

(Supplementary) Chapter 5 : Princess September

Comprehensive Check (Page No. 38)

Question 1 :

How many daughters did the royal couple have?

Answer 1:

The royal couple had nine daughters who were named after the names of the months in a year.

Question 2 :

Why were they named after the months of the year?

Answer 2:

They were named after the months of the year because the King and the Queen had many daughters, and the Queen used to get confused when it came to the remembering so many names.

Question 3 :

The King had a peculiar habit. What was it? Why is it called peculiar?

Answer 3:

The King's peculiar habit was that he liked giving gifts to other on his birthday rather than receiving them. It is called peculiar because generally, people like receiving gifts on their birthdays.

Question 4 :

- (i) What was Princess September's reaction to the loss of her parrot?
- (ii) What was her mother's reaction to it?
- (iii) What do the reactions indicate about the nature and temperament of each?

Answer 4:

- (i) When the parrot which was kept in the cage died, Princess September cried a lot. She was in tears because she had lost her parrot. She kept weeping and nothing calmed her.
- (ii) Her mother did not understand her feelings for the bird and told her to stop that nonsense. She also told her to go to bed without any supper.
- (iii) The Princess' reaction shows that she was a young and sensitive child. She could not bear the loss of her parrot and therefore she cried a lot. The parrot was a very dear to her. And this loss made her sad.

Her mother's reaction shows that she was a little insensitive. She did not sympathise with her daughter and did not understand her feelings. She did not realize that the parrot's death was in any way an important event to shed tears.

Question 5:

What pulled the Princess out of her gloom?

Answer 5:

The Princess had lost her parrot and so she was crying a lot. Suddenly a little bird hopped into her room and started singing a beautiful song. This brought a smile on her face and she wiped her tears. This is how she came out of her gloom.

Question 6:

How did the Maids of Honour come to know that the Princess and the bird had become intimate friends?

Answer 6:

When the Maids of Honour came to her room with breakfast, they saw her smiling. They also saw the bird eating rice out of her hand, and having its bath in her saucer. They realized that the princess and the bird had become close friends.

Question 7:

The new bird was full of new songs but the old parrots always repeated themselves. What did they say?

Answer 7:

All the old parrots could repeat only what they were taught like 'God save the king'. Some of them could even say 'Pretty Polly' in seven languages. But the new birds had their own songs to sing.

Question 8:

What is the King's opinion about his Councillors? Why did he form that opinion?

Answer 8:

The King said that the parrots could repeat 'Pretty Polly' in seven different languages. This made him recall that his Councillors could also do the same thing in seven different ways, but it meant nothing even if they said it in different ways. This was absolutely the same as what the parrots did. They also kept repeating whatever they had learnt, without understanding or knowing the meaning of it.

Question 9:

- (i) The eight Princesses made an offer to Princess September. What was it?
- (ii) Why, in your view, did they do it?

Answer 9:

- (i) The eight princesses were envious of Princess September so they offered her all their pocket money to buy a lovely green and yellow parrot from her.
- (ii) They did so because they were upset with the fact that everybody was full of praises for Princess September's bird, which could sing so beautifully. Their parrots looked sad and could only repeat what was taught to them. They wanted her pet to be like their pet.

Question 10:

What did the sisters advise the Princess to do about her bird?

Answer 10:

The sisters who were jealous of Princess September's bird had wrong intentions and therefore they advised her to keep the bird in a cage so that she could be sure of where it was.

Comprehensive Check (Page No. 43)**Question 1:**

In the following sentence elaborate the parts given in bold.

Under the circumstances it was a very unfortunate remark for the bird to make.

Answer 1:

Under the circumstances, after what her sisters advised her to do, she got concerned about the bird. She was afraid that the bird would forget her or start disliking her or like someone else. She felt that she would lose her sweet little pet.

A very unfortunate remark

On returning, the bird said that it almost did not come back that night as its father-in-law had thrown a party and he wanted it to stay there. This was the last thing which the princess wanted to hear as it confirmed her fear completely.

Question 2:

- (i) What did Princess September do to ensure the safety of her pet?
- (ii) How did the bird react to it?

Answer 2:

- (i) Princess September put it in the cage to ensure its safety.
- (ii) The bird did not like it and reacted to it rudely. It didn't want to stay in cage as it loves its freedom. He did not like the idea of being kept in the cage.

Question 3:

Why did the bird refuse to be taken out in her cage?

Answer 3:

The bird is happy and carefree when it stays free, so it refused to be taken out in her cage as it loves to fly. The rice fields, the lake and the willow trees which attracted it seemed to be quite different when it was behind the bars of a cage.

Question 4:

- (i) What persuaded Princess September to give the bird his freedom again?
- (ii) How did the bird react to it?

Answer 4:

- (i) The Princess saw that the bird almost dead by the next morning. He had stopped eating, chirping and singing songs. This made the Princess realise that the bird did not want to stay in the cage. This persuaded the Princess to give the bird its freedom back.
- (ii) The bird was very happy when it came to know that it was being released from the cage. He flew away to the far off land and promised that it would come back and sing for the Princess whenever she wanted.

Question 5:

Princess September kept her window open day and night.

- (i) How did it help the bird?
- (ii) How did it help the Princess herself?

Answer 5:

- (i) Princess September kept her window open day and night so that the bird could come any time into her room and leave whenever it felt like.
- (ii) Sleeping with the window open was also very fruitful for the princess as she grew extremely beautiful. The open window brought her close to the nature which enabled her to grow naturally.

Question 6:

The eight sisters kept their windows shut. How did it affect them?

Answer 6:

The eight sisters always kept their window shut which made them extremely horrible and unpleasant.

Exercise

Question 1:

Are the sisters unkind and cruel? Find evidence in the text to support your idea.

Answer 1:

Yes, the eight sisters were heartless and mean. When they saw that Princess September's bird could sing beautifully and their parrots could repeat only two lines which were taught to them, they became worried. They tried giving an offer to buy a green and yellow parrot for her. But she denied their offer; they suggested putting her bird in the cage. When she put the bird into the cage, it did not like it and it stopped eating and singing. When she consulted her sisters, they told her that it would soon get used to the cage. They even told her to be firm, and if it died, then it would be very unthankful of it. If it was adamant and would die, then it would serve it right. When she set the bird free, they made fun of her and said that the bird would never come back. All these evidences show that they were very unkind and cruel.

Question 2:

Which, to you, is the most important idea in this story, and why?

(i) importance of music (ii) value of freedom (iii) beauty of nature

Answer 2:

The most important idea in the story is the value of freedom. No one can live as a slave or in a cage so no one should be deprived of their freedom. Dearth of freedom is harmful for a person, and does not allow him to enjoy the beauty of life to the fullest. The bird in the story was happy when it was independent and was flying. It sang beautifully and ate well. However, when it was put in cage, it became sad, and stopped eating or singing. It needed its freedom to sing, otherwise it would die. This shows that the beauty of life is in freedom, and not in detention.