

PLAYS (Book III)

*Complete Short Questions and Answers*

*For 1<sup>st</sup> year students*



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 had not seen him clearly. She was too frightened and confused to remember him. Therefore, 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?**

**Ans:** The Girl was coming from a party and her car ran out of gas. It was a dark stormy night. There were almost no cars on the road so she locked her car and started walking on the road. She thought she could get the bus when it came along. So, these circumstances forced the girl to leave her car.

**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 being kind and supportive.

**Q:4 What was the condition of the weather?**

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

**Q:5 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:6 Does the Girl become suspicious of the First Man as the play progress?**

**Ans:** No, the Girl does not become suspicious of the First Man as the play progress because when she enters the bus station, the First Man was already present there before her. Therefore, she finds no reason to suspect him to be the killer. Moreover, his kind words and supportive attitude make her believe that he is her well-wisher.

**Q:7 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 frightened. Moreover, his remarks greatly confused and disturbed her. His inquisitiveness further upset her.

**Q:8 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 and signaled her not to accompany the second man.

**Q:9 Describe the setting of the play.**

The play "Heat Lightning" is set in the drab interior of a bus station along a deserted high way somewhere in the Midwest. There are two benches back-to-back; one faces the audience and one faces the rear wall. A door up Center leads out onto the road. Two doors, up Left and down Left. The room is lighted by an overhanging light with a dull green shade. A large bus schedule is also hung on the wall.

**Q:10 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, a dog that attacked the killer made her escape possible.

**Q: 11 What is the significance of storm in the play?**

**Ans:** The stormy weather creates an environment of suspense and horror. 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 its climax due to storm. It was due to storm that a dog comes there to take shelter and saves the Girl.

**Q: 12 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 as hers. It was the same flashlight which she had dropped while running from the killer.

## **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 hear the minds. He can sense what is going 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 Powers, he wants 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 a planet which is much more 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. His civilization is much more advanced and developed. According to him, the human civilization is in the initial stages of development. Contrary to the human race, he and his people do not die. His flying saucer, immense knowledge and extraordinary powers 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. It is a tool that spreads terrorism. It destroys the peace of the society. Such hurdles prove to be highly destructive and hinder the cause of development of a society.

**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 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 mentality of human beings. 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 did not explain his moral philosophy, verbally, yet we see his morals in his conduct and behavior. Even the harsh treatment by the troops and General Powers did not make him lose his calm poise. He bore every criticism without being insolent. Moreover, he did not misuse his extraordinary powers because he knew that the use of force in a society causes pain, destruction and even death. He appeared 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 US 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 has had a thorough study of the planet, about its geographical features as well as the civilization. He proclaims that the people of Earth are his hobby and their current period which he believes to be the initial stages of human civilization, are the most fascinating ones.

**Q:10 How does Kreton impress General Powers?**

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

**Q:11 What kind of girl Ellen is?**

**Ans:** Ellen is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Spelding. She is a lively girl of twenty. She is engaged to John who is a farmer and she wants to live a happy life with him on his farm after getting married to him. She likes Kreton and wishes to travel in his spaceship.

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

**Ans:** Mrs. Spelding is a simple and loving lady. Although she knows that her husband's job is important for running house, she is not interested in the live broadcast of her husband and looks bored and vague. She becomes worried about the safety of her house when the spaceship lands right in her rose-garden. She likes Kreton and welcomes him in her house.

## 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 of life is *"Take-it-easy way."*

**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 humor, 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?**

**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.

**Q:5 What is Harry doing when the play begins?**

**Ans:** When the play begins, Clay Larrabee is giving Harry a haircut. While getting the haircut, Harry is reading a book.



**Q:6 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:7 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:8 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:9 What kind of judge was Applegarth?**

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

**Q:10 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:11 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:12 What year it is?**

**Ans:** The year is 1953.

**Q:13 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:14 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:15 How much did Harry pay for his shop?**

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

**Q:16 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:17 What has attracted Harry and other people to O.K-by-the-Sea? Do you think that it resembles an ideal town?**

**Ans:** The simplicity, innocence and contentment of the people of the O.K by-the-Sea attracted Harry and the other people. The inhabitants of the town showed that they were satisfied with their lives. They were poor. Many of them could not even pay for a haircut. Mostly, they grew vegetables

to sell but they were loving and caring. They were the people who were poor materially but they were rich spiritually. They never complaint about their poverty. They lived simple and honest lives.

**Q:18 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:19 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:20 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. In some cases, he gives people haircut even free of cost.

**Q:21 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:22 Why does the writer not open the oyster?**

**Ans:** The writer does not open the oyster as he claims that he wants the whole thing and he believes that the pearl hasn’t stopped growing yet.

**Q:23 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:24 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:25 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:26 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:27 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:28 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:29 What kind of haircut does Miss McCutcheon want?**

**Ans:** Miss McCutcheon wants to have a poodle haircut from Harry.

**Q:30 Why does Miss McCutcheon want a poodle haircut?**

**Or**

**What does Miss McCutcheon think that a poodle haircut will do for her appearance?**

**Ans:** She wants to fit in the society of the town and feel easy.

**Q:31 Can Harry give a poodle haircut?**

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

**Q:32 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 gets a ride down in a truck and made a stop- over at O.K-by-the-Sea while passing through that region.

**Q:33 What does Clark give Harry? For what purpose?**

**Ans:** Clark gives thirty dollars to Harry so that he could give it to Clay who will give it to his mother.

**Q:34 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:35 What work does the man do?**

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

**Q:36 What does Clay find near Black Rock? (important)**

**Ans:** Clay finds one oyster near Black Rock.

**Q:37 What does Clay believe is in the oyster? How much is its worth?**

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

**Q:38 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 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:39 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:40 What does Greely have in a bottle?**

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

**Q:41 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:42 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 by opening it.

**Q:43 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:44 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:45 What kind of gadget does the writer describe?**

**Ans:** The writer describes the gadget that is like a safety razor with which one can have a haircut.

It is found in New York.