Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**Assignment: Dusk**

Answer the following :

1. **In which month and at what time of the day is the story set? Describe the scene.**

Ans : The story is set in early March and the time is thirty minutes past six. Dusk had fallen heavily over the scene, mitigated by some faint moonlight and many street lamps.

1. **What was the effect of the scene on Gortsby? Why and how did it match his present mood?**

Ans: The scene pleased Gortsby and harmonized with his present mood. Gortsby himself was in a defeated mood. It was not monetary issues that worried him but he had failed in some subtle ambitions and at that moment was heartsore and disillusioned.

1. **What did Gortsby associate ‘dusk’ to ? Why?**

Ans: According to Gortsby, dusk was the hour of the defeated. Men and women who had fought and lost , who hid their fallen fortunes and dead hopes as far as possible from the scrutiny of the curious , came forth in this hour of gloaming , when their shabby clothes and bowed shoulders and unhappy eyes might pass unnoticed.

1. **Who was sitting on the bench by Gortsby’s side? Describe him.**

Ans: An elderly gentleman was sitting by Gortby’s side on the bench. The man had a drooping air. Though his clothes were not shabby , he did not look like someone from an affluent background who could purchase a box of chocolates or a carnation buttonhole.

1. **What did Gortsby think of the elderly gentleman as he rose to go?**

Ans: As the elderly gentleman rose to go, Gortsby imagined him returning to a home circle where he was snubbed and of no account.

1. **Who came there after the elderly gentleman had left? Describe him briefly.**

Ans: After the elderly gentleman left, his place on the bench was immediately taken by a young man , fairly well dressed but scarcely more cheerful than the elderly gentleman.

1. **What did the new-comer do? What comment did Gortsby make? Why did Gortsby make the comment?**

Ans: The new-comer gave out an angry and loud expletive and flung himself into the seat. Gortby told him that he didn’t seem to be in a very good temper. From the body language of the new-comer , Gortsby judged that he was expected to take due notice of the demonstration.

1. **What put Gortsby on his guard? What do you think he must have thought about the new-comer?**

Ans: When Gortsby passed a comment, the young man turned to him with a look of disarming frankness which put Gortsby instantly on his guard. Probably Gortsby thought that the man was trying to be overfriendly and wanted some favour from him.

1. **What explanation did the young man give for his outburst while sitting on the bench?**

Ans: The young man said that he had come to the place that afternoon and had wanted to stay at Patagonian Hotel in Berkshire Square but unfortunately the hotel had been pulled down some weeks ago. The taxi driver recommended him to another hotel and the young man booked himself there. After sending a letter to his people , giving them the address, he went to buy some soap as he had forgotten to pack one and hated using the one provided by the hotel. After strolling about a bit he was about to return to the hotel but suddenly realized that he remembered neither the name of the hotel nor the street it was in. He didn’t have any money or friends in London and was wandering about with nowhere to go for the night.

1. **Does Gortby out rightly reject the story of the young man? Why?**

Ans: No. Gortsby did not out rightly reject the story of the young man because he remembered doing exactly the same thing once in a foreign capital and on that occasion there were two of them which made the episode more remarkable.

1. **Why was it difficult in the given situation for the young man inspite of being in his own land? How would it have been better in a foreign city?**

Ans: In a foreign city one could go to one’s Consul and get the requisite help from him. Comparatively in one’s own land one is far more helpless if one gets into a fix as it is difficult to find someone to swallow a story like his and lend him some money.

1. **Why was the young man happy? How did he say it to Gortsby?**

Ans: When the young man told Gortsby his story, Gortsby said that it seemed possible as he himself had done exactly the same thing once in a foreign capital and it was even more remarkable as on that occasion there were two of them. The young man was happy that Gortsby had believed him. He told Gortsby that he was glad that he didn’t think the story outrageously improbable.

1. **Explain : his hope that Gortsby did not fall far short of the requisite decency**

Ans: When Gortsby expressed his belief in the young man’s story, the young man was happy and warmly expressed his happiness. He hoped that Gortby will understand that he needed some money to get out of the difficult situation. So he was hoping that Gortsby would show the required decency and give him some money.

1. **What according to Gortsby was the weak point in the man’s story? What did he tell him to do?**

Ans: Though Gortsby told the young man that he believed his story, in reality he hadn’t . So he asked the young man to the produce cake of soap which he had said was the whole reason to have come out of the hotel. The young man was unable to show him the soap as he couldn’t find it. The same soap which could have been an evidence to his story , turned out to be the weak point in it.

1. **What did Gortsby tell the young man when he could not produce the soap? How did the young man react?**

Ans: Gortsby told the young man that losing a hotel and a cake of soap on one afternoon suggests wilful carelessness. The young man scarcely waited to hear the end of the remark. He flitted away down the path, his head held high, with an air of somewhat forced jauntiness.

1. **What happened as Gortby rose to go? What were his feelings then? What did he do?**

Ans: As Gorstby rose to go, he saw a small oval packet lying on the ground by the side of the bench. It was a cake of soap. He immediately realised that it must have fallen out of the youth’s overcoat packet when he flung himself down on the seat. He felt guilty for not having trusted the young man. He quickly went in search of the young man carrying the soap with him.

1. **What did Gortsby tell the young man while handing him the soap?**

Ans: While handling the soap to the young man, Gortsby was told him that the important witness to the genuineness of his story had turned up and explained that it must have slid out of his overcoat pocket when he sat down on the seat. He further asked the young man to excuse his disbelief but appearances were really rather against him. He then offered him a sovereign.

1. **As Gortsby passed by the seat what did he see? What must have been his feelings then?**

Ans: As Gortsby passed by his seat, he saw the elderly gentleman poking and peering beneath it and on all sides of it and recognized his earlier fellow occupant. On asking, the gentleman told him that he had lost a cake of soap. Gortsby must have felt crestfallen as he had actually been duped by the young man

1. **Bring out the importance of ‘the cake of soap’ in the story ‘Dusk’.**

Ans: Gortsby is sitting on a bench one evening at the time of dusk. Being a judgemental person, he judges all the passers by. When an elderly gentleman sits next to him, he judges him to be from a home where he was snubbed. After that when a younger man comes there and behaves very frankly with him, he instantly is on guard. Further when the man tells him his story of how he had come out of his hotel to buy a cake of soap and was unable to recall the hotel name and address and had no money, Gortsby doesn’t believe him and asks him to produce the soap as that is the only convincing touch to the story. The young man is unable to do so and thus it is proved that his story was a lie. After the man walks away, Gortsby finds the soap beneath the bench and feels guilty for not having trusted the man. Somehow he traces him and hands him the soap along with a sovereign, excusing himself for not believing him. On returning, he passes by the same bench and sees the elderly gentleman , who had sat on the bench before the young man, looking for something . Gortsby asks him and the man tells him that he is looking for a cake of soap that he had lost. Gortsby realises that he had been duped and had failed in his judgement. Thus the ‘cake of soap’ plays an important role in the story ‘Dusk’.