



READ AND FIND OUT

Q1. What kind of a person was Evans?

Ans: James Roderick Evans was a jail bird. The prison officers called him 'Evans the Break' as he had escaped from prison three times. At present he was in a solitary cell in Oxford Prison. He was quite a pleasant sort of chap—an amusing person who was good at imitations. He was not at all violent. He was just a congenital kleptomaniac. It meant he suffered from the disease of involuntarily stealing things. This was disease with which he was born.

Q2. What were the precautions taken for the smooth conduct of the examination?

Ans: The solitary cell of Evans was turned into examination room by placing two small tables and two chairs in it. Reverend Stuart McLeery, a parson from St. Mary Mags was to work as invigilator. The cell was to be kept locked from outside and a prison officer would observe Evans from a peep-hole after every minute or so. All potential weapons such as knife, scissors, nail-file and razor had been taken away. Even the contents of the suitcase of the invigilator were thoroughly searched, the paper knife was taken away by a prison officer. The Governor himself was to listen-in the conversation in the cell during the examination. The cell was in the D-Wing which had two heavy gates—outer and inner. Both were locked securely. Mr Jackson, the prison officer, was in constant contact with the Governor on the phone.

Q3. Will the exam now go as scheduled?

Ans: The two-hour examination in O-Level German was scheduled to begin at 9.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 8 June. However, it started a bit late. At 9.20 a.m. Evans objected to the presence of Stephens, a prison officer, in the examination room, as it disturbed his concentration. Under the orders of the Governor, Stephens was got out of the cell.

At 9.40 a.m. a correction slip was dictated to the candidate. At 10.50 a.m. Evans complained of bitter chill and made a request for putting a blanket round his shoulders. At 11.20 a.m. McLeery informed Evans that only five minutes remained. At 11.22 a.m. Jackson called Stephens to the phone. The Governor was on line. Stephens was given orders to escort McLeery to the main prison gates. The examination was over at 11.25 a.m. The door of the cell was locked on Evans after McLeery had left the cell. Thus, the examination went on smoothly as scheduled.

Q4. Did the Governor and his staff finally heave a sigh of relief?

Ans: The Governor heard the door of the cell clang for the last time. The examination was over. Stephens escorted McLeery to the main gates. His Scots accent seemed broader and he seemed to have grown slimmer under his long black overcoat. Stephens was happy that the morning had gone pretty well. In short, the Governor and his staff finally heaved a sigh of relief.

Their relief was, however, shortlived. On returning to the cell of Evans, Stephens found a person sprawling back in a chair. Blood dripped from his closely cropped front part of head on to his small black beard and over the white clerical collar down into the black clerical front. Stephens shouted wildly for Jackson. It was suspected

that Evans had hit McLeery and walked out impersonating him. A search began for Evans dressed as a parson.

Q5. Will the injured McLeery be able to help the prison officers track Evans?

Ans: Injured McLeery spoke slowly and in broken phrases that he knew where Evans was. He asked the prison officers to get the police and not to worry about the ambulance. He found the German question paper on the table. He told Jackson to get the Governor. He drew the attention of the Governor to the German text on photocopied sheet on the last page. The Governor slowly translated it. The words 'From Elsfied Way drive to the Headington roundabout' caught his attention. The Examination Board was in Elsfied Way. Meanwhile, the police arrived. Before the Governor could explain anything, McLeery told the officer to go Elsfied Way. The Governor told Detective Superintendent Carter to take injured McLeery with him. McLeery was helped inside the car. He helped the police to follow the direction indicated in the German text.

Q6. Will the clues left behind on the question paper, put Evans back in prison again?

Ans: The text on the last page of German question paper contained the plan of escape. It had important clues of the route. From Elsfied Way the person had to drive to the Headington roundabout and from there to Newbury. After sometime, Superintendent Carter informed the Governor on phone that McLeery had spotted Evans driving off along Elsfied Way. They had got the number of the car all right and given chase at once. But they had lost him at the Headington roundabout. Since McLeery felt quite weak when they got to the Examination offices, they rang Radcliffe for the ambulances from there. They left McLeery on Elsfied Way. Thus, the injured McLeery, who had posed to help the authorities, disappeared and Evans remained untraced.

The other clues: Index number 313; Centre number 271 and 'Golden Lion' also had a deep meaning. The Governor took help of an Ordnance Survey Map for Oxfordshire. The six figure reference 313/271 brought him in the middle of Chipping Norton. He found Evans in the Golden Lion in Chipping Norton.

Q7. Where did Evans go?

Ans: Evans left the prison disguised as parson McLeery who had been injured by the examinee Evans. He pretended to guide the authorities to help them track Evans. When the police car reached the Examination offices on Elsfied Way, McLeery (Evans in disguise) grogged. An ambulance was called in from the Radcliffe and he was left there.

Evans got into a car as arranged beforehand. It had soap, water, clothes and a map. He removed blood stains from hair, peeled the false beard, changed clothes, put on a smart new hat. Then he drove to the Golden Lion in the middle of Chipping Norton. He was traced in this hotel by the Governor of Oxford Prison following the clues in the German text on the German question paper.

***** END *****