

Comprehension

A. 1. The speaker is Lillian Wright and she is speaking to her husband, George, discussing about their new neighbour, Mrs Sakkaro. Mrs Sakkaro apparently asked her son to come in and play as it was going to rain, whereas it was bright daylight with the slightest hint of clouds in one corner of the sky. Mrs Wright went out to get the clothes she had hung to dry, fearing it might rain, and found out that Mrs Sakkaro had given her a scare for no reason.

2. Lillian usually paid no heed to the opinions of George, if she wanted her own way. This kept her happy in the marriage. This sentence refers to the details she shared about the interiors of the house of the Sakkaros, much against the wish of her husband.

3. Mrs Lillian Wright made this observation when she asked Mrs Sakkaro for a glass of water. The meticulous way in which she filled the glass with water, careful not to spill a drop, indicated that she was always this careful.

4. The speaker here is George Wright. He was discussing his inference regarding Mr Sakkaro, who apparently studies human nature as an occupation. George jocularly(joke) tells his wife, Lillian, that he thought Mr Sakkaro would be a tough example to emulate, given his good looks, unusual occupation and financial status.

5. George Wright had just commented that it was difficult to predict a thunderstorm in their town but if it did come, it did not last for more than half an hour. This comment along with the overcast sky made the Sakkaro kid upset and made his mother nervous as well.(last para. Pg-37)

6. George Wright said these words of consolation to the Sakkaros who were visibly upset at the thunderstorm which was threatening to begin any moment. The wind was blowing strongly, and the leaves trembled under its force and lightning flashed from time to time.

B. 1. The fact that the boy kept playing the same game all day long—throwing a ball at the wall, and catching it off —seemed like Chinese water torture to George. This is because the same sounds continued to be repeated the entire time the boy played and soon, the noise became unendurable.

2. These were the following clues: a. The fact that they got upset, nervous and sought shelter at the slightest hint of stormy weather, b. The fact that they preferred the sunny weather, c. The fact that they kept up with the weather report updates through all media—the radio and the newspapers—along with the weather bureau.

3. Lillian went over to invite the Sakkaros to join them on a visit to Murphy Park. She said it would be fun for the children to play together. Mrs Sakkaro checked with her husband about the weather, who said it would be fine, but he would inform if there is any unexpected change in weather.

4. Two examples of humour are: a. 'If you get to know her, then, she'll be setting you impossible standards and you'll have to drop her in self-defence.' This is humorous because George was teasing his wife, Lillian, about her habit of making friends to know all about them.

b. 'Yes, but with a handsome, wealthy man next door, it looks as though I'll have impossible standards set for me, too.' This is humorous because George joked about how Lillian might expect him to be as good as Mr Sakkaro and it would be impossible for him to do so.

5. The newspaper, radio and weather bureau were consulted before the Sakkaros agreed to go on the picnic. They carried a pocket radio and an aneroid barometer with them to the picnic.
6. The children were bought tickets for every ride in the park by Lillian. They ate a lot of cotton candy as well. They also tried playing darts and knocking wooden cylinders off pedestals. They took pictures of themselves, recorded their voices and tested the strength of their handgrips.
7. The twist is that the Sakkaros turned out to be made of sugar. They melted in the rain, as they ran for cover to their house, much to the shock of the Wrights. This explained their obsession with being updated about the weather constantly.

Ponder

- C.** 1. The mysterious neighbours, the Sakkaros, about whom very few details are divulged; their obsession with the weather; their gorging on candy floss—all these add to the mystery of the story.
2. Lillian Wright was a curious lady. She was extremely observant and usually did what she had set her mind to do.
3. The story would not have had such a dramatic ending if the Sakkaros had revealed their secret to the Wrights. The Wrights would not have believed them at all.
4. The title is significant because rain or water was life threatening to the Sakkaros, who were made of sugar. The title is derived from a popular nursery rhyme that requests the rain to go away as little Johnny wanted to play.