Swadesh) to begin his work of rural uplift. He gives the villagers a message that self-help is the best help and we cannot depend for everything on the Government. This remote village is plunged in darkness after sunset as there is no electricity. With the help of a few villagers, the scientist is able to produce hydroelectricity and light the village homes. The water can be used for irrigation purposes also. Thus the economic and social condition of the villagers undergoes a sea change.

MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

A. Short Answer Type Questions

Question 1. How are Mrs Pearson and Mrs Fitzgerald contrasted?

Answer: The two ladies are sharply contrasted. Mrs Pearson is a pleasant but worried looking woman in her forties. She speaks in a light, flurried sort of tone with a touch of suburban cockney. Mrs Fitzgerald is older, heavier and has a strong and sinister personality. She smokes. She has a deep voice, rather Irish tone.

Question 2. "I'm much obliged," says Mrs. J Pearson. What for does she feel obliged and to whom?

Answer: Mrs. Pearson feels obliged to Mrs Fitzgerald for telling her fortune. She thinks it quite wonderful having a real fortune teller living next door.

Question 3. What fortune does Mrs Fitzgerald predict for Mrs Pearson?

Answer: Mrs Fitzgerald is quite equivocal in her predictions. She says it could be a good fortune or a bad one. All depends on Mrs Pearson herself now. She asks her to decide firmly.

Her fortune depends on it.

Question 4. What problem does Mrs Pearson face? Who do you think is responsible for this state of affairs?

Answer: Mrs Pearson devotes all her time and energy to serve her husband, son and daughter. These thoughtless and selfish persons go out every night to enjoy themselves leaving Mrs Pearson alone at home. She is no better than a servant in her own home. Mrs Pearson herself is responsible for the ill-treatment, neglect and lack of concern shown to her.

Question 5. What course of action does Mrs Fitzgerald suggest to Mrs Pearson to tackle the situation?

Answer: Mrs Fitzgerald tells Mrs Pearson to decide firmly and stick to her decision. She must assert her position and become the real mistress of the house. Her own initiative can help her. She must let them went or look after themselves for once.

Question 6. What difficulties does Mrs Pearson face while dealing with the various members of her family?

Answer: Mrs Pearson loves her husband and children too much. She does not find courage enough to discuss the problem with them. She only keeps dropping hints. She hates any unpleasantness. She does not know where to start. She doesn't know how to begin discussion with the other members of the family.

Question 7. "Then let me do it", suggests Mrs Fitzgerald. How does Mrs Pearson react to it?

Answer: Mrs Fitzgerald offers to deal with the family of Mrs Pearson and teach them to treat her properly Mrs Pearson feels flustered. She thanks her saying that it wouldn't do at all. They would resent being ill-treated by somebody else and wouldn't listen.

Question 8. How does Mrs Fitzgerald plan to deal with the family of Mrs Pearson?

Answer: She tells Mrs Pearson that she will deal with her family not as herself but as Mrs Pearson. They will change places or really bodies. Mrs Pearson would then look like Mrs Fitzgerald and the latter would look like the former.

Question 9. Why does Doris Pearson feel astounded on returning home?

Answer: Doris finds her mother smoking away—lighting another cigarette and laying out the cards for patience on the table. She shoots her query about ironing her yellow silk, but feel astounded on seeing her mother's behaviour.

Question 10. What are the two reasons that annoy Doris Pearson?

Answer: Firstly, Doris is annoyed that her mother has not ironed her yellow silk dress which she has to wear that night. Secondly, she has returned home after working hard all day and mother hasn't even bothered to get her tea ready.

Question 11. How does Mrs Pearson refute Doris's argument about working hard?

Answer: Mrs Pearson tells Doris that she has a good idea how much Doris does. Mrs Pearson claims that she puts in twice the hours that Doris does, and gets no pay or thanks for it.

Question 12. How does Mrs Pearson criticize Doris on going out with Charlie Spence?

Answer: Mrs Pearson asks Doris if she could not find anyone better than Charlie Spence. He has buck-teeth and is half-witted. She wouldn't be seen dead with Charlie Spence. At her age she would either have found somebody better than Charlie Spence or stopped dating boys on seeing no hope of success.

Question 13. Why is Cyril Pearson annoyed with his mother? Give two reasons.

Answer: Cyril feels annoyed when his mother tells him that tea is not ready as she couldn't bother about it. He enquires if she is not feeling well and then asks her to be quick as he has not too much time. His mother has not taken his things out. She has neither mended them nor is she willing to do so.

Question 14. "That's a nice way to talk What would happen if we all talked like that?" says Cyril. In what context does he say so? What argument does he get in return?

Answer: When Mrs Pearson tells her son, Cyril that she has decided now that she doesn't like mending, Cyril objects to her words. Mrs Pearson gives him a taste of his own medicine by saying that all of them do talk like that. If there's something at home they don't want to do, they don't do it. If it is something at their work, they get the union to bar it. She has now joined the movement.

Question 15. How do Doris and Cyril react to Mrs Pearson's query about stout?

Answer: Cyril is the first to react. He hints that she doesn't want stout then i.e., at tea time. Her remark that she wants to drink surprises both Doris and Cyril and they exchange notes regarding her behaviour towards them since they returned home that evening.

Question 16. What changes in the behaviour of Mrs Pearson startle Doris and Cyril? What possible reasons do they suggest?

Answer: Doris couldn't believe her eyes when she saw her mother smoking and playing cards. Cyril too noted the change and asked her if she was feeling ill. She looks just the same but her behaviour is suddenly different. Cyril asks if she has gone slightly mad. Doris thinks that she has a concussion as a result of her head hitting something.

Question 17. How does Mrs Pearson teach her children to be responsible adults?

Answer: First she scolds them for their guffawing and giggling. Then she has a dig at their lifestyle. They just come in, ask for something, go out again and then return as there's nowhere else to go. When Doris and Cyril boast of doing their work all day, Mrs Pearson tells them that she has also done her eight hours. She threatens to have two days off at the weekend.

Question 18. "But any of you forty-hour-a-weekers who expect to be waited on hand and foot on Saturday and Sunday with no thanks for it, are in for a nasty disappointment," says Mrs Pearson. How has she planned to spend the weekends?

Answer: She might do cooking or make a bed or two as a favour: only if she is asked very nicely and thanked for it. They'll have to pay attention to her and show care and concern. Perhaps she might go off for the weekend. It will provide her a change. She is bored of remaining at home all the time.

Question 19. "I'll hit you with something, girl, if you don't stop, asking silly questions." says Mrs Pearson to Doris. Which 'silly' questions does she object to?

Answer: Doris at first asks with disbelief if she would go off for the weekend and then enquires where she would go and with whom. Mrs Pearson tells her that it is her business. Doris then asks her if she had fallen or hit herself with something. Mrs Pearson objects to this silly question.

Question 20. "Well that ought to be nice change for you" says Mrs Pearson. What 'change' does she refer to and how does George react to it?

Answer: George finds his wife Annie (Mrs Pearson) drinking stout at the wrong time of the day. Moreover, he has never seen her doing it before. Naturally, he is confused and surprised. When

he remarks that he doesn't like her drinking and it doesn't look right. Mrs Pearson remarks about the 'change' in her style.

Question 21. "Annoyed because I don't get a tea for him that he doesn't even want", says Mrs Pearson. What forces her to make this remark?

Answer: At first, George Pearson tells his wife that he wouldn't want any tea as there is supper at the club that night. He feels hurt to know that she hasn't prepared any tea. When he asks "suppose I'd wanted some," Mrs. Pearson makes this biting remark.

Question 22. How, do you think, is George Pearson treated at the club?

Answer: The members of the club laugh at George Pearson. He is, in fact, one of their standing jokes. They call him Pompy-Ompy Pearson because they think he is quite slow and pompous. Although this joke is quite famous, George is unaware of it.

Question 23. What objection does Mrs Pearson have against George's going to club so frequently ?

Answer: Mrs Pearson fails to understand why her husband George wants to spend so much time at the club where people are always laughing at him behind his back and calling him names. He leaves his wife alone every night. She wouldn't make him look a fool if he went out with her.

Question 24. "Sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt. " Do you agree with Mrs Pearson's observation?

Answer: Mrs Pearson has hurt the feelings of her husband, George by telling him the truth. She thinks that truth should not hurt anybody for long. I think she is right. It's no good living in fool's paradise.

Question.25. Why does Mrs Pearson doubt the value of Cyril's opinion?

Answer. She tells Cyril frankly that he knows nothing about worldly affairs. He spends too much time and good money at amusement shows like greyhound races, dirt tracks and ice shows.

Question 26. Why is George Pearson incensed at Mrs Fitzgerald's utterances?

Answer: George reacts with horror and surprise when his neighbour, Mrs Fitzgerald addresses him by his first name, George, instead of the formal Mr George Pearson. Her second remark "Oh-dear-I ought to have known" further incenses him as he thinks she has no business to poke "her nose into their family affairs.

Question 27. "Perhaps you'll excuse us.... " What lessons of civility does Mrs Pearson teach George Pearson?

Answer: Mrs Pearson tells George that she will not excuse him for his behaviour. She asks him to be polite to her friend or neighbour in future. He should greet her politely instead of coming in and sitting down silently.

Question 28. Why does Mrs Pearson threaten to slap her husband?

Answer: George feels angry at being humiliated in the presence of his neighbour. He loses his temper and asks his wife if she has gone mad. This is too much for Mrs Pearson to bear. She jumps up and threatens to slap George if he shouts at her again.

Question 29. "Either Pm off my chump or you two are". Why do you think George arrives at this conclusion?

Answer: Mrs Pearson threatens to slap George if he shouts at her again. Then Mrs Fitzgerald

begins to moan and addressing Mrs Pearson as Mrs Fitzgerald, requests her not to do so. George is bewildered and exclaims that either he is mad or both of them are mad.

Question 30. How is Doris taught a lesson in behaviour?

Answer: When Mrs Fitzgerald remarks that Doris was going out with Charlie Spence that night, Doris feels annoyed and retorts that she has got nothing to do with it. Mrs Pearson rebukes Doris harshly and tells her to answer Mrs Fitzgerald properly. She adds that she won't have her daughter behaving rudely with anyone.

Question 31. How does the real Mrs Pearson learn about her daughter's miserable state?

Answer: The real Mrs Pearson has the body of Mrs Fitzgerald. At her insistence Doris tells her that her mother has been criticizing her and making her feel miserable. According to her Charlie Spence has buck-teeth and is half-witted. All this has made her miserable.

Question 32. What forces the real Mrs Pearson to come to the conclusion: "That's enough quite enough"?

Answer: Mrs Fitzgerald who has the body of Mrs Pearson, has been quite harsh to George Pearson, Doris and Cyril. The real Mrs Pearson objects to her comments about Charlie Spence. Later when she is a bit rude to George, the real Mrs Pearson feels offended.

Question 33. What is Mrs Fitzgerald's final advice to Mrs Pearson after reversion to their original personalities?

Answer: Mrs Fitzgerald advises Mrs Pearson not to go soft on the members of her family again. She should not start explaining or apologizing. She should give them a look or a rough tone of voice now and then to suggest that she might be tough with them if she wanted to be so.

Question 34. What would Mrs Pearson like the members of her family to do?

Answer: She wants them to stop at home in the evening and give her a hand with supper. She would also like to play a nice game of rummy, which she fails to have except at Christmas.

Question 35. How does the stern treatment reform the spoilt children?

Answer: The children look apprehensively at Mrs Pearson. However, they smile back at her, as she smile. Since they are not going out, she suggests having a nice family game of rummy. She tells the children to get the supper ready while she has a talk with their father. The spoilt children meekly obey her.

B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. What do you think is the theme of the play? How has it been worked out?

Answer: The theme of the play is the status of women in their own household. The housewife serves the members of her family with complete devotion, sincerity and love. However, she is never given the regard, attention or thanks due to her. Her leniency and eagerness to please everyone reduces her to the rank of an unpaid domestic servant in her own house. Instead of being politely requested for a favour, she is ordered to do it. She gets no thanks in return. The theme is worked out by portrayal of the Pearson family. Mrs Pearson is the harassed mother. Her daughter Doris, son Cyril and husband George take her services for granted and have become thoughtless and selfish. The interchange of personalities and the harsh treatment meted out to them by the personality of Mrs Fitzgerald (in the body of Mrs Pearson) reforms them and they obey the mother willingly.

Question 2. What impression do you form of Mrs Annie Pearson ?

Answer: Mrs Pearson is the main character in the play 'Mother's Day'. She is a pleasant but

worried-looking woman in her forties. She speaks in a light, flurried sort of tone, with a touch of suburban cockney. She loves her husband and children very much and runs after them all the time. Her excessive love and care have spoilt them and they have become thoughtless and selfish. She feels neglected and lonely but lacks courage to discuss things with them. Perhaps she hates any unpleasantness as well. She is not willing to act as a tough mom as she is nervous and fluttering by nature. She is so tender-hearted that she is shocked to see the rough treatment meted out to her children. She decides to change back to her original personality to deal with her family herself. She is indeed a loving and affectionate mother and a devoted wife.

Question 3. "The shock treatment makes the thoughtless and selfish persons realise the real position of the lady of the house." How far do you agree with the statement? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer: I fully agree with the aforesaid statement. Drastic situations need drastic remedies. The thoughtless, selfish and spoilt members of the Pearson family do not understand the language of love and affection. Mrs Pearson with Mrs Fitzgerald's bold and dominating personality and her toughness makes them realise their own state. Doris is the first to learn her lesson in civility and politeness. The criticism of her boy friend seems quite unexpected to her—perhaps more than the non-compliance of her orders of ironing the yellow silk dress. Doris has tearful eyes. Cyril is also told to help himself. The mother's declaration that she too will henceforth work forty hours a week, have the weekends off and go somewhere to enjoy herself come as a shock treatment. The balloon of her husband's ego is punctured by disclosing to him how people at the club make fun of him. In the end all the three members come round and show their willingness to obey the mother's command.

Question 4. Write a note on the role of Mrs Fitzgerald in the play.

Answer: Mrs Fitzgerald plays a very important role in the play. She is introduced as a fortune teller and the next-door neighbour of the Pearsons. It is through the initial conversation between her and Mrs Pearson that we come to know the problems that Mrs Pearson faces. Mrs Fitzgerald analyses the situation quite objectively and becomes the playwright's mouthpiece. She also suggests the ways and methods of tackling the situation. Since Mrs Pearson does not have the guts to stand for her right, Mrs Fitzgerald suggests a novel approach—exchange of personalities. Now as Mrs Pearson, with the personality Mrs Fitzgerald, she puts the plan of reformation in action. She smokes, drinks and plays cards. All this is unusual for the family. She further shocks them by being tough with them in word and action. She asks them to look after themselves. She clearly tells them that she has already worked for more than eight hours that day. She tells them plainly how they behave at home and workplace. She is equally blunt with Mr George Pearson, who goes away every evening to club, leaving his wife alone at home. She reveals to him how the people at club make a fun of him. In short, she makes them realise their responsibility towards the mother. In the end, she performs the exchange of personalities once again. Thus she is the main spring of initial action, climax and denouement.

Question 5. The play 'Mother's Day' is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the woman in a family. Bring out briefly the elements of humour and satire.

Answer: The play 'Mother's Day' treats a serious theme in a light-hearted manner. The humour in the play springs from an unusual situation where the personalities of two ladies change bodies. Their subsequent behaviour, which is in total contrast to their previous one, is a very powerful source of laughter. The ignorance of the characters about the personality they are facing also creates humour. Suggestive dialogues also provide a lot of fun. For example, consider the following:

- "Mrs Pearson if you had to live my life it wouldn't be so bad. You'd have more fun as me than you've had as you."
- "It's that silly old bag from next door—Mrs Fitzgerald."
- "Ticking her off now, are you, Annie?"
- "They call you Pompy-Ompy Pearson because they think you're so slow and pompous."

The actions, gestures and reactions of the characters also provide humour. The housewife being given orders, treated like dirt and forced to stay home every night while other members go out to amuse themselves is sharply contrasted with the position at the end of the play where she is the mistress of the house. Then play also satirises the eight hour work culture and threats to go on strike. Even the housewife adopts this weapon.

Question 6. Comment on the ending of the play 'Mother's Day'.

Answer: The play has a happy ending with a complete reversal of the initial situation. Mrs Pearson is now cheerful while the family looks anxiously at her. When she smiles, they feel much relieved and smile back at her. None of them is going out.

For the first time, perhaps she tells the members of the family what they should do. Instead of behaving timidly, she looks sharply at the family and asks if they have any objections. George is the first to yield. He agrees to do whatever she says. Still smiling, she suggests that they should have a nice family game of rummy and then the children could get the supper ready while she has a talk with their father. George supports her and looks enquiringly at the children. Cyril hastily approves the proposal while Doris agrees hesitatingly. A sharp command: "What Speak up!" does the trick and Doris agrees. Mrs Pearson bids good bye to Mrs Fitzgerald and smilingly asks her to come again soon.

The ending seems quite natural. It also leaves a message for the mothers. They should assert themselves.

Question 7. Write a note on the title of the play 'Mother's Day'.

Answer: The title of the play is quite appropriate. It sums up the theme of the play. It suggests that the action of the play revolves round a mother. The playwright confronts us at the outset with the problems the mother faces from her grown up children and their father. The novel technique employed to tackle the spoilt children and the grown up man is quite amusing and thought provoking. The bold and dominating mother acts tough with the children and makes them realise the need of proper attention towards their mother. They are made to learn lesson in courtesy

and polite behaviour not only towards the mother but also towards the visiting neighbour. The mother certainly has her day as the children learn to treat her properly. The supper being prepared by the children, their stay at home and the family game of rummy is a rare gift that the mother receives on this important day.

The Ghat of the only World

Page No: 64

Reading with Insight

1. What impressions of Shahid do you gather from the piece?

Answer

Shahid Ali was a multi faceted personality and appears to be sensitive soul. He was born in Srinagar and had studied in Delhi. Later, he migrated to America and served in various colleges and universities. Shahid was a fine scholar and and brilliant teacher. His students loved and respected him. Sahid was a profound lover of good poetry, music, clothes and food. He always thought of Kashmir and was hurt by the mounting violence in the valley. Though he was not a political poet his finest work relates to writing about Kashmir. Shahid outlook was ecumenical. He did not believe in mixing of politics and religion. He never lost the courage in the face of misfortune. Even dreadful disease of cancer could not break his spirit. He refused to take the help of the wheelchair in the hospital.

2. How do Shahid and the writer react to the knowledge that Shahid is going to die?

Answer

"Oh dear! I cant see a thing...I hope this doesn't mean that I am dying," The fear of death was very vividly visible in Shahid's tone of voice and usage of words. He got scared when he felt for the first time that he was dying. When his occasional memory lapses became more serious with passage of time, the realisation of death drawing nearer becomes stronger. When he was in a conversation with Amitav Ghosh, he said in a clear ringing voice- "When it happens, I hope you will write something for me." The writer could think of nothing to say on such a topic. At last, he had to promise, "I'll do the best I can." From that day, the writer started keeping a record of all the conversations and meetings he had with Shahid. This record helped him to fulfil his promise.

3. Look up the dictionary for the meaning of the word 'diaspora'. What do you understand of the Indian diaspora from this piece?

Answer

The word 'diaspora' means a dispersion of an originally homogeneous entity, such as a language or culture. With reference to the context, Indian diaspora becomes more prominent in Ghosh's writings. From this text, we come to know that a number of Indians have settled in different countries of the West, especially England and America. Agha Shahid, his brother and two sisters, Suketu Mehta and the writer form part of the Indian diaspora in America. Shahid belonged to Kashmir and migrated to America in 1975. his elder brother was already settled there. His two sisters also joined them later. These people, though living in another land, never forgot about their roots. These Indians feel a sense of unity and keep meeting each other on various occasions.

Birth

QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

A. Reading With Insight

Question 1. "I have done something; oh, God! I've done something real at last." Why does Andrew say this? What does it mean?

Answer: The young doctor Andrew Manson had done a commendable work. His exclamation is justified. He had not only helped the middle-aged lady in the safe delivery of a male child but also restored them to perfect health. Susan Morgan's strength was ebbing after the delivery. She was almost pulse less. Andrew gave her an injection and worked severely to strengthen her heart.

The major achievement of Andrew was to resuscitate the stillborn child. First, he laid the child on a blanket and began the special method of respiration. Then he tried the hot and cold water treatment dipping the baby alternately. He laboured in vain for half an hour. He then made another last effort. He rubbed the child with a rough towel. He went on pressing and releasing the baby's little chest with both his hands. At last the baby responded. His chest heaved. Andrew redoubled his efforts. The child was gasping now. A bubble of mucus came from his tiny nostril. The pale skin turned pink. His limbs became hard. Then came the child's cry. Andrew called upon God as witness of his act which was no less than a miracle. It was not mere theoretical talk but a practical achievement—something real and solid.

Question 2. 'There lies a great difference between textbook medicine and the world of a practising physician.' Discuss.

Answer: Normally, the medicines prescribed in the textbooks are used by the practising physicians. However, in extreme cases of emergency, the physician's experience, resourcefulness and practical approach become far more important than the theoretical knowledge. For example, a victim of burn-injury, snakebite or suffocation through drowning needs immediate help. The nearest available doctor may not have all the facilities needed for the case. In such a situation first-aid is a must to save the patient's life before rushing him to the hospital for proper care. With limited resources at his command, the practising physician exercises all his practical experience to control the damage to the minimum and check the victim's state from further deterioration. A stitch in time does save nine in such cases. The practical help comes as a boon.

Question.3. Do you know of any incident when someone has been brought back to life from the brink of death through medical help? Discuss medical procedures such as organ transplant and organ regeneration that are used to save human life.

Answer. Yes, I have seen and heard of incidents where people have been brought back to life from the brink of death through medical help. Surgical operations, life saving drugs and organ transplant play a leading role in modern medical science. Leading hospitals in advanced countries have facilities for medical procedures such as organ transplant and organ regeneration. Blood bank and eye bank are quite common. Nowadays people willingly donate various organs of their body to the hospitals after their death. The techniques of organ regeneration help to preserve them for certain period and use them for transplanting the defective organ of another patient. Nowadays eye, heart, kidney and liver are being transplanted. The time is not far off when artificial human organs will be made in laboratories from non-human sources.

MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

A. Short Answer Type Questions

Question 1. Who was Joe.Morgan? Why had he been waiting for Dr Andrew Manson?

Answer: Joe Morgan was a driller in Blaenelly, a mining town. He was a big, strong and heavy middle-aged person. Joe and his wife Susan, who had been married nearly twenty years, were expecting their first child. Joe was waiting for the doctor to help Susan in the delivery of the child.

Question 2. Where did Joe lead Andrew? Why did he not go in with the doctor?

Answer: Joe Morgan led Andrew to his house, 12, Blaina Terrace. His wife was about to deliver her first child after being married for nearly twenty years. Joe was quite tensed. He refused to go inside the house. Even his voice showed signs of strain.

Question 3. "Don't fret, mother, I'll not run away". Why do you think Andrew say so?

Answer: Mrs Morgan's mother offered to make a cup of tea for the doctor. The experienced woman had realized that there must be a period of waiting. She was afraid that the doctor would leave^ the case saying that he would return later.

Question 4. Why did Andrew decide to remain there until everything was over?

Answer: Andrew had reached Bryngower at about midnight. He was very worried and upset. He needed some rest and sleep. He knew that he could not sleep even for an hour if he went home. Secondly, he knew that the case would demand all his attention. He felt lethargic and decided to remain there until everything was over.

Question 5. What had Andrew been thinking about? How would you like to describe the state of his thoughts?

Answer: Andrew had been thinking about the unsuccessful married lives of some persons he knew. Bramwell was foolishly devoted to a woman who deceived him immorally. Edward Page was bound to quarrelsome Blodwen. Denny was living unhappily apart from his wife. His thoughts were muddled (confused).

Question 6. What was Andrew's view of marriage? Why was he resentful and confused?

Answer: For Andrew marriage was a peaceful and beautiful state. He loved Christine. The conflict between his steady mind and overflowing heart left him resentful and confused.

Question 7. Why did Andrew feel surprised while sitting by kitchen fire?

Answer: Andrew had been thinking about his beloved as he sat by the kitchen fire. He sat still

and sadly for a long time. When the old woman sitting opposite him suddenly addressed him, Andrew felt surprised.

Question 8. Why did a shiver of horror pass over Andrew?

Answer: Andrew had struggled for more than an hour to help Mrs Susan Morgan in the safe delivery of her first child. At last, the child was born, but it was lifeless. As Andrew gazed at the still form of the baby, a shiver of horror passed over him.

Question 9. What dilemma did Andrew face?

Answer: His heart prompted him to resuscitate the stillborn child. His mind dictated him to attend to the mother who was laying in a hopeless state. Andrew faced the dilemma whom he should attend first.

Question 10. What efforts did Andrew make to revive Susan Morgan?

Answer: He smashed a glass ampule and injected the medicine. After this he flung down the hypodermic syringe. Then he worked quiet hard to restore the soft and weak woman. Her heart strengthened after a few minutes of feverish effort.

Question 11. In what state did Andrew find the newborn child? What did he conclude?

Answer: Andrew found the baby amongst wet newspapers under the bed. Its limp warm body was white and soft. Its head lolled on the thin neck. The limbs seemed boneless. The whiteness over the body meant suffocation caused by the lack of oxygen.

Question 12. How did Andrew's practical experience come handy?

Answer: Andrew had once seen a similar case in the Samaritan. He remembered the treatment that had been used. He at once decided to administer the hot and cold water therapy.

Question 13. What efforts did Andrew make to revive the newborn baby?

Answer: First, he laid the child upon a blanket and gave it artificial respiration. Then he dipped the child alternately in hot and cold water. After that he rubbed the slippery child with a rough towel. He pressed and released his chest till it began to breathe and gave a cry.

Question 14. How did Andrew react to the first glimpse of the success of his efforts to help the stillborn child come alive?

Answer: As a result of Andrew's persistent efforts, the small chest of the baby heaved up. This short heave was followed by other heart beats. Andrew turned giddy. The sense of life, throbbing under his feelings almost made him faint.

Question 15. What was the result of Andrew's feverish efforts after the child's chest gave a short, convulsive heave?

Answer: Andrew redoubled his efforts. The child began to gasp deeper and deeper. A bubble of mucus came from a nostril. The limbs were no longer boneless. The pale skin turned pink. Then the child cried. It came alive.

Question 16. What was the state of the room after the resuscitation of mother and child? .

Answer: The room was littered with blankets, towels, basins and soiled instruments. The hypodermic syringe was impaled in the linoleum by its point. The ewer was knocked over. The kettle lay on its side in a puddle of water.

Question 17. Why did Andrew say, "Fill fetch my bag later, nurse."?

Answer: Andrew had worked hard single-handedly and constantly to save the mother as well as the stillborn child from the jaws of death. The constant efforts, tension, desperation caused

by failure combined to make him weak and dazed. His throat was dry.

Question 18. How did Andrew assess that night's work?

Answer: As Andrew left driller's house he felt tired. He kept thinking of the work he had done that night. He realised that at last he had done something real. For him it was an achievement.

B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. Why was Andrew Manson called in? How did he react to the call of duty?

Answer: Andrew Manson had just begun his medical practice in the small Welsh mining town of Blaenelly. He was called in to attend to Susan Morgan, who was expecting her first child after being married for nearly twenty years. Her husband, Joe Morgan had been waiting for an hour outside the closed surgery. It was nearly midnight when Andrew reached there. As Joe acquainted Andrew with his wife's condition, Andrew forgot his own affairs. He went inside his house for his bag and immediately left for the driller's place.

Since his services were not immediately needed by the expecting mother, he decided to wait downstairs. He re-examined her after an hour. It was at 3:30 am when the nurse summoned him. He struggled for an hour before the child was born. Then he worked feverishly to revive the weak mother and the stillborn child. He had to use all his knowledge and experience in discharging his duty. He did not pay attention to his own physical tiredness or mental tension. Duty came first and he responded to it with single-minded devotion.

Question 2. Give a brief account of the efforts made by Andrew to revive the stillborn baby.

Answer: A shiver of horror passed over Andrew as he gazed at the still form of the newborn baby. Though it was a perfectly formed boy, its limp warm body was white. The whiteness meant suffocation caused by lack of oxygen. Andrew remembered the treatment given to such a case in the Samaritan. Before the hot and cold water came he had asked for, he laid the child upon a blanket and gave it artificial respiration. Then he dipped the child alternately in hot and cold water. Now, the child was quite slippery. He rubbed it with a rough towel. Then he pressed and released his chest till it heaved up. It was followed by other heaves. Andrew redoubled his efforts. The child started gasping. A bubble of mucus came from one tiny nostril. The pale skin turned pink. The limbs were no longer boneless. His head did not lie back spinelessly. The child gave a cry. It came alive.

Question 3. Compare and contrast Andrew's emotional, mental and physical state at the beginning of the story and at the end.

Answer: At the beginning of the story Andrew is physically tired and emotionally upset. He has just returned from a disappointing evening with Christine, the girl he loved. His thoughts are heavy and muddled. The episode he had witnessed at Cardiff station still filled his mind with sadness. Though he thought of marriage as a blissful state, he couldn't help remembering the miserable failure of many marriages.

At the end of the story, Andrew is physically exhausted but emotionally cheerful and mentally alert. His mind is filled with joy and self-satisfaction. He has performed an unusual feat, no less than a miracle. He calls upon God as witness that he has done something real at last. This sense of achievement helps him to overcome physical fatigue. His sense of duty towards his patients helps him to attend them whole-heartedly. He forgets his personal feelings and thinks only of reviving the patients.

Question 4. What impression do you form of Andrew Manson on the basis of the story 'Birth'?

Answer: Andrew Manson is a young man who has recently qualified as a doctor and started his medical practice as an assistant to Dr Edward Page in the small Welsh mining town of Blaenelly. He is in love with Christine and thinks of marriage as an idyllic state. His heart is

overflowing with love. His steady mind and reason help him see the marriages of many persons as dismal failures.

Andrew is mature enough to keep his private and professional lives apart. Once confronted with his responsibility, he discharges his obligations to the utmost capacity. He is duty conscious. He is not a theorist only. He believes in practical approach. He is pragmatic and is not afraid to try unique methods.

Andrew has a tender heart. He is aware of the feelings of others. He knows how deeply Susan loved her coming baby. He has polite manners and reassuring tone. On the whole, Andrew impresses us as a dedicated doctor.

The Tale of Melon City

QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

A. Reading With Insight

Question 1. Narrate 'The Tale of Melon City' in your own words.

Answer: 'The Tale of Melon City' runs like folk tale. The city is called Melon City because its ruler is a melon. There is a curious tale around it. Once a fair and gentle king ruled over a state. He got an arch built across the thoroughfare. As he passed under the low arch it struck his head and he lost his crown. He thought it a disgrace and ordered the chief of builders to be hanged. The chief lay the blame on the workmen. The workmen were surprised. They said that the bricks were made of wrong size. So the masons were thought guilty. The masons shifted the blame on the architect. The architect put the blame at the king's door as he had amended his original plan.

The king sought a wise man's counsel. He held the arch guilty and ordered it to be hanged. A councillor objected to it as it had touched the king's head. The people became restless. They wanted to see someone hanging. Only the king's head could fit the noose. So he was hanged. It was now announced that the next man who passed the City Gate would choose the king. An idiot came. He suggested 'A melon'. So melon was crowned the king. He was taken to the throne. He was called melon king.

Question 2. What impression would you form of a state where the king was just and placid*?

Answer: The State where the king was just and placid' seems to be a backward region full of ignorant fools and ruled by a whimsical king. The king considers himself to be the custodian of people and gets an arch erected for their spiritual upliftment. The king's word is a command and unwritten law. The whole process of changing judgement on the appeals of the victims appears as a mock-trial. The Ministers and Councillors seems to be selfish. They advise the king to serve their own ends, though they appear to flatter the king and seem dedicated to the state. The common people are uneducated and ignorant fools. They need mental as well as spiritual upliftment. They are fun loving. In their quest for fun, they can cross all limits. If deprived of fun, the unruly mob can rebel against the crown. They do not bother whether the king is a man or a melon. They want their personal freedom, free business and peaceful lives.

Question 3. How according to you, can peace and liberty be maintained in a state?

Answer: Various people advocate various means of maintaining peace and liberty in a state. Some are in favour of dictatorship while others favour democracy. I think the best course lies in good governance. Whatever is well-administered is most fruitful for the citizens as well as the rulers. It ensures peace and liberty to the common man. A strong state, in itself, is safe against any external threat. Dedicated rulers, enlightened citizens and proper law enforcing agencies can establish peace and harmony in the state. Narrow considerations based on region, religion, caste etc. should be discouraged because these are potent threat to internal security as they fuel dissensions among the people. Free expression of opinions must be allowed but respect for law and order be observed. People should be conscious of their privileges and rights as well as duties and responsibilities. This is the only way to maintain peace and liberty.

Question 4. Suggest a few instances in the poem which highlight humour and irony?

Answer: 'The Tale of Melon City' is full of instances of humour and irony. The just and placid king got an arch built to 'edify' spectators. The king's riding under low arch and losing his crown also creates humour. The way the accused appeal to the king and shift the blame on others is quite funny. The unstable behaviour of the king also creates humour. The self-defence of the architect is a masterpiece. He holds the king himself responsible for the disgrace as he had 'made certain amendments' to his original plan. The king's anger and inability to act calmly create humour.

The criteria for selection of the wisest man is quite ironic. It is assumed that wisdom comes with age. Being blind he does not know that an arch cannot be hanged. Others have eyes, yet they follow his advice and take the arch to the gallows. How ironic it is! The king wants to keep the crowd in good humour and orders that someone be hanged. Only the king is tall enough to fit the noose. What an irony! The king is hanged by his own order. The custom of naming the next king seems equally ridiculous. The idiot who passes by the City Gate suggests "melon" to be the next king. People who think only of their own interests do not bother whether the king is a man or a melon.

MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

A. Short Answer Type Questions**Question 1. What sort of king ruled over the state ? What did he proclaim?**

Answer: The king was fair and gentle. He seemed to be interested in the welfare of the masses. So he proclaimed that an arch should be constructed which should extend across the major thoroughfare. He hoped that it would improve people's mind on looking at it.

Question 2. Why did the king ride down the thoroughfare and what was the result?

Answer: The king rode down the thoroughfare to edify spectators there. Since the arch was built too low, he lost his crown under it. A frown appeared on his mild face and he called it a disgrace.

Question 3. Who was held responsible for the disgrace? How did he /they react to it? What do you learn about the king?

Answer: The chief of builders was held responsible for the disgrace and ordered to be hanged. The chief called it the workmen's fault. The king ordered to have all the workmen hanged. The workmen looked surprised but they blamed the wrong size of bricks for it. This shows the king's fickle mindedness.

Question 4. What argument did the architect advance in self-defence? How did the king take it?

Answer: The architect reminded the king that he had made certain amendments to the original plans of the architect. He suggested that it was the fault of the king himself. On hearing it, the king became so angry that he nearly lost his ability to act sensibly or calmly.

Question 5. Why did the king need some counsel and from whom? Do you think the man was really the wisest one? Give a reason for your answer.

Answer: The king got confused by the architect's clever self-defense. So, he needed the advice of the wisest man in the country. The man selected was so old that he could neither walk nor see. He was not really the wisest one as wisdom does not necessarily come with age. His advice proves his worthlessness.

Question 6. Comment upon the criteria of selection of the wisest man and the quality of counsel he offered.

Answer: The criteria was that wisdom comes with grey hair. The old man they selected could not walk or see. He spoke in a trembling voice. The advice he offered was absurd. A lifeless object cannot be deprived of life by hanging it.

Question 7. What does the comment of the councillor about the arch reveal about himself and the king?

Answer: It shows the councillor's sycophancy and the King's capriciousness. The councillor, an expert in the art of flattery, checked the king from an absurd action, through an argument that appeared logical. The thoughtless king mused over it.

Question 8. Why did the king succumb to public demand?

Answer: The king noticed that the crowd of spectators had become restless and people were muttering aloud. He judged their mood. He trembled to think of the consequences if they were deprived of the fun of watching someone being hanged. So, in order to save his skin, he ordered that someone be hanged immediately.

Question 9. What was the result of the King's thoughtless order?

Answer: The king ordered that someone be hanged immediately. So the noose was set up somewhat high. Each man was measured one by one. Only one man was found tall enough to fit the noose. He was the king. He was hanged by the royal order. Thus the king paid with his life for his thoughtless order.

Question 10. Why did the Ministers feel relieved? Do you think their elation was justified?

Answer: The Ministers felt relieved that the public's eagerness to watch a hanging had been satisfied. They expressed their pleasure by saying that they found someone for hanging. They believed that if they had failed to do so, the unruly town might have turned against the king. Their elation is misplaced. The king had to lose his life to keep the public in good humour.

Question 11. What opinion do you form of the King's Ministers on the basis of their actions after the King's death?

Answer: The Ministers believed in tradition and ceremonies. They shouted in one breath, 'Long live the king! The king is dead'. They were practical-minded men. They knew that the throne could not be left unoccupied. The crown being a symbol of power, someone must be crowned as king.

Question 12. What 'custom' of the citizens is referred to in the tale? How did the Ministers decide to observe it?

Answer: It is their custom to choose the new ruler of their state. Whoever passed the City Gate first of all the next day, would choose the ruler of the state. This method of random choice

excluded dynastic rule as well as conspiracies. The Ministers decided to observe it with proper formality-

Question 13. How was the new ruler of the state selected?

Answer: The Ministers sent out messengers to declare that the next man to pass the City Gate would choose the ruler of their state. An idiot happened to pass the gate. When asked to decide who was to be the king, he replied, "A melon." This was his standard answer to all questions. The Ministers declared that a melon would be their new ruler.

Question 14. What does the selection process of the new ruler of the state reveal about the ministers and the people?

OR

How did the people and ministers react to the selection of 'a melon' as the new ruler?

Answer: The selection process seems quite ridiculous. It also shows how ignorant masses stick to traditions and clever ministers go on fooling them. They are more worried about their own peace, freedom and business affairs than the ruler. This shows how selfish, self-centred and ego-centric they are.

B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. How did the accused try to shift the blame on others? How far did they succeed?

Answer: The chief of builders was the first one to be held guilty. He shifted the blame on the workmen. The workmen were surprised but did not lose their reasoning power. They told the king he had forgotten the fact that the bricks were made of the wrong size. Swayed by their rational argument, the masons were summoned. They trembled with fear, but shifted the blame on the architect who was responsible for planning and erecting the arch. The king ordered the architect to be hanged. The clever architect reminded the king that he had forgotten one small thing. He had made certain amendments to plans when the former had shown them to the latter. This clearly meant that he held the king responsible for the mishap. The king became very angry and lost his capacity of clear judgement. He called it a tricky thing and sought the advice of the wisest man in the country. Thus each accused succeeded in shifting the blame on others.

Question 2. What impression do you gather about the king from 'The Tale of Melon City'?

Answer: The just and placid king appears quite ruthless as he becomes 'placider' and decides to have all the workmen hanged instead of the chief of builders. His wobbling mind and capricious nature is indicated by the frequent changes in his decision. He is easily swayed by arguments and seems fickle-minded. He seems to be eager about public welfare and gets an arch constructed across the thoroughfare to edify them. The whimsical king is easily outwitted by the clever architect. The king loses his head in a fit of anger. In order to save his skin, he seeks the advice of the wisest man in the country. The king wants to keep the public in good humour. He is quite observant and judges the mood of the masses correctly. His lack of foresight proves to be his doom. The height of the noose fits only his neck. He foolishly becomes a victim of his own order. He wants to prevent a public revolt but pays for the public amusement with his blood. Thus he is a short-sighted crank with muddled reasoning power.

Question 3. What do you think makes 'The Tale of Melon City' interesting and edifying?

Answer: As the title indicates the poem tells a story about Melon City—a city named after its ruler. It is quite interesting and edifying to learn how the country got a melon as its ruler. In short, it was on account of customary choice. The people relate the story of a just and placid king who was hanged by his own Royal Decree.

What the king did for the people and how he held the trails of the accused both are quite amusing. The clever arguments of the accused to save their lives are equally interesting. The

king feels the pulse of the people who want to see a hanging. He knows how mischievous an angry mob can be and hence orders that someone must be hanged immediately. The irony of the situation is that only the king is tall enough to fit the noose.

The practical-minded ministers resort to the age-old custom to choose the next ruler. The idiot's choice is approved of in the name of custom. The people are indifferent to the fact that their ruler is a melon not a man. The behaviour of pragmatic ministers and equally selfish, foolish and mean people seems quite funny and interesting. It is instructive too. A wise man should avoid the company of fools.

Question 4. "The poem mocks the process of fair trial and proper judgement." How far do you agree with the statement?

Answer: The poem is a severe indictment of the age-old custom of delivering justice by word of mouth of the kings. There was a time when the King's word was considered divine and whatever he uttered was law. A just and placid king was expected to protect the innocent and punish the guilty. However, the process of trial and the ever-changing judgement's make a fun of the whole process of fair trials and considered awards. This is evident from the statements of the accused who try to save their lives by holding others responsible for the guilt. The King's capriciousness and inability to see through the thin veil of their arguments make him an object of ridicule rather than a dispenser of divine justice. Hence, we agree hilly with the above statement.

Question 5. Comment on the ending of the poem 'The Tale of Melon City'. What bearing does the ending have on the title of the poem?

OR

Comment on the title of the poem 'The Tale of Melon City'.

Answer: The ending of 'The Tale of Melon City' is quite significant. It has a direct bearing on the title. The ending of the poem reveals that the incidents took place long ago. It throws light on the old custom of the state to choose their new ruler. Confronted with the dilemma, the ministers took the easy way out. The person who passed the City Gate next was to name the king. It happened to be an idiot who gave the standard answer "a melon" to every question. So the melon was crowned the king, carried to the throne and respectfully set down there. The people are not at all ashamed to have a melon as their king. They say that if the king rejoices in being a melon, that's all right with them. They find no fault with him as long as he leaves them to enjoy their peace, freedom and free trade. The capital city is called Melon City after the king. Thus the ending throws light on the selfish nature of the people and their belief in old customs. It also explains the title.