Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Assignment: The Open Window**

1. **Who was Framton Nuttel? What had the doctors advised him?**

Ans: Framton Nuttel was a man with a nervous disorder. The doctors advised him to go to a country – a rural retreat- to cure his nervous condition.

1. **What had his sister done for him? Why?**

Ans: Framton’s sister had once stayed in the country at the rectory and knew many people there. She gave letters of introduction to her brother so that he could get acquainted with people there. She believed that if Framton would bury himself in the new place and not speak to anyone, his nerves would be worse than ever from moping.

1. **In whose house was Framton in the story? Who welcomed him and why?**

Ans: Framton had gone to Mrs Sappleton’s house. Mrs Sappleton’s niece Vera welcomed him as her aunt was upstairs.

1. **Descirbe Vera in short. What did she tell Mr Framton on greeting him?**

Ans: Vera was a very self-possessed young girl of fifteen. She told Framton that her aunt would be there in some time and that in the meantime he must put up with her.

1. **What were Framton’s thoughts when Vera told him to put up with her? What did he think about visiting strangers in a new place?**

Ans: When Vera told Framton to put up with her, he endeavoured to say the correct something which would flatter the niece but not discount the aunt. Framton doubted whether those formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing.

1. **What did Framton think about Mrs Sappleton and the inhabitants of the house?**

Ans: Framton wondered whether Mrs Sappleton was actually one of the nice people his sister had mentioned. He also wondered whether Mrs Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. There was something which he couldn’t define the suggested masculine inhabitation.

1. **Which question did Vera ask Framton regarding her aunt? Why? What was Famton’s response?**

Ans: Vera asked Framton if he knew anything about her aunt. Framton said that he only knew her name and address.

1. **What did Vera do immediately after learning that Framton did not know her aunt? What does this tell us about her?**

Ans: As soon as Framton told Vera that he did not know her aunt, he started spinning a yarn about a certain tragedy that had come upon her aunt three years ago. This tells us that Vera is smart , mischievous and a great story teller. She is imaginative and has a great presence of mind to create a story on the spot without any pre-planning.

1. **What tragedy did Vera narrate?**

Ans: Three years ago, Mrs Sappleton’s husband and her two young brothers along with their little brown spaniel had gone off for their day’s shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite snipe-shooting ground they were all engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. Their bodies were never recovered. According to Vera, aunt always thought that they would come back some day and walk in through the window.

1. **According to Vera’s story why was a window kept open?**

Ans: According to Vera’s story, the window was kept open because Mrs Sappleton believed that her husband and two brothers who had gone for hunting would come in through it. The window was kept open every evening till it was dusk.

1. **How did Mrs Sappleton enter the room? What did she ask Framton?**

Ans: Mrs Sappleton bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance. She asked Framton whether Vera had been amusing him in the meanwhile.

1. **What was Mrs Sappleton’s version of the open window?**

Ans: Mrs Sappleton asked Framton if he wouldn’t mind the open window and explained that her husband and brothers would be home directly from the shooting and they always came in that way. She further added that they had been out for snipe in the marshes that day and so they would make a fine mess over her carpets.

1. **What was purely ‘horrible’ for Framton? Why?**

Ans: Mrs Sappleton kept talking about her husband and brothers having gone for shooting and that they would come in from the window. She further rattled cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds and the prospects for duck in the winter. Vera had already given a different version of the story saying that her aunt’s husband and her brothers had gone for hunting three years ago and had not returned but the aunt kept believing that they would and therefore would keep the window open. Having heard this version, Framton was shocked to hear Mrs Sappleton talking about the hunting party returning any moment. This was purely ‘horrible’ for Framton.

1. **What did Framton do to deviate the conversation? Was he successful in doing so?**

Ans: Framton made a desperate effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic. He tried to talk about his ailment and what the doctors had suggested him. He was partially successful in diverting the attention of Mrs Sappleton as she was giving him only a fragment of her attention and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond.

1. **How did Framton react when Mrs Sappleton exclaimed the arrival of the hunting party?**

Ans: Mrs Sappleton suddenly exclaimed that her husband and her brothers had arrived just in time for tea and looked as if they were muddy upto the eyes. On hearing this Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look of sympathetic comprehension.

1. **Explain ‘sympathetic comprehension’:**

Ans: Vera had already told Framton that the aunt still hoped that her husband and her brothers would return in spite of the fact that they had disappeared for three years. When Mrs Sappleton exclaimed that the hunting party had returned and were covered with mud, Framton realised that Vera had told him the truth. Thus, he gave Vera a look to express ‘sympathetic conversation’ meaning he understood what she had said and also was sympathetic towards the aunt.

1. **What did Framton see when he looked in the direction of the window?**

Ans: When Framton looked in the direction of the window, he saw three figures walking across the lawn towards the window. They all carried guns under their arms and one of them carried a white coat over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house and then a hoarse young voice chanted out of the dusk ‘I said Bertie why do you bound?’.

1. **What did Framton do after seeing the figures? Why?**

Ans: When Framton saw the figures of the three men along with the spaniel, he grabbed wildly at his stick and hat and rushed out. While driving away, he did not even notice when he passed the hall-door, the gravel-drive and the front gate. He zoomed out so fast that a cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid an imminent collision. Framton believed that the figures were ghosts and was shell-shocked.

1. **What did Mr Sappleton say on entering through the window?**

Ans: On entering through the window, Mr Sappleton said that they had arrived fairly muddy but most of it was dry. He then asked her who it was who had bolted out as they came up.

1. **Which story did Vera churn out to explain Framton’s behaviour?**

Ans: Vera explained that Farmton had dashed away because of his fear of the spaniel. She said that he had told her that he had a horror of dogs as he was once hunted into a cemetery on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs and had to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming above him.

1. **Explain: Romance at short notice was her speciality.**

Ans: This is just a witty way of saying that Vera was quick to make up stories (or lies), and had an incredible knack of telling them in a way that people believed her. The writer gives evidence of this statement with the two stories that Vera had made up. One was the lie she told Framton related to the tragedy of her aunt Mrs Sappleton. The other story was the one she told Mr Sappleton about Framton running away as he was afraid of the spaniel due to a horrible experience with dogs in the past. She also uses techniques like apt facial expressions and voice modulation while narrating the stories. She was sharp enough to pick out points in the conversation and use them to make her stories convincing. When she learnt that Framton’s sister had been in their country four years ago, she smartly said that the incident had taken place three years ago. She knew that the hunting party was expected soon and so quickly made up the story that her aunt believed they would come through the window. She even gave details like Mr Sappleton had carried a white coat and the brother used to sing a tune while entering. She even took advantage of the fact that Framton was already a nervous wreck and made up a spooky story. Thus, the writer says that ‘Romance at short notice’ was her speciality.