Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Question Bank: Across the Fence**

1. **What is the name of the novel? When is it set? Where is this story set?**

**Ans:** The name of the novel is ‘The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas’. The story of this novel is set during the Holocaust. This story is set in Auschwitz.

1. **Why does the family move there?**

**Ans:** The family moves there because Bruno’s father gets promoted as Commandment of Auschwitz.

1. **What would Bruno observe from the window of his place? What does his father tell him?**

**Ans:** Bruno would observe people in the distance from the window of his place. He sees a tall fence that cuts him off from them. His father would tell him that those people are not really people and not to think about them.

1. **Does he hold the same opinion like his father regarding people beyond the fence? What does Bruno do?**

**Ans:** No, Bruno doesn’t have the same opinion as his father has. Instead while exploring his new environment he meets Shmuel and decides to help him to find his missing father.

1. **What are the similarities and differences between Shmuel and Bruno?**

**Ans:** Shmuel and Bruno both are eight year old boys. They share the same birthday but have very different lives and Shmuel looks more pale and skinny. Bruno was a German and Shmuel was a Jew.

1. **What does Shmuel ask Bruno one day? Does Bruno agree? Why?**

**Ans:** Shmuel asks Bruno one day if he would help Shmuel to locate his missing father. Bruno immediately agrees to do so because for him the prospect of exploring the world on the other side of the fence was more important than finding Shmuel’s father.

1. **What was Shmuel doing when Bruno arrives?**

**Ans:** Shmuel wasn’t sitting crosslegged on the ground like usual. He was instead staring at the dust beneath him but standing and leaning against the fence.

1. **What did Shmuel give Bruno? Why was it given to Bruno? Describe it.**

**Ans:** Shmuel gives a pair of striped pyjama bottoms, a striped pyjama top and a strip cloth cap exactly like the one he was wearing. It was given to Bruno as a disguise to be worn to go to the other side of the fence.

1. **What were the reasons behind wearing the new costume? Which was the more important one?**

**Ans:** One reason was to find Shmuel’s missing father. The other reason which was more important was that Bruno wanted to be an explorer and he wanted to explore the other side of the fence.

1. **What did Bruno forget to get with him? Is it indicative of anything in the story?**

**Ans:** Bruno forgets to bring a bag to hold his own clothes in. Yes, it indicates that Bruno will not come back and he won’t need his clothes again.

1. **How did Shmuel give the new costume to Bruno?**

**Ans:** Shmuel lifted the bottom of the fence off the ground and handed the outfit to Bruno being particularly careful not to let it touch the muddy ground below.

1. **What was Bruno reminded of, after he gave the last touches to his costume?**

**Ans: Bruno is reminded of his grandmother and of the plays she used to put on with Gretel and him. It reminded him of how she always had the right costume for him to wear.**

1. **What would Bruno’s grandmother always tell him? Was he following his grandmother’s advice?**

**Ans:** Bruno’s grandmother would always tell him that if one wears the right outfit, one will feel like the person one is pretending to be. Yes, he was following his grandmother’s advice as he was pretending to be someone from the other side of the fence by wearing the right outfit.

1. **What is something that Bruno had to leave behind? Why?**

**Ans:** Bruno had to leave his clothes as he had not brought a bag with him. He also had to leave his heavy boots behind as he would get recognized by the people on the other side of the fence.

1. **What happens when Bruno removes his shoes and socks?**

**Ans:** When Bruno removes his shoes and socks and leaves them beside the pile of clothes on the ground, it first felt horrible, putting his bare feet into so much mud that they would sink down to his ankles. Every time he lifted his foot, it felt worse. But later he starts enjoying it.

1. **How does Bruno cross the fence? How does he feel?**

**Ans:** Shmuel reaches down and lifts the base of the fence. It is lifted to a certain height and Bruno had no choice but to roll under it, getting his stripped pyjamas completely covered in mud. Bruno laughs when he looks down at himself. He had never been so filthy in all his life yet it felt wonderful.

1. **How do the two children react after being on the same side of the fence? Which feeling was mutual between the two? Why? How did they react instead?**

**Ans:** The two boys stood awkwardly together for a moment unaccustomed to being on the same side of the fence. Bruno had an urge to give Shmuel a hug, just to tell him know how much he liked him and how much he enjoyed talking over the last year. Shmuel had an urge to give Bruno a hug too, just to thank him for all his many kindnesses and his gifts of food and the fact that he was going to help him find Papa. Neither of them hugged each other though and instead they began the walk away from the fence and towards the camp.

1. **What did Bruno observe after coming to other side of the fence where Shmuel was?**

**Ans:** Brunoobserved in one corner that there were three soldiers who seemed to be in charge of a group of about twenty men. The three soldiers were shouting at them. Some of the men had fallen to their knees with their heads in their hands. In another corner he could see more soldiers standing around and laughing and looking down the barrels of the guns, aiming them in random directions, but not firing them. In fact everywhere he looked, all he could see was two different types of people: either happy, laughing, shouting soldiers in their uniforms or unhappy crying people in their striped pyjamas.

1. **What did Shmuel reply when Bruno spoke of going home? How did Bruno react to this? What did they do next?**

**Ans:** When Bruno spoke of going home, Shmuel replied stopped walking and stared at Bruno and said that Bruno had promised him to help find his Papa. Bruno kept his word and the two boys spent an hour and a half searching the camp looking for evidence. They weren’t sure exactly what they were looking for but Bruno kept stating that a good explorer would know it when he found it. But they didn’t find anything at all that might give them a clue to Shmuel’s papa’s disappearance and it started to get darker.

1. **What happened ‘eventually’?**

**Ans:** Eventually they were not able to trace Shmuel’s Papa. Bruno asked for forgiveness and Shmuel nodded his head sadly as though he wasn’t really surprised. Still for him it was good to have his friend come over to the place where he lived.

1. **What happened when Shmuel opened his mouth to say something?**

**Ans:** As Shmuel opened his mouth to say something, there was a loud whistle and ten soldiers surrounded the area in which Bruno and Shmuel were standing. Bruno asked what was happening to which Shmuel replied that they were marches. Bruno shockingly said that he was extremely tired and can’t go on marches also because he had to go home soon for dinner. Shmuel asked Bruno not to speak anything as the soldiers get angry.

1. **What happened when whistles were blown?**

**Ans:** When whistles were blown, the group of people from their part of the camp about a hundred started to march slowly together with Bruno and Shmuel held together unseen in the centre. There was some sort of disturbance towards the back where some people seemed unwilling to march but Bruno was too small to see. All he heard were loud noises but he couldn’t make out what they were.

1. **What did Bruno ask whisperingly? What did Shmuel answer?**

**Ans:** Bruno asked Shmuel whisperingly if the marching goes on for long because he was beginning to feel quite hungry. Shmuel replied that he doesn’t think so. He had never seen the people after they have gone on a march but he wouldn’t imagine that it would take a long time.

1. **What did Bruno see when he looked up in the sky? What does the change in weather signify?**

**Ans:** When Bruno looked up in the sky, he heard thunder overhead. The sky seemed to grow even darker almost black and rain poured down even more heavily than it had that morning. The change in weather from pleasant and beautiful morning to heavy rain signified that something tragic and unfortunate was going to happen.

1. **Where did the two boys land up at last?**

**Ans:** The two boys landed up at a place where there was no more rain coming down anymore as they were all piling into a long room that was surprisingly warm and it must have been very securely built because no rain was getting in anywhere. In fact it felt completely airtight. It is revealed later that they had entered a gas chamber.

1. **Mention the difference in Bruno and Shmuel’s approach in the end.**

**Ans:** Bruno is glad to be out of the storm for a few minutes. He innocently says that they will have to wait there till the rain eases off and then he would go home. On the contrary it looks like Shmuel gathers himself very close to Bruno and looks up at him in fright probably indicating that he understood where they were. Bruno says that Shmuel would be his best friend for life. It is ironical as they were going to die in the gas chamber very soon.