



Q6. What estimate do you form of the Governor of Oxford Prison ?

OR

How far do you agree with the observation: “He was just another good-for-a-giggle, gullible governor, that was all” ?

Ans: The Governor was a fussy sort of person. He would carry things to the extreme and in his enthusiasm, sometimes overdid them and ignored the obvious. His imagination seemed to run riot. He was apprehensive that Evans might try to take advantage of the examination and escape. He was filled with doubts. Evans might take advantage of the invigilator and hi-jack-knife him.

The Governor was duty-conscious. He did not run away from responsibility. He listened- in to the conversation in the cell himself. In spite of all his virtues, the Governor had a serious flaw. He was too credulous. He had full faith in his officers and the law-enforcing machinery. He believed the injured “McLeery” and let him accompany Superintendent Carter to help him trace Evans. Actually, he let Evans leave the prison.

The final act of foolishness was when he let Evans be carried in a prison-van, without sufficient police escort. He had used his intelligence to locate the hide-out of Evans and nab him. His gullible nature deprived him of all credit. In the end, he appeared as “another good-for-a-giggle, gullible governor.”

Q7. Using examples from the play “Evans Tries An O-Level” show how the criminals like Evans turn the tables on the Governor of Oxford Prison and the local police.

Ans: Evans is familiar with the methods of the prison authorities and he anticipates all their moves. Hence, in the battle of wits between himself and the official machinery he employs tricks unknown to them. The new German teacher and the replaced invigilator are merely stooges of Evans. Carrying blood in a rubber ring for piles is a novelty. The device of the correction slip to fix the hide out and the route to it is another piece of ingenuity. The master-stroke is when Evans impersonating wounded “McLeery” stays in prison and misguides the police to trace the parson. The use of modem devices such as prison-van, car, telephone, Ordnance Survey Map for Oxfordshire etc. shows how the criminals can misuse these facilities for their own ends. The whole operation is run by someone in the Examination Board who remains unknown till the end. It is well-planned and skilfully executed escape using the prison-van and prison staff.

Q8. What impression do you form of ‘Evans the Break’?

OR

Attempt a brief character sketch of James Roderick Evans.

Ans: “Evans the Break” as he was known among the prison officers was a jail-bird. He was a congenital kleptomaniac, but he was non-violent. He was quite a pleasant sort of person— an amusing chap; a star at the Christmas concert good at imitations.

Evans had long wavy hair. When we meet him for the first time his face was unshaven and he wore a filthy looking red and white bobble hat upon his head. He had tucked a grubby string-vest into equally grubby trousers. He smiled cheerfully at the prison officers. “Evans is smart, cunning and resourceful. He makes a request to Mr Jackson to allow him to put on his bobble hat. But he complains to

the invigilator against Stephens. Stephens' presence disturbs Evans' concentration. He makes a very polite request to cover himself with blanket as it is chilly. He uses it to put on the clerical collar and black front. He employs the brief absence of prison officers to disguise himself as parson McLeery and spill blood on himself to look injured. He acts the part of injured parson well. He offers to help police and wins their confidence. He becomes groggy and is left there to wait for ambulance.

Evans enjoys the faith, support and active cooperation of his dedicated friends. They plan carefully, working out the minute details and execute it skilfully. He never loses his calm or presence of mind even in the worst circumstances.

Q9. Comment on the ending of the play 'Evans Tries An O-Level'.

Ans: The ending of the play is quite surprising and unexpected. Only a couple of minutes ago the Governor of Oxford Prison had nabbed Evans from his hide-out at the 'Golden Lion'. A silent prison officer handcuffed the recaptured Evans. Then the two men clambered awkwardly into the back seat of the prison-van.

The Governor bade him farewell but wished to see him soon in his jail. Evans too behaved as if he would remain there for a long time and wanted to know about the O-Level Italian classes coming up next September. The Governor remarked that perhaps Evans might not be with them then. Evans pondered over it and said that he wouldn't. After a couple of minutes Evans implemented what he had predicted. Not only were the handcuffs unlocked, but the van moved on fast towards Newbury.

Evans is once again free. The broad Scots accent leaves us in no doubt who the driver was. Once again Evans scores over the prison authorities.

Q10. Comment on the aptness of the title 'Evans Tries An O-Level'
OR

Do you think the title 'Evans Tries An O-Level' is appropriate. Give reasons in support of your answer.

Ans: The title 'Evans Tries An O-Level' is quite apt and suggestive. The action of the play begins with a conversation between the Secretary of the Examination Board and the Governor of the Oxford Prison about holding the O-Level examination in German at the prison. The play ends with the mention of O-Level Italian classes and Evans's interest in them. The middle portion of the play is devoted to the holding of the O-Level Examination and its consequences—escape of Evans impersonating McLeery, the Invigilator. In short, the title dominates the play and is interwoven in the whole action.

The title indicates how criminals may exploit a facility for their selfish purpose of escaping from prison. It, thus, throws a comment on crime and punishment. The complacent Governor and methodical prison officers are outwitted again by a smart criminal and his friends who help in his adventure. It makes us laugh at the discomfiture of the efficient prison authorities.

Q11. Describe the precautions taken by the prison officers to prevent Evans from escaping. [Delhi 2014]

Ans: Special precautions were taken by the prison staff to prevent him from escaping during Evans O-level German test. A parson from St. Mary Mags was called to invigilate. Evans "was put in the heavily guarded recreational block. Between the cell and the yard there were two locked doors. The prison officers were on alert. In Evan's cell a microphone was installed while Mr. Stephens kept eye on Evans. Mr. Jackson and Mr. Stephens, the two prison officers checked his cell thoroughly for the possible escape.

***** END *****

