

Poem
13

A Tale of Two Cities

(John Peter)

Words and Expressions

shrill	–	uproar; loud noise
drills	–	military exercises
scarred	–	injured
woeful	–	sad; sorrowful; mournful
grill	–	grate for broiling food
groan	–	cry; sob; sigh; moan
smash	–	ruin; crush; destroy
moan	–	wail; groan, sob
lessen	–	relieve; make less
flavours	–	tastes; joys
dash	–	diminish; shatter; crush; destroy
grind	–	devastation; destruction
two glories	–	two glorious cities
fury	–	wrath; violent anger; rage; ferocity
care	–	consider; respect
deadly	–	fatal; lethal; deathly
ashes	–	remains of fire; ruins; remains
merely	–	simply; only; just

تیز آواز، شور
فوجی مشقیں
زخمی
اداس، ماتمی
چولہا، انگلیٹھی
کراہنا۔ آہ بھرنا
کچلنا۔ تباہ کرنا
کراہنا۔ آہ وزاری کرنا
کم کرنا
ذائقے، مزے، خوشیاں
تباہ کرنا، کچل دینا
تباہی
دو عظیم شہر
غصہ
خاطر میں لانا، احترام کرنا
مہلک، تباہ کن، جان لیوا
راکھ، ملبہ
محض

Multiple Choice Questions

Choose the correct synonym.

- In the storms of the **shrills** / Of arms, smoke and the drills...
A) sharpness B) hush
C) smoke D) uproar
- In the storms of the shrills / Of arms, smoke and the **drills**.
A) military exercises B) military retreat
C) recruitment D) strategy
- All were **scarred**, burnt and afraid.
A) injured B) terrified
C) paralyzed D) evacuated

4. **Woeful** were all the hills.
A) sad B) wonder-struck
C) invaded D) captured
5. **Wasteful** were all the grills.
A) unnecessary B) desolate
C) calm D) trampled
6. None to **lessen** their groans.
A) sustain B) diagnose
C) relieve D) sharpen
7. None to share their **moans**...
A) wails B) cares
C) motives D) concerns
8. None to lessen their **groans**.
A) cries B) interests
C) deliberations D) defense
9. Flowers, flavours all **smashed** / Burnt,
crushed and all dashed...
A) rendered B) dumped
C) bloomed D) ruined
10. Flowers, flavours all **smashed** / Burnt,
crushed and all **dashed**...
A) infuriated B) fostered
C) diminished D) destroyed
11. And all passed through the **grind**.
A) rescue B) devastation
C) gunpowder D) disgust
12. The lives of two glories / In the moments of **furies**.
A) shrills B) worries
C) wrath D) invasion
13. All was done by a nation / Whoin her **wild**
passion.
A) savage B) lonely
C) primitive D) impossible
14. Nor saved them from **deadly** fights.
A) otherworldly B) careless
C) unending D) fatal
15. ...Who **bore** the pains of black day.
A) concealed B) faced
C) intensified D) relieved
16. "Ashes" are not **merely** the waste.
A) actually B) scarcely
C) partially D) simply
17. "Ashes" are not merely the **waste**.
A) consequence B) frugality
C) trash D) extravagance
18. All was done by a nation / Who in her wild
passion.
A) dream B) inference
C) emotion D) dread

Answers

1. D	4. A	7. A	10. D	13. A	16. D
2. A	5. B	8. A	11. B	14. D	17. C
3. A	6. C	9. D	12. C	15. B	18. C

Questions and Answers

Q.1 Describe the circumstances the victims had to pass through?

(Board 2010)

Ans. The victims of war passed through miserable circumstances. They had to bear the devastation caused by the dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and suffer mental and physical agony.

Q.2 Describe the scene of devastation as given in "A Tale of Two Cities".

Ans. There was death and destruction everywhere. Scarred and burnt bodies of the people lay here and there. The gigantic buildings were reduced to rubble. The dropping of atom bombs annihilated everything.

Q.3 What is the moral of "A Tale of Two Cities"?

OR

What is the central idea of "A Tale of Two Cities"?

Ans. The poem teaches us the moral that war is the mother of all evils. It only brings about death and destruction. It says that the world powers should not resort to extreme measures to resolve the disagreements but rather find peaceful solutions to conflicts through negotiations.

Q.4 Why did the people of the two cities look powerless and helpless?

Ans. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki annihilated the two glorious cities. There was a large scale destruction of life and resources. The atomic nemesis had taken them unawares. In the face of these circumstances, people looked powerless and helpless.

Q.5 What is the significance of the title of the poem "A Tale of Two Cities"?

Ans. The title "A Tale of Two Cities" has been taken from Charles Dickens' novel of the 19th century. This historical novel depicts life in the cities of London and Paris in the aftermath of the French Revolution. This poem depicts life in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the aftermath of dropping of atom bombs in the World War II.

Q.6 What does the poet say in the last stanza of "A Tale of Two Cities"?

Ans. The poet pays a tribute to the unyielding people of Japan who rose up to great heights in spite of the massive destruction of life and resources. He compares the Japanese nation to phoenix which rises from the ashes and is a symbol of immortality.

(Phoenix: in ancient stories, an imaginary bird that set fire to itself every 500 years and was born again, rising from its ashes; symbolically, it represents transformation, death, and rebirth)

Q.7 Who is the author of "A Tale of Two Cities"?

Ans. "A Tale of Two Cities" has been composed by John Peter

Explanation with Reference to the Context

Stanza 1:

In the storms of the shrills
Of arms, smoke and the drills.
All were scarred, burnt and afraid
Powerless and helpless were they made.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from "A Tale of Two Cities" by John Peter.

Context:

The poem gives a peep into the history and refreshes the tragedy, rather scratches the sore wounds. It reminds us of the extermination caused by the nuclear bombs. It is a direct criticism on the making and using of atomic weapons. War is the mother of all evils. It only brings about death and destruction. It must be shunned in all cases.

Explanation:

In these lines John Peter paints a painful picture of the devastation caused by the American bombing of two great cities of Japan. There was a loud noise of arms and ammunition and there was death and destruction all around. The people were frightened, crippled and helpless. It was the doing of a nation which did not show any respect for the human rights and violated them as no one had done previously. The dropping of the atom bombs caused unspeakable loss to both life and property.

Stanza 2:

Woeful were all the hills
Wasteful were all the grills
None to share their moans
None to lessen their groans.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from 'A Tale of Two Cities' by John Peter.

Context:

The poem gives a peep into the history and refreshes the tragedy, rather scratches the sore wounds. It reminds us of the extermination caused by the nuclear bombs. It is a direct criticism

on the making and using of atomic weapons. War is the mother of all evils. It only brings about death and destruction. It must be shunned in all cases.

Explanation:

In this stanza, the poet draws a picture of devastation brought about by atom bombs. Death and desolation overtook the world of man and the world of nature. All the hills were treeless and all the grills were desolate. There was widespread destruction. It ruined both social and home life. No one was present to comfort the victims of the nuclear explosion. No one was there to lessen their troubles and to listen to their painful cries.

Stanza3:

The flowers, flavours all smashed
Burnt, crushed and all dashed
And all passed through the grind
Leaving there nothing behind.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from 'A Tale of Two Cities' by John Peter.

Context:

The poem gives a peep into the history and refreshes the tragedy, rather scratches the sore wounds. It reminds us of the extermination caused by the nuclear bombs. It is a direct criticism on the making and using of atomic weapons. War is the mother of all evils. It only brings about death and destruction. It must be shunned in all cases.

Explanation:

The scene of destruction extends to nature as well. Beautiful flowers and sweet fruits were crushed and burnt in the explosion. It reduced the surroundings to nothing, only ruins and rubble. All colours and joys of life were smashed; all hopes and ambitions had dashed to the ground. None survived to tell the tale. The wild act of America of dropping atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused an irreparable loss to both these cities. This was highly inhuman and irrational. It was such a great tragedy that we find no words to condemn its authors.

Stanza 4: No eye could look

(Board 2015)

The explosion that took
The lives of two glories
In the moments of furies.

Reference:

These lines have been taken from 'A Tale of Two Cities' by John Peter.

Context:

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Explanation:

In these lines, the poet says that it was not a sight worth seeing. The unsightly death and destruction lay as an eyesore. It was all so horrible that no one had the courage to see it. The explosion that took place was so powerful that it completely destroyed the two glorious cities of Japan. It was done by an angry nation not bothering about the human rights even. In sheer fanaticism, they did not care for human life or felt the prick of conscience.

Stanza 5: All was done by a nation
Who in her wild passion
Cared not for the human rights
Nor saved them from deadly fights.

Reference: These lines have been taken from 'A Tale of Two Cities' by John Peter.

Context: The poem gives a peep into the history and refreshes the tragedy, rather scratches the sore wounds. It reminds us of the extermination caused by the nuclear bombs. It is a direct criticism on the making and using of atomic weapons. War is the mother of all evils. It only brings about death and destruction. It must be shunned in all cases.

Explanation: The poet, in these lines, says that this cruel act of dropping the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was committed by the Americans in their wild fury and passion. America did not care to bother about human rights violations. America made them suffer the loss without any repentance. This hellish scene was played out in utter vindictive anger. They bluntly violated human rights in this case and let the humanity face the cruelties and brutalities of ruthless human ambition for supremacy. The atomic bombing turned day into night and modern technology into humanity's greatest enemy. Being a resourceful and most influential country, America could have saved the world from destruction by helping to resolve the crisis peacefully.

Stanza 6: But how much great were they
Who bore the pains of black day
"Ashes are not merely the waste
They can really create the great."

Reference: These lines have been taken from 'A Tale of Two Cities' by John Peter.

Context: The poem gives a peep into the history and refreshes the tragedy, rather scratches the sore wounds. It reminds us of the extermination caused by the nuclear bombs. It is a direct criticism on the making and using of atomic weapons. War is the mother of all evils. It only brings about death and destruction. It must be shunned in all cases.

Explanation: In these lines, the poet pays tribute to the people of Japan who suffered pains and pangs boldly. They did not lose heart and rebuilt their devastated cities with great courage. Their unshaken resolve to stand up in the face of all odds enabled them to emerge as a great nation and make their mark in the world. The Japanese rose out of the ashes like Phoenix – a symbol of strength, rebirth and renewal. The poem brings out the courage and determination of Japanese people and makes it proverbial.