Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

Assignment: The Purple Children

1. **What was the weakest spot in the defences?**

Ans: The sentry at the rear gate was an eighteen –year- old boy, who was new to the town and ill at ease with his enforced duties there. He was singled out as the weakest spot in the defences.

1. **Describe the girl who came looking for her cat.**

Ans: She was slight, young not more than fifteen years old. She wore a black frock

and her thin small wrists issued pale and strange from the sleeves. Her face was

silvery oval and had dark shining eyes.

1. **What did the sentry say to the girl on seeing her?What explanation did the girl give for being there at that hour of the day?**

Ans: The sentry warned the girl that she was not allowed to go inside the gate and

that she ought to be in the house at that time of night and asked her if she did not

know about the curfew. The girl told the sentry that she had been in the house but

her cat got out when she had gone to bring wood and that she couldn’t catch her.

1. **What thoughts did the sentry have about the girl as she was trying to convince him?**

Ans: The sentry thought the little girl was only a kid and was harmless. He also thought that the girl could possibly not make trouble if he allowed her through the gate. He couldn’t see any harm in letting her in. He further thought that he had got orders to treat the natives politely and considerately as long as they weren’t making trouble and he was convinced that that waif possibly couldn’t make any trouble.

1. **How did the girl convince the sentry that it would not be any trouble letting her in to get her cat?**

Ans: The girl assured the sentry that no one would find out if she got in . Further she told him that he would be close to her every minute and would see every move she made and that he had a gun and so there was no reason to be afraid.

1. **Finally what did the sentry do? What instruction did he give the girl?**

Ans: Finally the sentry set his hands on the bars and thrust the gate open before her. He warned the girl to be quick and not to make a noise about it.

1. **What did the girl do after finding her cat?**

Ans: After the girl found the cat, she looked up at the sentry with a wild smile and thanked him for his kind gesture. She kept looking at him still and did not move when they both heard the sudden light impact of feet as though someone had dropped from the high wall of Town Hall.

1. **What did the sentry do on hearing the sound of feet? What did he do when he realised that the girl was a partner in the crime?**

Ans: After hearing the sound, the sentry spun round and went up the cellar steps and saw the figure of a boy run towards the gate. The sentry ran after him and heard the girl’s scream, who ran past him and flung the cat at him, as he was readying the gun. He fired the gun blindly and the spray splattered darkly over her cheek and her spread hands but she was successful in running into the darkness with her partner.

1. **What happened after the fugitives had escaped?**

Ans: After the fugitives had escaped , the people around came pouring into the courtyard as the sentry had given out a shout of rage and alarm before he knew he had. They found the sentry mopping his face and saw a long violet stain upon the ground and the coils of the severed rope dangling at the foot of the flagstaff. The people got the Major out of the bed and the sentry reported to him with every excuse he could think of.

1. **What was the Major’s reaction on learning what had happened?**

Ans: When the Major learnt about what had happened, he stood gazing at the boy without rancour. He was accustomed to the local style of warfare and to the ugly demands it made upon him. So he realised that the sentry was not entirely at fault.

1. **What did the Major tell the sentry when he mentioned the cat?**

Ans: When the sentry mentioned the cat, the major told him that it belonged to the caretaker and its appearance was a stroke of luck. He further said that the girl must have seen it before and made up her story and certainly had never owned it.

1. **What did the Major mean when he asked if there were scores of them with purple hands and faces?**

Ans: When the Major asked the sentry if he could recognise the girl, he said there he couldn’t as there were scores of girls like her , thin as a monkey. The major was quite annoyed that the sentry said so because this particular girl could be easily recognised as she had been fired with the spray-gun loaded with a purple vegetable dye. Thus he mockingly asked the sentry if there were scores of such girls with purple hands and faces.

1. **What were the sentry’s feelings with respect to his firing of the gun at the girl?**

Ans: The sentry was filled with regret as he fired the gun at the girl. He was sympathetic towards the fugitives as he understood their side of the fight to free themselves, and felt bad about spraying the dye which made the girl easily recognisable. Though he had sympathy for the fugitives, he was bound to his duty as a sentry which made him fire the gun.

1. **What did the Major say about the boy who had changed the flag?**

Ans: The Major thought that the fugitive had worked extremely fast as he

had left about ten feet of the flagstaff coiled round with barbed wire.

The Major also said that the fugitive must have spent a longer time

practising the movements involved before he could reproduce them at

that speed.

1. **What plan did the Major devise to trace the fugitives?**

Ans: The Major decides to find the girl first as they will find the boy eventually. The Major decides to try the grammar school for the same and then visit the homes of all those girls who do not answer the register.

1. **What were the names of the fugitives? Where was the girl? What was she doing?**

Ans: The names of the fugitives were Ariana and Andreas. The girl, Ariana, was in the shed behind Niko’s father’s shop. She was kneeling over a pan of water, scouring with a handful of wet sand at the back of her hands . She was trying to take off the purple colour which she had on her face and the back of her hands .

1. **What suggestion did Christo give to Ariana? What did Ariana say?**

Ans: Christo told Ariana that the soldiers would come straight to school to look for her. He suggested her to miss school that day as they may not notice if only one girl was missing. He also told her to stay at home and avoid being seen.

1. **Who were the purple children ? What quality did they display?**

Ans: The purple children refers to the partisans. These were fifty-three children of the senior form who had unanimously painted their faces with the resplendent purple colour which is a symbol of royalty and mourning. Ariana and Andreas had gone to hoist their flag on the Town Hall but Ariana had been stained by the purple vegetable dye which had been fired from a spray-gun. She could be easily identified and caught. The other children wanted to save her and thus had bravely dyed their olive faces with purple. Thus the children had displayed marvellous unanimity and love for their land.