

**Bilcans**

***SHORT STORIES***  
***&***  
***ONE ACT PLAYS***

**Critical Notes**

For  
**Bachelor of Arts**  
**(According to Punjab University English Syllabus)**

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**SOHAWA, MANDI BAHAUDDIN**  
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## 1. THE KILLERS

By: Ernest Hemingway

**Q.1: What is the effect of the story “The Killers” on the mind of the reader?**

**Or**

**“The Killers” is a powerful story, which is full of suspense, action, fear and terror/horror, Explain**

**Answer:**

The main scene of this dramatic story, “The Killers”, is Henry’s Lunch-Room. Two men, Al and Max, enter there. They are hired killers. They behave with the waiters, George and Nick Adams, and the cook, Sam, in a cruel and inhuman manner. They want to kill Ole Anderson, a Swede heavyweight boxer, just to oblige a friend.

They wait many hours for Ole Anderson to kill him. However, he does not come to the restaurant that evening. At last, the killers leave the restaurant. Nick Adams goes to Ole Anderson and informs him that two killers are certainly going to kill him. He is, however, willing to accept a respectable death. In fact, he is tired of running from death. Nick Adams is shown horrified by Anderson’s passive acceptance of death. Similar is the case with the readers.

It is now obvious how the killers leave behind them a looming shadow of death and terror both for the coded hero, Nick Adams, and the readers.

**Q.2: Describe Henry’s Lunch-Room. What did happen there?**

**Answer:**

The door of Henry’s Lunch-Room opens. Two men, Al and Max, enter. They sit at the counter. They take Nick Adams and George, the waiters, and Sam, the cook, under their control. Their way of action is quite mysterious.

It is getting dark outside. Al and Max order some items of food separately. They are provided some eatables at the dinner time. They ask Nick Adams to go around behind the counter.

Al takes both Sam and Nick Adams into the kitchen; the door shuts behind them. George asks Max what all that is about. He is told that they are going to kill a person named Ole Anderson, a Swede heavyweight boxer, who comes to the restaurant for dinner. From the kitchen, Al tells George that they want to kill Ole Anderson only to oblige a friend.

Max forbids George to entertain anyone in the restaurant. At quarter past six (6:15 pm), a street car driver enters the restaurant, but George immediately sends him back by saying that the cook has gone out. George happens to go to the kitchen and he sees there Nick Adams and Sam bound back to back. A towel has also been pushed into their mouths.

The killers wait for Ole Anderson but he does not come. At last, they leave Henry’s Lunch-Room at five past seven (7:05 pm). Here ends the scene in Henry’s Lunch-Room.

**Q.3: What does Ole Anderson read on the wall? Explain**

**Or**

**When Nick Adams goes to tell Ole Anderson that two men are certainly going to kill him, what is his reaction?**

**“Death must come as inevitable doom when time comes but one should embrace it gracefully.” Explain**

**Or**

**What is the main theme of the story “The Killers”? Explain**

**Answer:**

The study of the story, “The Killers”, reveals that Ole Anderson was a Swede heavy-weight prize fighter. However, by the time of this event, he has become an isolated person.

He is shown willing to accept death in the story. He is certainly not a coward. In fact, he is now tired of constantly running from death. It is this acceptance of death, which he reads on the wall when Nick Adams informs him that two men, Al and Max, are certainly going to kill him.

Ole Anderson’s solemn acceptance of death ennobles his mind—a pure Hemingway-mysticism. It develops in him, therefore, a spiritual readiness to accept any tragic event in life. He reads on the wall his certain murder but he is not terrified. Contrary to him, Nick Adams (the coded hero) and the readers indeed feel fear and horror.

There is world of crime in the story. Nick Adams is made a victim of a silencing situation in which Ole Anderson refuses to escape any more.

**Q.4: Describe Hemingway’s typical style of narrating a story.**

**Or**

**Write a note on Hemingway’s simple, direct but effective language as used by him in his story “The Killers.”**

**Answer:**

Hemingway’s typical prose style is universally recognized. In his case, “Style is the man.” “The Killers” highlights that his prose is very simple, clean and lucid. His direction is very simple. The structure of his sentences is also simple enough for ordinary readers to grasp.

In his prose, he is very economic in the use of words. There is a strange freshness in his language. The words he uses look like pebbles, which live and shine. In this story, the dialogue is also remarkable. It is very clean and economical. He has created a very powerful impact of death and horror using a very simple but effective language in this story. His use of ‘diction’ is remarkable. He has used vigorous language, avoiding extravagant adjectives.

His typical style, used in this story, constantly keeps the readers in touch with its details to its ending.

**Q.5: Write a note on the state of law and order in the USA after your study of “The Killers.”**

**Answer:**

The story, “The Killers”, reflects the problem of law and order in the USA of Hemingway’s times. There were killers in the US, who killed people for trivial motives.

There are only two killers, Al and Max, in the story, “The Killers”. They enter Henry’s Lunch-Room in the restaurant with each carrying a shotgun. Their treatment with George and Nick Adams as well as Sam (the cook) is very cruel and inhuman. They want to kill Ole Anderson just to oblige a friend. Ole Anderson is a Swede heavy-weight prize fighter. He daily comes to Henry’s Lunch-Room for dinner. They wait many hours for him, but he does not come. They leave the restaurant but only after leaving behind them a looming shadow of death.

Obviously, the state of law and order in the USA of Hemingway’s times was extremely poor.

**Q.6: Write a note on the role played by Nick Adams in the story, “The Killers”.**

**Or**

**Write a note on Nick Adams, the coded hero of the story.**

**Answer:**

In this dramatic story, Nick Adams plays the role of a hero—in fact a coded hero. His role is, thus, of great significance. He is the bright boy (waiter) in the Henry's Lunch-Room.

The killers, Al and Max, behave with him in a disgusting manner. Al takes him into the kitchen and binds him back to back with Sam, the nigger.

When the killers leave the restaurant, it is Nick Adams who goes to see Ole Anderson, a Swede heavy-weight prize fighter, to inform him that two men, Al and Max, are certainly going to kill him. Nick Adams asks him if he can do anything for him, but Ole Anderson tells him that there is nothing to be done now.

On returning to the restaurant, Nick tells George that Ole Anderson is not prepared to do anything about his certain murder. George guesses that Ole Anderson must have been involved in some illegal activities in Chicago. Nick Adams believes that it is an awful thing. He tells George that he is going to get out of the town to release the horror.

There is a world of crime in the story. Nick Adams, the hero, is exposed to a sickening situation. George suggests him not to think of it.

Nick is indeed horrified by Ole Anderson's passive acceptance of death. Nick cannot bear this thought of his and, as such, he decides to get out of the town.

## **2. RAPPACCINI'S DAUGHTER**

By: **Nathaniel Hawthorne**

**Q.1: Analyze critically the story, "Rappaccini's Daughter", but briefly.**

**Or**

**What kind of story "Rappaccini's Daughter" is in your opinion?**

**Answer:**

"Rappaccini's Daughter" is a fantasy, indeed; but its writer, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, has blends realism with scientific fiction in the story. Professor Rappaccini has been shown extremely busy in his scientific experiments. He is completely devoid of sentiments and humanism. He cares more for his scientific projects than for his own daughter. He is ready to destroy human life, his own and his daughter's lives too, so as to add to his scientific knowledge.

His obsession of the scientific knowledge has, therefore, made him cruel and callous. In fact, he can see nothing beyond his own being. His scientific work is indeed the satisfaction of his own ego, and not a service to mankind. This lust for scientific knowledge drives him on wrong path.

In fact, the writer has justified that any knowledge of science is incomplete if it is devoid of humanism. In his opinion, all scientific research should be founded on the principles of morality, religion and humanism. Any deviation from these principles is very likely to mislead in the wrong direction and cause an irreparable loss to mankind.

**Q.2: What kind of chief treasure Dr. Rappaccini has and how/why does he entrust it to his only daughter, Beatrice?**

**Answer:**

Dr. Rappaccini has cultivated a mysterious garden in order to conduct his scientific research. It is full of poisonous plants and flowers. There is a bush in the center of this garden that bears red flowers. It is regarded the chief treasure of Dr. Rappaccini. It is so poisonous that just a drop of its secretion can kill an insect or other animate being. It is only

Beatrice, Rappaccini's daughter, who is a human-sister of this bush. She is, therefore, immune to its fatal effect.

Being sick, Dr. Rappaccini is afraid that he might lose his life to touch this bush, his chief treasure, as closely as circumstances demand. This is the reason why he has entrusted this bush to Beatrice alone.

**Q.3: Why does Beatrice show so much warmth of love to the poisonous bush?**

**Answer:**

Beatrice is Dr. Rappaccini's only daughter. Being young, she is full of life, health and energy. Her father has deputed her to work in his garden where he has cultivated most poisonous plants and flowers for his scientific experiments.

Dr. Rappaccini has evolved a scientific formula by which he has been able to infiltrate certain poisons into Beatrice's body. She has, therefore, become immune to the harmful effects of poison. Her very touch has also become fatal for other humans. Thus, she has become a "poisonous serpent".

Poison has indeed become an inevitable part of Beatrice's body. It is why she is seen evoking the poisonous plants to give her their breath. When she releases breath upon an insect, it dies outright. And it is due to this reason that she gladly responds to the call of her father to take charge of the poisonous bush and tend it.

She lowers down herself upon the poisonous bush and puts her arms around it. She calls it her "splendour sister" and promises to tend and serve it with kisses and sweet breath.

**Q.4: What is the main theme or message or central idea of the story, "Rappaccini's Daughter"?**

**Answer:**

This scientific fiction highlights that all science, which is devoid of humanity and humanism, is destructive and fatal for human beings. Its writer has just justified that any scientific research or experiment, which aims at advancing, or adding to the scientific knowledge must be founded on the principles of morality, religion and humanism. Any deviation from these principles is most likely to mislead in the wrong direction and cause an irreparable loss to mankind. The basic object of all scientific research and progress must, therefore be based on reality and on the solution of human problems.

Dr. Rappaccini cares more for adding to his scientific knowledge than for the betterment and welfare of mankind. In fact, he has developed a fascination for power and supremacy over other human beings. He has no inclination for human service. Its result is destructive, fatal and most pathetic as the death of his only daughter, Beatrice, is the result of his own scientific experiments.

**Q.5: Describe the relationship or love between Giovanni and Beatrice.**

**Or**

**Write a note on Giovanni's sentiments for Beatrice and her father.**

**Or**

**Where and why does Giovanni in his address to Beatrice call Dr. Rappaccini 'Your awful father'?**

**Answer:**

Giovanni plays the role of a lover in the story, whereas Beatrice is his beloved. Beatrice has a more refined and developed taste than that of Giovanni. She is full of life, health and energy. Giovanni's imagination seeks enrichment upon her qualities and physical charms. He finds in her a paragon of all the qualities and charms that a young maiden possesses in a

romantic. In his first meeting with her, he is extremely impressed by her simplicity, refined talk and sensible manners.

Beatrice is indeed poisonous. Eventually, Giovanni observes it himself that she is poisonous—"a poisonous serpent". And thus, as a result, he has himself become poisonous and fatal for others. Now he at once becomes angry with her. She disowns her father's botanical experimentation and the cultivation of poisonous plants. If she had been aware of it beforehand, she would not have responded to Giovanni's love in order to save him from her poison.

It is Professor Baglioni, a friend of Giovanni's father, who creates hatred in Giovanni for Beatrice. Thus, he curses Professor Rappaccini in front of Beatrice saying "your awful father" and meaning thereby that he has brought this fate upon both of them. He also curses him and his science. He tells her that he has a medicine, given to him by a "wise doctor", which has the effect of an antidote to the poison of her body. When he offers it to her, she accepts it. She takes it down into her throat and dies outright. Before dying, however, she bids good-bye to Giovanni. Similarly, only a moment before her death, he also realizes the depth of her love for him, her innocence and nobility of nature.

**Q.6: "At least, thought he, "her poison has not yet entered in my system. I am no flower to die in her lap." Explain.**

**Or**

**Why did Giovanni become angry/offended with Beatrice and how did he come to know of his own being poisoned?**

**Or**

**What was Giovanni's reaction when he came to know that Beatrice was poisonous?**

**Answer:**

Giovanni is a young university student, who falls in love with Beatrice, the only daughter of a scientist, Dr. Rappaccini. He saw Beatrice for the first time in the garden, cultivated by her father for his scientific experiments. Afterwards, it became a habit of him to see her there. Gradually, he inhaled a good much of poison from the plants and flowers, though in a lesser degree than Beatrice.

One day, he threw a bunch of flowers to her from his window in the garden. She picked them up. He observed that his flowers soon began to die out in her hands. On another day, he saw that she picked a flower and placed it near her breast. Then he saw that a small insect came near the flower. A drop or two of secretion from the flower fell on it and it died. He was, no doubt, astonished, but he thought, "At least her poison has not yet entered into my system. I am no flower to die in her lap."

One day, Giovanni himself gave forth a long breath on some insects that fell dead to the ground. Thus, a shock came to him and he learnt of his own being poisonous. He, therefore, became angry with Beatrice for not telling him that she was poisonous—"a poisonous serpent".

**Q.7: Giovanni is no more than a pawn on the chessboard of Dr. Rappaccini's research. Comment**

**Giovanni falls in Rappaccini's net involuntarily but with disastrous results. Elaborate**

**Answer:**

In his first meeting with Giovanni, Professor Baglioni warns him that he is the subject of one of Dr. Rappaccini's experiments. He adds that he has fallen into fearful hands because of his deep love with Beatrice.

In his second meeting with Giovanni, Prof. Baglioni informs him that Dr. Rappaccini has indeed selected him as the subject-matter of some new experiment, the result of which is certainly death or a fate even more awful. *Hence, to Prof. Baglioni, Giovanni is no more than a*

*pawn on the chessboard of Dr. Rappaccini's scientific research.* Later on, Giovanni himself observes that Beatrice is really a “poisonous serpent” and that she has made him poisonous too.

Prof. Baglioni leaves a little silver bottle with Giovanni telling him that it is an antidote whose single drop will make harmless the strongest poisons. He goes to Beatrice and condemns her. Moreover, he also curses her father and his science. She explains him that all this is the result of her father's deadly science and that she is innocent and true in her love for him. She asks him to kill her as his words are bitter than death.

Afterwards, he tells her that he has an antidote given by a “wise doctor”. If they both drink it, they can free themselves from the evil clumps of poison. She drinks it but asks him to await the result. The antidote works and she dies outright. However, before dying, she bids good-bye to Giovanni. She dies at the feet of her father, saying: “My father, why did you bring this terrible fate upon your child?”

Prof. Baglioni then calls loudly to that utterly amazed man of science: “This is the result of your experiment”—of course, a disastrous result in the form of the death of his only daughter.

**Q.8: Write a note on Dr. Rappaccini's “mysterious garden”.**

**Answer:**

Dr. Rappaccini the scientist has cultivated a mysterious botanical garden for his scientific experiments. It is full of poisonous plants, flowers, herbs and bushes. It appears to have been the pleasure-place of a rich family. There is ruin of a stone-fountain in its centre made with unusual art. Its water still flows in the sunshine as cheerfully as ever. At the pool, there are growing plants with very large leaves and grand flowers. The whole scene, viewed together, makes a show so bright that the whole garden seems to shine even in the absence of sunshine.

Every portion of this garden is full of plants, which bear signs of great care. It seems that all of them have their unique virtues, which are exclusively known to the scientific mind that tends them. There is a bush set in a stone jar in the middle of the pool. It bears many purple flowers. Its each flower glitters like a jewel. This bush is considered the chief treasure of Dr. Rappaccini's science. He has entrusted this bush to his only daughter, Beatrice, for its look-after. This bush is so poisonous that just a single drop of its secretion can kill any insect. Only Beatrice, who is spoken of in the story as its human sister, is immune to its deadly effects.

**Q.9: What does Beatrice say to her father (Rappaccini) and her lover (Giovanni) before dying?**

**Answer:**

When Beatrice has drunk the antidote from the silver bottle, given to her by her lover, Giovanni, she is sinking down upon the ground. At this moment, she remorsefully sighs that she would rather have been loved, not feared; but now it matters not. Here she addresses her father, Dr. Rappaccini, and tells him that she is going where the evil he has given to her will pass away like a dream.

Then she turns to Giovanni, her lover. At first, she bids him good-bye. Then she tells him that his words of hatred are like stone within her heart; but they too will fall away as she rises to heaven. She asks Giovanni with regret if there was not more poison in his nature than in her body.

As poison had become an inevitable part of her life, so the powerful medicine—an antidote given by Dr. Baglioni—proved her death. Therefore, she died there, at the feet of her selfish father. What a pitiable and pathetic death indeed!

**Q.10: How did Beatrice become poisonous—a poisonous serpent, and why was Giovanni unable to avoid her?**

**Answer**

Beatrice, who was Dr. Rappaccini's only daughter, had been brought up by her father among the poisonous and fatal plants, flowers and bushes. She had been fed with poisons from her birth until her last. Therefore, she herself had become the deadliest poison in existence. In fact, poison had become an inevitable element of her life. Her love was a poison—a deadly poison, for Giovanni.

Beatrice was beautiful. Being young, she was full of life, health and energy. Being fascinated by her beautiful and charming personality, Giovanni fell in deep love with her. Prof. Baglioni warned him to beware of Dr. Rappaccini and her poisonous daughter, Beatrice. Despite knowing that Beatrice was a "poisonous serpent", Giovanni could not avoid her company. He ignored the warning of Prof. Baglioni and continued to see Beatrice in Rappaccini's mysterious garden.

When he came to know that he himself had become poisonous, he expressed his anger to her. However, he also tried to save her from Rappaccini's deadly poison. He gave the antidote, given to him by Prof. Baglioni, to Beatrice to drink in order to cure her. She drank it and died as the antidote was more powerful than the poison in her body.

**Q.11: Compare and Contrast the role, played by Dr. Rappaccini and Professor Baglioni in the story, "Rappaccini's Daughter".**

**Or**

**"Both the forces of good and evil are simultaneously at work in the story, 'Rappaccini's Daughter'. Elaborate this statement.**

**Answer:**

In the story, "Rappaccini's Daughter", Dr. Rappaccini and Professor Baglioni are introduced as great scientists working at the University of Padua, Italy. Prof. Baglioni stands for good whereas Dr. Rappaccini represents evil. Dr. Rappaccini uses his scientific knowledge for achieving his selfish and destructive ends. Contrary to him, Professor Baglioni, who is a kind-hearted scientist, uses his scientific knowledge for the betterment of other people.

It is Dr. Rappaccini's obsession for adding to his scientific knowledge which drives him in the wrong direction. He makes experiments to produce the most deadly poison, so as to get power and supremacy over other people. This is the extreme of selfishness that one can exhibit. He has conducted scientific experiments even on his only daughter, Beatrice. As an aftermath, she has become "a poisonous serpent". Prof. Baglioni produces the most powerful antidote, so as to get Beatrice and Giovanni, her lover, freed from Rappaccini's deadly poison. When Beatrice drinks that antidote, she dies, for poison has become an inevitable element of her life.

Thus, in the conclusion, it is safe to assert that the forces of good and evil are simultaneously at work in the story. In the end, good wins over evil.

### **3. THE NEW CONSTITUTION**

**By: Saadat Hassan Manto**

**Q.1: What is the New Constitution, New Law or New Act? What would change if it be promulgated?**

**Or**

**Prove or justify how Manto was, between the lines, criticizing all those who were praising the British India Act of 1935?**

**Answer:**



In the story, “*The New Constitution*”, **Saadat Hassan Manto** has made Ustad Mangu the representative of the common Indians of that era. Mangu had a lot of expectations from the New Act to be enforced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1935.

At first, he believes, the civil rights of the natives of India would be restored. Second, the natives of India would be treated as humans by the British rulers. Third, the Indians would also be treated as equal to the British. Fourth, the unemployment of young Graduates of India would be reduced. Fifth, the exploitation of the Indian natives would come to an end. Sixth, the class of the cruel money-lenders would vanish. Finally, all Indians arrested on the charge of treason would be released. Thus, his simple mind never ceases to think in idealism.

In fact, in his expectations about the New Act of 1935, Mangu represents the common Indian folk of pre-partition age. Through Mangu, Manto was, between the lines, criticizing all those who were praising the Births India Act of 1935.

**Q.2: Describe the row/quarrel between Ustad Mangu and the Gora Sahib or Gora Soldier. What is its cause and result?**

**Or**

**In “The New Constitution”, Ustad Mangu is at best a half-wit; elaborate.**

**Answer:**

Ustad Mangu, a tongawala in Lahore, is deadly averse to the Gora Sahibs. One day, he picks up a Gora Sahib to earn some amount from him. However, as soon as he looks at him, it strikes his memory that he is the same Gora soldier with whom he had a fight one year back. This Gora soldier had, in fact, insulted him.

Mangu’s revengeful feelings against the Gora soldier suddenly wake up. He at once becomes aggressive, both by words and by fits. Soon he starts beating the Gora soldier violently. It appears as if “Ustad Mangu is at best a half-wit”.

On the other hand, he does not notice any colourful and dramatic change on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1935. This enrages him. Moreover, he has overconfidence and over-enthusiasm for the expected changes in favour of the Indian natives on the enforcement of the New Act. This is why he continues to cry out “New Constitution, New Constitution” when he is being taken to police station for the offence of beating a Gora soldier.

The main cause or reason of Ustad Mangu’s row with the Gora soldier is that the Gora had mistreated and insulted him a year back. While beating the Gora soldier, he seems to be at best a half-wit, that is, mentally deranged.

**Q.3: What is the attitude of the Gora towards Ustad Mangu?**

**Answer:**

The attitude of the Gora soldier towards Ustad Mangu is authoritative, insulting and inhuman. The Gora adopts this kind of attitude when Ustad Mangu demands from him five rupees as fare of tonga to carry him to the dancing girls’ bazaar.

When the Gora hears Mangu’s demand of Rs.5, he is flown in anger. This demand of fare is too much according to the Gora. He advances towards Mangu aggressively.

When the Gora asks Mangu if he is out of mind, Mangu asks the Gora, clenching his fist, if he is interested to go or not. Upon this, the Gora’s behaviour towards Mangu becomes very rude.

The reason of the Gora’s rude and insulting behaviour towards Mangu is that he considers himself as one of the rulers, and Mangu being one of his subjects.

**Q.4: Manto is a great writer. Explain.**

**Or**

**Explain the style of Manto in brief.**

**Or**

**Do you understand/agree that Manto is a great writer? Explain.**

**Answer:**

*Saadat Hassan Manto* was born in 1912. He is regarded as the greatest Urdu fiction-writer in Pakistan. He was gifted with matchless skills, as a story writer as well as a playwright.

He is justly admired for his stark realism, remarkable insight into human psyche, vivid observation, and attention to details.

He is also renowned for his daring truthfulness and a unique style of surprising original images, subtle irony and sarcasm.

His literary career began with Urdu translations of masterpieces of the world literature. His translation began to appear in the well-reputed and esteemed magazines. Later on, these translations were collected and published in book form. Soon he began to write remarkably original short stories and plays. He died in 1955.

**Q.5: Why did Ustad Mangu hate Englishmen, or the British or the Gora soldiers so much? Explain briefly.**

**Answer:**

Ustad Mangu had an intense hatred and spite for the Englishmen. To him, they were ruling over India against the will of the natives. Besides, the Gora soldiers of the cantonment area used to treat the natives like dogs. Naturally, he also grew malignant against them.

The faces of the Gora soldiers seemed to him just like the rotten meat. He expressed his bitter spite, resentment and hatred by calling them:

“White and ruddy Gora soldiers, decaying carcasses, drunken goras, human monkeys, lepers, dead and rotting”.

All these bad adjectives, used by him against the Whiteman, showed his bitter and deep-rooted hatred for the British. He considered them usurpers. To him, they were devoid of all decency, morality, and principles of human life.

**Q.6: What did Ustad Mangu witness on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1935, and how did he feel in this regard?**

**Answer:**

Mangu was anxiously waiting for the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1935—the day when the new constitution was going to be promulgated in India. At last, the day promised came.

In the morning of the first day of April, 1935, Mangu rose earlier than usual. There was chill in the air. He set up his tonga and brought it on the road. He was very happy because he was going to witness the coming of the new constitution on that day.

He went round the broad and narrow streets of Lahore but there was no change in things. He wanted to see colour and light, but there was nothing. He had bought a special new plume for his horse to celebrate the big day.

The lamp-posts looked the same. The shop signs had not changed. People moved about as if nothing new had happened. Most of the shops were closed. He consoled himself thinking that the courts did not open until 9 am. He saw the students of Government College walking in through its main gate. Compelled by his nature, he wanted to see something colourful and dramatic. The general traders were busy with their customers.

In fact, he wanted to see the new constitution as clearly as he could see his horse. He was utterly disappointed as there was nothing extraordinary as he expected.

#### **4. BREAKFAST**

By: **John Steinbeck**

**Q.1: Reproduce in your own words the writer's incidental/chance rural family in America of 1930.**

**Or**

**Critically but briefly discuss the story, "Breakfast", by John Steinbeck.**

**Or**

**How does John Steinbeck highlights the utter poverty of an American rural family?**

**Or**

**The story, "Breakfast", is about a poor family. They invite the narrator to share breakfast with them. What does it show?**

**Answer:**

It was a cold morning. The writer, John Steinbeck, was walking a country road. He caught sight of a young girl sitting near the stove beside a tent. She was carrying a child. He guessed from the smell that she was frying bacon.

Later on, he saw a young man and an old man coming out of the tent one after the other. Their hands and hair seemed to be wet with water. They gladly welcomed the writer. Then they sat near the stove and began to warm their hands.

Soon the girl brought the breakfast and placed it before them. The old man invited the writer to have breakfast with them. They told him that they had been picking-cotton from the last twelve days and had got new clothes. They all took the breakfast together. The old man thanked God by saying:

**"God Almighty, it is good."**

Then they went to their work. They also offered the job of cotton-picking to the writer, which he declined. They went away all together to their work. The writer went ahead on the country-road, too.

At the end, John Steinbeck narrates that he could not forget his "chance" meeting with the rural family. To him, it was pleasant. It was, however, difficult for him to explain the reason of its being pleasant.

**Q.2: How does John Steinbeck highlights the utter poverty of an American rural family? Explain briefly.**

**Answer:**

In his story, "Breakfast", John Steinbeck has presented a faithful picture of the utter poverty of an American rural family in the background of the great slump prevailing in America during 1930s. First, he highlights the quality and condition of the girl's dress; she comes of a poor rural family with whom he has a chance meeting. Then he throws light on the ordinary utensils and household articles, used by the poor rural family, which are indeed very old and cheap.

He tells us that their household articles include an old and rusty iron stove, tin cups, tin plates, knives and forks. Further, they have a big packing box, a big tin dish and a big tin platter.

He also tells us that they are eating very simple food; they are wearing very simple clothes. Their very simple and cheap utensils are an ample proof of their utter poverty.

**Q.3: How does John Steinbeck bring out the simplicity or austerity of the young girl of an American rural family?**

**Answer:**

In his story, "Breakfast", John Steinbeck has also thrown light on the simplicity and austerity of the young girl of that poor rural family. He narrates that she is wearing a very simple dress and is really busy in her domestic chores.

The hair of the young girl is tied behind with a string. While she is doing her domestic chores, her hair is hanging down her back. She sets the cups, made of tin, on a large packing box. She arranges the plates, knives and forks. Later on, she opens the door of the rusty oven they own and takes out a square pan which is full of big biscuits.

In short, the outward condition of the young girl of the poor rural family reflects her austerity, which is, perhaps, the result of the poverty of her family during the Great Depression of 1930s.

**Q.4: The story, "Breakfast", is about a poor family. They invite the narrator (writer) to share breakfast with them. What does it show?**

**Answer:**

In his story, "Breakfast", John Steinbeck narrates that it was a cold morning. He was walking a country-road. He caught sight of a tent and stove burning near it. A young woman was sitting near the stove. She, while carrying her child, was frying bacon. Later on, a young man and an old man came out of the tent one after the other and sat near the stove. When he reached near them, they welcomed him. Then the girl brought breakfast and placed it before them. The old man invited the writer to take the breakfast with them. Having taken the breakfast, the old man thanked God by saying: "**God Almighty, it is good.**"

Their offer to the narrator, the writer of the story, to share the breakfast with them shows that, despite their extreme poverty, they are content, generous and hospitable people.

**Q.5: The narrator is offered a job by the poor rural family in the cotton-fields which he declines and departs. But he could never forget these people. Why?**

**Or**

**In his story, "Breakfast", John Steinbeck has painted a picture of laborers. Can you paint a picture of those modern people who always complain against their government or circumstances?**

**Answer:**

A study of the story, "Breakfast", reveals that the members of the poor rural family took their very simple breakfast with the writer. Afterwards, they immediately got ready to go to their work of cotton-picking. They also offered the narrator the job of cotton-picking. He, however, declined their offer and departed.

The writer really found in these poor rural people an element of great beauty and satisfaction. That element of great beauty was their contentment even in extreme poverty, especially when being in the Great Depression of 1930s. The thought of the contentment always made the writer full of joy and excitement.

Contentment in an utter poverty is indeed a very important aspect of human life, for it provides man happiness and peace of mind.

**Q.6: In his story, “Breakfast”, John Steinbeck has painted a picture of laborers. Can you paint a picture of those modern people who always complain against their government of circumstances?**

**Answer:**

In his story, “Breakfast”, John Steinbeck has narrated the austerity, self-sufficiency and contentment of an American poor rural family even in the state of extreme poverty. He has mirrored their self-satisfaction and contentment free from any kind of complaint and resentment. He has indeed presented a faithful picture of the simple laborers without exaggeration. The situation about modern people, both rich and poor, is absolutely contrary to the situation narrated by the writer about that poor family. The modern people are always seen and heard of complaining against their government or their poor economic conditions.

In the modern world, uncertainly and adverse economic conditions are found in the entire world, particularly in the poor countries like our own Pakistan. Most of the people have fallen prey to despair and discontentment. The modern people want to become rich overnight, either by hook or by crook. There is, therefore, a race of collecting more and more money, which make people forgetful of fair means. They are always running after wealth. They have forgotten that contentment is the main source of a happy life and peace of mind.

## 5. TAKE PITY

By: **Bernard Malamud**

**Q.1: Write a note on Eva’s character in the light of the story, “Take Pity”.**

**Or**

**Eva stands out as a person who can endure hardships for the sake of female glory.**

**Elaborate**

**Answer:**

The story, “Take Pity”, highlights the character of a widow, Eva. She is the widow of a Polish refugee Jew, Axel Kalish. Being Jews, they had left their country (Poland) owing to the atrocities of Nazis. Eva is self-confident. She has a great moral courage and self-respect. She is in financial difficulties but she does not yield to them. She rejects Rosen’s offers for financial assistance, time and again. Rosen is a friend of her late husband. She is indeed an embodiment of self-confidence, strong will-power, self-respect and patience.

Being optimistic, she resets the store with one thousand dollars—the insurance money of her late husband. She works hard to run the store, but in vain. At last, she and her two little daughters have to face starvation. She does not fall prey to despair, for she has faith in hard work. Like a true optimist, she always looks at the bright side of things.

Indeed she wants to lead her life with honor. She does not believe in leading her life on charity, as she does not want to become a financial burden for anyone. She has repeatedly rejected Rosen’s offer for financial assistance. Moreover, she also rejects Rosen’s offer for marriage. She thinks that his offer for marriage is not based on love but only an exploitation of hers out of her poor economic condition.

**Q.2: Why would Eva not accept Rosen’s offers for help? Describe briefly.**

**Answer:**

The story, “Take Pity”, highlights that Eva, the widow of Axel Kalish, is not a frail character of the weaker-sex. After the death of her husband, she refused to accept charity in any form. She did her best to live her life with honor, self-respect and moral values through hard

work. She never intended to live on charity. Rosen, a salesman, who was a friend of Eva's late husband, advised her to marry someone. She replied that no one would have her with two children. He also asked her to shift into his two-family house. He also assured her that he would look after her two little daughters till such time she got a job. However, she refused to comply.

Rosen also tried to send her some money as repayment of the loan he had got from her late husband every month. As she knew that it was not true, she returned it to him. Later on, he asked her to marry him telling that he, being sick, would not live long. Thus, after his death, he would be leaving a lot of money and property to her and her two daughters. However, she refused to marry him, saying: "I had enough with sick man."

**Q.3: "Whore, bastard, bitch", he shouted at her, "Go away from here. Go home to your children." How/Why was Rosen in "Take Pity" provoked to make such remarks about Eva?**

**Answer:**

Rosen was an ex-salesman. He was a sympathetic friend of Eva's late husband, Kalish. After her husband's death, Rosen advised her to settle somewhere else with her two little daughters. He also advised her to leave the store of her late husband to his creditors. However, she refused to do so. Many a times, he made offers of financial help, but she rejected such offers every time. Further, he advised her to re-marry, but useless. He also offered her to shift into his two-family house, but she rejected this offer, too. He also tried to send some money as repayment of the loan taken from her late husband every month. Nevertheless, as she knew that it was not true, she refused the amount.

At last, he asked her to marry him, saying, that he was sick and would not live long. Therefore, after his death, all his property and wealth would be for her and her little daughters. But she again rejected his proposal for marriage, replying that she had enough with sick man. Later on, he got prepared a will. According to his will, all his property and wealth was to go to Eva and her two little daughters. Then he attempted to commit suicide but was saved.

After Rosen's attempt of suicide, Eva goes to his house. It was twilight. Rosen saw Eva standing in front of his window, raising her arms toward him as if she was willing to marry him. But he, being in rage, shouted at her calling her "whore, bastard" and "bitch". Then he asked her to get out of his sight. In fact, Rosen made such censuring remarks against Eva, because she had already rejected his offers for financial help many a times. She had also rejected his offer for marriage. That is why he was provoked to make such censuring remarks against her.

## 6. THE HAPPY PRINCE

By: Oscar Wilde

**Q.1: Why was the Prince happy when he was alive and had a human heart? Explain Briefly.**

**Answer:**

The story, "The Happy Prince", highlights that the Prince was happy when he was alive. He enjoyed life to the fullest extent on account of the following reasons: First the Prince, when he was alive, used to live a life of joys and pleasures. He lived within the four walls of his Palace, named Sans-Souci—a pleasure-house, free from all kinds of cares and worries of life.

Second, he lived his life with his companions inside his palace. He lived an utterly aloof life in his palace away from his public. He was totally cut-off from the common people and their poor and miserable life. He was, therefore, absolutely ignorant of what human misery was. As he, while alive, lived within the four walls of his palace, he could not see the ugliness and misery which was found in the country.

Third, during the day-time, he used to play with his companions. In the evening, he led the dance in the Great Hall of his palace. Fourth, he lived in the palace where sorrow or grief were not allowed to enter. He was always happy as he had never experienced the human miseries, hardships, sufferings, grief and tears. It is now obvious why the Prince was happy when alive and had a human heart.

**Q.2: What kind of misery and ugliness had made the Prince weep despite having a heart of made of lead? Explain briefly.**

**Or Why did the Happy Prince weep in “The Happy Prince”? Explain briefly.**

**Or Why was the Happy Prince weeping? Explain**

**Or Happy Prince sees best when he has no eyes to see. Explain**

**Answer:**

After his death, the Prince stood on a high column in the shape of a statue in the middle of the city. He could, therefore, see the miserable conditions of his people. That was why he could not help weeping. In fact, after his death, the second life of the Prince started. It was a life of cares and worries, and troubles and hardships. It was his life in the shape of a statue, which could, no doubt, have the feelings of humanism. Standing on high column in the middle of the city, when he watched the miseries of his people, he could not help weeping despite the fact that he had never tasted tears, that is, pains, when he was alive.

He began to help the needy and the poor of his city through the services of a little Swallow. He helped the ailing son of a seamstress, the poor dramatist or writer, and the poor match-girl, the suffering children and starving men and women. He continued to ask the little Swallow to take out the rubies, pearls and gold leaves from his statue and to give them to the needy of his city.

**Q.3: What is meant by the Palace of Sans-Souci? The prince was called ‘the happy prince’ by his courtiers, but he did not consider himself so, why?**

**Answer:**

“Sans-Souci” is a French phrase. ‘Sans’ means ‘without’, whereas ‘Souci’ means ‘cares and worries’. Thus the phrase implies, ‘without cares and worries’, that is, free from the cares and worries of human life. While alive, the Prince used to live a life of joys and pleasures. He lived within the four walls of his palace away from his subjects. He was, therefore, absolutely ignorant what human misery was, because he did not know the poor and their miserable conditions.

While alive, he always lived in his Palace, “Sans-Souci”—a palace free from cares and worries of life. Thus, he could not know about troubles and hardships which cause tears during his life time. Being always inside his palace, he could not see the ugliness and misery of the common people of his country. That was why his courtiers called him ‘the Happy Prince’. After his death, the Prince stood in the shape of a statue on a high column in the middle of the city. He could see the bad conditions of his people. He could not help weeping despite having a heart made of lead. In fact, after his death, the second life of the Prince has started. It was a life of cares, grief and hardships.

The story is, no doubt, a fairy tale. Its style, however, leaves the impression as if it is the story of a real Prince, having a real life in the shape of a statue. Being fixed, he cannot move, so he acquires the services of a little Swallow to help the needy, the poor and the suffering humanity of his city. That was why the Prince did not consider himself happy.

**Q.4: “The Happy Prince” is a story of “love, self-sacrifice and humanism—human sympathy.” What is your opinion? Explain briefly.**

**Or “Love and self-sacrifice are the saving forces of mankind.” Explain in the light of the story, “The Happy Prince.”**

**Or Critically analyze “The Happy Prince” as a fairy tale, bringing out its main theme.**

**Or What is the main theme or the lesson of the story, “The Happy Prince”? Explain briefly.**

**Or Explain the following lines: “You have rightly chosen”, said God, “for in my Garden of Paradise, this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold, the Happy Prince shall praise me.”**

**Answer:**

While alive, the Prince lived his life in his palace, ‘Sans-Souci’—a palace free from all the cares and worries of life. He was, therefore, unaware of the ugliness and misery of his people. After his death, he stood on a high column in the shape of a statue in the middle of the city. From there, he could see the faces of his people and peep into their hearts, and thus feel for them. That was why he could not help weeping after seeing their miseries and hardships.

He asked the little Swallow to take out rubies, pearls, and gold leaves from his statue and give them to the poor in order to alleviate their sufferings. Thus, he sacrificed all his precious stones and gold-leaves and became an ugly figure. The little Swallow also sacrificed his life for the sake of his love for the Prince. When the Swallow died of severe cold, the Happy Prince’s heart also broke into two pieces. It was again a coincidence that both the leaden heart of the Prince and the dead body of the Swallow were thrown on the same dust-heap.

The story highlights the themes of love, humanism and self-sacrifice for the well being of mankind. Outwardly, the statue becomes ugly but the Prince achieves spiritual beauty. The Swallow also achieves spiritual beauty by laying down his life for the love of the Prince. God



ordered one of His angels to fetch Him the two most precious things found in the city. The angels fetched Him the Prince's leaden heart and the Swallow's dead body. Upon this, God Said: "You have rightly chosen."

**Q.5: How does the Swallow lay down/sacrifice his life for the love of the Prince?**

**Or How does the Swallow in Oscar Wilde's "The Happy Prince" fare as a friend?**

**Answer:**

The story, "The Happy Prince", highlights how the little Swallow lays down his life for the sake of his love for the Happy Prince, who, after his death, stood on a high column as a statue. All of his companions had flown away to the country of their safety, Egypt. He stayed behind as he had fallen in love with a Reed. As he did not want to leave her, he asked her to accompany him to Egypt. However, she refused to do so. Being despaired, he decided to fly away to Egypt all alone. He continued to fly all the day long. When it was night, he was flying over a city, where he caught sight of a statue. Thus, he decided to spend the night between the feet of the statue of the Happy Prince. He was going to sleep when a large drop of water fell on him. Then another drop, and then another drop of water fell on him. The Swallow was surprised because the sky was clear.

However, when he saw right above his head, he found the Happy Prince's eyes full of tears. His tears were running down his golden cheeks. The Swallow was deeply moved. When the Prince told him the cause of his grief and weeping, the Swallow became his friend. As asked by the Prince, the Swallow continued to take out rubies, pearls and gold leaves from his statue to give them to the needy and the poor. At last, the statue became ugly and blind. The Swallow began to live with him. Soon afterwards, the snow-fall began. The Swallow could not bear the chilly winter and died. Before dying, he bid good-bye to the Prince, kissed his lips and fell dead at the Prince's feet. Thus, he laid down his life for the sake of his love for the Prince.

## **7. ARABY**

By: **James Joyce**

**Q.1: Who is the narrator and what is his nature? Also describe what is Araby and what is its importance in the story?**

**Answer:**

The writer himself is the narrator—the hero in the story. In the story, he is a school-boy and has not yet reached maturity. By nature, he is extremely bashful. This is why he is unable to express his noble feelings and passion of love before the girl whom he loves.

"Araby" is the name of a bazaar, which is held outside the city. He passionately loves a girl, Mangan's sister. Mangan is his playmate. Being bashful, he cannot express his love to her face.

One day his beloved asks him if he is going to Araby. She adds that she is not able to go there herself being busy in the convent. He promises that he would fetch a gift for her from there.

He gets his uncle's permission to go to the bazaar, Araby, on the weekend. Thus, he anxiously waits for the weekend.

On Sunday evening, he waits for his uncle to get some money. The narrator reaches Araby, traveling in the third class of the train at 9:50 p.m. He pays the entrance fee and enters Araby. He becomes despaired and sad because, (i) about half of the bazaar has already closed down, (ii) he is left with only two pennies and a six pence in his pocket. He wishes to buy a vase from an outside stall for his beloved but he is short of money. Soon the light is off and Araby is closed. He becomes utterly despaired. For the first time, he realizes: **"Dreams never come true in life"**.

**Q.2: Why was the narrator losing interest in his studies?**

**Or**

**Describe briefly the effect of the romantic love on the adolescent mind of the small school-boy.**

**Or**

**The narrator, a school-boy, of the story, "Araby", stands for 'everyman'—the other boys of his age. Explain.**

**Answer:**

The narrator of the story, "Araby", James Joyce, was an adolescent school-boy. He fell in love with a girl, who used to come to his house to call her brother, Mangan—his playmate. He used to watch his beloved with eyes full of love and praise. The scene of her movement always seemed to him very charming and attractive.

Whenever he was absorbed into her thoughts, her name sprang to his lips in strange prayers and praises. He was very keen to speak to her, but, being too bashful, he could not fulfill his desire.

One day, he responded to her demand to go to Araby. He himself promised to fetch some gift for her from the bazaar, Araby. On that day, the young lady deeply fascinated him.

Later on, whenever he was in his bedroom at night or in his classroom during the daytime, the image of the girl came before his eyes and between the opened pages of his book. That was why his studies were being badly affected day by day. He began to dislike everything.

It is obvious why he began to lose interest in his studies as a school-boy and what was the effect of his romantic feelings on his adolescent mind.

## **9. THE NECKLACE**

**By: Guy De Maupassant**

**Q.1: Briefly describe the personality and character of Matilda.**

**Or Briefly describe the various aspects of Matilda's personality and character.**

**Or Describe briefly Matilda's appearance and character.**

**Answer:**

Matilda is the wife of Mr. Loisel, a poor Junior Clerk in the Ministry of Instruction. She comes of a poor family of clerks. She has, however, a very beautiful and attractive personality, which has consequently made her very imaginative. She is keen to live a very comfortable and luxurious life like the rich ladies. She believes that it is her right to live like rich ladies. She is always dissatisfied with her poor condition of life. When she does not find servants and other facilities of life in her house, she becomes very sad and despaired.

Unfortunately, she is married to Mr. Loisel. Thus, she cannot live a comfortable and luxurious life of her dreams. She is, however, ambitious to move in the society of the rich. She likes to attend and participate in the dance parties and other social gatherings. She does not, in fact, try to understand her low status in life. At last, she becomes the root cause of the miserable economic condition of her family when she loses the borrowed necklace, apparently, made of diamonds.

**Q.2: What Price did Matilda pay for wearing the borrowed necklace for one night?**

**Answer:**

Madame Matilda came of a poor clerical family. She was forced to live the life of a lower middle-class woman by the adverse circumstances after the loss of the borrowed necklace. She was very imaginative from the first and was very keen to live a luxurious life. She was, however, unable to do so, because she was married to a poor Junior clerk, Mr. Loisel. One day, both the husband and wife were invited to a dance party which was arranged by the Ministry of Instruction. To attend the dance party, Matilda bought new clothes out of her husband's savings. She also borrowed a diamond-necklace from her rich friend, Madame Forestier.

She attended the party. She looked to be the most beautiful and charming lady in her new dress and diamond-necklace. No man at the party could help praising her. Women felt themselves envious of her. Her husband fell asleep. She continued to dance with other men till four in the morning. At last, they returned home. While changing her dress, Matilda found the diamond-necklace missing. Both the husband and wife were shocked. They searched the missing necklace but all in vain. They took loans and bought a new necklace of real diamonds for thirty-six thousand francs. They returned it to Madame Forestier. Later on, both of them had to work hard to repay the loans. They spoiled their health; they lost their peace of mind. In that way, their life became miserable. One day Matilda came across Madame Forestier. Upon mention of the necklace, she came to know that the lost necklace was artificial, whose price was not more than five hundred francs.

It is now obvious what price Matilda had to pay and what troubles and sufferings she had to undergo for winning herself the false pride of one night only.

**Q.3: Was it Matilda's desire that ultimately became responsible for her and her family's tragedy or miserable condition? Explain Briefly.**

**Or Who was, in your opinion, responsible for the trouble and suffering after the loss of the borrowed necklace—Mr. Loisel or his wife, Matilda? Explain Briefly.**

**Answer:**

Matilda came of a poor family. She was very pretty and imaginative. She always desired to live a very luxurious life of a rich lady. Unfortunately, she was married to Mr. Loisel, a poor Junior Clerk in the Ministry of Instruction. Thus, she could not satisfy her ambition. One day both the husband and wife were invited to a dance party, arranged by the Ministry of Instruction. To participate in the dance party, Matilda bought new clothes out of the savings of her husband. She also borrowed a diamond-necklace from her rich friend, Madame Forestier. She did not know that the necklace was fake. Matilda and her husband attended the dance party. She appeared extremely beautiful and attractive in her new dress and diamond-necklace. Out of her superfluous joy, she continued to dance till four in the morning. At last, the couple returned home.

While changing her dress, she found that the necklace was missing. Both of them were shocked. They tried to search it, but in vain. Consequently, they took loans and bought a new identical diamond-necklace for thirty-six francs and returned it to Madame Forestier. Later on,

both the husband and wife had to labor for ten years to repay the loans. They spoiled their health; they lost all the comforts and joys of life. Thus, Matilda's desire for expensive clothes and ornaments became the root-cause of all the troubles and sufferings of her family.

Critically speaking, both Mr. Loisel and Matilda are responsible for all their suffering. Mr. Loisel is, however, more responsible because he had no effective control over his wife's wearing expensive clothes and ornaments. Besides, instead of discouraging her, he encouraged her to make a show of her physical beauty in the dance party.

**Q.4: How did Matilda's husband notice her sadness, though her dress was nearly ready?**

**Answer:**

Matilda had a very charming personality. Being imaginative, she had high ambitions to lead her life after the suit of the rich ladies. Her husband, Mr. Loisel, worked as a Junior Clerk in the Ministry of Instruction, which was a low-profile job.

One day, they received an invitation letter to attend a dance party, arranged by the Ministry of Instruction. Matilda was very keen to attend the dance party. However, she did not have nice clothes. Similarly, she also had no precious ornaments to wear. Her new dress was ready, but she appeared to be sad, disturbed and dissatisfied. Her husband noticed her sad condition for two or three days. Eventually, he asked her the reason of her sadness and disturbance. She replied that she had no valuable ornaments to wear for her external beautification. She added that she would look a very poor lady at the party. Therefore, she did not like to attend the dance party.

Thus, it is obvious how Madame Matilda's husband, Mr. Loisel, noticed her sadness, despite the fact that the new dress for the dance party had already been bought.

## ONE ACT PLAYS

### 1. THE BEAR

By: Anton Chekov

**Q.1: Why does Smirnov refer to “Equality of rights, emancipation” etc?**

**Answer:**

When Smirnov enters the stage, Popova, the widow-heroine, is already there. He demands from her the loan, borrowed from him by her late husband. She refuses to comply, because, (a) being in the state of mourning, she has no interest in money-matters, and (b) her steward is also away.

Smirnov shouts and declares to stay there till she pays back his money. Upon this, an exchange of harsh words starts between them about the fidelity of men and women. As Smirnov's attitude towards Popova is rude and insulting, she cries at him:

**“You're a boor! A coarse bear! A Bourbon! A monster!”**

On this, Smirnov felt himself insulted. He tells her that he does not care if she is a woman, i.e. the “softer-sex”. He tells categorically to Popova if she wants equality, she can have it. He says that they both have to fight for the equality of rights. Smirnov challenges her for a duel with pistols. She accepts it. Popova threatens him to blow his thick head with bullet.

Luka, Popova's old servant, warns Popova that Smirnov wants to shoot her. Smirnov believes that if she decides to fight, it is equality of rights between men and women. He simply adds that, if the duel takes place, he will shoot her on the principles of equality and freedom to fight for his rights. This is why he refers to “equality of rights, emancipation” etc.

**Q.2: What is Smirnov's tone? Does it make his behavior funny during his dialogue with Popova?**

**Answer:**

The dialogue between Smirnov and Popova reveals that Smirnov's tone is not rude; it is rather polite and civilized, indicating equality of rights. He appears to be a man of principles. However, at times, Smirnov's behavior becomes funny and humorous too. He begins to parody Popova; he curses that Devil may take her. Moreover, he wonders at her accepting his challenge for a duel with pistols. Smirnov admits that it is the first chance in his life that he has seen a woman prepared to have a gunfight with a man.

When Luka talks to him, he replies what a wonderful and strange woman she is. He says that she is not only sour-faced, jelly-bag, but she is also fire, gunpowder and rocket. He expresses his sorrow to have to kill her.

It is quite clear from the whole dialogue that Smirnov's behavior gets gradually lenient and civilized. It may be termed at times as humorous and funny; but we cannot call it “rude”.

**Q.3: What kind of state of mind is Popova in when Smirnov goes to her house?**

**Answer:**

Popova is in a state of mourning owing to the death of her husband, who died seven months ago. She has vowed to mourn him till her last breath. Thus, she has put on a domino.

When the scene opens, she is in a black dress, standing and gazing at her late husband's photograph. She then begins to sigh in his memory. When Luka, her old servant, advises her to give up her mourning and resume normal life, she answers him:

**"My love will die out with me".**

She does not like the light in the house. She lives in darkness even during the daytime. Luka advises her to give up her prolonged mourning and start her life afresh by remarrying. But she declares:

**"My life is already at an end. He is in his grave, and I have buried myself between four walls ... We are both dead".**

Popova is "Outwardly" in a very sad and mournful state of mind, having no interest in the activities and joys of life. However, what is revealed in the end of the play is an exact opposite of this.

**Q.4: Discuss the title of the play, "The Bear", by Anton Chekhov. Is it justified?**

**Or Why is Smirnov "The Bear" according to Popova? Explain**

**Answer:**

A dialogue is going on between Popova and Luka, her old servant, on the stage when Smirnov enters. He demands the repayment of his money, borrowed by her late husband. Popova tells him that she is in mourning and her steward is also away. Thus, she cannot repay his money at the moment. Smirnov, when hearing this, begins to shout. Popova leaves the stage. Smirnov loses his temper and declares to stay there until he is repaid.

Soon Popova re-enters the stage. She orders Smirnov to leave her house, but this order falls flat on him. Then they start exchanging their views about the faith of men and women. Smirnov insists that women cannot love anyone but themselves. He adds that it is against women's nature to be constant and faithful.

Popova refuses his views and says that only women are true in love. She explains him how men always betray the trust of women. She tells him that her late husband frequently betrayed her, and that she is still faithful to his memory.

Smirnov rejoins, saying, he knows why she has put on the domino and buried herself within the four walls. He adds that men know these tricks of women. She asks how he has dared say all this. He replies:

**"You may have buried yourself alive, but you haven't forgotten to powder your face".**

In response to these sarcastic remarks, she clenches her fists and cries out:

**"You're a boor! A coarser bear! A Bourbon! A monster!"**

Hence, these lines supply the title to the play, which is fully justified as far as Smirnov's action and Popova's reaction are concerned..

**Q.5: Discuss briefly the play, "The Bear", as light social comedy.**

**Or What is the main theme of the play?**

**Answer:**

Play "The Bear" is a farce, a light social comedy. It exposes the social evils of pretension and hypocrisy of a young Russian widow, Popova. Popova stands for the women of high status in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian society. Outwardly, she shows her grief to others after her husband's death.

We are shown that she constantly looks at her late husband's photograph. She declares that she will never love any other man in her remaining life. In order to exhibit her outward mourning, she always wears a domino. In fact, this is all pretension and hypocrisy.

Smirnov, a landlord, is the first man to meet her after her husband's death. At first, she expresses her bitter hatred for Smirnov, saying:

**"You're a boor! A coarse bear! A Bourbon! A monster!"**

However, soon afterwards she responds to his spontaneous love. In fact, it is not her feeling of love for Smirnov; rather she agrees to marry him because: (i) he is a rich-man of high status in the society, (ii) that she will not have to return the loan, and (iii) she will get his wealth and property.

It appears as if she is all the time pretending to be true to the memory of her late husband and waiting for some potential bait. She is, no doubt, a vivid hypocrite.

The main theme of the play is the exposition of the pretension and hypocrisy of the Russian women. Here Popova stands for such Russian women of that period.

This play also reflects the social facts as were found in the Russian society of that time. The playwright has criticized the Russian society in a light comic manner and, as such, it is "a light social comedy".

**Q.6: Discuss the paradox or conflict in Popova's character.**

**Or Is Popova sincere and true in her love for her late husband? If so, why does she condemn him?**

**Or What do you know about Popova? Explain briefly**

**Or Describe briefly the role or part played by Popova in the play, "The Bear".**

**Or Draw a brief character-sketch of Popova.**

**Answer:**

When the play, "The Bear", opens, Popova, the widow-heroine, is shown dressed in domino. She is gazing at her late husband's photograph. Luka, her servant, is doing his best to convince her to give up her prolonged mourning.

Luka advises her to restart taking interest in the activities and joys of life. However, his advice falls flat. She insists on continuing her mourning in the memory of her late husband—only an outward show of grief. In this regard, she says:

**"My life is already at an end. He is in his grave, and I have buried myself between four walls ... We are both dead."**

She also points out that her late husband frequently betrayed her love and trust. He often went to other women and neglected her. She would, however, be true in her love forever. Further, she lightly condemns him for being unfaithful to her. But, despite all his treacheries, she declares:

**"My love will die out with me".**

Luka makes another attempt and suggests her to remarry as she is still young with roses in cheeks. He adds that her beauty will vanish with the passage of time, and then nobody will propose her. This suggestion also ends in smoke. Later on, however, when Smirnov asks her to marry him, she at once accepts his proposal. This shows the paradox of her nature.

All the development of the play shows that she is not sincere and true in her displayed love for her late husband. In fact, she is in search of a rich man. When she finds such a man, Smirnov, she forgets all her vows about her previous love. Thus, she at once agrees to marry Smirnov. This is the paradox in Popova's character that exposes her reality.

**Q.7: Draw a brief character-sketch of Luka, the old servant of Popova.**

**Or What do you know about Luka? Describe his role briefly.**

**Answer:**

Being an experienced fellow, Luka, Popova's old servant, plays the role of an adviser to Popova. He advises a number of things to her, namely, (i) to give up her prolonged mourning, (ii) to resume the normal lifestyle, (iii) to step out of the four walls of her house, and (iv) to take interest in the activities of life.

He also does his best to convince her to remarry in order to start her life afresh. He warns her that beauty is not everlasting as it vanishes quickly. He further adds that nobody will, after ten years, like to court her. But his efforts go in vain.

Luka also plays the role of a comic character. He entertains us with his humorous remarks. His apprehensions and exclamations about the changing situation after Smirnov's arrival at the stage are a source of recreation for us. For instance, an interesting situation develops when we see that Luka is supposed to obey his mistress Popova, but he is, at the same time, terrified by Smirnov. Thus, he finds himself on the horns of dilemma.

Furthermore, he plays the role of Popova's defender. He requests Smirnov to leave the house. However, Smirnov refuses and terrifies him. During the expected duel with pistols, he calls for other servants for Popova's defense. Luka is, however, astonished to see them embracing each other on his return.

It is now obvious that Luka's role in the play is really of great importance, as it serves the purpose of advancing the story. Moreover, he is also a great source of amusement and recreation for the readers and viewers.

**Q.8: Draw a brief character-sketch of Smirnov?**

**Or What is the role of Smirnov in the play, "The Bear"?**

**Or What do you know about Smirnov? Describe briefly.**

**Answer:**

Smirnov is one of the two chief characters in the play, "The Bear". He can rightly be declared the hero of the play. He is the most interesting character indeed. All of his actions make us laugh, time and again. Moreover, it appears that he is fully aware of the pretentious nature of women.

There are some very important features in his character. He is very talkative; he gives an unnecessarily detailed explanation of his need of money; his talk is full of humour. Further, he is a careless person. He constantly insists on the return of his money. However, when he spontaneously begins to love Popova, money matters him no more. This shows how careless a person he is.

Smirnov also establishes his wit and wisdom. He knows that Popova is a widow; so he asks her to marry him because she is still young with rosy cheeks. He knows that he cannot, being ahead in age, get a woman like Popova as his wife.

Similarly, he is also a man of strong will-power. Popova refuses to see him. He insists to see her. At last, she has to yield to his determination.

Smirnov is also cool-headed. Popova insults him by calling him a boor, a coarse bear and a monster. He does not mind his remarks, but, instead, he begins to admire her beauty and boldness. He says to her: **"I love you as I've never loved before...I offer you my hand; yes or no?"** Eventually, she accepts his offer.

In short, Smirnov is the most humorous and interesting character in the play. He is very sentimental in love. Further, he proves himself a great comic character.

## **2. THE BOY COMES HOME**



By: A. A. Milne

**Q.1: Discuss the play, “The Boy Comes Home”, as a light comedy.**

**Or Why is Uncle James annoyed at, or offended or angry with Philip, and how does Philip react to James’ talk with him?**

**Answer:**

Being funny, witty and amusing, this play can be called a light comedy. When this play opens, we find that Philip, who has just left the army, is staying with his uncle, James. James is his guardian after his father’s death.

Philip takes breakfast at 10 o’clock instead of 8 o’clock—the regular time for breakfast. At that moment, Uncle James comes there. He objects to his taking breakfast so late.

After the breakfast, Philip enters the stage where Uncle James is awaiting him. In a rude manner, Philip asks his uncle if they are going to talk about business or something else. Then he lights up his cigar. James objects to his smoking in the house. He asks Philip to be punctual in doing everything. Moreover, Philip is also advised to behave decently if he wants to stay with him. Philip reacts sharply against James’s dictatorial attitude towards him. He demands from him the money left by his father, so as to live an independent life. James refuses to do so until he reaches the age of twenty-five as per his father’s will.

Then James asks him to join his business of jam, which Philip refuses. He prefers the profession of architecture, instead. James tells him that it is too late for him to start profession. Philip says: **“If I am four years behind, so is everybody else”**. He adds that his four years’ active fighting at the war-front has made him a mature man. James threatens him to use the force of money against him.

In order to put down James’ power of money, Philip takes out his loaded revolver. Aiming it at him, he tells James that he has killed twenty Germans with it. When he takes out a bomb from his pocket, James is, being terrified, at once faints. Thus Philip comes out victorious. Now he consoles James by saying he is willing to join his business of jam. James offers him a post in the management of his business.

Thus we can conclude that, as a whole, the play is full of light comedy.

**Q.2: “Was it a dream or wasn’t it? He will never be quite certain”.**

**Or Reproduce the “Dream-Scene” in the play, “The Boy Comes Home”.**

**Answer:**

Uncle James is sitting in wait for Philip to discuss with him his future career. There he begins to nod and soon deep sleep overtakes him. Thus begins the dream that compels him change his view about Philip. In the dream, he sees that Philip has come down to him. He regrets that Philip has forgotten punctuality. He also objects to his smoking in the house.

Philip sharply reacts against his uncle’s authoritative attitude towards him. He tells him that he cannot live with him any longer. He demands from him the money his late father had left for him. James refuses to do so until he reaches the age of twenty-five as per his father’s will. He is still twenty-one.

Then James threatens him to use the force of the money against him. Upon this, Philip takes out his loaded revolver to suppress the force of money with the physical force. He points the revolver at James, telling him that it has killed twenty Germans. Soon afterwards, he takes out a bomb from his pocket. James is terrified and thus he faints, Philip puts the bomb back into his pocket telling James: **“We will rehearse and enjoy it every day.”** Then Philip leaves the stage.

Soon Uncle James wakes up. Philip enters the stage, saying, that they should now talk about business. Upon this, James feels greatly relieved. He offers Philip a post in the management of his business of jam. At the end, James, who is still bewildered, utters: **“Was it a dream, or wasn’t it?”** Here the play comes to an end.

The significance of the dream-scene lies in the fact that it really advances the story of the play. It also makes the play interesting through suspense about the result of the conflict between Philip (hero) and James (villain).

**Q.3: Draw a character-sketch of Philip.**

**Or Describe briefly Philip’s character or role/part in the play, “The Boy Comes Home”.**

**Or What do you know about Philip? Describe everything briefly.**

**Answer:**

Philip is one of the two main characters in the play, “The Boy Comes Home”. He is the hero, whereas Uncle James is the villain.

Philip is a young man, aged twenty one only. For the most part, he dominates the action of the play. He has a strong will-power, and he can take quick decisions. For instance, the incident of Mrs. Higgins is a good example of it. He is so bold that he can risk his life when so required. In the battle, half of the soldiers of his company were killed, but he remained fearless and undaunted. He killed a number of German soldiers with his revolver. A bold decision at the forefront proved him mature enough as he ordered his remaining men, acting as commandant, to move into a safe trench.

By nature, he is amusing, witty and tender-hearted. He does not, however, let others take any undue advantage of his politeness. He boldly puts down the force of money with physical force.

When he succeeds in suppressing undue authority, he at once declares that he is willing to join his jam-business. He has a belief “in using force to suppress force.”

Philip has a dominating personality. He is bold and also a humanist. He knows how to watch his interests. He has a faith in the use of force of to suppress force. His role in the play is quite dramatic and full of suspense.

**Q.4: Draw a character-sketch of Uncle James.**

**Or What do you know about Uncle James? Explain briefly.**

**Or Briefly explain the character, role or part of Uncle James in the play, “The Boy Comes Home”.**

**Answer:**

He is one of the two main the characters in the play, “The Boy Comes Home”. He is guardian of Philip, the hero. He plays the role of the villain. He is an aged person. He is a dictator both by nature and attitude. He believes in old values life. So, he runs his domestic affairs and his jam-business in a disciplined manner.

He enjoys full command over his servants. All the affairs of the house are done as per his instructions. He dislikes Philip’s taking the breakfast late. He directs him to be punctual. He also forbids him to smoke in the house. He is offended when Philip refuses to join his jam-business. Change is indeed the Law of Nature, but he dislikes any change in the affairs of his life. He treats and orders Philip like a school-boy. Having served in the army and fought battle against Germans for four years, Philip has attained maturity. He is now an experienced young man. But James treats him as an “impertinent young puppy”. This results in Philip’s hatred for him.

As guardian of Philip, he wants to derive benefits out of the money left by his late father. His greedy nature creates problems for him. When Philip suppresses his force of money by using physical force, he has to yield to Philip's view-point. He also appears to be coward. As soon as Philip points his revolver at him, he is terrified and accepts his demand for handing over the money left by his late father.

### 3. SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT

By: Eden Phillpotts

- Q.1: How would you justify that the play, "Something to Talk About", is a light comedy?**  
**Or The Play, "Something to Talk About", is a comedy. Explain briefly.**  
**Or "The play, "Something to Talk About", is a farce. Discuss and explain briefly.**  
**Or Discuss the story of the play, "Something to Talk About", as an entertainment.**

**Answer:**

The very belief that "nothing happens to the Sydneys" creates humour, which results in laughter. Thus, it becomes a source of entertainment for the readers and/or spectators. The Sydneys treat the notorious burglar, Wolf, as an honorable guest. The following remarks of Guy Sydney about Lettice, his younger sister, are very humorous and entertaining: *"She's a topping girl—quite one of your sort...You'd like her."* When Lord Redchester enters the stage, a very humorous thing happens which creates a lot of entertainment. He begins to doubt the Wolf by saying: *"The Wolf came to our little race! Surely not. Some imposter pretending to be the Wolf."*

Wolf's answer to this remark is also very funny: *"I'm the Wolf all right."* Watching the Wolf on the stage, Lady Redchester at once remarks: *"A new sort of Santa Claus."* This simile, used by her, is quite funny, which makes us laugh indeed. All subsequent remarks about the Wolf are also very funny and entertaining.

When the Wolf fails to open the safe by using all available means, he passes a funny remark about the safe: *"One of these damned Yankee puzzle-boxes that make you wish Columbus had ever been born."*

When the Wolf departs from the house of the Sydneys, leaving their Christmas gifts, Lady Redchester again utters the humorous remark: *"He was dear Santa Claus, after all."* The last scene also offers a great entertainment, for the Sydneys bid him good bye as if some noble guest were departing from their house.

- Q.2: How far is the story of the play, "Something to Talk About", credible? Explain Briefly.**

**Answer:**

The play, "Something to Talk About", is an amusing comedy. It is full of suspense and action. It reveals that modern English people derive delight even from alarming situations. The Sydneys represent such a class of the English in the play.

According to some critics, this play is hardly credible. In fact, the play seems to be the reward of good breeding, which its characters possess. They do not lose senses even when they are in unexpected troubles. Young Guy Sydney is the first who comes across the Wolf—the notorious burglar and "Terror of England. But he is not terrified. The other members of family follow his suit. All of them, except the butler, find in the Wolf a source of entertainment.

On the whole, the play appears to be credible as its thorough study reveals that, *"Enjoying in the worst situations is a hallmark of the modern English generation."*

In this regard, Guy Sydney's following amazing remark in the praise of the Wolf is noteworthy: *"You're manna in the wilderness—you are indeed."* Besides, Lettice, his younger sister, enters the stage and is overjoyed to see the Wolf. She exclaims with both wonder and joy: *"Oh! How brave of him! How thrilling! How d'you do?"* She is neither disturbed nor terrified to see the Wolf; rather she shakes hand with him. The rest of the members act in a similar fashion.

**Q.3: In the play, "Something to Talk About", the Wolf proves to be "a sheep in wolf's clothing." Explain briefly.**

**Or**

**The play, "Something to Talk About", is a comment on the modern life concerning the English society—the society of England. Justify or prove otherwise.**

**Or "Enjoying even in the worst situations is the hall-mark of the modern generation of the England." Explain briefly.**

**Or What is the behaviour with, and reaction against, the Wolf, the notorious burglar, on the part of the Sydneys? Explain briefly.**

**Or What is the treatment of the Sydneys with the Wolf, the notorious burglar? Explain briefly.**

**Answer:**

It is Guy Sydney, who finds the Wolf, the notorious burglar of England, before anyone else does, under the roof of their house at 3 o'clock on Christmas morning. To see him, he utters an excited and joyous scream: *"All right...all right. The real thing, by Jove."* He is certainly not terrified. He calmly sits in an easy armchair. He treats the Wolf as an honourable guests of his family by terming him "manna in wilderness". He tells the Wolf that nothing has ever happened to their family; therefore, he expects some interesting incident.

Later on, Guy Sydney calls his younger sister on the stage. When she watches the Wolf, she exclaims: *"Oh! How brave of him! How thrilling! How d'you do?"* She takes a deep interest in his art of burglary. Indeed, Guy Sydney and Lettice stand for the modern generation of the England. They both face this alarming situation with excitement and joy. They are not terrified at all by the notorious burglar, the "Terror of England". Lettice asks Guy Sydney: *"Let's sing to him gently—a Christmas Carol."*

**Q.4: How do the Sydneys get their precious possessions (belonging or Christmas presents) back from the Wolf? Explain briefly.**

**Or Describe how the tables are turned on the Wolf, the notorious burglar.**

**Or What is the Bishop's last suggestion to the Wolf, which makes him depart, and turns the tables on him? Explain briefly.**

**Answer:**

The Wolf, a notorious burglar and terror for the people of England, is considered adept in the art of burglary. It is Guy Sydney who finds the Wolf under the roof of their house early in the Christmas morning at 3 o'clock. He is not terrified, but overjoyed to see him. He behaves with him as guest and offers him whisky. Lettice and then all others members of the family enter the stage. They are Lord Redchester, Lady Redchester, the Bishop, and Preston—the butler.

When the Wolf fails to break open their safe, Lord Redchester tells him the password, "Sophy". He allows them to cast a glance at their Christmas presents before he takes them away. When having a look at the presents, they attempt to change his mind. Lady Redchester requests him not to take away her necklace as such a loss will spoil her Christmas, but in vain.

At last, Bishop suggests him to go to their next door neighbor, Lord Wallaby, who is a millionaire. He adds that Lord Wallaby has gold-plates worth hundred thousand pounds in his dining-room. He also tells him that Lord Wallaby is visiting them in the evening and that they would keep him busy. Thus, he would have enough time, from eight till eleven, to steal his precious belonging. He agrees and returns them all of their Christmas gifts. Then, he leaves the stage, saying them good-bye. Upon this, Lord Redchester utters the following sentence: *"Good-fellow! Something to talk about at last."* Thus, the curtain drops and the play comes to end.

**Q.5: How does the play, "Something to Talk About" by Eden Phillpotts, highlight/reflect the attitude of the modern people of England towards the criminals and crimes? Explain briefly.**

**Answer:**

The playwright has highlighted the attitude of the modern English people towards criminals and the acts of crimes, like burglary. In the present-day advanced countries, like England, the old methods of facing and dealing with the criminals by using power, violence and direct fighting have mostly been given up. Every possible effort is made, as is evident from this play, to understand the criminals and their acts of crimes psychologically through discussions and cross-examinations.

The use of physical power and violence is generally avoided. Physical force or violence is used only when all other peaceful means and methods prove to be ineffective in total. In the modern developed countries, a crime is considered as a symptom of some social disease, such as unemployment, poverty, inequality and social injustice.

**Q.6: Who is Wolf and who is Lady R? (Their brief character-sketches)**

**Answer:**

**(i) Wolf:**

Wolf is the central character in the play, "Something to Talk About". He is a notorious burglar and known all over as the "terror of England". He is adept in the art of burglary. No safe is really safe from him. He is a bold and fearless burglar. He is not terrified by any person or anything, as he boldly and fearlessly breaks into the Sydneys' house. He is a resourceful burglar. He has the correct information about the wealth or ornaments lying into the safe in a particular room in Sydneys' house.

By nature, he is aesthete and romantic. It is why Guy Sydney lures the aesthetic aspect of his nature. His approach to life is intellectual and philosophical. He is shown as a man capable of watching and safeguarding his own interests. At the end, his greedy nature has also been exposed. Eventually, as the situation unfolds, he appears to be a sheep in wolf's clothing.

**(ii) Lady R:**

Lady R. is **Lady Redchester**, the wife of **Lord Redchester**. Her nickname is *Sophy*. She is an important character of the play, "Something to Talk About". She is introduced as a very kind and gentle lady. She treats the notorious burglar, Wolf, like a mother. When the Wolf is going to take away their Christmas presents, she requests him not to take away her necklace, for this will destroy her Christmas. She joins the stage after Lord Redchester.

Moreover, she examines the Wolf closely. After having investigated that the burglar is really the Wolf, she exclaims joyfully that "the terror of England" has been kind enough to choose their house that night.

Her dialogue with the notorious burglar is very smart, exciting, funny, enjoyable and entertaining.

**GOOD LUCK**

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“Use soft words but hard arguments.” (English Proverb)