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First Edition: 2014

Preview from Notesale.co.uk
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Price: Rs. 50.00

Beta Publications

(A Unit of MSB Publishers Pvt. Ltd.)
4626/18, Ansari Road, Daryaganj
New Delhi - 110002

Website: www.studentsmorningstar.com
E-mail: info@studentsmorningstar.com

back and forehead were hurting, so he gently put down Kunwar to take rest, when they heard squeal of the elephants.

- (ii) An old elephant was the leader of elephants. He was more aggressive at that time because of the period of heightened aggressiveness that happens annually in male elephants.
- (iii) Sher Singh chilled with fright because the old elephant, moving his tusk to and fro came round towards him. He could not escape in the situation because he could neither climb nor run, carrying his brother on his back.
- (iv) Sher Singh earnestly prayed to God to avert the danger. It tells us that Sher Singh was a brave boy who had firm belief in God. It seems that God heard Sher Singh's prayers and consequently, the elephant hurriedly went away.
- (v) Immediately after being saved from the elephants, Sher Singh got up and decided to continue his journey. This was because he heard an elephant trumpet at a distance and could not take the risk of being attacked by elephants again.

- VI.**
- (i) Sher Singh had anticipated the river would be shallow and the water would not be very cold as the snow-water would not have entered the river by that time. However, when Sher Singh entered the river, he found the water colder than he had anticipated. Besides, it was almost waist-deep, deeper than what he had thought. Further, there was the danger of his falling into the river because of slime on the stone.
 - (ii) The bridge at the second river was a kutchra, impermanent one. It was made of rings of bamboo poles driven into the river bed and tied round and were filled with stones to make the piers of the bridge. The surface of the bridge was also made of bamboos laid down horizontally and across and laced thick grass and river gravel.
 - (iii) When Sher Singh reached the second river, his hopes were shattered to see the river in flood, as he had not expected floods at that time of the year. The river was in flood because of the melting of a big head of snow. The bridge over the river had submerged because of the sudden floods in the river.
 - (iv) The breaking of the bridge made matters worse for the boy because now the boy had to swim across the flooded river, with his younger brother on his back.
 - (v) The boy crossed the second river by moving along the wreck of the broken bridge and holding on to anything he could hold

- III. (i) Rizwan, the interviewer and Kasim, the interviewee are the speakers in these lines. They are present in a crowded market place.
- (ii) 'Shah' refers to ruler of Iran, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Rizwan, the interviewer asked Kasim, a poor rag-seller (the interviewee), if he knew who was the Shah, to which he replied in negative.
- (iii) The second speaker, i.e., Kasim says that his father had told him that his father (Kasim's grandfather) died of hunger or cold.
- (iv) The answer given by the second speaker reveals that during the Shah's reign, there was widespread poverty. The labourers could hardly earn enough to make both ends meet and therefore, many used to die of hunger and starvation.
- (v) The second speaker's son was a child of four years, who used to play around in village, chasing dogs. The speaker wanted him to join his profession of rag-selling, on attaining the age of five.
- IV. (i) Rizwan wanted to tell the rag-seller that the government was helping the poor farmers and that he could take loan from the bank to set up his business and lead a better life.
- (ii) No, Rizwan was not sent by the government because he was interviewing Kasim on behalf of the *Kihaan* newspaper, where Rizwan had joined that day only.
- (iii) Kasim said that he did not want a better job because he was satisfied with his lot and he had no faith in the promises made by the government for the welfare of the poor.
- (iv) The similar things, which happened with Kasim earlier included the promises made by the government to improve the lot of the poor and the government's total apathy towards their poor condition later on.
- (v) Kasim used to spend his nights in front of a shop or under a bridge. He used to do so because he had no home or shelter to spend the nights.
- (vi) Kasim said that he could not meet Rizwan the next day in the market place because he was going to his village. He then told Rizwan that it was time for him to start his work and carrying his goods, went away hurriedly from there.
- V. (i) The rag-seller simply walked away because he did not want to waste any more time in discussing the shallow political propaganda of the government.

(vi) Jumman's first reaction to Alagu's proceedings was that Alagu was only pretending to be fair and just. In his defence, Jumman said that he had been carrying all his obligations towards his aunt like a son would be doing for his mother. He accepted the fact that there had been occasional quarrels between his aunt and his wife. However, he could not afford to pay a monthly allowance to his aunt.

VI. (i) 'He' in the extract refers to Alagu. He gained knowledge of law by visiting the courts often in connection with his business and by observing the legal proceedings there.

(ii) Ramadhan Misra was the resident of another village. He bore a grudge against Jumman for the latter had settled some of Ramadhan's tenants in his own village. He was excited to see Alagu defeating Jumman in his cross-examination.

(iii) Jumman was wondering how his friend, Alagu, who was talking to him cordially a moment ago, was now trying to bring before the panchayat his faults. He found it difficult to understand for which old grievance, Alagu was trying to take revenge on him. He was wondering like that because Alagu was his close friend and he had thought that he would favour him, rather than his aunt.

(iv) The panchayat's verdict was that Jumman had to pay a monthly allowance to his aunt. In case of non-compliance with the panchayat's verdict, the deed transferring her aunt's property to him will be declared null and void.

Jumman was stunned to hear the verdict. He could not understand how his friend, Alagu, whom he trusted so much had suddenly turned into an enemy by pronouncing a verdict against him.

(v) The villagers were full of praise for Alagu for his sense of fairness and justice. They said that Alagu had separated truth from falsehood as a swan separates milk from water.

(vi) The verdict spoiled the relationship that existed between Jumman and Alagu. The two friends avoided seeing each other, and if they happened to meet by chance, they behaved like enemies. Jumman kept on thinking about how to take revenge on Alagu and waited with baited breath for such an opportunity to come his way.

VII. (i) Alagu purchased the pair of bullocks a year ago from the Bateshwar fair. The bullocks had beautiful long curved horns

8. The Bet

ASSIGNMENTS

- I. (i) The old banker hosted the party. The people who attended the party included journalists, intellectuals, a lawyer and a banker. The host was in a depressing and reminiscent mood.
- (ii) Capital punishment was the topic of discussion at the party. Life imprisonment was the alternative suggested in place of capital punishment.
- (iii) The majority of guests at the party were against giving death penalty as they considered it out of date, immoral and unsuitable for Christian states.
- (iv) The host's view was that capital punishment was more moral than life imprisonment. He justified his view by saying that capital punishment kills a man at once, whereas life imprisonment kills a man slowly.
- (v) According to the young lawyer, both capital punishment and life sentence were immoral. But given a choice, he would go for life imprisonment because it is better than not living at all.

I am in/not in favour of capital punishment:

- For:*
- (a) Capital punishment achieves nothing but revenge.
 - (b) A criminal is a mentally sick person who must be cured of his ailment rather than be destroyed completely.
 - (c) Capital punishment does not reform the criminal but just eliminates him.
 - (d) Capital punishment does not act as a deterrent against crime. The claim that capital punishment reduces violent crime is inconclusive and certainly not proven.

- Against:*
- (a) All humans have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. When someone wilfully commits crimes against his fellow humans, he should be given capital punishment.
 - (b) Lesser sentence or life imprisonment will remove the fear and deterrence instilled by capital punishment.
 - (c) When the criminals will be out, they will be free to resume their nefarious activities and even take revenge against the law enforcing agencies or the relatives of the victims.

- III.** (i) In the second year of his confinement, the prisoner did not play any music and no piano was heard. This was because he wanted to study only the classics.
- (ii) In the second year the prisoner asked for classics to read, whereas in the fifth year of his confinement, he altogether gave up reading books.
- (iii) In the first year of his confinement, the prisoner refused to take wine because he believed that wine excites the desires and desires are the worst enemy of a prisoner. Besides, he felt that nothing could be more gloomy than drinking wine and not being able to meet anyone.
- (iv) In the fifth year of his confinement, the prisoner indulged in music, eating, drinking, lying on his bed, frequently yawning, angrily talking to himself and writing at night and putting up in the morning, all that he had written.
- (v) The prisoner used to tear up all that he had written at night, in the morning. He did so to spend time and avoid the bouts of depression. Besides, he was not interested in anything.
- (vi) The prisoner's act of crying tells us that he was in a state of depression, restlessness and frustration.
- IV.** (i) The first 'them' in the first line of the extract refers to the people who knew six languages in which the prisoner had written a letter to the banker. The prisoner wanted them to read the letter he had written to the banker.
- (ii) The prisoner took a great interest in learning languages is hinted from the fact that he procured six hundred volumes of books related to languages. The banker had the difficulty in getting the books which the prisoner wanted to become proficient in different languages.
- (iii) It means that although people belonging to different lands speak different languages, but their feelings and thoughts are the same.
- (iv) The prisoner wanted the banker to fire a shot in the garden if the experts in different languages could not find a single mistake in the letter he had written in six languages. In this way, he would be able to prove himself that all the efforts he made in learning different languages were not a waste.
- The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden to recognise the proficiency the prisoner had acquired in different languages over the years.

- (ii) The banker was in a state of despair when he broke the seals off the door. He was in a state of despair because only a day was left for the final accounting of the stipulated fifteen years of the bet and he would have to pay two million roubles to the prisoner.
- (iii) The author wants to create suspense in the story by using expressions like 'rusty', 'lock', 'grating sound' and 'creaking door'. These expressions hint at the passage of fifteen years as well as the miserable condition in which the prisoner might be.
- (iv) The banker expected to hear the footsteps of the prisoner because he thought that the latter would rush towards the door and give a cry of amazement on knowing that somebody had opened the door and he would be freed from the prison.
- (v) The banker finally decided to enter the lodge in his garden, where the lawyer has been in captivity for the last fifteen years. He made up his mind to go inside the lodge to see the prisoner and put to an end the bet and the issue of paying two million roubles to the prisoner.
- (vi) The banker thought that the prisoner would be dreaming about the two million roubles, he was likely to get after completing the stipulated time period of fifteen years in prison.
- (vii) The prisoner is to be pitied for the condition in which he landed himself for his greed for money. He staked his liberty and youth for fifteen years in return for two million roubles. He did realise the worthlessness of the materialistic world and the need for introspection, after fifteen years of being in solitary confinement. However, his efforts to learn and excel in many areas of achievements in the confinement are praiseworthy.

- VII.**
- (i) The watchman of the lodge informed the banker about the disappearance of the prisoner from the lodge. The prisoner stayed for five hours less than fifteen years in confinement.
 - (ii) The prisoner renounced the two million roubles because fifteen years of his confinement in the prison, during which he moved from one enthusiasm to other like music, eating, drinking, sleeping, smoking and reading books made him realise that nothing endures in this world: death destroys everything and everyone. Therefore, this world is empty, illusory and doomed.
 - (iii) The banker after reading the prisoner's note underwent a transformation of heart. He wept and felt a great contempt for himself. When he reached home and tried to sleep, he could not do so because his tears and emotions kept him awake for hours.