



QUESTIONS FROM TEXTBOOK SOLVED

A. Understanding the Text

Question 1. The three phases of the author's relationship with his grandmother before he left the country to study abroad.

Answer: The three phases of the author's relationship with his grandmother before he left the country to study abroad are:

- childhood - when he went to the village school and the grandmother helped him to get ready and went to school with him.
- boyhood - when he went to the city school in a bus. He shared a room with grandmother but she could no longer help him in his studies.
- early youth - when he went to the university and was given a room of his own. The common link of friendship was snapped.

Question 2. Three reasons why the author's grandmother was disturbed when he started going to the city school.

Answer: The three reasons why the author's grandmother was disturbed when he started going to the city school are:

- She hated western Science and learning.
- She was pained to know that there was no teaching of God and the scriptures there.
- She was allergic to music. She thought it was not meant for decent people and gentlemen. It was the monopoly of prostitutes and beggars.

Question 3. Three ways in which the author's grandmother spent her days after he grew up.

Answer: The three ways in which the author's grandmother spent her days after he grew up are:

- She lived alone in her room as she had accepted her loneliness quietly.
- She sat at her spinning wheel reciting prayers.
- In the afternoon, she would feed the sparrows for half an hour.

Question 4. The odd ways in which the author's grandmother behaved just before she died.

Answer: Just before her death, the author's grandmother refused to talk to them. Since she had omitted to pray the previous night while she was singing songs of homecoming and beating the drum, she was not going to waste any more time. She ignored their protests. She lay peacefully in bed praying and telling beads.

Question 5. The way in which the sparrows expressed their sorrow when the author's grandmother died.

Answer: Thousands of sparrows sat silently surrounding the dead body of the author's grandmother. There was no chirruping. The author's mother threw some crumbs of bread to them. They took no notice of them. As soon as the grandmother's corpse was carried off, they flew away quietly. Thus the sparrows expressed their sorrow.

B. Talking About the Text

Talk to your partner about the following:

Question 1. The author's grandmother was a religious person. What are the different ways in which we come to know this?

Answer: The author's grandmother was a deeply religious lady. We come to know this through the different ways of her behaviour. She visited the temple every morning and read scriptures. At home she always mumbled inaudible prayer and kept telling the beads of rosary. She would repeat prayers in a sing-song manner while getting the writer ready for school. She hoped that he would learn it by heart. She didn't like English school as there was no teaching of God and scriptures.

Even while spinning at her spinning-wheel she would recite prayers. Perhaps it was only once that she forgot to say her prayers. It was on the evening prior to her death when she felt over excited while celebrating the arrival of her grandson with songs and beatings of drum. She continued praying and telling beads of her rosary till her last breath.

Question 2. Describe the changing relationship between the author and his grandmother. Did their feelings for each other change?

Answer: During his boyhood, the author was completely dependent on his grandmother. She was a part of his life. The turning point in their friendship came when they went to city. She could no longer accompany him to school as he went there by bus. They shared the same room but she could not help him in his studies. She would ask him what the teachers had taught. She did not believe in the things that were taught at school. She was distressed that there was no teaching about God and the scriptures. She felt offended that music was also being taught. She expressed her disapproval silently. After this she rarely talked to him. When he went to university, he was given a room of his own. The common link of friendship was snapped.

However their feelings for each other did not change. They still loved each other deeply. She went to see the author off at the railway station when he was going abroad for higher studies. She showed no emotion but kissed his forehead silently. The author valued this as perhaps the last sign of physical contact between them. When the author returned after five years, she received him at the station. She clasped him in her arms. In the evening she celebrated his homecoming by singing songs and beating an old drum.

Question 3. Would you agree that the author's grandmother was a person strong in character? If yes, give instances that show this.

Answer: Yes, I agree that the author's grandmother was a person strong in character. She was a strong woman with strong beliefs. Although she was not formally educated, she was serious about the author's education. She could not adjust herself to the western way of life, Science and English education. She hated music and disapproved of its teaching in school.

She was a deeply religious lady. Her lips were always moving in a silent prayer. She was always telling the beads of her rosary. She went to temple daily and read the scriptures. She was distressed to know that there was no teaching about God and holy books at Khushwant's new English school.

She was a kind lady. She used to feed dogs in the village. In the city she took to feeding sparrows. Although old in years and weak in body she had strength of mind. Just before her death, she refused to talk to the members of the family as she did not want to waste her time. She wanted to make up for the time last evening when she had not prayed to God. She lay peacefully in bed saying prayers and telling the beads of her rosary till she breathed her last.

Question 4. Have you known someone like the author's

grandmother? Do you feel the same sense of loss with regard to someone whom you have loved and lost?

Answer: Yes, I have known my grandfather, who loved me deeply and looked after me. He had served in the army before he retired as a colonel 20 years ago. When I was a school going kid, he was still active and smart. He was fond of walking, jogging and playing outdoor games. He inspired us to get up early in the morning. He believed that a healthy mind lives in a healthy body. He used to give us good physical exercises followed by milk and nourishing food and then asked us to study for a while before going to school. In the afternoon, he would enquire what we had been taught at the school. He would help us in our home task and supervise our reading, writing and doing sums. He was gentle but firm. He laid stress on good habits and character building. He passed away when I had gone abroad for higher studies. I miss him a lot. A sense of loss fills me whenever I see his portrait on the wall. But his cheerful looks remind me to take heart and fight the struggle of life.

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