

Chapter 5 - Mother's Day

Question 1(i):

This play, written in the 1950s, is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the mother in the family.

What are the issues it raises?

Answer:

Mother's Day is a comical satire. The story is a simple one, yet it strongly condemns the position of women in society. Our mothers and wives work hard daily, turning our houses into homes. They receive no wages and have no weekends off and work all day long, round the clock. Little do we realise the hard work they put in to make it all perfect. We take them for granted and never appreciate them or stop by to drop a word of 'thanks'. The story very clearly states that our mothers and wives have equal right to relax, enjoy their lives and deserve acknowledgement and appreciation. They sacrifice their whole lives building ours'. Husbands stay busy at work and kids are occupied in their own lives. Amidst all this women lose their self trying to contain our world.

Question 1(ii):

This play, written in the 1950s, is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the mother in the family.

Do you think it caricatures these issues or do you think that the problems it raises are genuine? How does the play resolve the issues? Do you agree with the resolution?

Answer:

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

The issues that the story raises are genuine and we must heed them. In the story the major complaint of Mrs. Pearson is that her family does not spend time with her. The author has tried to highlight the fact that how lonely can a woman feel when all the members of her family leave early morning to work and then return in the evening just to get the supper and then leave again to socialise outside home. They pay her no time or attention. She selflessly makes the home and asks nothing in return. However, little do we realise that they also yearn for company and wish to spend time with their loved ones.

In the play, Mrs. Fitzgerald, a determined lady who lives in the neighbourhood and a fortune teller, helped Mrs. Pearson by exchanging body with her and dealt with Mrs. Pearson's family. She made the Pearsons understand that Mrs. Pearson is a human after all and that even after working 24x7 she receives no acknowledgement and appreciation from her family members. She did not prepare the supper and did not iron the clothes and made George, Doris and Cyril realise that how dependent they are actually on Mrs. Pearson. She is the sole pillar who keeps their lives in place and keeps everything ready for them before even they have asked for it. Finally when the three receive such harsh treatment and see Annie sitting back and not doing household chores, they feel helpless and find it all difficult to manage on their own. They realise that their lives are absolutely incomplete without Mrs. Pearson.

The resolution was perfect and very well decided. The Pearsons needed the harsh treatment after all else they would have never realised the blunder they were going on committing. After what all happened and when Mrs. Fitzgerald and Mrs. Pearson exchanged the bodies back to the original ones, Annie tells George, Doris and Cyril to stay back and play cards with her and proposed that kids would do cooking while she could sit back and relax while talking to her husband, to which the three approved merrily.

Question 2:

If you were to write about these issues today what are some of the incidents, examples and problems that you would think of as relevant?

Answer:

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

No matter that time has changed and women in today's society have become confident and aware about their rights. However, they still continue to be dominated in conservative societies like ours. Even in western world, one may find many such families, like Pearsons, where the lady of the house alone manages all for the rest of the members. They work round the clock, doing the house hold chores all by themselves without complaining and do not even receive appreciation. Our mothers take little liberty to enjoy or have their own leisure time. A woman is accepted only in the avatar of a home maker, we never can accept our mothers or wives going out with her friends. We all stereotype a woman as a lady who is going to cook food for us, iron our clothes, sit back at home all day cleaning our room and anxiously waiting for us to return in the evening. We behave as if she can not have a life and is liable for our our work. We must always keep it in mind that that woman in our house needs our attention and appreciation and we must be grateful to her.

Question 3:

Is drama a good medium for conveying a social message? Discuss.

Answer:

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

Drama or theatre is a perfect media to deliver social messages to the society. Now that we are in the digital era, we have various kinds of media, print, electronic and cyber. However, in the times when there were no TVs, the only media was theatre. Media not just reflects the society but also revolutionises the society. Jean Genet has made it very clear from his plays that the society dwells on images. Hence, what we show affects the society largely. So, in Drama or Theatre, when the characters come alive and equivocally make their point in front of the whole society, they raise

questions, very strong and vital issues are highlighted, which otherwise remain ignored. People heed to what is displayed and learn and not just relate and get emotional.

It is believed that in drama, comedy is best able to mark an effect on the audience. Comedy does not stimulate the audience emotionally; hence, there is no subsequent catharsis. Thus, the alienated audience is able to think rationally rather than getting emotional and is able to infer what the dramatist has been trying to convey. Thus, it opens the audience's mind and they begin to think about what has been suggested or portrayed in the story rather than associating themselves with the characters and reaching a catharsis.