Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

Assignment: Fourteen

1. Descibe Mrs. Pringle as mentioned in the beginning of the lesson.

Ans: Mrs. Pringle is a woman of fashion, handsome and wears a lovely evening gown. She is rather excitable in temperament but capable, vivacious and humorously charming.

1. Why is Mrs Pringle hosting a dinner?

Ans: Mrs Pringle is hosting a dinner to introduce her young maiden daughter , Elaine to the social circle of the town.

1. What does Mrs Pringle carry when she enters ? Who sends it to her ? Why?

Ans: Mrs Pringle carries a corsage bouquet of flowers and the empty box from which she has taken them. Mr Harper sent those flowers to her to apologise as he was not able to attend her dinner because he was called away to the bedside of a friend who was very ill.

1. In what state was the cook? What does Mrs Pringle say about her?

Ans; The cook was in a temper, as always. Mrs Pringle says that she is glad to hear it. According to her , the cook is like an actress – the better the temper, the better the performance. Mrs Pringle was happy as long as she served them a good dinner and did not care how much she swears.

1. What was Gustave doing? Why?

Ans: Gustave was sweeping off the sidewalk as there was an awful blizzard .

1. Who is Elaine? What is wearing ? What does she bring with her?

Ans: Elain is the young debutant daughter of Mrs Pringle . She is in an evening gown and brings a bunch of place cards with her.

1. Why did Mrs Pringle say that they could never sit down with thirteen?

Ans: She says so because like many people she too considers thirteen to be an unlucky number and did not want to spoil her dinner by having thirteen people at the table.

1. Whom does Mrs Pringle call instead of Mr Harper? How does she convey the invite?

Ans: Mrs Pringle called Mr Morgan instead of Mr Harper . She calls his residence and leaves a message with the person who picks up the phone. She says that she wants him to dine with them in about ten minutes.

1. What are Mrs Pringle’s plans about Elaine’s marriage? What has she done to execute her plan?

Ans: Mrs Pringle wanted her daughter, Elaine to marry Oliver Farnsworth, who was worth millions. She had invited him to the dinner that night and arranged the seating in such a manner that he would be next to Elaine.

1. What is Mrs Pringle’s complain about her daughter?

Ans: Mrs Pringle says that she tries to fling every eligible bachelor at Elaine but she takes no initiative to ensure that the person finally marries her.

1. What is Mrs Pringle’s reaction on hearing the mention of the Prince of Wales?

Ans. The moment she hears the name, Mrs Pringle is very excited. She says she would have done everything possible to have him in her house. It would establish her social position for life.

1. Why can’t Mrs Sedgwick make it to the dinner? What is Mrs Pringle ‘s reaction while speaking to her and while speaking to the others ? What does this tell us about her?

Ans: Mrs Sedgwick can’t make it to dinner because she is caught up in a snow drift. While speaking to her, Mrs Pringle expresses disappointment on her inability to come. She tells her that she is heartbroken . On the other hand while speaking to the other characters present in the scene , she says that she is glad Mrs Sedgwick dropped out as now with two less they could save at least four glasses of champagne.

1. Why is Mr Darby unable to attend the dinner? Who else cannot make it because of that?

Ans: Mr Darby is unable to attend the dinner because his baby has chicken pox and owing to the transmutability of the disease, he and his wife feel obliged to regret. Their guests , Mr and Mrs Fleetwood also cannot make it because of them.

1. What reason does Mrs Pringle give for not inviting the Hatwoods and Hester Longley?

Ans: Mrs Pringle does not want to invite the Hatwoods because they don’t serve drinks when they entertain and she can’t afford to invite them to drink hers. She did not want to invite Hester Longley as she was too pretty and clever and would probable woe Oliver Farnsworth herself.

1. Why was Elaine upset after having invited the Tuppers?

Ans: Elaine had invited the Tuppers and then Ella said they had two house guests and asked if they too could come along. Elaine agreed without consulting her mother and now there would be sixteen guests. Thus Elaine was upset.

1. What additional arrangements were too be done as a result of sixteen guests?

Ans: In order to cater to sixteen , an additional board had to be inserted to the dining table, the cook would have to prepare more food and they might have to use cans of soup and vegetables.

1. Why could Jessica not attend the dinner? What was Mrs Pringle’s reaction to that?

Ans: Jessica couldn’t attend the dinner because she was down with cold . Mrs Pringle was extremely happy as now there would be only fourteen and no additional arrangements had to be made.

1. Why couldn’t Oliver come? How did Mrs Pringle react to that?

Ans: Oliver couldn’t come because he had to leave for Boston due to some important business. Mrs Pringle was extremely upset. She thinks it is very rude of him to have cancelled last minute . She does not believe that he has some business. She thinks he didn’t want to exert himself and was afraid of freezing in the blizzard.

1. What is the reason behind Mrs Pringle getting so upset when Oliver Farnsworth cancels the invite? Whom does she blame for it?

Ans: Mrs Pringle is actually upset because she had taken the trouble to host the dinner for the sole purpose of bringing her daughter and Oliver , a millionaire, together so the alliance could come about. Mrs Pringle blamed Elaine for it saying that if she would perk up and not be so timid, Oliver would be curios to meet her.

1. Who were the two uninvited guests? What was Mrs Pringle’s reaction to their presence?

Ans: The two uninvited guests were the Prince of Wales and his secretary. Mrs Pringle’s joy knew no bounds as she realised who the prestigious guest were. She told Dunham to serve the cocktails and also said that the guests could sit anywhere they chose. She said she would personally bring the Prince in with her.

1. Write a character sketch of : a) Mrs Pringle b) Elaine

Ans:

1. Mrs Pringle is a fashionable lady and a socialite. She is a well known hostess and people clamour to receive her invitations and all her affairs were a success. She is a hypocrite as she says one thing to the people in her circle and means something else. She overshadows her daughter as does not give her any independence and plans everything for her.
2. Elaine, the daughter of Mrs Pringle is a timid girl and a very righteous one also. She does not like to woe people for her vested interest. She does not know how to say something when she means something else.

Mrs. Pringle is preparing to host a dinner party to introduce her daughter, Elaine, to the city's most [eligible bachelor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eligible_bachelor). Illness and a blizzard force some guests to cancel and the three characters are compelled to try to salvage the evening and the dinner-table layout.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourteen_(play)#cite_note-PWYF-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fourteen_(play)#cite_note-14Script-2)