

Chapter-1

Pigeons at Daybreak

Anita Desai

About the author:

Anita Desai (born in Mussoorie, India in 1937), is a prominent Indian novelist, short- story and children's literature writer. Her fiction has covered themes such as women's oppression and quest for a fulfilling identity, family relationships and contrasts, the crumbling of traditions and human reactions in all kinds of difficult situations. Desai's novels and short stories evoke characters, events and moods with recourse to a rich use of visual imagery and details. The origin of her stories is itself rooted in images. Some of her novels are Cry, the Peacock (1963), Voices in the City (1965), Fire on the Mountain (1977), Clear light of Day (1980), In Custody (1984), Fasting, Feasting (1999), The Zig Zag Way (2004). "Pigeons at Daybreak" has been taken from a collection of stories entitled Games at Twilight and Other Stories (1978).

Brief Summary

Anita Desai's tale "Pigeons at Daybreak" focuses on an older couple, Mr. and Mrs. Basu, who reside in a bustling loud area in India. This narrative shed light on the challenges of growing old dealing with sickness, and appreciating life's small pleasures. Mr. Basu, an elderly man with poor health, has asthma. He struggles to breathe particularly when it's hot. His wife, Mrs. Basu, looks after him and runs their home. While she might seem annoyed by his grumbling at times, she cares about his health and happiness.

One day, Mrs. Basu reads a news article about a blackout in their city. Mr. Basu needs a fan to help with his breathing issues so she worries about his ability to make it through the night without power. When she informs him of the news, he responds with irritation grumbling about life's many challenges.

As darkness falls, the electricity cuts out plunging the entire neighborhood into blackness. Mr. Basu has trouble breathing without the fan, and he grows more uncomfortable. Mrs. Basu concerned for his well-being, proposes taking him to their neighbor's house, which has a terrace with fresh air. Despite his usual unwillingness to leave home, Mr. Basu agrees.

Mr. Basu steps onto the terrace where a cool breeze helps him unwind. He gazes at the night sky, which brings back memories from his youth. He thinks about a time he spent with his grandson watching pigeons on the terrace. Seeing birds fly at dawn used to make him happy.

As morning comes, the pigeons take to the sky, and Mr. Basu experiences a calm feeling. He forgets his sickness for a bit and enjoys the morning's beauty. The pigeons comfort him, and he pictures himself rising with them, free from his troubles.

The story concludes with Mrs. Basu guiding her husband back inside. Despite his physical weakness, his mind holds onto the peaceful image of the pigeons at daybreak. This moment represents his brief escape from pain and hardship highlighting the difference between life's tough realities and the small joys that bring peace.

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The first part of the text discusses the importance of the English language in the global context. It mentions that English is the most widely spoken second language and is essential for international communication. The text also highlights the role of English in education and the workplace, emphasizing that proficiency in English is a key skill for many careers.

The second part of the text focuses on the challenges of learning English as a second language. It notes that many students find it difficult to understand and use the language correctly. The text suggests that consistent practice and exposure to the language are crucial for improvement. It also mentions that teachers should use a variety of methods to help students learn, including grammar exercises, reading, and listening.

The third part of the text discusses the importance of grammar in English. It explains that grammar is the foundation of the language and that understanding the rules is essential for effective communication. The text provides examples of common grammar mistakes and offers tips on how to avoid them. It also mentions that grammar is often tested in exams and that students should pay attention to the details.

The fourth part of the text focuses on the importance of vocabulary. It explains that having a large vocabulary is necessary for understanding and using the language. The text suggests that students should learn new words regularly and use them in context. It also mentions that there are many resources available to help students expand their vocabulary, including dictionaries and word lists.

The fifth part of the text discusses the importance of listening and speaking skills. It explains that these skills are essential for effective communication and that students should practice them regularly. The text suggests that students should listen to English audio materials and speak with native speakers as much as possible. It also mentions that there are many opportunities for students to practice these skills, such as language exchange programs and conversation clubs.

The sixth part of the text focuses on the importance of reading and writing skills. It explains that these skills are essential for understanding and using the language. The text suggests that students should read English books and articles and write essays and reports regularly. It also mentions that there are many resources available to help students improve their reading and writing skills, such as textbooks and online resources.

The seventh part of the text discusses the importance of the final exam. It explains that the exam is a crucial part of the course and that students should prepare carefully. The text provides tips on how to study for the exam, such as reviewing grammar rules and practicing writing. It also mentions that students should stay calm and confident during the exam.

Explanation with reference to context:

Paragraph 1:

One of his worst afflictions, Mr Basu thought, was not to be able to read the newspaper himself. To have them read to him by his wife. He watched with fiercely controlled irritation that made the corner of his mouth jerk suddenly upwards and outwards, as she searched for her spectacles through the flat. By the time she found them — on the ledge above the bathing place in the bathroom, of all places: what did she want with her spectacles in there? — she had lost the newspaper. When she found it, it was spotted all over with grease for she had left it beside the stove on which the fish was frying. This reminded her to see to the fish before it was overdone. ‘You don’t want charred fish for your lunch do you?’ she shouted back when he called. He sat back then, in his tall-backed cane chair, folded his hands over his stomach and knelt that if he were to open his mouth now, even a slit, it would be to let out a scream of abuse. So he kept it tightly shut.

Reference to the Context:

These lines have been taken from story ‘Pigeons at Daybreak’ written by Anita Desai. The story describes beauty of human relationship against the backdrop of different voices, scenes and circumstances. This is a slow-paced story of an elderly couple living in Daryaganj, Old Delhi. These lines reflect the helpless situation of Mr Basu who is old and ailing and hence is dependent upon his wife Otima for every small daily need. The lines clearly indicate a feeling of irritation and vulnerability.

Explanation:

Mr. Basu, the central character, finds himself not even able to read the newspaper. His wife reads it to him, but at times her forgetfulness bothers him. She tends to lose her spectacles often and does not keep a proper track of the newspaper; hence, this one gets greasy as she has kept it beside the stove. Mr. Basu feels helplessness, along with annoyance toward his wife. This introduces a central theme of the story: aging and the dependency it brings, alongside the trivial irritations that accumulate in relationships.

Paragraph 2:

Otima soon lost the light-heartedness that had come to her with this unaccustomed change of scene. She tired of dragging around the pillows and piling up the bolsters, helping him into a sitting position and then lowering him into a horizontal one, bringing him his medicines, fanning him with a palm leaf and eventually of his groans and sobs as well. Finally she gave up and collapsed onto her own string bed, lying there exhausted and sleepless, too distracted by the sound of traffic to sleep. All through the night her husband moaned and gasped for air. Towards dawn it was so bad that she had to get up and massage his chest. When done long and patiently enough, it seemed to relieve him.

Reference to the Context:

These lines have been taken from story ‘Pigeons at Daybreak’ written by Anita Desai, a prominent contemporary writer whose literary skills in dealing with themes like family relationships and human reactions in all kinds of difficult situations, are well recognized and acclaimed. The story describes beauty of human relationship against the backdrop of different voices, scenes and circumstances. This is a slow-paced story of an elderly couple living in Daryaganj, Old Delhi. The present lines depict an untiring sense of duty and responsibility on the part of Otima towards her ailing husband Mr. Basu.

Explanation :

Due to severe cut in the power supply during night and with her husband suffering from asphyxia, she has to make frantic efforts to provide sufficient amount of air to him. Yet Mr Basu's condition worsens during night and she has to massage him towards the dawn. The sense of relief that Otima gets in serving her ill husband indicates her innate goodness and humanity. Notwithstanding the daily household pressures, she fully understands the significance of love and care in times of need and ailments. The loyalty with which Otima attends to all the real and imagined problems of her husband in addition to all her exhausting daily chores speaks of her deep commitment and sincerity towards human relationships.

Paragraph 3:

'I'll bring you your inhaler. Don't get worried, just don't get worried,' she told him and hustled off to find his inhaler and cortisone. When she held them out to him, he lowered his head into the inhaler like a dying man at the one straw left. He grasped it with frantic hands almost clawing her. She shook her head, watching him. 'Why do you let yourself get so upset?' she asked, cursing herself for having read out that particular piece of news to him. 'It won't be so bad. Many people in the city sleep without electric fans - most do. We'll manage -' 'You'll manage,' he spat at her, 'but I?'

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Explanation:

Mr. Basu becomes anxious when he hears that there will be no electricity tonight. His imaginative fears to spend the night without fan worsen his asthma. He asks for his inhaler. Otima tells him not to worry and brings him an inhaler. Basu almost snatches the inhaler from him and immediately starts using it. Otima explains to Basu that many people sleep without fans in summer. So nothing bad is going to happen, you don't worry. On this Basu says that you will manage but how will I do it.

Paragraph 4:

There was no soothing him now. She knew how rapidly he would advance from imagined breathlessness into the first frightening stage of a full-blown attack of asthma. His chest was already heaving, he imagined there was no oxygen left for him to breathe, that his lungs had collapsed and could not take in any air. He stared up at the strings of washing that hung from end to end of the balcony, the overflow of furniture that cluttered it, the listless parrot in its cage, the view of all the other crowded, washing—hung balconies up and down the length of the road, and felt there was no oxygen left in the air. 'Stay out here on the balcony, it's a little cooler than inside,' his wife said calmly and left him to go about her work. But she did it absently. Normally she would have relished bargaining with the fish—seller who come to the door with a bekti, some whiskered black river fish and a little squirming hill of pale pink prawns in his flat basket. But today she made her purchases and paid him off rather quickly — she was in a hurry to return to the balcony. 'All right?' she asked, looking down at her husband sunk into a heap on his chair, shaking with the effort to suck in air. His lips tightened and whitened in silent reply. She sighed and went away to sort out spices in

the kitchen, to pour them out of large containers into small containers, to fill those that were empty and empty those that were full, giving everything that came her way a little loving polish with the end of her sari for it was something she loved to do, but she did not stay very long. She worried about her husband. Foolish and unreasonable as he seemed to her in his sickness, she could not quite leave him to his agony, whether real or imagined. When the postman brought them a letter from their son in Bhilai, she read out to him the boy's report on his work in the steel mills. The father said nothing but seemed calmer and she was able, after that, to make him eat a little rice and fish jhol, very lightly prepared, just as the doctor prescribed. 'Lie down now,' she said, sucking at a fish bone as she removed the dishes from the table. 'It's too hot out on the balcony. 'Take some rest.'

Reference to context:

These lines have been taken from story 'Pigeons at Daybreak' written by Anita Desai, a prominent contemporary writer whose literary skills in dealing with themes like family relationships and human reactions in all kinds of difficult situations, are well recognized and acclaimed. The story describes beauty of human relationship against the backdrop of different voices, scenes and circumstances. This is a slow-paced story of an elderly couple living in Daryaganj, Old Delhi. The present lines depict the scene how Mr Basu feels after Otima reads the news about power cut this night.

Explanation:

Otima reads newspaper for Basu where she reads the news of power cut. As soon as Mr Basu hears this news, he becomes disturbed. His imaginations invoke asthma attack to him. He feels that there is no oxygen is left in the air and becomes breathless. He starts looking here and there on nearby things but speaks nothing. Meanwhile his wife starts working in kitchen. She bought some fishes and starts preparing food for him. But all the time she is worried about him. In normal days she likes to work. She is a work loving lady. But today due to illness of his husband, she I was not able to work with concentration. Postman brings the letter of their son from Bhilai, she reads the letter for him. He did not respond but seemed calmer. Then she feeds her husband a light fish curry as prescribed by doctor and makes him lie down to rest in the balcony.

Paragraph 5:

Basu had not been on the terrace for years. While his wife and Basu led him up the stairs, hauling him up and propping him upright by their shoulders as though he were some lifeless bag containing something fragile and valuable, he tried to think when he had last attempted or achieved what now seemed a tortuous struggle up the steep concrete steps to the warped green door at the top.

They had given up sleeping there on summer nights long ago, not so much on account of old age or weak knees, really, but because of their perpetual quarrels with the neighbours on the next terrace, separated from theirs by only a broken wooden trellis. Noisy, inconsiderate people addicted to the radio turned on full blast. At times the man had been drunk and troubled and abused his wife who gave as good as she got it had been intolerable. Otima had urged her husband, night after night, to protest. When he did, they had almost killed him. At least they would have had they managed to cross over to the Basus' terrace which they were physically prevented from doing by their sons and daughters. The next night they had been even more offensive. Finally the Basus had been forced to give in and retreat down the stairs to sleep in their closed, airless room under the relentlessly ticking ceiling fan. At least it was private there. After the first few restless nights they wondered how they had ever put up with the public sleeping outdoors and its disturbances — its 'nuisance', as Otima called it in English, thinking it an effective word.

Reference to context:

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Explanation:

Basu had not been to the terrace since he fell ill. He was being carried as if he were a delicate object. He tried to think when he had last tried or succeeded in what now seemed like a painful struggle to reach the green door at the top of the concrete staircase.

He had long ago given up sleeping there on summer nights because of quarrels with his neighbours. They were noisy, careless people, addicted to radios that played at full volume. They had nearly beaten Basu up when he protested. So, he had given up sleeping on the terrace on summer nights.

Paragraph 6:

"'What else? What else?' Mr Basu snapped at her. 'Nothing else in the papers?' 'Blue bull menace in Delhi airport can be solved by narcotic 'Blue bulls? Blue bulls?' snorted Mr Basu, almost tipping out of his chair. 'How do you mean, "blue bulls"? What's a blue bull? You can't be reading right.'"

Reference to the context:

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Explanation:

The impatient Mr. Basu keeps Otiima on the tenterhooks, asking for more news that would be substantial. When Otiima reads the headline of the "blue bull menace" at the Delhi airport, Mr. Basu becomes incredulous. His mocking at Otiima for misreading the term further shows his frustration and irritation with both her and the world around him. This dismissive attitude shows that he is dissatisfied with himself and has no attachment to the modern world, which he believes is mundane and absurd.

Paragraph 7:

"Mr Basu sat staring at the narrow strip of the morning sky which, in the gaps between the houses, formed a glimmering seam of pale blue. He thought of the old woman who had lived with him. What was her name? Ah, yes, it was Otiima... He felt he could hardly see her now. It was as if she were being slowly erased from the earth."

Reference to the context:

These lines have been taken from story 'Pigeons at Daybreak' written by Anita Desai, a prominent contemporary writer whose literary skills in dealing with themes like family relationships and human reactions in all kinds of difficult situations, are well recognized and acclaimed. The story describes beauty of human relationship against the backdrop of different voices, scenes and circumstances. This is a slow-paced story of an elderly couple living in Daryaganj, Old Delhi. The present lines explain scene about the next morning when Mr Basu wakes up and looks towards the open blue sky.

Explanation:

Reflecting on his wife's name, Mr. Basu feels intensely emotionally estranged from her. The "thin strip of the morning sky" symbolically draws a parallel between his view of his life-now narrow and unconnected to other people. The thoughts of Otima suggest that his perception of her and, by extension, their relationship, is slowly being erased. This metaphor of Otima's being "slowly erased from the earth" reflects that the process of Otima's isolation, and his emotional distance from his wife, might result from his old age or frail health.

Comprehension:

Paragraph 1:

'I'll bring you your inhaler. Don't get worried, just don't get worried,' she told him and hustled off to find his inhaler and cortisone. When she held them out to him, he lowered his head into the inhaler like a dying man at the one straw left. He grasped it with frantic hands, almost clawing her. She shook her head, watching him. 'Why do you let yourself get so upset?' she asked, cursing herself for having read out that particular piece of news to him. 'It won't be so bad. Many people in the city sleep without electric fans - most do. We'll manage - ' 'You'll manage,' he spat at her, 'but I?'

There was no soothing him now. She knew how rapidly he would advance from imagined breathlessness into the first frightening stage of a full-blown attack of asthma. His chest was already heaving, he imagined there was no oxygen left for him to breathe, that his lungs had collapsed and could not take in any air. He stared up at the strings of washing that hung from end to end of the balcony, the overflow of furniture that cluttered it, the listless parrot in its cage, the view of all the other crowded, washing-hung balconies up and down the length of the road, and felt there was no oxygen left in the air.

1. Who offers to bring the inhaler and for whom?

It is Otima who offers to bring the inhaler for her ailing husband Mr. Basu.

2. Why is there a need for the inhaler?

The inhaler is required for Mr Basu who is suffering from asthma.

3. What is the reason for getting so upset?

Mr. Basu gets very upset on hearing the news of power cut during night.

4. Why does he feel that he will not be able to manage?

He feels that he will not be able to manage because of his imagined frightfulness related to the intense

5. What makes him feel that there was no oxygen left in the air?

He begins to feel that there was no oxygen left in the air due to his imagined breathlessness advancing into the stage of a full-blown attack of asthma.

6. Explain the meaning of the words: *frantic* and *rapidly* by using them into sentences of your own.

7. Frantic: There was frantic search for the culprit by the police.

Rapidly: The students are advised to go through their tasks rapidly so as to save time.

Paragraph 2:

‘I’ll tell you,’ she suddenly answered, and wiped the perspiration from her face in relief. ‘I’ll have your bed taken up on the terrace. I can call Bulu from next door to do it - you can sleep out in the open air tonight, eh? That’ll be nice, won’t it? That will do you good.’ She brightened both at the thought of a night spent in the open air on the terrace, just as they had done when they were younger and climbing up and down stairs was nothing to them, and at the thought of having an excuse to visit the neighbours and having a little chat while getting them to come and carry up a string bed for them. Of course, old Basu made a protest and a great fuss and coughed and spat and shook and said he could not possibly move in this condition, or be moved by anyone, but she insisted and, ignoring him, went out to make the arrangements.

1. Whose bed is being taken up on the terrace and why?

Bed of Mr. Basu is being taken up on the terrace as there is power cut for the whole night and it’s a summer night. Bed is taken up so that he could sleep easily.

2. What is the need to sleep out in the open air that night?

They had to sleep out in the open air that night because of power cut in their area during that night.

3. Why did she brighten up at the thought of finding an excuse to visit the neighbours?

She was brightened up to recall her youthful days of meeting and chatting with neighbors while sleeping on the terrace.

4. Why did old Basu make a protest and great fuss about going up on the terrace?

Basu made a protest because of his physical condition due to severe illness at this stage.

5. Why did she insist and go out to make arrangements?

She insisted as she was happy to recall their younger days when they used to go to terrace to sleep during summer nights.

6. Use the words terrace and protest in your own words.

Terrace- Some guests recline in lounge chairs on the sea-facing terrace.

Protest- Lots of people protested about the new working hours.

Paragraph 3:

Mr. Basu, a middle-aged man, suffers from asthma and often finds himself in a bad mood due to his health issues. He is irritated by his wife, Otima, who tends to care for him in a way that does not always meet his expectations. She tries to assist him by reading the newspaper to him, but her actions seem to aggravate him. Otima, in her attempt to help, reads out the news headlines to her husband. However, she gets distracted and makes a mistake in reading one of the headlines. Mr. Basu, already in a bad mood, becomes further irritated, and he asks her to stop reading, growing more agitated by her missteps. As Otima continues reading the newspaper, she comes across an article about a “blue bull menace” and reads it aloud. Mr. Basu dismisses the news and criticizes her reading, claiming it to be a mistake. Otima defends her ability to read properly, even though she is not aware of her husband's growing frustration.

1. Why is Mr. Basu in a bad mood at the start of the story?

Mr. Basu is in a bad mood because of his ongoing health issues, particularly asthma, which makes him irritable and impatient.

2. What does Otima try to do for Mr. Basu in the beginning?

Otima tries to care for Mr. Basu by reading the newspaper to him, but her actions and behavior frustrate him

3. What mistake does Otima make while reading the newspaper?

Otima misreads one of the headlines, which further frustrates Mr. Basu.

4. How does Mr. Basu react to Otima's reading?

Mr. Basu becomes irritated by her reading and asks her to stop, expressing his frustration.

5. What article does Otima read aloud?

Otima reads about the "blue bull menace," a news report that Mr. Basu dismisses as incorrect.

6. How does Mr. Basu respond to the "blue bull" news?

Mr. Basu dismisses it as a mistake and criticizes Otima for reading it.

Paragraph 4:

Otima's actions continue to annoy Mr. Basu, but she remains persistent in trying to read to him. As she reads more, she finds a tragic story about a young man's death, which she reads with some morbid fascination. Mr. Basu, however, grows more annoyed with each passing moment. The story takes another turn when an announcement about a power cut is made on the radio. Mr. Basu, who is highly dependent on his fan due to his asthma, becomes panicked at the thought of being without it. His anxiety escalates, and Otima tries to comfort him by locating his inhaler, hoping to calm him down. Otima, realizing Mr. Basu's distress, suggests that he sleep on the terrace for some fresh air. Despite his discomfort and complaints, she manages to get him to the terrace. Once there, Mr. Basu begins to reflect on the past, particularly the time when he showed his grandson the pigeons flying on the rooftops.

1. What tragic news does Otima come across while reading?

Otima finds an article about the tragic death of a young man, which she reads with morbid fascination.

2. How does Mr. Basu react to the tragic news Otima reads?

Mr. Basu becomes more irritated with the reading, showing no interest in the story and growing frustrated with Otima's tone.

3. Why does Mr. Basu panic when the power cut is announced?

Mr. Basu panics because he cannot imagine sleeping without his fan, especially with his asthma.

4. How does Otima try to help Mr. Basu during his panic?

Otima tries to calm him down by finding his inhaler and offering comfort.

5. Why does Otima suggest Mr. Basu sleep on the terrace?

Otima suggests the terrace as a place with fresh air to help Mr. Basu breathe better.

6. What memory does Mr. Basu recall while on the terrace?

Mr. Basu recalls showing his grandson the pigeons flying on the rooftops in the past.

Paragraph 5:

Mr. Basu feels the cool breeze on the terrace and begins to relax. He reflects on how, in the past, he used to sleep on the terrace with his family, and how peaceful it was. As he enjoys the fresh air, Otima continues to care for him, but both of them remain aware of the difficulties of the situation. As the night wears on, Otima becomes exhausted from caring for Mr. Basu but refuses to leave him. She decides to stay with him on the terrace for the rest of the night. Eventually, the electricity is restored, but Otima is too tired to bring Mr. Basu back inside. However, he insists on staying out, content with the cool air and the peaceful atmosphere of the terrace. The next morning, as the sun rises, Mr. Basu feels a sense of tranquility while lying on the terrace. The pigeons fly across the sky, adding to the peaceful atmosphere. Mr. Basu is grateful for the stillness, feeling a rare sense of calm, as he watches the birds.

1. What effect does the fresh air have on Mr. Basu?

The cool breeze on the terrace helps Mr. Basu relax and feel better, easing his discomfort.

2. What does Mr. Basu think about while lying on the terrace?

Mr. Basu reflects on the past, remembering the peaceful times when he used to sleep on the terrace with his family.

3. Why does Otima stay on the terrace with Mr. Basu despite being tired?

Otima stays on the terrace because she is determined to care for her husband, despite her exhaustion.

4. How does Mr. Basu feel about staying on the terrace?

Mr. Basu feels content and peaceful, enjoying the cool air and the quiet atmosphere of the terrace.

5. What gives Mr. Basu a sense of peace in the morning?

The sight of pigeons flying in the morning sky gives Mr. Basu a sense of peace and tranquility.

6. How does the story end?

The story ends with Mr. Basu finding peace on the terrace, watching the pigeons as the day breaks, and feeling calm despite the challenges of the previous night.

Short Answer Type Questions (Answer in about 50 words)

1. Who are the main characters in the story?

The main characters in Pigeons at Daybreak are Mr. and Mrs. Basu. Mr. Basu is an elderly man who battles asthma, which makes his life particularly difficult on hot and humid nights. Mrs. Basu, his caring yet occasionally frustrated wife, looks after him and tries to ensure he is comfortable despite his constant complaints. Their relationship is marked by love, concern, and moments of annoyance, as Mrs. Basu is always worried about his health. The story emphasizes their daily struggles, especially during a night when the power goes out, worsening Mr. Basu's condition and adding to their difficulties.

2. What illness does Mr. Basu suffer from?

Mr. Basu suffers from asthma, a respiratory condition that makes him hard to breathe and even looks obese while wearing thick sweaters, especially during humid and hot days. The illness plays an important role in the story since it's something that worsens his life on a daily basis and distresses both of them as well as his wife. His suffocation is enhanced without having electricity run the fan for him. His asthma also symbolizes the struggle of aging and helplessness. Again, he doesn't lose hope but experiences temporary comfort from the air and thought when he sees the pigeons rise to the sky when dawn comes as it breaks on the roof of his terrace.

3. Why is Mrs. Basu worried about the power failure?

Mrs. Basu is worried about the power failure because it directly affects Mr. Basu's health. He depends on the fan to keep cool and breathe comfortably, and without electricity, the heat makes his asthma worse. She fears he will struggle to sleep and suffer throughout the night. Additionally, she knows he will complain and feel helpless, which increases her own anxiety. She tries to pacify him, and eventually she takes him out to the balcony, hoping fresh air will clear his head. Her concern illustrates how much she cares for her husband, although she is irritated by his whining at times.

4. How does Mr. Basu react to the news of the power failure?

Mr. Basu feels angry and hopeless in the wake of the power outage. He immediately complains about the heat, and his condition is getting worse, showing how dependent he is on electricity for comfort. His reaction reflects his general dissatisfaction with life itself, as he often speaks of his suffering and hopelessness. He is generally irritable because of his illness and advancing body. However, despite his grouching, one can see his wife's concern and care when she tries to comfort him. His reaction, therefore, reveals the theme of aging and how small inconveniences, such as a power cut, can have a huge impact on the elderly.

5. Why does Mrs. Basu take Mr. Basu to the terrace?

Mrs. Basu takes Mr. Basu to the terrace because she hopes that fresh air will make him breathe better. With no electricity and the heat worsening his asthma, she realizes that staying inside will only make his condition worse. Bringing him outside helps her try to provide relief and comfort. The terrace becomes a place where he can feel some peace, as the cool breeze calms him. This choice enables him to again relive an old favorite childhood memory—observing pigeons fly at sunrise. Her tenderness and the swiftness of action demonstrate how she cares about him.

6. How does Mr. Basu feel on the terrace?

At first, he is extremely uncomfortable, but as he sits on the terrace, he feels the cool breeze about him and relaxes. The fresh air helps him breathe a little easier, and for the moment, he forgets how he struggles. While watching the sky and remembering his childhood, he finds peace in simple beauty. The sight of a pigeon evokes the happier moments in his life and specifically the time spent with his grandson. Although his disease never leaves him, it offers him a temporary escape from the suffering it brings. The terrace is turned into a location of relief and nostalgia for him.

7. What does Mr. Basu remember while sitting on the terrace?

Sitting on the veranda, Mr. Basu talks about his childhood and the happy hours when he saw pigeons. He talks about his grandson as well and some great moments they spent together, especially seeing the pigeons fly at dawn. A comfort or that level of happiness in him comes with these memories, making him forget his illness and problems for a while. His recollection depicts the notion that nice memories bring relief from difficult situations. Despite the physical suffering, his mind finds peace in these memories, showing how important small joys and nostalgic moments can be in a person's life, especially during old age.

8. What role do pigeons play in the story?

Pigeons are a symbol of freedom and peace in the story. For Mr. Basu, watching them fly at daybreak provides a moment of escape from his painful reality. They remind him of his childhood and the time he spent with his grandson, bringing him a sense of joy. The pigeons also represent the contrast between his restricted, illness-ridden life and their ability to fly freely. In a way, they symbolize his desire to be free from his physical suffering. The moment he watches them gives him peace, making them a crucial element in the story's theme of finding solace.

9. How does the power failure serve as a metaphor in the story?

The power breakdown becomes a symbol of helplessness, aging, and suffering in life. How the old gentleman depends on power to alleviate himself of asthma serves him equally at the hands of others for old-age care; and the cut off of that power reflects more the vulnerability that one feels so strongly when approaching the age, he cannot control even himself. The darkness caused by the power failure represents the struggles and discomforts of life, while the terrace and the morning

light symbolize temporary relief. The story uses this contrast to show how even in moments of suffering, there can be glimpses of peace.

10. What is the significance of the story's title?

The title Pigeons at Daybreak means hope and freedom. The pigeons flying at dawn represent a moment of peace and escape for Mr. Basu, who otherwise is imprisoned in his illness and suffering. The break of day represents a new beginning that gives him a brief but meaningful sense of happiness. The title also throws up the contrast between night and day—night being his struggles and day representing relief. Even though his condition won't change, watching the pigeons somehow makes him feel better, exemplifying that even in harsh reality, there is always peace through the small things.

11. How does Mrs. Basu feel about Mr. Basu's constant complaints?

Mrs. Basu loves and cares for her husband, but she often feels frustrated with his constant complaints. She understands his suffering, yet his frequent negativity makes it difficult for her to stay patient. She tries her best to provide comfort, but sometimes she reacts with irritation, especially when he exaggerates his suffering. Despite these irritation moments, however, she was very much worried about his health and kept looking after him as much as she could. Nothing reduces the amount of love in her heart, but irritation sometimes brings into sharp focus what all caregivers endure to care for older or ill loved ones.

12. What emotions does Mr. Basu experience throughout the story?

The frustration, helplessness, nostalgia, and temporary peace Mr. Basu experiences in the story start from irritation and misery, worsened by his asthma and power failure. He feels helpless in his dependence on Mrs. Basu for comfort. However, sitting on the terrace brings nostalgia when he remembers happy memories of his childhood and his grandson. He gets to spend a rare daybreak with pigeons and be relieved from all his misery in that little instance. It catches the moment when he comes out of all sufferings to moments of relief.

13. What does the story reveal about aging and illness?

The story presents the sufferings of old age and illness, describing how they cause physical pain and emotional anguish. Mr. Basu's asthma handicaps him to such an extent that he is confined, relying on others for everything. The frequent complaint from him depicts that chronic illness hampers not only the suffering patient but also the caregivers. Mrs. Basu's irritation is a reflection of the problems of caring for an elderly person. The story also gives the impression that while hardships accompany aging, little moments of joy, such as watching pigeons fly, can be comforting. It underlines how memories and nature can be a source of relief even when suffering is there.

14. What is the relationship dynamic between Mr. Basu and Mrs. Basu?

Mr. Basu and Mrs. Basu have a loving, caring relationship with much irritation. Mrs. Basu is a big worrier who constantly cares about her husband's health, but she also gets annoyed by his complaints about everything in one go. While irritated, Mr. Basu is absolutely dependent on her and finds the lady's presence soothing. Their relationship is an epitome of aging couples' reality, where love is portrayed in small gestures of care rather than grand acts. They still have deep feelings for each other despite the tensions brought about by illness, proving how long-term relationships are built with patience, responsibility, and enduring affection.

15. What is the overall message of the story?

The story says, even in these moments of helplessness and agony, little joy can bring respite. Now, the condition of Mr. Basu reveals the hardships due to old age, but as he is getting peace watching the pigeons around him, his beauty is shown. This has shown the emphasis on love, care, and patience in a relationship as indicated in Mrs. Basu's worry for her husband even amidst all her frustration. The short story also presents the role that memory and nature play in affording temporary escapes from pain as well as illustrating how happiness could be achieved amidst dire situations.

16. Describe in a few words one of Mr Basu's 'worst afflictions.'

Mr. Basu had several afflictions. His 'worst affliction' is his inability to read the newspaper himself, having to rely on his wife to read it to him, causing him immense irritation and a sense of helplessness.

17. What kind of news does Otima read for Mr Basu? Is Basu interested in such news readings?

Otima reads news related to daily life like reviews on latest released films, news on Filmfare awards and other situational news like kidnapping etc. But Basu is not interested in such news as he takes interest in general news only.

18. What is the news that makes Basu restless and why?

The news related to power cut in their area makes Basu restless. This is because its summer time and he cannot sleep without a fan. Further he is a patient of asthma and this causes him to shortness of breath.

19. What is the suggestion that Otima gives to survive the above crisis?

Otima suggests to go and sleep on terrace during the night due to absence of electricity during that night. She tells Basu that they can easily survive there as the cool breeze is blowing outside.

20. What happens to Basu at the end of the story?

Mr Basu, unfortunately, dies at the end of the story as Otima finds him lying 'flat and still, gazing up, his mouth hanging open' as if to let the cool and fresh air pour into him.

21. Discuss the relevance of the title 'Pigeons at Daybreak'.

The title of the story is spiritual. The pigeon is a symbol of the postman and also of the liberation of the soul. The second word is a symbol of full hope and the comfort of the new coming day. Shree Basu spent that night full of difficulties. Hence the title is a symbol of the liberation of Basu's soul and his journey of a new life.

22. What is Otima's attitude towards Basu?

Otima is a sincere lady towards his husband and other household activities. She remains busy in the house doing household routine activities still she takes care of his husband very attentively. She reads newspaper for her husband and takes her to terrace as there was no electricity that night. This shows that she is kind and attentive towards his husband Basu.

Essay type questions (Answer in about 150-200 words)

1. Describe Basu's ailment and how he copes up with it?

Mr Basu, an aged man in his early sixties, suffers from many physical and emotional ailments which include asthma and problems in breathing but sometimes there is imagined breathlessness too when there is lack of sufficient air or oxygen due to intense heat or power cut. This imagined state leads to the frightening stage of a full-blown attack of asthma where he feels as if there were no oxygen left for him to breathe, that his lungs had collapsed and he can not take in any air. Mr Basu copes up with it due to the affectionate care and support of his wife Otima who serves him with complete loyalty and selflessness. Though he seems foolish and unreasonable to her in his sickness, yet she could not quite leave him to his agony, whether real or imagined. When the postman brings them a letter from their son in Bhilai, she read out to him the boy's report on his work in the steel mills. On hearing the contents of the letter, Mr. Basu becomes calmer and is able to eat and relax properly. When it becomes too hot out on the balcony, she offers to shift him up on the terrace where it is comparatively calmer. She knows it fully well that it is not so easy to get various things done when one's husband is old and ill, yet she is never irritated or impatient. She continues taking care of him with utmost devotion till his last breath.

[illegible]

2. Write down a character sketch of Otima.

Otima, wife of Mr Basu, is a dedicated lady, who nurses and serves her ailing husband with much care and affection. Pressed with all kinds of household chores and duties, she still manages to take enough care of the moods and demands of her husband without any complaints or regrets. As far as her own personality and character is concerned, at fifty-six years of age, she did not have even a

single wrinkle on her oiled face or a grey hair on her head. She seemed as smooth as butter and as round as cake. As a matter of fact, life might still have been enjoyable to her if it had not been for the asthma of her husband that had made him totally dependent on her.

Otima tries to take care of him in every humane way like reading newspaper headlines to him, providing him with all kinds of comforts, shifting him from one place to the other so that he could inhale more air and tending to all his real and imagined ailments with affectionate nursing which include bringing inhaler, shifting to terrace and massaging his body. She consoles him in her own sweet way when he gets upset and does not allow him to lose heart. Though physically it was very exhausting for her and she did feel tired and irritated at times, yet emotionally it gave her much relief and satisfaction to serve her husband in a selfless way. Otima's character reflects the beauty of human relationship and human values in difficult circumstances.

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3. Throw light on the theme of the story in about 150 words.

The present story 'Pigeons at Daybreak' deals with the theme of the tremendous power of family and human relationships, particularly the significance of love and care in times of need and ailments. The story discusses the pace of life of an aged couple living in old Delhi. The old man gets easily

irritated due to his illness but his wife is always calm and composed. The story describes the beauty of human relationship against the backdrop of all kinds of day to day pressures. The old man symbolizes life in the twilight years whereas his small grandson stands for continuity of life in all its zeal and enthusiasm. The pigeons symbolize yearning for freedom which is finally attained by the old man. Desai tries to focus on the problems and personal struggles of contemporary life that her characters must learn to cope up with. She maintains that her primary aim is to discover the truth that often lies submerged beneath the reality. The loyalty with which Otima attends to all the real and imagined problems of ailing husband in addition to all her exhausting daily chores speaks of her deep commitment and sincerity towards human relationships.

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4. Describe Mr. Basu's condition and his struggle in the story.

Mr. Basu, being the protagonist of Pigeons at Daybreak, is an old man who has an acute respiratory problem. This condition has weakened him and left him at the mercy of others even for simple things of everyday life. Things that he once used to enjoy doing cannot be done now; for example, reading the newspaper or going out for a walk. His wife, Otima, has to assist him in his daily routine: finding his glasses, reading out to him, or bringing his medicines. The constant need for help frustrates Mr. Basu. He feels helpless and resents the loss of his independence. His physical struggle with his illness is compounded by his mental struggle. Mr. Basu is acutely aware of his own feebleness; this is how he feels quite isolated and removed from the rest of the world. His body fails him; in the slightest discomfort, he reflects on the life he led and could never do anything independent.

Although his disease is a personal affair for him, it also creates tension in his relation with his wife Otima. Otima is so patiently loving towards Mr. Basu and, at times, his dependency makes them fight. He feels sorry for making her take care of him and wishes sometimes that he could contribute

more to the household. It has been emotionally tiring to have the sense that he was more of a liability to his wife. Mr. Basu is portrayed to struggle with growing old and falling sick, so even his own body becomes an antagonist to him-physically as well as mentally. These reasons make his case more layered.

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5. What role does Otima play in Mr. Basu's life?

Otima is the most vital person in Mr. Basu's life. She is, in fact his caretaker during his illness, his support, and his solace in tough times. Through Otima's role in the story, there is a thematic development of love and selflessness. Otima has been around Mr. Basu for quite some time now and remains faithful to him. Otima caters for all Mr. Basu's needs. These include assisting him with basic requirements, such as searching for his glasses to seeing to it that he takes his medicines on time. She reads the newspaper to him if he cannot do so himself and oversees the running of the house. She does all this in patient love for Mr. Basu.

Though Otima's love for Mr. Basu is unconditional, it is not without its emotional cost. She has to bear Mr. Basu's frustration and resentment about his illness. His dependence on her makes him feel like a burden, and Otima has to bear not just the physical responsibilities of caring for him but also the emotional weight of his feelings. However, despite these difficulties, Otima never complains. She is very calm and composed, showing immense strength in her role as Mr. Basu's caregiver. Her selflessness stands out in the story, portraying a person who is committed to her loved one, even when it's not easy.

Otima's character also gives the theme of love and sacrifice in the face of adversity. She continues to care for Mr. Basu without expecting anything in return, which reinforces the idea of duty and devotion. Her role as a wife is not just about love but responsibility. In the story, Otima is the pillar that keeps Mr. Basu grounded and helps him find moments of peace, despite his illness and frustration.

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1. 在 2019 年 12 月 31 日，本集团持有的金融资产和负债的公允价值如下：

金融资产	公允价值
货币资金	1,234,567
应收账款	567,890
其他应收款	123,456
长期股权投资	789,012
固定资产	345,678
无形资产	234,567
其他非流动资产	123,456
应付账款	456,789
其他应付款	234,567
长期借款	1,234,567
应付债券	567,890
其他金融负债	123,456

2. 在 2019 年 12 月 31 日，本集团持有的金融资产和负债的公允价值如下：

金融资产	公允价值
货币资金	1,234,567
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应付债券	567,890
其他金融负债	123,456

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6. What is the significance of the pigeons in the story?

In *Pigeons at Daybreak*, it is the pigeons that have symbolic significance in Mr. Basu's life. He scans through his window from the terrace every day and sees the pigeons flying freely in the sky. Here, pigeons mean freedom to Mr. Basu—a feeling he craves but cannot indulge in as he is ill. The pigeons take the sky with such liberty, without an iota of worry from any physical strain. In return, watching them gives Mr. Basu a sense of relief and joy, only temporarily. The pigeons remind him of the life he once had before his illness took over his ability to move freely and enjoy life. The birds' flight symbolizes the freedom he has lost, and it is, for the time being, an escape from such harsh reality. The pigeons at dawn also symbolize the concept of hope. Though he is battling health and old age, the pigeons' flight gives Mr. Basu a glimpse of hope. It is a daily ritual that calms him down and brings him peace. The pigeons in the story bring out the idea that small joys in life can be powerful, even when everything else seems tough. The pigeons are thus a reminder to Mr. Basu that there is, indeed, beauty and freedom in the world even when one cannot touch it with his sick hands. These birds seen day in and day out give him relief; he knows some things will always be out of his control, yet they could bring a smile to his face.

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7. How does Mr. Basu react to the power cuts and how does it affect him?

In the story, the frequent power cuts are a great source of frustration for Mr. Basu. His illness makes it difficult for him to breathe properly, and he relies on the fan for relief from the heat and discomfort. When the power cuts occur, the air becomes stuffy, and Mr. Basu struggles to breathe. This makes him feel helpless and irritated, which adds to his already present anxiety about his illness. The power cuts symbolize more than just a loss of comfort; they symbolize Mr. Basu's lack of control over his surroundings. At this stage in his life, where he is already dependent on others, the power cuts make him feel even more vulnerable. He cannot even count on basic things like electricity for him to be at ease.

The power cuts also serve as a metaphor for the frailty of life. As in the case of the power being cut off without any particular rhyme or reason, Mr. Basu's health is erratic and unpredictable. He is constantly at the mercy of his condition, and the power cuts reflect his uncertainty. His frustration with the cuts is magnified by his physical discomfort, which makes him feel more cramped and imprisoned. It uses these awkward moments to explore the larger theme of aging and illness—how minor disruptions to one's normal, everyday experience can have profound effects on their sense of security and well-being.

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8. What is the relationship between Mr. Basu and his surroundings in the story?

Mr. Basu's relationship with his surroundings reflects his physical and emotional state. His home, especially his bedroom, is a place where he is reminded of his physical limitations. He feels trapped in his own body, unable to move freely or take care of himself. The house is now a place of confinement where he is constantly reminded of his illness and his dependency on others, especially his wife, Otima. His interaction with his immediate environment reveals the isolation and frustration that have beset him. The physical space of the house feels stifling to him, a constant reminder of his declining health.

However, if he goes into the terrace room, his circumstances with his world change. A terrace is actually where he had a feeling of freedom. When he is viewing the pigeons flying in the sky, during that moment when he forgets his illness briefly, the scene represents a small space where freedom from the limitation of his illnesses is possible as well as just a moment where he can temporarily feel peaceful. The contrast between the closed space of the house and the open terrace underscores Mr. Basu's inner conflict—his desire for freedom and release from his struggles, yet the reality of being bound by his illness.

The house and the terrace around Mr. Basu are very significant in the story in transferring his emotional and physical journey. The house is symbolic of his confinements, and the possibility of freedom and peace for him was the terrace. By showing Mr. Basu's interaction with his surroundings, we get a better insight into his condition of aging, illness, and comfort.

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Das folgende Diagramm zeigt die Entwicklung der deutschen Sprache von der Vorzeit bis zur Gegenwart. Die Zeitstrahl ist in Jahrhunderte unterteilt, wobei die wichtigsten Sprachstadien und deren Merkmale hervorgehoben sind. Die Entwicklung ist von der Urzeit über die germanische Vorfahren bis zur modernen deutschen Sprache zu sehen.

Die Entwicklung der deutschen Sprache ist ein Prozess, der über Jahrhunderte hinweg stattfand. Sie begann mit der Urzeit, in der die ersten Menschen in Europa lebten. In dieser Zeit entstanden die ersten germanischen Sprachen, die sich später in die verschiedenen Dialekte der deutschen Sprache aufspalteten. Die germanische Vorfahren, die in der Zeit der germanischen Vorfahren lebten, sprachen eine gemeinsame germanische Sprache, die sich in die verschiedenen Dialekte der deutschen Sprache aufspaltete. Die Entwicklung der deutschen Sprache ist ein Prozess, der über Jahrhunderte hinweg stattfand. Sie begann mit der Urzeit, in der die ersten Menschen in Europa lebten. In dieser Zeit entstanden die ersten germanischen Sprachen, die sich später in die verschiedenen Dialekte der deutschen Sprache aufspalteten. Die germanische Vorfahren, die in der Zeit der germanischen Vorfahren lebten, sprachen eine gemeinsame germanische Sprache, die sich in die verschiedenen Dialekte der deutschen Sprache aufspaltete.
