

ICSE Paper 2019

English Literature

(Two hours)

- Answers to this Paper must be written on the paper provided separately.
 - You will not be allowed to write during the first 15 minutes.
 - This time is to be spent in reading the question paper.
 - The time given at the head of this paper is the time allowed for writing the answers.
 - Attempt five questions in all from only three text books.
 - You must attempt at least one question from each of the Sections A, B and C and not more than two other questions from the same books you have already compulsorily chosen.
 - The intended marks for questions or parts of questions are given in brackets [].
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SECTION – A (Drama)

The Merchant of Venice : Shakespeare

Question 1.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow :

Bassanio : To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love;
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.
Antonio : I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;

- (i) Describe Antonio's mood at the beginning of this scene. [3]
State any two reasons that Antonio's friends, who were present, gave to explain his mood.
- (ii) What promise did Antonio make to Bassanio immediately after this conversation ?
[3]
- (iii) What did Bassanio say to Antonio about 'a lady richly left' in Belmont ?
[3]

(iv) Why was Antonio unable to lend Bassanio the money that he needed ? [3]
How did he propose to help his friend ?

(v) What does the above extract reveal of the relationship between Antonio and Bassanio ? [4]

Mention one way in which this relationship was put to the test later in the play.

Answers :

(i) Antonio is in a melancholy mood at the beginning of this scene. He does not know where he got it and how it began. Salarino, one of Antonio's friends, thinks that Antonio is sad because he is worried about his ships sailing on the sea. Salario, another of Antonio's friends, attributes his sadness to his being in love.

(ii) Antonio assures Bassanio of his wholehearted help in his mission. He says that his money, his body, his utmost resources will all be placed at his disposal so that Bassanio is able to pursue his aim.

(iii) Bassanio tells Antonio that a very beautiful and rich lady, Portia, lives in Belmont. Her reputation as a rich, beautiful lady has spread far and wide. A number of eligible bachelors are reaching Belmont to try their luck in quest of her.

(iv) Antonio was unable to lend the money that Bassanio needed because all his money was invested in trading ventures at sea. So he suggested Bassanio to go and enquire from where he could get money in Venice. He would stand surety for the money that he could borrow on his behalf.

(v) We learn that Antonio and Bassanio are close friends. They share their intimate feelings and anxieties with each other. Both are ready to sacrifice their most precious thing for the other. Their friendship is tested later in the play when Bassanio helps Antonio in the Trial Scene through his wife Portia and later Antonio stands surety for Bassanio's character when the marriage ring is found missing on Bassanio's hand.

Question 2.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow :

Bassanio : A gentle scroll. – Fair lady, by your leave; [Kissing her]
I come by note, to give and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes
Hearing applause and universal shout
Giddy in spirit, still gazing, in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no;

- (i) Where did Bassanio find the 'gentle scroll' ? [3]
What 'prize' had Bassanio just won ?
- (ii) Explain why Bassanio said he felt 'Giddy in spirit, still gazing, in a doubt'. [3]
- (iii) Shortly after this exchange, Portia gave Bassanio a ring as a token of her affection. What did the gift symbolise ? [3]
- (iv) What assurance did Bassanio give her when he accepted the ring ? [3]
- (v) What did Portia urge Bassanio to do when she learnt that his friend Antonio was in trouble ? [4]
What aspect of her character is revealed through her words ?

Answers :

(i) Bassanio found the 'gentle scroll' in the leaden casket from which he found the portrait of fair Portia. His winning of the hand of Portia was the 'prize' for Bassanio as so many suitors were trying to win her hand.

(ii) Bassanio felt 'giddy in spirit, still gazing in doubt' as he thought that he was one of two competitors for a prize who thought he had done well in the eyes of spectators, looking around in some doubt as to whether those shouts of applause were for him or not. He was still in doubt whether he had really won the fair lady Portia.

(iii) Portia gave Bassanio a ring as a token of her affection. The gift symbolised their mutual trust and love for each other. If ever he parted with the ring or lost it or gave it away, this would mean that his love for her was dead and she would accuse him of the breach of trust.

(iv) Bassanio assured Portia that he would never part with the ring she had given him. Giving her an assurance of his love, he told her that he would keep the ring secure on his finger. It would go only after his life was no more. That is, he would keep it as long as he lived.

(v) Portia urged Bassanio to leave for Venice at once and take as much gold and money he needed to return the borrowed money to Antonio. In no case should such a good friend come to trouble; this shows Portia's compassionate heart and generous nature to help someone in distress.

Question 3.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow :

Duke : You hear the team'd Bellario, what he writes:

And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

[Enter Portia, dressed like a Doctor of Laws]

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario"?

Portia : I did, my lord.

Duke : You are welcome : take your place.

Are you acquainted with the difference

That holds this present question in the court ?

- (i) Where is this scene set ? Why was Portia there ? [3]
 - (ii) What reason had Bellario given for his absence ? Whom had he sent in his stead ? [3]
 - (iii) Bellario's letter stated that he had taken some measures to prepare the 'young and learned doctor' to deal with the case. What were they ? [3]
 - (iv) What was the 'difference' between Shylock the Jew and Antonio the merchant that the Duke was unable to resolve ? [3]
 - (v) How does Portia succeed in saving Antonio ? [4]
- What does this reveal of her character ?

Answers :

(i) This scene is set in a court of justice. Portia was there, dressed as a learned doctor of laws, in the guise of Balthazar, to appear on behalf of Antonio and defend him against the lapse of the bond that he had signed with Shylock.

(ii) Bellario stated in his letter to the Duke that he could not be present at the court due to his illness. He sent a learned a doctor of law, Balthazar, in his stead. He was confident of the ability of Balthazar to prove his capability in such a crucial case between Shylock and Antonio.

(iii) Bellario's letter stated that he had thoroughly discussed the case with the learned doctor of laws, Balthazar, who was fully acquainted with the case in question. Balthazar was a young man with mature judgement and rich experience to handle the case.

(iv) The 'difference', that is dispute between Shylock the Jew and Antonio that the Duke was unable to resolve was the clause in the bond according to which Shylock could have his pound of flesh from Antonio's heart if the latter failed to fulfil the terms of the bond.

(v) Portia succeeded in saving Antonio by interpreting the bond in the letter, and not the spirit, of the law, as Shylock himself insisted on it. She warned Shylock that the bond did not allow him to shed even a single drop of blood while taking the pound of flesh. Thus defeating Shylock with his own weapon, she could save Antonio from the clutches of Shylock. Portia's shrewd interpretation of law really saved Antonio.

The Mousetrap : Agatha Christie

Question 4.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow :

Giles : I beg your pardon. Did you say something ?

Trotter : Yes, Mr. Ralston, I said 'Is there an extension ?' (He crosses to Centre.)

Giles : Yes, up in our bedroom.

Trotter : Go and try it up there for me, will you ?

(Giles exits to the stairs, carrying the glove and bus ticket and looking dazed. Trotter continues to trace the wire to the window. He pulls back the curtain and opens the window, trying to follow the wire. He crosses to the arch up Right, goes out and returns with a torch. He moves to the window, jumps out and bends down, looking, then disappears out of sight. It is practically dark. Mrs. Boyle enters from the library up Left, shivers and notices the open window.)

Mrs. Boyle: (Moving to the window) Who has left this window open ?

(i) Why did Giles fail to hear what Trotter had said earlier ? [3]

Why did Giles look 'dazed' ?

(ii) What was Trotter attempting to do ? Why ? [3]

(iii) Why did Mrs. Boyle close the window ? [3]

What did the voice on the radio say about the 'mechanics of fear' ?

(iv) How did the murderer mask the sounds of the killing ? [3]

Who entered the room immediately after the murder ?

What did this person see ?

(v) Who was the victim ? why was the victim murdered ? [4]

What was the 'signature tune' that the murderer whistled ?

What is the significance of this tune in the context of the play ?

Answers :

(i) Giles had just found a London bus ticket from Mollie's glove. He was feeling upset and confused due to this. That is why he failed to hear what Trotter had said earlier. He looked dazed because he could not understand why the London bus ticket was there in Mollie's glove when she had not gone there.

(ii) Trotter was trying to find out if the telephone wire had been cut by some one or it had simply gone out of order due to the snow storm that had blown the other day. In fact he wanted to make a report to Police Superintendent Hogben. That is why he needed telephone service.

(iii) Mrs Boyle closes the window because a very cold wind is blowing. She shivers due to this cold wind. The voice on the radio says that in order to understand the mechanics of fear you have to study the exact effect produced by fear on the human mind. If one is alone in a room, in the late afternoon and door opens softly behind him/her, he/she is likely to be frightened.

(iv) The murderer masked the sounds of the killing under the tune of 'Three Blind Mice'. Soon after the murder Mollie entered the room. She switched on the light and saw Mrs Boyle lying strangled in front of the sofa.

(v) The victim was Mrs Boyle. The victim was murdered because she was one of the Judges on the bench which sent the three children to the Long ridge. Farm where they were cruelly treated and one of them died. The murderer whistled the tune of 'Three Blind Mice'. The tune of 'Three Blind Mice' is significant here because 'The mousetrap' is a revenge play and here one of the ill-treated children George is going to take revenge from his victim. So the tune is very significant here.

Question 5.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow :

Trotter : (Leaning on the refectory table) Those simple actions took you rather a long time, didn't they, Mr Ralston ?

Giles : I don't think so. (He moves away to the stairs)

Trotter : I should say you definitely – took your time over them.

Giles : I was thinking about something.

Trotter : Very well. Now then, Mr Wren, I'll have your account of where you were.

(i) What 'simple actions' of Giles was Trotter referring to ? [3]

Where had Giles been ? Who had sent him there ?

(ii) How did Christopher Wren account for his whereabouts at the time of the murder ? [3]

(iii) Where was Paravicini at that time ? What was he doing ? [3]

(iv) Whom did Giles accuse of having committed the murder ? [3]

On what did he base this accusation ?

(v) Mollie shared her suspicions regarding the identity of the murderer with Trotter, later in this scene. [4]

Whom did she suspect of being the murderer ?

What reasons did she give for her suspicion ?

Answers :

(i) Trotter had sent Giles to his bedroom upstairs to see whether the extension telephone was working or not. It was a simple action for which, according to Trotter, Giles took more time than was required. Giles had been in his bedroom upstairs. Trotter had sent him there.

(ii) Christopher Wren told Trotter that at the time of the murder, he was in the kitchen. He had gone there to see if he could help Mollie Ralston in her cooking. After that he had gone upstairs to his bedroom.

(iii) At the time of murder Paravicini was in the drawing room. He was playing the piano.

(iv) Giles openly accused Christopher Wren of having committed the murder. His accusation was based on the fact that Christopher was of the same age as the eldest of those three children would be now. Secondly he was mentally abnormal very much like the suspected murderer of Culver Street.

(v) Mollie suspected Major Metcalf of being the murderer. She told Trotter that the murderer could be a middle aged person probably the father of the ill-treated children. Her supposition was that after being a prisoner with the Japanese, were treated in his absence at Longridge Farm, he might have decided to take revenge.

Question 6.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow :

Trotter : Yes. You've been extraordinarily foolish, you know. You've run a very good chance of being killed by holding out on me. As a result, you've been in serious danger more than once.

Mollie : I don't know what you mean.

Trotter : (Moving slowly above the sofa table to the right of the sofa; still quite natural and friendly) Come now, Mrs. Ralston. We policemen aren't quite so dumb as you think. All along I've realized that you had first-hand knowledge of the Longridge Farm affair. You know Mrs. Boyle was the magistrate concerned. In fact, you knew all about it. Why didn't you speak up and say so ?

Mollie : (Very much affected) I don't understand. I wanted to forget-forget. (She sits at the Left end of the sofa.)

(i) What was the 'Longridge Farm' affair ? [3]

(ii) Trotter revealed to Mollie some facts that he had uncovered about her past. What were they ? [3]

(iii) What did Mollie want to forget ? [3]

How was she linked with the 'Longridge Farm affair' ?

(iv) How did Trotter manage to pass himself off as a policeman ?

How had he reached Monkswell Manor ?

(v) What did Trotter reveal to Mollie about his true identity ? [4]

How was Mollie saved at the end of the play ?

Answers :

(i) Three Corrigan children – Two boys and a girl-were brought before the court in need of care and protection. A home was found for their shelter with Mr and Mrs Stanning at Longridge Farm. Here the children were ill treated and one of them died. Mr and Mrs Stanning were sent to jail for negligence. Mr Stanning died in prison. When Mrs

Stanning was released from the prison she was murdered in Culver Street where she was living as Maureen Lyon. Trotter was investigating into this Longridge affair.

(ii) Trotter had discovered about Mrs Ralston that before marriage, her name was Miss Waring. She was a teacher in the school where Jimmy was studying. He had also found out that Jimmy had managed to get letter posted to her. In this letter he had begged help from his teacher Miss Waring. But her teacher did not answer that letter.

(iii) Mollie wanted to forget the horrible incident of Jimmy's death. In fact when Jimmy's letter reached her, she was down with pneumonia. So the letter was put aside along with other letters. It was weeks afterwards when she found and read the letter. By that time Jimmy had died. She could not do anything for him. She felt penitent. This haunted her for a long time. This is what she wanted to forget. Mollie was linked with the Longridge Farm affair because she was the teacher whom Jimmy had requested for help.

(iv) Trotter very cleverly takes out his notebook and pretends to be an officer on duty to interview all those persons who were staying at Monkswell Manor. He tells Mollie that his visit is regarding police protection to be given to them which they need at the moment. He had reached Monkswell Manor with the help of his skis.

(v) Trotter revealed to Mollie that he was not a policeman. He was George, Jimmy's elder brother. He also told her that he had cut the telephone wires before he entered the Monkswell Manor. Mollie was saved by the intervention of Major Metcalf and Miss Casewell who appear on the scene and arrest George.

SECTION – B (Poetry)

Answer one or more questions from this Section.

A Collection of Poems

Question 7.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

“Now tell us what it was all about”.
Young Peterkin, he cries.
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder – waiting eyes,
“Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for”.
– After Blenheim, Robert Southey

(i) Who are Peterkin and Wilhelmine ? [3]

How does the poet describe the scene at the beginning of the poem ?

(ii) What did Young Peterkin find and where ? Describe it. [3]

(iii) Who is referred to as “each other” ? What did they fight for ? [3]

(iv) To whom are the words in the extract addressed ? [3]

How was this person’s family affected by the war ?

(v) What, according to the poet, are the consequences that are often associated with great and famous victories ? [4]

What message does the poet want to convey to the readers ?

Answers :

(i) Peterkin, a little boy, and Wilhelmine, a young girl, were the grandchildren of old Kaspar. The poet makes the setting of the poem clear at the beginning of the poem by stating that the two children were playing near Kaspar sitting before his cottage. The scene described is quite commonplace but spectacular.

(ii) Young Peterkin, who was playing near the cottage, was rolling something which was large and round. He did not know what it was.

(iii) “Each other” referred to the English and the French who fought a battle at Blenheim. They fought to win supremacy over each other. But the real cause of the battle could not be explained.

(iv) The words in the extract are addressed to the grandfather Kaspar. Kaspar’s family was hard hit by war in which his father’s house was burnt down and he was forced to run away, with his wife and child. He had no place to take shelter.

(v) According to the poet, war is destructive and horrible. It brings miseries, sufferings and disorder in life. The poet brings out the horrors of war in a simple but ironic way. The young children fail to understand in the poem ‘After Blenheim’ how the war which created so much havoc could be a great and famous war.

Question 8.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

There’s nobody on the house-tops now

Just a palsied few at the windows set;

For the best of the sight is, all allow,

At the Shambles’ Gate or, better yet,

By the very scaffold’s foot, I trow.

– The Patriot, Robert Browning

(i) Who is the speaker ? Where is he being taken ? Why ? [3]

(ii) Describe the scene when he had walked down the same street a year ago. [3]

(iii) Where does the speaker think all the people had gathered that day ? [3]

Why does he think so ?

(iv) Describe the speaker's physical condition. [3]

(v) What is the central message of the poem ? [4]

Does the poem end on a note of hope or despair ?

Give one reason for your answer.

Answers :

(i) The speaker here is the patriot. He is being taken to the scaffold to be hanged for his misdeeds. He is passing through some street in a town.

(ii) A year ago, the patriot was worshipped like a hero. He was accorded a warm welcome on his return after a glorious victory. His path was strewn with flowers. The church towers were decorated with victory-flags. Huge crowds were there to welcome him.

(iii) The speaker thinks that all the people have left the town and gone to the Shambles' Gate or quite near the scaffold in order to have a better view of the patriot's (his) execution. Only a few paralysed persons are sitting at the windows.

(iv) The speaker's physical condition is pathetic. He is being led to the gallows. A long rope has been used to tie his hands on the back. The rope is so tight that it cuts both his hands. His forehead is bleeding. It is due to the stones hurled at him by some callous and cruel fellows. All this shows that he is being treated very harshly.

(v) The central message of the poem is the fickle mindedness of the ordinary people who go enthusiastic at welcoming a hero but soon get disappointed with him and begin to hurl abuses and stones on him.

The poem ends on a note of hope. Though the hero in this poem feels betrayed and abandoned, he achieves a moral victory. He feels that he has not been rewarded for his services on the earth, he hopes he would be rewarded by God in heaven. So he feels safe in the bosom of God. His faith in God being a true judge marks his unbounded sense of optimism.

Question 9.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

All round the field spectators were gathered Cheering on all the young women and men
Then the final event of the day was approaching The last race about to begin.

– Nine Gold Medals, David Roth

(i) Where had the 'young women and men' come from ? [3]

What had brought them together ?

How had they prepared themselves for the event ?

(ii) What was the last event of the day ? [3]

How many athletes were participating in this event ?

What signal were they waiting for ?

(iii) What happened to the youngest athlete half way through the race ? [3]

How did he respond ?

(iv) What 'strange' turn did the story take at this point ? [3]

(v) Why does the poet say that the banner – 'Special Olympics' could not have been nearer the mark ? [4]

What human quality does the poem celebrate ?

Answers :

(i) The 'young women and men' had come from different countries to participate in various sports events. They were fired with the longing to win a medal – gold, silver or bronze. As the international event is very prestigious, every participant had put in a lot of preparation and practice. No one wanted to spare any pains for winning a medal – gold, silver or bronze.

(ii) The last event of the day was the hundred-metre race. Nine young athletes were participating in this event. They were well-poised, waiting for the pistol shot as a starting signal.

(iii) The youngest athlete who was weaker could not run. His legs gave in and he fell on the track. He was distressed and gave out a cry in frustration because his hard work had come to nothing.

(iv) The remaining eight contestants stopped and looked back at their fallen companion. They were expected not to stop but to continue the race. But a 'strange' thing happened. They all turned round and came back to the fallen athlete. They lifted him to his feet.

(v) The banner 'Special Olympics' meant Olympics for the differently-abled persons turned to be significant. 'The Special Olympics' became really special when each participant was declared to be the winner and awarded a gold medal.

The poem celebrates the human quality of true sportsmanship and empathy for the fallen athlete. We should be able to understand the feelings of another person from his point of view, and be ready to mitigate his pain and sorrow.

SECTION – C (Prose)

A Collection of Short Stories

Question 10.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow:

It had no eyes, ears, nose or mouth. It was just a round smooth head – with a school cap on top of it! And that's where the story should end. But for Mr. Oliver it did not end here.

The torch fell from his trembling hand. He turned and scrambled down the path, running blindly through the trees and calling for help. He was still running towards the school buildings when he saw a lantern swinging in the middle of the path.

- (i) Who was Mr. Oliver ? Where did he encounter 'It' ? [3]
- (ii) Where did Mr. Oliver work ?
Why did Life magazine describe this place as the 'Eton of the East' ? [3]
- (iii) Why had Mr. Oliver approached 'It' in the first place ? [3]
What had he mistaken it for ?
- (iv) What is lantern ? Who was holding the lantern ? [3]
Why did Mr. Oliver feel relieved at the sight of the lantern ?
- (v) Briefly describe the meeting between the lantern-bearer and Mr. Oliver. [4]
State one reason why 'A Face in the Dark' could be considered a horror story.

Answers :

- (i) Mr Oliver, a bachelor, was an Anglo Indian teacher in a school outside Simla. He encountered 'it' (a figure of a boy) who was sitting alone on a rock as he (Oliver) walked through the pine forest.
- (ii) Mr Oliver was teaching in the school which was run on English Public School lines. 'Life' magazine described this place as 'the Eton of the East' because the boys from wealthy Indian families studied in the school. They wore blazers, caps and ties.
- (iii) Mr Oliver approached it (the boy) in order to recognise the boy. He had mistaken it (the boy) for one of his school students who, Mr Oliver felt, should not have been there so late in the dark.

(iv) A lantern is a lamp in a transparent case, often a metal case with glass sides, that has a handle, so that you can carry it outside. Mr Oliver was holding the lantern. He felt relieved at the sight of the lantern swinging in the middle of the path because his own lantern had fallen from his trembling hand on seeing the figure of a boy who was without eyes, ears nose or mouth.

(v) Mr Oliver feels nervous. He stumbles up to the 'watchman gasping for breath. He is frightened when he finds that the Watchman has also no eyes, no ears, no features at all – not even an eyebrow. All this makes the story mysterious, strange and supernatural. Mr Oliver had earlier come across a figure of a boy who had no eyes, no ears, no nose and no mouth. And then a similar watchman. This is all frightening and horrible. This makes the story a real horror story.

Question 11.

Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow :

An angry athlete is an athlete who will make mistakes, as any coach will tell you. I was no exception. On the first of my three qualifying jumps, I leaped from several inches beyond the take-off board for a foul.

(i) When and where is this story set ? [3]

What reason does the narrator Jesse Owens give for the heightened nationalistic feelings at this time ?

(ii) In which event had Owens been confident of winning a gold medal ?
Why ? [3]

(iii) What had made Owens angry enough to make mistakes ? [3]

(iv) Name Owens' rival who approached him at this point. [3]

What advice did this athlete give Owens ?

(v) How did the two athletes perform in the finals ? [4]

What does Jesse Owens consider his 'Greatest Olympic Prize'? Why ?

Answers :

(i) This story is set in the time of the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936. Because Hitler childishly insisted that his performers were members of a 'master race', heightened nationalistic feelings at this time were at an all-time high.

(ii) Jesse Owens gained, sweated and disciplined himself for six years. He had already made a world record in the long jump in the last year. So he expected to win the gold medal easily this time.

(iii) At the time of broad-jump trials Jesse Owens was started to see a tall boy hitting the pit at almost 26 feet on his practice leaps Jesse felt angry when he was told that Hitler had kept him under wraps obviously to win the jump with him. Jesse was

disturbed to think if Luz Long won, it would add some new support to the Nazis' Aryan-superiority theory. Jessie was so disturbed that he made mistakes in his trial jumps.

(iv) Luz Long,, a German, was Jessie Owens' rival. On noticing Jessie Owens feeling disgusted, Luz Long counselled Jessie to focus on the jump by giving him a valuable tip. He said to Jessie, "Why don't you draw a line a few inches in back of the board and aim at making your take off there?"

(v) The two athletes gave their best possible performance in the finals. They improved upon their previous records. As it turned out, Luz broke his own past record. But in doing so, he pushed Owens on to a peak performance. When Owens won the medal, Long congratulated him by shaking his hand with him, without bothering about having to face the wrath of Hitler. To Jessie Owens, the greatest Olympic prize was not gold medal but his new and noble friendship with Luz Long. He was happy to learn that the essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well.

Question 12.

Answer the following questions with reference to Ray Douglas Bradbury's short story, 'All Summer in a Day' :

(i) Name the planet on which this story is set. [4]

Describe everyday life on this planet.

(ii) Why was there so much excitement in the school room that morning ? [4]

What set Margot apart from the other children ?

(iii) Describe how the planet was transformed when the sun came out and shone briefly over it. [8]

Why was Margot not able to witness this phenomenon ?

What emotion do you suppose the other children experienced when Margot emerged at the end of the story ?

Answers :

(i) The setting of the story is the planet Venus where it keeps on raining for years together. Sunshine occurs only once in seven years. The scene of the story is set in a school where the teachers and children await the appearance of the sun with great curiosity. One sunny day is equal to an earthly summer on this planet.

The children inhabiting this planet are nine years old and living with their families. Seven years of continuous rain have deprived them of the brightness on their faces. They are pale and colorless. They are passive both physically and mentally. The lack of the light of the sun has dried their compassion and consideration for others. They do not gain their humanity until they spend sometime in the light of the sun.

(ii) The children were eagerly waiting for a momentous occasion. It had been raining for seven years and now the scientists on Venus had predicted that the sun would appear for a brief period of time. Margot was like a stranger in her class. She had come to this planet (Venus) only five years ago from Earth. She still remembered the sun and the sky and how they looked when she was only four years old in the city of Ohio.

The other children in the school had been on Venus all their lives and they had been only two years old when last the sun came out on Venus. Since they were small at that time, they had now forgotten the colour and heat of the sun and how it looked. When Margot told them that the sun was like a penny or like fire in the stove, nobody was ready to believe her. They thought that she was lying.

(iii) The rain slackened slowly and came to a stop. It was followed by a disturbed violence which seemed like a tornado, a hurricane or volcanic eruption. The children put their hands to their ears. Then, all of a sudden, the sun came out. It was flaming bronze in colour and it looked very large. The sky was blazing blue and the whole jungle seemed to bum with sunlight. It was incredible.

The children felt as if they had been released from a spell. They rushed out, yelling into the springtime (which comes only once in 7 years). The teachers warned them not to go too far. The children had only two hours to remain outside. But the children seemed to go out of control. They were running and turning their faces up to the sky. They were feeling the sun on their cheeks like a warm iron. They were letting the sun bum their arms after taking off their jackets.

Margot was not able to witness this phenomenon as she had been locked into a closet by her classmates who did not like Margot to talk about the sun. The phenomenon of the sunshine lasted for a very short, time. The sun started fading off gradually behind a stir of mist. A cold wind began to blow and all the children started walking back. Their smiles had vanished. They could hear a boom of thunder and see the flash of lightning coming nearer and nearer. The sky darkened into midnight in a flash.

Then a girl remembered Margot who was locked in the closet. Then all the children walked towards the closet, unlocked the door and let Margot come out. Their attitude towards Margot changed after they had spent some time in the light of the sun.

(Note : Question Nos. 13 to 18 not in syllabus)