



B. Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1. What do you think is the theme of the play? How has it been worked out?

Answer: The theme of the play is the status of women in their own household. The housewife serves the members of her family with complete devotion, sincerity and love. However, she is never given the regard, attention or thanks due to her. Her leniency and eagerness to please everyone reduces her to the rank of an unpaid domestic servant in her own house. Instead of being politely requested for a favour, she is ordered to do it. She gets no thanks in return.

The theme is worked out by portrayal of the Pearson family. Mrs Pearson is the harassed mother. Her daughter Doris, son Cyril and husband George take her services for granted and have become thoughtless and selfish. The interchange of personalities and the harsh treatment meted out to them by the personality of Mrs Fitzgerald (in the body of Mrs Pearson) reforms them and they obey the mother willingly.

Question 2. What impression do you form of Mrs Annie Pearson ?

Answer: Mrs Pearson is the main character in the play 'Mother's Day'. She is a pleasant but worried-looking woman in her forties. She speaks in a light, flurried sort of tone, with a touch of suburban cockney. She loves her husband and children very much and runs after them all the time. Her excessive love and care have spoilt them and they have become thoughtless and selfish. She feels neglected and lonely but lacks courage to discuss things with them. Perhaps she hates any unpleasantness as well. She is not willing to act as a tough mom as she is nervous and fluttering by nature. She is so tender-hearted that she is shocked to see the rough treatment meted out to her children. She decides to change back to her original personality to deal with her family herself. She is indeed a loving and affectionate mother and a devoted wife.

Question 3. "The shock treatment makes the thoughtless and selfish persons realise the real position of the lady of the house." How far do you agree with the statement? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer: I fully agree with the aforesaid statement. Drastic situations need drastic remedies. The thoughtless, selfish and spoilt members of the Pearson family do not understand the language of love and affection. Mrs Pearson with Mrs Fitzgerald's bold and dominating personality and her toughness makes them realise their own state. Doris is the first to learn her lesson in civility and politeness. The criticism of her boy friend seems quite unexpected to her—perhaps more than the non-compliance of her orders of ironing the yellow silk dress. Doris has tearful eyes. Cyril is also told to help himself. The mother's declaration that she too will henceforth work forty hours a week, have the weekends off and go somewhere to enjoy herself come as a shock treatment. The balloon of her husband's ego is punctured by disclosing to him how people at the club make fun of him. In the end all the three members come round and show their willingness to obey the mother's command.

Question 4. Write a note on the role of Mrs Fitzgerald in the play.

Answer: Mrs Fitzgerald plays a very important role in the play. She is introduced as a fortune teller and the next-door neighbour of the Pearsons. It is through the initial conversation between her and Mrs Pearson that we come to know the problems that Mrs Pearson faces. Mrs Fitzgerald analyses the situation quite objectively and becomes the playwright's mouthpiece. She also suggests the ways and methods of tackling the situation. Since Mrs Pearson does not have the guts to stand for her right, Mrs Fitzgerald suggests a novel approach—exchange of personalities. Now as Mrs Pearson, with the personality Mrs Fitzgerald, she puts the plan of reformation in action. She smokes, drinks and plays cards. All this is unusual for the family. She further shocks them by being tough with them in word and action. She asks them to look after themselves. She clearly tells them that she has already worked for more than eight hours that day. She tells them plainly how they behave at home and workplace. She is equally blunt with Mr George Pearson, who goes away every evening to club, leaving his wife alone at home. She reveals to him how the people at club make a fun of him. In short, she makes them realise their responsibility towards the mother. In the end, she performs the exchange of personalities once again. Thus she is the main spring of initial action, climax and denouement.

Question 5. The play 'Mother's Day' is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the woman in a family. Bring out briefly the elements of humour and satire.

Answer: The play 'Mother's Day' treats a serious theme in a light-hearted manner. The humour in the play springs from an unusual situation where the personalities of two ladies change bodies. Their subsequent behaviour, which is in total contrast to their previous one, is a very powerful source of laughter. The ignorance of the characters about the personality they are facing also creates humour. Suggestive dialogues also provide a lot of fun. For example, consider the following:

- "Mrs Pearson if you had to live my life it wouldn't be so bad. You'd have more fun as me than you've had as you."
- "It's that silly old bag from next door—Mrs Fitzgerald."
- "Ticking her off now, are you, Annie?"
- "They call you Pompy-Ompy Pearson because they think you're so slow and pompous."

The actions, gestures and reactions of the characters also provide humour. The housewife being given orders, treated like dirt and forced to stay home every night while other members go out to amuse themselves is sharply contrasted with the position at the end of the play where she is the mistress of the house. Then play also satirises the eight hour work culture and threats to go on strike. Even the housewife adopts this weapon.

Question 6. Comment on the ending of the play 'Mother's Day'.

Answer: The play has a happy ending with a complete reversal of the initial situation. Mrs Pearson is now cheerful while the family looks anxiously at her. When she smiles, they feel much relieved and smile back at her. None of them is going out.

For the first time, perhaps she tells the members of the family what they should do. Instead of behaving timidly, she looks sharply at the family and asks if they have any objections. George is the first to yield. He agrees to do whatever she says. Still smiling, she suggests that they should have a nice family game of rummy and then the children could get the supper ready while she has a talk with their father. George supports her and looks enquiringly at the children. Cyril hastily approves the proposal while Doris agrees hesitatingly. A sharp command: "What Speak up!" does the trick and Doris agrees. Mrs Pearson bids good bye to Mrs Fitzgerald and smilingly asks her to come again soon. The ending seems quite natural. It

also leaves a message for the mothers. They should assert themselves.

Question 7. Write a note on the title of the play 'Mother's Day'.

Answer: The title of the play is quite appropriate. It sums up the theme of the play. It suggests that the action of the play revolves round a mother. The playwright confronts us at the outset with the problems the mother faces from her grown up children and their father. The novel technique employed to tackle the spoilt children and the grown up man is quite amusing and thought provoking. The bold and dominating mother acts tough with the children and makes them realise the need of proper attention towards their mother. They are made to learn lesson in courtesy and polite behaviour not only towards the mother but also towards the visiting neighbour. The mother certainly has her day as the children learn to treat her properly. The supper being prepared by the children, their stay at home and the family game of rummy is a rare gift that the mother receives on this important day.

***** END *****