

PLAYS (BOOK III)
COMPLETE SHORT QUESTIONS AND
ANSWERS

FOR 1ST YEAR STUDENT



Estd 1864

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE &
LITERATURE**
**FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE (A CHARTERED
UNIVERSITY)**
LAHORE

Play 1

Heat Lightning

By: Robert F. Carroll

Questions Answers

Q:1 Why couldn't the Girl describe the killer?

Ans: The Girl could not describe the killer because she could not see him properly because she was too frightened. She was confused and puzzled so she had a vague glimpse of him. Thus, the Girl couldn't describe his appearance.

Q:2 What were the circumstances that forced the girl to leave the car?

(or) Why was the girl forced to leave the car on the road?

The Girl's car ran out of gas. It was dark stormy night. There were almost no cars on the road. There was no gasoline station nearby. She could not get any help. So these circumstances forced the girl to leave her car and walk down the road with the hope of catching a bus.

Q:3 Why did the Girl ask for the help from the First Man?

(or) Why did the Girl consider the First Man her helper?

Ans: When the Girl reached the bus station and came across the First Man, she instantly sought his help. It never occurred to her that the murderer could reach there before her. Moreover, the First Man, established his trust by reassuring her of his help. Therefore, she took him as her friend and helper.

Q:3 What was the condition of the weather?

Ans: The weather was stormy and unpleasant. It was raining heavily and continuously. There were lightning flashes followed by large bursts of thunder.

Q:4 How did the Second Man accuse the First Man of lying?

Ans: The Second Man had already seen the Girl through the glass of the door, but he found the First Man hesitant to tell him about the Girl. Therefore, the Second Man accused him of lying.

Q:5 Did the Girl become suspicious of the First Man as the play progress?

Ans: No, the Girl did not become suspicious of the First Man as the play progress because when she entered the bus station, she came across the First Man and instantly sought his help. Since the First Man was present there before her she found no reason to suspect him as the killer.

Q:6 What was the Girl's impression about the Second Man?

Ans: The Girl got terrified by the arrival of the Second Man. She thought him to be the killer. She was, in fact very much confused. Moreover, his remarks greatly disturbed her. His interest in her further upset her. Naturally, she got suspicious of the Second Man and suspected him as the killer.

Q:7 Why didn't the Girl accompany the Second Man?

Ans: The Girl didn't accept the offer of the Second Man to accompany him because she suspected him to be the killer who was chasing her. Besides, she was also under the influence of the First Man, who established his trust as a helper and a friend.

Q:8 Describe the setting of the play.

The play "Heat Lightning" is set in the drab interior of the bus station along a deserted high way somewhere in the Midwest. There are two benches and two doors. The room is lighted by an overhanging light with a dull green shade. A large bus schedule is also hung on the wall.

Q:9 What were the factors that played role in saving the girl?

Ans: In the beginning, the pitch darkness and the heavy storm became very helpful for her. Later, the thick woods and twisted way proved to be a great blessing. At the bus station, her ignorance was of value as the killer didn't kill her instantly for he was checking whether she could identify him or not. The Second Man's presence also prevented the First Man from attacking her. Her flashlight also paved a way for her narrow escape. In the end, the dog that attacked the killer made her escape possible.

Q: 10 What is the significance of storm in the play?

Ans: The storm signifies the troubled feelings of the Girl. It increases her fear. The stormy weather is very unfavorable that adds to the misery of the Girl throughout the play. The suspense of the play reaches to its climax due to storm. The storm sends the dog to save the Girl. The stormy weather creates an environment of suspense and horror.

Q: 11 How did the Girl realize the truth?

Ans: It was only when the light went out and the killer took out the flashlight that the Girl identified him. It was the same flashlight which she had dropped while running from the killer.

Q:12 What was the condition of the weather?

Ans: The weather was stormy and unpleasant. It was raining heavily and continuously. There were lightning flashes followed by large bursts of thunder.

Play 2

A Visit to a Small Planet

By: Gore Vidal

Questions Answers

Q:1 How does Kreton prove his extraordinary powers?

Ans: Kreton, the alien, has extraordinary powers which he proves through his actions. He can read the minds. He can sense what is to happen in future too. When the troops try to take his ship apart, through his unusual and remarkable power, he erects an invisible wall around it. Besides, he also knows all Earthian languages. When General Powers and Aide rush to seize him, he forces to hold them back within a foot of him.

Q:2 What is the purpose of the visit of Kreton?

Ans: Kreton has been studying the planet Earth and human civilization for innumerable years. The purpose of his visit is to see human civilization and development more closely. With his extraordinary Power, he wanted to take charge of the planet Earth. He calls the Earth people his hobby.

Q:3 How much advanced is the civilization of Kreton than that of the Earth?

Ans: Kreton comes from some planet which is about 500 years advanced than that of the Earth in terms of time, space and relative motion. To him, the human civilization appears to be fascinating and interesting only because it is in its initial stages of development. His mind and minds of his people work in superior ways. Moreover, his flying saucer, immense knowledge and extra ordinary powers also assert the same point.

Q:4 Can the people of Earth compete with the people of Kreton?

Ans: The people of Earth cannot compete with the people of Kreton in any aspect. Kreton's civilization is more advanced and developed. According to him, the human civilization is in the initial stages of development. Contrary to human race, he his people do not die. His flying saucer,

immense knowledge and extraordinary powers are also assert that there is no comparison between both the civilizations.

Q:5 How much damaging is violence in life? Write five sentences.

Ans: Violence is an immoral and inhuman act that is condemned by civilized people in the civilized world. It is a tool that spreads terrorism and destroys the peace of the society. Such hurdles prove to be highly destructive and hinder the cause of development of a community. Kreton's society must be free from this sinister curse. This appears to be one reason for its magical advancement.

Q:6 What type of life do you foresee in the year 5000?

Ans: The message that is conveyed by the author is that the altogether technological advancement will change the scenery of the world. People will be able to travel in space. Spaceships and advanced aircrafts will be seen all around. The scientific developments will also improve the mental landscape of humans. They may be liberated from the evils of violence, hatred and enmity. By and large, people would lead more satisfied, prosperous and contented lives.

Q:7 How impressive were the morals of Kreton?

Ans: Although Kreton does not explain his moral philosophy, verbally, yet we see his morals in his conduct and behavior. Even the somewhat harsh treatment by the troops and General Powers does not unruffle his calm poise. He bears every criticism without being insolent. Moreover, he does not misuse his extraordinary powers because he knew that the use of force in a society cause pain, destruction and even death. He appears to be liberated from the evils of hatred, aggression and violence.

Q:8 What is the role of General Powers in the play?

Ans: General Powers is the product of the National Guard of the USA Army. He is an important and influential figure who has contacts with the high official of the country. He is also the first official who meets the alien, Kreton. He investigates the whole matter and his job is to guard the security of his country.

Q:9 What is the theme of the study of kreton?

Ans: Kreton, as the inhabitant of some other planet has much interest in human civilization and its development. He has been studying the planet Earth for innumerable years. Its growth and development appear to be fascinating to him as he called it his 'hobby'. He is specifically interested in the twentieth century period and the development taking place in this period.

Q:10 How does Kreton impress the General Powers?

Ans: When General Power comes to know about the extraordinary powers of Kreton, he gets highly impressed. When Kreton hears his thoughts and tells him there and then that he is thinking of his promotion. His extraordinary knowledge regarding human civilization also impress him. He further amazes General Powers by building an invisible wall around the ship.

Q:11 What kind of girl Ellen is?

Ans: Ellen is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Spelding. She is lively girl of twenty. She is engaged to John. She is not interested in the broadcast of her father.

Q:12 Draw a character sketch of Mrs. Spelding.

Ans: Mrs. Spelding is a simple and loving lady. She knits passively while listening to her husband's broadcast. She looked bored and vague. She becomes worried when the spaceship lands right in her rose-garden. She seems to concern only about her rose- garden.

Play 3

‘The Oyster and the Pearl’

By: William Saroyan

Questions Answers

Q:1 What is Harry’s philosophy of life?

Ans: Harry’s philosophy is “Take-it-easy”. He wants to take life easy.

Q:2 What type of play ‘The Oyster and the Pearl’ is?

Ans: The play ‘The Oyster and the Pearl’ is a sentimental comedy that is based on tender feelings rather than reasonable and practical judgements. It has plenty of humour, wit and also fulfils moralistic purposes. It has a happy ending and demonstrates faith in the basic goodness of human nature.

Q:3 Where does the play take place?

(or) How does the barber shop serve as the stage?

Ans: The play takes place in the barber shop of Harry Van Dusen in O.K-by-the-Sea in California. The shop serves as a stage for the play.

Q:4 Why is Harry sitting in the barber’s chair?

(or) What is Harry doing when the play begins?

Ans: Harry is seated in the chair, when the play begins. A boy of nine or ten named Clay Larrabee is giving him a haircut. While getting the haircut, Harry is also reading a book.

Q:5 According to Harry, how does one bring merriment to the tired human heart?

Ans: According to Harry, a person may bring merriment to the tired old human heart by composing a symphony, painting a picture, writing a book or inventing a philosophy.

Q:6 What is Miss McCutcheon looking for? How does she feel about the children of the town?

Ans: Miss McCutcheon is looking for a chance to teach, but she is greatly disappointed after meeting the children of the town. She feels that the children are not serious about their studies. She finds them unruly and irresponsible. They only seem to be interested in games and the sea.

Q:7 Did Miss McCutcheon believe that there was a pearl in the oyster?

Ans: Miss McCutcheon was a realist. She insisted that only one oyster in a million had a pearl in it. She believed that everyone should face the truth and truth was that there was no pearl in the oyster.

Q:8 What kind of judge was Applegarth?

Ans: Judge Applegarth once judged the animals at county fair, thus, everyone believed him and started calling him a judge.

Q:9 How does Harry describe the inhabitants of O.K-by-the-Sea?

Ans: According to Harry, the people of O.K-by-the-Sea are all poor. In a town of a thousand people there is not a single rich man. A few people find jobs for a couple of months. Yet he finds these people to be “the richest” due to simplicity.

Q:10 Do you think it is right to allow Clay to believe that there is a pearl in the oyster? Explain briefly.

Ans: Clay was a poor boy of nine years who never enjoyed life as children should. Thus, many people may believe that he should be remained under the illusion that there was a pearl in the oyster as it would bring mental peace and comfort to him. Such an attitude may cause more harm than good in the long

Q:11 What year it is? Why is the year important for the American Society?

Ans: The year is 1953. This is the time after the Second World War that ended in 1945 when America and Europe were engaged in the reconstruction of society. It was a democratic victory over dictatorship. The present play has a democratic atmosphere of an open and free discussion.

Now people do not believe things without evidence. The economic condition of the people is also extremely unstable.

Q:12 In your opinion, does the play reveal the author's view of life? If so, what is his view of life?

Ans: In the play, "The Oyster and the Pearl", William Saroyan appears to be a sensitive person who wants everyone to lead a carefree life. He understands the problems of the poor and is of the view that service of suffering humanity brings spiritual happiness and peace of mind. Besides, Harry's philosophy "Take-it-easy" also has its roots in the writer's viewpoint of life.

Q:13 Who is Miss McCutcheon? How does she feel about her job?

Ans: Miss McCutcheon is a new teacher at school who has come from San Francisco. She feels overwhelmed and defeated. She wants to quit and go back to home.

Q:14 How much did Harry pay for his shop?

Ans: Harry paid seventy -five dollars for his barber shop.

Q:15 How long has he been in O.K-by-the-Sea?

Ans: Harry has been in O.K-by-the-Sea for twenty-four years.

Q:16 What has attracted Harry and other people to O.K-by-the-Sea? Do you think that it resembles an ideal town?

Ans: Harry's remark, "In a town of almost a thousand people there isn't one rich man. Not even one who is well off and yet these people are the richest. I have ever known", shows clearly the thing that impressed Harry regarding the people of O.K-by-the-Sea.

Q:17 In your opinion, why is the writer willing to buy the pearl? What has he received in return? What does he mean by saying: "As far as I am concerned, the whole thing's a pearl?"

Ans: The writer is the good natured person. He has a kind and sympathetic heart. He happened to listen to the harsh realities of Larrabee family at Harry's shop and realized the intensity of Clay's dream. Thus, in order to help him and to keep his dream intact, he decides to buy the oyster. To him, it doesn't matter whether there is actually a pearl in it or not. He is mainly concerned with the inner satisfaction and contentment that his selfless deeds will bring.

Q:18 How many barbers are there in O.K-by-the-Sea?

Ans: O.K-by-the-Sea is a town with small population of 909. Harry is the only barber in the town.

Q:19 How much does Harry charge for haircuts?

Ans: Harry generally charges one dollar for a haircut. But he often charges half or a quarter dollar of it depending on the affordability of the people living in O.K-by-the-sea. In some cases, he gives people haircut even free of cost.

Q:20 Where was Clay going when the play opened up?

Ans: Clay was going to the sea from the barber shop to find something “real good” when the play opened up.

Q:21 Why does the writer not open the oyster?

Ans: The writer does not open the oyster because he knows that there is no pearl inside it. He buys it for three hundred dollars because he wants to help Clay’s poor family.

Q:22 Why does Clark return?

Ans: Clark Larrabee reads the advertisement in “The Gull”, in which his family has requested Clark to come back. After reading this ad in “The Gull” Clark returns.

Q:23 What does the writer do with the oyster?

Ans: The writer buys the oyster from Clay for three hundred dollars to help his family. He puts the oyster in his coat pocket and goes out.

Q:24 Why does Clay need money? (important)

Ans: Clay needs money to bring his father back home. He also wants to buy a present for his mother.

Q:25 What had happened to Clay’s father? (important)

Ans: Clay’s father, Clark Larrabee, had a quarrel with his wife over money. He left his home a month ago in anger. Then he started working at Salinas.

Q:26 What does Clay want to put up (place) in the local paper?

Ans: Clay wants to put up (place) an advertisement in a local newspaper to call his father, Clark Larrabee, back home.

Q:27 What does Harry advise Miss McCutcheon to do? (important)

Ans: Harry advises Miss McCutcheon to go back to San Francisco while the going's good. He feels the town is too dull and drab for her youth and intelligence.

Q:28 What kind of haircut does Miss McCutcheon want?

Ans: Miss McCutcheon wants to have a poodle haircut from Harry. She wants to fit in the society of the town and feel easy.

Q:29 Can Harry give a poodle haircut?

Ans: No, Harry cannot give a poodle haircut as he has never seen a poodle dog.

Q:30 What does Miss McCutcheon think that a poodle haircut will do for her appearance?

Ans: Miss McCutcheon thinks poodle haircut would change her appearance, which would then, suit the fashion of the town more appropriately.

Q:31 Where has Clark Larrabee been? How does he get to O.K.-by-the-sea?

Ans: Clark Larabee has been working in Salinas since he left his family. He got a ride down in a truck and made a stop- over at O.K.-by-the-Sea while passing through that region.

Q:32 What does Clark give Harry? For what purpose?

Ans: Clark gives thirty dollars to Harry for his wife, Clay's mother. He asks Harry to give money to Clay who will give it to his mother.

Q:33 How far is it to Hollywood from O.K.-by-the-sea?

Ans: Hollywood is about two hundred miles straight down the highway from O.K.-by-the-Sea.

Q:34 What work does the man do?

Ans: The Man is a writer. He writes "a little bit of everything".

Q:35 What does Clay find near Black Rock? (important)

Ans: Clay finds one oyster near Black Rock.

Q:36 What does Clay believe in the oyster? How much is it worth?

Ans: Clay believes that there is a pearl in the oyster. He thinks it is worth at least three hundred dollars.

Q:37 Does Miss McCutcheon believe that there is a big pearl in the oyster?

Ans: No, Miss McCutcheon does not believe that there is a pearl in the Clay's oyster. She suggests that it is just Clay's wishful thinking that makes him hopeful that there is a pearl in his oyster but the truth is otherwise.

Q:38 Why does Miss McCutcheon have a chair with three legs?

Ans: Miss McCutcheon has a chair with three legs because she brings things from the sea like others.

Q:39 What does Greely have in a bottle?

Ans: Greely has sea water in the bottle believing that there are little sea things in the water.

Q: 40 Why do they want Wozzeck to come? (important)

Ans: Wozzeck is an expert watch repairer, therefore, they think that he can open the oyster without damaging its pearl.

Q: 41 How does Miss McCutcheon view Harry's thinking about the pearl in the oyster?

Ans: Miss McCutcheon thinks that Harry is encouraging people to tell a lie. Instead, he should show the people reality that there is no pearl in the oyster.

Q: 42 Why does judge think that Miss McCutcheon will not last as a teacher? What kind of teacher does he think they needed?

(or) What does Applegarth say about Miss McCutcheon?

Ans: Judge Applegarth thinks that Miss McCutcheon is young and beautiful and can't control the children. He favors an old experienced and strict teacher to teach and control the children. He wants "an old battle-axe" not a "bathing beauty" like her.

Q:43 What is Applegarth's complaint about the sea? (important)

Ans: Applegarth complains that the quality of the stuff the sea is washing up isn't good any more.

Q:44 What kind of gadget does the writer describe?

Ans: The writer describes the gadget that is found in New York. He says that it is like a safety razor and with its help anyone can have a haircut.

Q:45 Who is Miss McCutcheon? How does she feel about her job?

Ans: Miss McCutcheon is a new teacher at school who has come from San Francisco. She feels overwhelmed and defeated. She wants to quit and go back to home.