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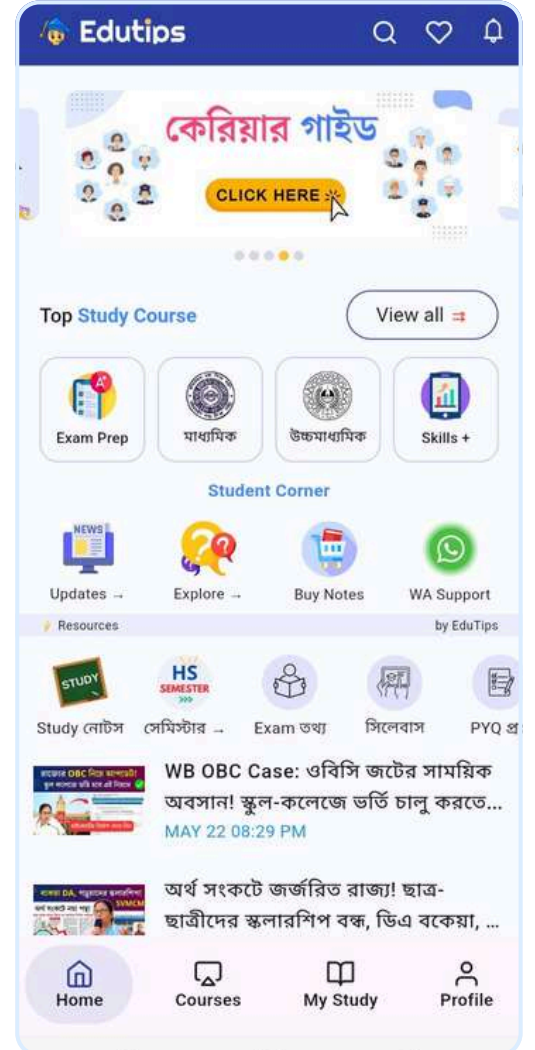


মাধ্যমিক প্রস্তুতি

উচ্চমাধ্যমিক সেমিস্টার

চাকরির পরীক্ষা প্রস্তুতি

WBJEE/Nursing





The Night Train at Deoli



RUSKIN BOND

About the Author :

Ruskin Bond (b. May 19, 1934) is one of India's most beloved writers, celebrated for his evocative storytelling, simple language, and deep connection to nature and rural India. Born in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, Bond spent his early years in Dehradun, which inspired much of his work. His debut novel, *The Room on the Roof* (1956), won the prestigious John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. Over the years, Bond has written numerous novels, essays, short stories, and children's books, earning accolades such as the Padma Shri (1999) and Padma Bhushan (2014). His stories often explore themes of nostalgia, childhood, and relationships, blending realism with poetic charm. Living in Landour, Mussoorie, Bond continues to write, drawing readers into the serene beauty of the Himalayan foothills.



About the Text :

Ruskin Bond's *Night Train at Deoli* captures the fleeting beauty of unspoken connections and the poignant charm of transitory relationships. The narrator recounts his encounters with a mysterious young woman selling baskets at Deoli station during his journeys. Her simplicity and enigmatic presence stir deep emotions in him, leaving a lasting impression. However, when he finally decides to meet her again, she is no longer there. The story poignantly reflects the impermanence of moments and the yearning for unfulfilled desires, making it relatable and deeply moving. With its vivid imagery and emotional depth, the narrative encapsulates the innocence of youthful longing and the bittersweet pain of missed opportunities.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

Text :

When I was at college I used to spend my summer vacations in Dehra, at my grandmother's place. I would leave the plains early in May and return late in July. Deoli was a small station about thirty miles from Dehra; it marked the beginning of the heavy jungles of the Indian Terai.¹

The train would reach Deoli at about five in the morning, when the station would be dimly lit with electric bulbs and oil-lamps, and the jungle across the railway tracks would just be visible in the faint light of dawn. Deoli had only lone platform, an office for the stationmaster and a waiting room. The platform boasted a tea stall, a fruit vendor, and a few stray dogs; not much else, because the train stopped there for only ten minutes before rushing on into the forests.

Why it stopped at Deoli. I don't know. Nothing ever happened there. Nobody got off the train and nobody got in. There were never any coolies on the platform. But the train would halt there a full ten minutes, and then a bell would sound, the guard would blow his whistle, and presently Deoli would be left behind and forgotten.

I used to wonder what happened in Deoli, behind the station walls. I always felt sorry for that lonely little platform, and for the place that nobody wanted to visit. I decided that one day I would get off the train at Deoli, and spend the day there, just to please the town. www.edutips.in

I was eighteen, visiting my grandmother, and the night train stopped at Deoli. A girl came down the platform, selling baskets.

It was a cold morning and the girl had a shawl thrown across her shoulders. Her feet were bare and her clothes were old, but she was a young girl, walking gracefully and with dignity.

When she came to my window, she stopped. She saw that I was looking at her intently, but at first she pretended not to notice. She had a pale skin, set off by shiny black hair, and dark, troubled eyes. And then those eyes, searching and eloquent, met mine.

She stood by my window for some time and neither of us said anything. But when she moved on, I found myself leaving my seat and going to the carriage door, and stood waiting on the platform, looking the other way. I walked across to the tea stall. A kettle was boiling over on a small fire, but the owner of the stall was busy serving tea somewhere on the train. The girl followed me behind the stall.

¹Indian Terai : A fertile, marshy region in the Himalayan foothills, rich in biodiversity, supporting agriculture and wildlife.





THE NIGHT TRAIN AT DEOLI

'Do you want to buy a basket?' she asked. 'They are very strong, made of the finest cane ...'

'No,' I said, 'I don't want a basket.'

We stood looking at each other for what seemed a very long time, and she said, 'Are you sure you don't want a basket?'

'All right, give me one,' I said, and I took the one on top and gave her a rupee, hardly daring to touch her fingers.

As she was about to speak, the guard blew his whistle; she said something, but it was lost in the clanging of the bell and the hissing of the engine. I had to run back to my compartment. The carriage shuddered and jolted forward.

I watched her as the platform slipped away. She was alone on the platform and she did not move, but she was looking at me and smiling. I watched her until the signal box² came in the way, and then the jungle hid the station, but I could still see her standing there alone.

I sat up awake for the rest of the journey. I could not rid my mind of the picture of the girl's face and her dark, smouldering eyes.³

But when I reached Dehra the incident became blurred and distant, for there were other things to occupy my mind. It was only when I was making the return journey, two months later, that I remembered the girl.

I was looking out for her as the train drew into the station, and I felt an unexpected thrill when I saw her walking up the platform. I sprang off the footboard⁴ and waved to her.

When she saw me, she smiled. She was pleased that I remembered her. I was pleased that, she remembered me. We were both pleased, and it was almost like a meeting of old friends.

She did not go down the length of the train selling baskets, but came straight to the tea stall; her dark eyes were suddenly filled with light. We said nothing for some time but we couldn't have been more eloquent.

I felt the impulse to put her on the train there and then, and take her away with me; I could not bear the thought of having to watch her recede into the distance

²Signal box : a structure used on railways to house signaling equipment and operators to control train movements.

³Smouldering eyes : an intense and passionate gaze that conveys strong emotions.

⁴Footboard : a horizontal board or platform located at the bottom of a railway carriage.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

of Deoli station. I took the baskets from her hand and put them down on the ground. She put out her hand for one of them, but I caught her hand and held it.

'I have to go to Delhi,' I said.

She nodded. 'I do not have to go anywhere.'

The guard blew his whistle for the train to leave and how I hated the guard for doing that.

'I will come again,' I said. 'Will you be here?'

She nodded again, and, as she nodded, the bell clanged and the train slid forward. I had to wrench my hand away from the girl and run for the moving train.

This time I did not forget her. She was with me for the remainder of the journey, and for long after. All that year she was a bright, living thing. And when the college term finished I packed in haste and left for Dehra earlier than usual. My grandmother would be pleased at my eagerness to see her.

I was nervous and anxious as the train drew into Deoli, because I was wondering what I should say to the girl and what I should do. I was determined that I wouldn't stand helplessly before her, hardly able to speak or do anything about my feelings.

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The train came to Deoli, and I looked up and down the platform, but I could not see the girl anywhere.

I opened the door and stepped off the footboard. I was deeply disappointed, and overcome by a sense of foreboding. I felt I had to do something, and so I ran up to the station-master and said, 'Do you know the girl who used to sell baskets here?'

'No, I don't,' said the station-master. 'And you'd better get on the train if you don't want to be left behind.'

But I paced up and down the platform, and stared over the railings at the station yard; all I saw was a mango tree and a dusty road leading into the jungle. Where did the road go? The train was moving out of the station, and I had to run up the platform and jump for the door of my compartment. Then, as the train gathered speed and rushed through the forests, I sat brooding in front of the window.

What could I do about finding a girl I had seen only twice, who had hardly spoken to me, and about whom I knew nothing - absolutely nothing - but for whom I felt a tenderness and responsibility that I had never felt before?





THE NIGHT TRAIN AT DEOLI

My grandmother was not pleased with my visit after all, because I didn't stay at her place more than a couple of weeks. I felt restless and ill-at-ease. So I took the train back to the plains, meaning to ask further questions of the station-master at Deoli.

But at Deoli there was a new station-master. The previous man had been transferred to another post within the past week. The new man didn't know anything about the girl who sold baskets. I found the owner of the tea stall, a small, shrivelled-up man, wearing greasy clothes, and asked him if he knew anything about the girl with the baskets.

'Yes, there was such a girl here, I remember quite well,' he said. 'But she has stopped coming now.'

'Why?' I asked. 'What happened to her?'

'How should I know?' said the man. 'She was nothing to me.'

And once again I had to run for the train.

As Deoli platform receded, I decided that one day I would have to break journey there, spend a day in the town, make enquiries, and find the girl who had stolen my heart with nothing but a look from her dark, impatient eyes.

With this thought I consoled myself throughout my last term in college. I went to Dehra again in the summer and when, in the early hours of the morning, the night train drew into Deoli station, I looked up and down the platform for signs of the girl, knowing, I wouldn't find her but hoping just the same.

Somehow, I couldn't bring myself to break journey at Deoli and spend a day there. (If it was all fiction or a film, I reflected, I would have got down and cleaned up the mystery and reached a suitable ending for the whole thing). I think I was afraid to do this. I was afraid of discovering what really happened to the girl. Perhaps she was no longer in Deoli, perhaps she was married, perhaps she had fallen ill.

In the last few years I have passed through Deoli many times, and I always look out of the carriage window, half expecting to see the same unchanged face smiling up at me. I wonder what happens in Deoli, behind the station walls. But I will never break my journey there. It may spoil my game. I prefer to keep hoping and dreaming, and looking out of the window up and down that lonely platform, waiting for the girl with the baskets.

I never break my journey at Deoli, but I pass through as often as I can.





Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given:

- Where does the narrator meet the young girl in the story?
 - On a crowded bus stop
 - In a bustling marketplace
 - On the railway platform at Deoli
 - In a quiet park
- The girl was selling
 - plastic buckets
 - cane baskets
 - iron buckles
 - flower pots
- A : The narrator's game will be spoilt.
B : The narrator will never break his journey at Deoli.
 - A is TRUE, but B is FALSE
 - A is FALSE but B is TRUE
 - A and B are both TRUE
 - A and B are both FALSE
- Match the characters with their descriptions:

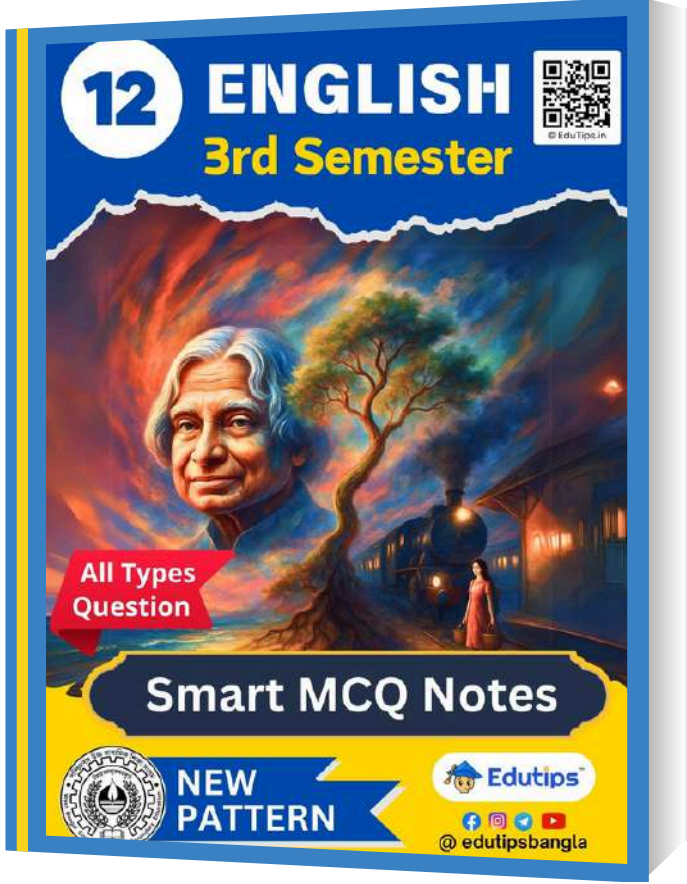
A	B
i. The station master	a. could remember the girl.
ii. The owner of the tea stall	b. was not pleased with the narrator's visit.
iii. The narrator's grandmother	c. had joined recently
iv. The new station-master	d. instructed the narrator to board the train.

- i-b, ii-c, iii-a, iv-b
 - i-d, ii-b, iii-c, iv-a
 - i-d, ii-a, iii-b, iv-c
 - i-b, ii-a, iii-d, iv-c
- Arrange the following sentences in proper sequence :
 - The train would reach Deoli at about five in the morning.
 - A girl came down the platform selling baskets.
 - A kettle was boiling over on a small fire.
 - Do you want to buy a basket ?", she asked.
 - i-iii-iv-ii
 - i-ii-iii-iv
 - ii-i-iii-iv
 - iii-iv-ii-i



Class 12 ENGLISH 3rd Sem

MCQ, Short Read Notes



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Strong Roots



A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM

About the Author :

Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam (1931-2015) was one of the pioneers of aerospace engineering in India. For a major part of his life he worked as a scientist in Indian space programmes. Some of his famous works are *India 2020*, *Ignited Minds*, *Wings of Fire*. He was the President of India from 2002 to 2007.



About the text :

Strong Roots is an extract from Dr. Kalam's autobiography *Wings of Fire*. In this extract, he talks about his childhood in his hometown. The piece presents a delightful sketch of the author's early life and the development of his spiritual growth.

Text :

I was born into a middle-class Tamil family in the island town of Rameswaram in the erstwhile Madras state. My father, Jainulabdeen, had neither much formal education nor much wealth; despite these disadvantages, he possessed great innate wisdom and a true generosity of spirit. He had an ideal helpmate in my mother, Ashiamma. I do not recall the exact number of people she fed every day, but I am quite certain that far more outsiders ate with us than all the members of our own family put together.

My parents were widely regarded as an ideal couple. My mother's lineage was the more distinguished, one of her forebears having been bestowed the title of 'Bahadur' by the British.

I was one of many children—a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. We lived in our ancestral house, which was built in the middle of the 19th century. It was a fairly large pucca house, made of limestone and brick, on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram. My austere father





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries. However, all necessities were provided for, in terms of food, medicine or clothing. In fact, I would say mine was a very secure childhood, materially and emotionally.

I normally ate with my mother, sitting on the floor of the kitchen. She would place a banana leaf before me, on which she then ladled rice and aromatic sambar, a variety of sharp, home-made pickle and a dollop of fresh coconut chutney.

The Shiva temple, which made Rameswaram so famous to pilgrims, was about a ten-minute walk from our house. Our locality was predominantly¹ Muslim, but there were quite a lot of Hindu families too, living amicably² with their Muslim neighbours. There was a very old mosque in our locality where my father would take me for evening prayers. I had not the faintest idea of the meaning of the Arabic prayers chanted, but I was totally convinced that they reached God. When my father came out of the mosque after the prayers, people of different religions would be sitting outside, waiting for him. Many of them offered bowls of water to my father, who would dip his fingertips in them and say a prayer. This water was then carried home for invalids³. I also remember people visiting our home to offer thanks after being cured. Father always smiled and asked them to thank Allah, the merciful. edutips.in

The high priest of Rameswaram temple, Pakshi Lakshmana Sastry, was a very close friend of my father's. One of the most vivid memories of my early childhood is of the two men, each in traditional attire, discussing spiritual matters. When I was old enough to ask questions, I asked my father about the relevance of prayer. My father told me there was nothing mysterious about prayer. Rather, prayer made possible a communion⁴ of the spirit between people. "When you pray," he said, "you transcend your body and become a part of the cosmos, which knows no division of wealth, age, caste, or creed."

My father could convey complex spiritual concepts in very simple, down-to-earth Tamil. He once told me, "In his own time, in his own place, in what he really is, and in the stage he has reached — good or bad — every human being is a specific element within the whole of the manifest divine Being. So why be

¹predominantly: mostly.

²amicably: in a friendly manner.

³invalids: people with incapacities.

⁴communion: a special communication.





STRONG ROOTS

afraid of difficulties, sufferings and problems? When troubles come, try to understand the relevance of your sufferings. Adversity⁵ always presents opportunities for introspection⁶."

"Why don't you say this to the people who come to you for help and advice?" I asked my father. He put his hands on my shoulders and looked straight into my eyes. For quite some time he said nothing, as if he was judging my capacity to comprehend his words. Then he answered in a low, deep voice. His answer filled me with a strange energy and enthusiasm: "Whenever human beings find themselves alone, as a natural reaction, they start looking for company. Whenever they are in trouble, they look for someone to help them. Whenever they reach an impasse⁷, they look to someone to show them the way out. Every recurrent anguish, longing, and desire finds its own special helper. For the people who come to me in distress⁸, I am but a go-between in their effort to propitiate⁹ demonic forces with prayers and offerings. This is not a correct approach at all and should never be followed. One must understand the difference between a fear-ridden vision of destiny and the vision that enables us to seek the enemy of fulfilment within ourselves."

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I remember my father starting his day at 4 am by reading the namaz¹⁰ before dawn. After the namaz, he used to walk down to a small coconut grove we owned, about four miles from our home. He would return with about a dozen coconuts tied together thrown over his shoulder, and only then would he have his breakfast. This remained his routine even when he was in his late sixties.

I have, throughout my life, tried to emulate my father in my own world of science and technology. I have endeavoured to understand the fundamental truths revealed to me by my father, and feel convinced that there exists a divine power that can lift one up from confusion, misery, melancholy and failure, and guide one to one's true place. And once an individual severs his emotional and physical bond, he is on the road to freedom, happiness and peace of mind.

⁵adversity : hardship.

⁶introspection : thinking deeply about oneself.

⁷impasse : a situation which allows no progress.

⁸distress : sadness.

⁹propitiate : appease.

¹⁰namaz : Urdu word for prayer.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given :

- What is the significance of the title "Strong Roots" in this extract?
 - It refers to the author's family tree
 - It symbolizes the important values instilled in the author during his childhood
 - It describes the strong trees near his childhood home
 - It foreshadows the author's future achievements
- Who is Jainulabdeen in the extract?
 - A close friend of the author's father
 - The author's grandfather
 - The author's father
 - A teacher of the author
- What lesson does the author learn from his father's words about troubles and sufferings?
 - To avoid difficulties at all costs.
 - To view challenges as opportunities for growth and self-discovery.
 - To rely on others for help during difficult times.
 - To blame God for misfortune.
- Match the following aspects of "Strong Roots" with their corresponding descriptions:

Column A	Column B
1. Jainulabdeen	A. Kalam's father, a man of wisdom
2. Ashiamma	B. Kalam's mother, known for her generosity
3. Pakshi Lakshmana Sastry	C. Hindu priest and friend of Jainulabdeen
4. Rameswaram	D. Kalam's hometown reflecting religious harmony

- 1-A, 2-B, 3-C, 4-D
 - 1-B, 2-D, 3-A, 4-C
 - None of the above
 - All are incorrect
5. Reason: Kalam's father believed that prayer provides mental peace and helps transcend the body.
Assertion: Prayer is essential for overcoming life's challenges according to "Strong Roots".

Options:

- Both Reason and Assertion are true and Reason explains Assertion
- Both Reason and Assertion are true but Reason does not explain Assertion
- Reason is true but Assertion is false
- Both Reason and Assertion are false





The Bet



ANTON CHEKHOV

About the Author :

Anton Chekhov (1860-1904) was a Russian playwright and short-story writer, considered one of the greatest writers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His works are known for their subtle character development, poignant observations of human nature, and a blend of humor and melancholy. Chekhov's writing often explored themes of social isolation, disillusionment and the complexities of human relationships. He is a master of the short story form, known for his economy of language and ability to create vivid and memorable characters in just a few pages.



About the Text :

The Bet explores several complex themes, including the nature of freedom, the meaning of life, and the value of material wealth. The story raises questions about what truly constitutes a fulfilling existence. Is it physical freedom, intellectual pursuit, or the accumulation of riches? Chekhov uses the extreme situation of the bet to examine the psychological impact of isolation and the transformative power of knowledge. The story also delves into the themes of pride, regret, and the ultimate contempt for worldly possessions when faced with existential questions. The banker's initial arrogance and the lawyer's acceptance of the bet-both stem from a certain kind of pride, which is ultimately challenged and overturned by the lawyer's profound transformation. The story leaves the reader pondering the true meaning of happiness and the sacrifices people make in its pursuit. The present text has been translated from Russian by Constance Garnett.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

Text:

It was a dark autumn night. The old banker was walking up and down his study and remembering how, fifteen years before, he had given a party one autumn evening. There had been many clever men there, and there had been interesting conversations. Among other things they had talked of capital punishment¹. The majority of the guests, among whom were many journalists and intellectual men, disapproved of the death penalty. They considered that form of punishment out of date, immoral, and unsuitable for Christian States. In the opinion of some of them the death penalty ought to be replaced everywhere by imprisonment for life.

"I don't agree with you," said their host the banker. "I have not tried either the death penalty or imprisonment for life, but if one may judge a priori², the death penalty is more moral and more humane than imprisonment for life. Capital punishment kills a man at once, but lifelong imprisonment kills him slowly. Which executioner is the more humane, he who kills you in a few minutes or he who drags the life out of you in the course of many years?"

"Both are equally immoral," observed one of the guests, "for they both have the same object—to take away life. The State is not God. It has not the right to take away what it cannot restore when it wants to".

Among the guests was a young lawyer, a young man of five-and-twenty. When he was asked his opinion, he said:

"The death sentence and the life sentence are equally immoral, but if I had to choose between the death penalty and imprisonment for life, I would certainly choose the second. To live anyhow is better than not at all."

A lively discussion arose. The banker, who was younger and more nervous in those days, was suddenly carried away by excitement; he struck the table with his fist and shouted at the young man:

"It's not true! I'll bet you two millions you wouldn't stay in solitary confinement for five years." "If you mean that in earnest," said the young man, "I'll take the bet, but I would stay not five but fifteen years."

¹Capital punishment: Death sentence.

²A priori: The Latin term means without empirical evidence.





THE BET

"Fifteen? Done!" cried the banker. "Gentlemen, I stake two millions!"

"Agreed! You stake your millions and I stake my freedom!" said the young man. And this wild, senseless bet was carried out! The banker, spoilt and frivolous³, with millions beyond his reckoning, was delighted at the bet. At supper he made fun of the young man, and said:

"Think better of it, young man, while there is still time. To me two millions are a trifle, but you are losing three or four of the best years of your life. I say three or four, because you won't stay longer. Don't forget either, you unhappy man, that voluntary confinement is a great deal harder to bear than compulsory. The thought that you have the right to step out in liberty at any moment will poison your whole existence in prison. I am sorry for you."

And now the banker, walking to and fro, remembered all this, and asked himself:

"What was the object of that bet? What is the good of that man's losing fifteen years of his life and my throwing away two millions? Can it prove that the death penalty is better or worse than imprisonment for life? No, no. It was all nonsensical and meaningless. On my part it was the caprice⁴ of a pampered man, and on his part simple greed for money...."

Then he remembered what followed that evening. It was decided that the young man should spend the years of his captivity under the strictest supervision in one of the lodges in the banker's garden. It was agreed that for fifteen years he should not be free to cross the threshold of the lodge, to see human beings, to hear the human voice, or to receive letters and newspapers. He was allowed to have a musical instrument and books, and was allowed to write letters, to drink wine, and to smoke. By the terms of the agreement, the only relations he could have with the outer world were by a little window made purposely for that object. He might have anything he wanted-books, music, wine, and so on-in any quantity he desired by writing an order, but could only receive them through the window. The agreement provided for every detail and every trifle⁵ that would make his

³ *Frivolous* : lighthearted to the point of being a bit silly.

⁴ *Caprice* : A sudden and unaccountable change of mood or behavior.

⁵ *Trifle* : all the small, seemingly insignificant details.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

imprisonment strictly solitary, and bound the young man to stay there exactly fifteen years, beginning from twelve o'clock of November 14, 1870, and ending at twelve o'clock of November 14, 1885. The slightest attempt on his part to break the conditions, if only two minutes before the end, released the banker from the obligation to pay him two millions.

For the first year of his confinement, as far as one could judge from his brief notes, the prisoner suffered severely from loneliness and depression. The sounds of the piano could be heard continually day and night from his lodge. He refused wine and tobacco. Wine, he wrote, excites the desires, and desires are the worst foes of the prisoner; and besides, nothing could be more dreary than drinking good wine and seeing no one. And tobacco spoilt the air of his room. In the first year the books he sent for were principally of a light character; novels with a complicated love plot, sensational and fantastic stories, and so on.

In the second year the piano was silent in the lodge, and the prisoner asked only for the classics. In the fifth year music was audible again, and the prisoner asked for wine. Those who watched him through the window said that all that year he spent doing nothing but eating and drinking and lying on his bed, frequently yawning and angrily talking to himself. He did not read books. Sometimes at night he would sit down to write; he would spend hours writing, and in the morning tear up all that he had written. More than once he could be heard crying.

In the second half of the sixth year the prisoner began zealously studying languages, philosophy, and history. He threw himself eagerly into these studies—so much so that the banker had enough to do to get him the books he ordered. In the course of four years some six hundred volumes were procured at his request. It was during this period that the banker received the following letter from his prisoner:

"My dear Jailer, I write you these lines in six languages. Show them to people who know the languages. Let them read them. If they find not one mistake I implore you to fire a shot in the garden. That shot will show me that my efforts have not been thrown away. The geniuses of all ages and of all lands speak different languages, but the same flame burns in them all. Oh, if you only knew what unearthly happiness my soul feels now from being able to understand them!" The prisoner's desire was fulfilled. The banker ordered two shots to be fired in the garden.





THE BET

Then after the tenth year, the prisoner sat immovably at the table and read nothing but the Gospel⁶. It seemed strange to the banker that a man who in four years had mastered six hundred learned volumes should waste nearly a year over one thin book easy of comprehension. Theology⁷ and histories of religion followed the Gospels.

In the last two years of his confinement the prisoner read an immense quantity of books quite indiscriminately. At one time he was busy with the natural sciences, then he would ask for Byron⁸ or Shakespeare⁹. There were notes in which he demanded at the same time books on chemistry, and a manual of medicine, and a novel, and some treatise on philosophy or theology. His reading suggested a man swimming in the sea among the wreckage of his ship, and trying to save his life by greedily clutching first at one spar and then at another.

The old banker remembered all this, and thought:

"To-morrow at twelve o'clock he will regain his freedom. By our agreement I ought to pay him two millions. If I do pay him, it is all over with me: I shall be utterly ruined."

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Fifteen years before, his millions had been beyond his reckoning; now he was afraid to ask himself which were greater, his debts or his assets. Desperate gambling on the Stock Exchange, wild speculation and the excitability which he could not get over even in advancing years, had by degrees led to the decline of his fortune and the proud, fearless, self-confident millionaire had become a banker of middling rank, trembling at every rise and fall in his investments. "Cursed bet!" muttered the old man, clutching his head in despair "Why didn't the man die? He is only forty now. He will take my last penny from me, he will marry, will enjoy life, will gamble on the Exchange; while I shall look at him with envy like a beggar, and hear from him every day the same sentence: 'I am indebted to you for the happiness

⁶Gospel : the first four books of the New Testament in the Bible: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These books tell the story of Jesus' life, teachings, death, and resurrection.

⁷Theology : the study of God and religious beliefs.

⁸Byron : George Gordon Byron (Lord Byron) was a major English Romantic poet.

⁹Shakespeare : William Shakespeare is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

of my life, let me help you!" No, it is too much! The one means of being saved from bankruptcy and disgrace is the death of that man!"

It struck three o'clock, the banker listened; everyone was asleep in the house and nothing could be heard outside but the rustling of the chilled trees. Trying to make no noise, he took from a fireproof safe the key of the door which had not been opened for fifteen years, put on his overcoat, and went out of the house.

It was dark and cold in the garden. Rain was falling. A damp cutting wind was racing about the garden, howling and giving the trees no rest. The banker strained his eyes, but could see neither the earth nor the white statues, nor the lodge, nor the trees. Going to the spot where the lodge stood, he twice called the watchman. No answer followed. Evidently the watchman had sought shelter from the weather, and was now asleep somewhere either in the kitchen or in the greenhouse.

"If I had the pluck to carry out my intention," thought the old man, "Suspicion would fall first upon the watchman."

He felt in the darkness for the steps and the door, and went into the entry of the lodge. Then he groped¹⁰ his way into a little passage and lighted a match. There was not a soul there. There was a bedstead with no bedding on it, and in the corner there was a dark cast-iron stove. The seals on the door leading to the prisoner's rooms were intact.

When the match went out, the old man, trembling with emotion, peeped through the little window. A candle was burning dimly in the prisoner's room. He was sitting at the table. Nothing could be seen but his back, the hair on his head, and his hands. Open books were lying on the table, on the two easy-chairs, and on the carpet near the table.

Five minutes passed and the prisoner did not once stir. Fifteen years' imprisonment had taught him to sit still. The banker tapped at the window with his finger, and the prisoner made no movement whatever in response. Then the banker cautiously broke the seals off the door and put the key in the keyhole. The rusty lock gave a grating sound and the door creaked. The banker expected to hear at once footsteps and a cry of astonishment, but three minutes passed and it was as quiet as ever in the room. He made up his mind to go in.

¹⁰Groped : To search for something blindly or uncertainly with hands.





THE BET

At the table a man unlike ordinary people was sitting motionless. He was a skeleton with the skin drawn tight over his bones, with long curls like a woman's and a shaggy¹¹ beard. His face was yellow with an earthy tint in it, his cheeks were hollow, his back long and narrow, and the hand on which his shaggy head was propped was so thin and delicate that it was dreadful to look at it. His hair was already streaked with silver, and seeing his emaciated¹², aged-looking face, no one would have believed that he was only forty. He was asleep.... In front of his bowed head there lay on the table a sheet of paper on which there was something written in fine handwriting.

"Poor creature!" thought the banker, "he is asleep and most likely dreaming of the millions. And I have only to take this half-dead man, throw him on the bed, stifle him a little with the pillow, and the most conscientious¹³ expert would find no sign of a violent death. But let us first read what he has written here...."

The banker took the page from the table and read as follows:

"To-morrow at twelve o'clock I regain my freedom and the right to associate with other men, but before I leave this room and see the sunshine, I think it necessary to say a few words to you. With a clear conscience I tell you, as before God, who beholds me, that I despise freedom and life and health, and all that in your books is called the good things of the world.

"For fifteen years I have been intently studying earthly life. It is true I have not seen the earth nor men, but in your books I have drunk fragrant wine, I have sung songs, I have hunted stags and wild boars in the forests, have loved women.... Beauties as ethereal as clouds, created by the magic of your poets and geniuses, have visited me at night, and have whispered in my ears wonderful tales that have set my brain in a whirl. In your books I have climbed to the peaks of Elburz and Mont Blanc¹⁴, and from there I have seen the sun rise and have

¹¹Shaggy: Untidy.

¹²Emaciated: abnormally thin or weak.

¹³Conscientious: extremely careful and thorough in doing what is right or proper.

¹⁴Elburz and Mont Blanc: Elbrus is located in the Caucasus Mountains of Russia, near the border with Georgia, and Mont Blanc is situated in the Alps mountain range, on the border between France and Italy, examples of the heights of earthly experience that the lawyer explores vicariously through books.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

watched it at evening flood the sky, the ocean, and the mountain-tops with gold and crimson. I have watched from there the lightning flashing over my head and cleaving the storm-clouds. I have seen green forests, fields, rivers, lakes, towns. I have heard the singing of the sirens¹⁵, and the strains of the shepherds' pipes; I have touched the wings of comely¹⁶ devils who flew down to converse with me of God.... In your books I have flung myself into the bottomless pit, performed miracles, slain, burned towns, preached new religions, conquered whole kingdoms....

"Your books have given me wisdom. All that the unresting thought of man has created in the ages is compressed into a small compass in my brain. I know that I am wiser than all of you.

"And I despise your books, I despise wisdom and the blessings of this world. It is all worthless, fleeting, illusory, and deceptive, like a mirage¹⁷. You may be proud, wise, and fine, but death will wipe you off the face of the earth as though you were no more than mice burrowing under the floor, and your posterity, your history, your immortal geniuses will burn or freeze together with the earthly globe.

"You have lost your reason and taken the wrong path. You have taken lies for truth, and hideousness¹⁸ for beauty. You would marvel if, owing to strange events of some sorts, frogs and lizards suddenly grew on apple and orange trees instead of fruit, or if roses began to smell like a sweating horse; so I marvel at you who exchange heaven for earth. I don't want to understand you. To prove to you in action how I despise all that you live by, I renounce¹⁹ the two millions of which I once dreamed as of paradise and which now I despise. To deprive myself of the right to the money I shall go out from here five hours before the time fixed, and so break the compact²⁰..."

¹⁵ Sirens : In Greek mythology sirens are creatures whose singing lured sailors to their death.

¹⁶ Comely : attractive or pleasing.

¹⁷ Mirage : something that appears to be real or possible but is actually not.

¹⁸ Hideousness : Quality of being extremely ugly or unpleasant.

¹⁹ Renounce : Formal rejection of something.

²⁰ Compact : Contract or Agreement.





THE BET

When the banker had read this he laid the page on the table, kissed the strange man on the head, and went out of the lodge, weeping. At no other time, even when he had lost heavily on the Stock Exchange, had he felt so great a contempt for himself. When he got home he lay on his bed, but his tears and emotion kept him for hours from sleeping.

Next morning the watchmen ran in with pale faces, and told him they had seen the man who lived in the lodge climb out of the window into the garden, go to the gate, and disappear. The banker went at once with the servants to the lodge and made sure of the flight of his prisoner. To avoid arousing unnecessary talk, he took from the table the writing in which the millions were renounced, and when he got home locked it up in the fireproof safe.

Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given:

- What was the subject of the initial discussion at the banker's party?
 - Love and marriage www.edutips.in
 - Capital punishment
 - The stock market
 - Literature and philosophy
- How long was the lawyer supposed to stay in solitary confinement?
 - 10 years
 - 15 years
 - 20 years
 - 5 years
- Assertion (A): The lawyer left his confinement before the bet ended.
Reason (R): He realized that material wealth and worldly pleasures were meaningless.
 - Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
 - Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
 - A is true, but R is false.
 - A is false, but R is true.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

4. Assertion (A): The banker was relieved when the lawyer left early.
Reason (R): The banker had become wealthy by the end of the 15 years and was ready to pay.

- Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- A is true, but R is false.
- A is false, but R is true.

5. Match the themes with their descriptions:

Column A	Column B
1. Crime and Punishment	a. Debate over capital punishment vs life imprisonment
2. Freedom and Imprisonment	b. Lawyer frees himself from material desires
3. Greed	d. Banker's obsession with money
4. Wisdom	d. Lawyer's realization of life's futility

- 1-A, 2-B, 3-C, 4-D
- 1-B, 2-D, 3-A, 4-C
- None of the above
- All are incorrect





Our Casuarina Tree



TORU DUTT

About the Poet :

Toru Dutt (1856-1877) was an Indian poet and translator, often referred to as one of the earliest Indian writers to gain recognition in English literature. Born on March 4, 1856, in Bengal, India, she came from an affluent and well-educated Christian family. Despite her brief life, which ended at the age of 21 due to tuberculosis, Toru left a lasting impact on literature. She was fluent in several languages, including English, French and Sanskrit, and her works are remarkable for their emotional depth, lyrical beauty and cultural synthesis.



Toru Dutt composed "Our Casuarina Tree" during the final years of her life, likely around 1876, as a tribute to her childhood memories and her deceased siblings, Abju and Aru. The poem was posthumously published in her second collection, "Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan" (1882), edited by her father, Govin Chunder Dutt. This collection secured her place in the literary canon as a pioneer of Indo-Anglian poetry.

About the Poem :

The poem "Our Casuarina Tree" by Toru Dutt is a heartfelt tribute to a majestic tree that holds deep personal and emotional significance for the poet. Its beauty and grandeur dominate the poet's childhood memories. As she reflects on the past, the tree becomes a symbol of those cherished moments and her connection to her deceased siblings. The poet also sees the tree as a witness to her joys and sorrows. In the later stanzas, Toru expresses her desire to immortalize the tree through her poetry, ensuring it remains alive in memory and continues to evoke love and admiration. For her, the tree represents the bond between nature, memory and her loved ones who have passed away. Through this poem, Toru Dutt conveys themes of love, loss and the enduring power of nature to connect the past and the present. The casuarina tree becomes a symbol of both personal and universal emotions, blending nostalgia with hope for immortality.





REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

Like a huge Python¹, winding round and round
 The rugged trunk, indented² deep with scars,
 Up to its very summit near the stars,
 A creeper climbs, in whose embraces bound
 No other tree could live. But gallantly
 The giant wears the scarf, and flowers are hung
 In crimson clusters all the boughs among,
 Whereon all day are gathered bird and bee;
 And oft at nights the garden overflows
 With one sweet song that seems to have no close,
 Sung darkling from our tree, while men repose³.

When first my casement is wide open thrown
 At dawn, my eyes delighted on it rest;
 Sometimes, and most in winter, - on its crest
 A grey baboon sits statue-like alone
 Watching the sunrise; while on lower boughs
 His puny offspring leap about and play;
 And far and near kokilas hail the day;
 And to their pastures wend⁴ our sleepy cows;
 And in the shadow, on the broad tank cast
 By that hoar⁵ tree, so beautiful and vast,
 The water-lilies spring, like snow enmassed⁶.

But not because of its magnificence
 Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:

¹Python: A large snake; here, the creeper is compared to a python coiling around the tree.

²Indented: Marked with deep cuts or scars.

³Repose: Rest or sleep.

⁴Wend: To go or travel in a particular direction.

⁵Hoar: Grey or white; used to describe the ancient, majestic appearance of the tree.

⁶Snow enmassed: Refers to the white water lilies covering the surface of the pond, resembling snow.





OUR CASUARINA TREE

Beneath it we have played; though years may roll,
O sweet companions, loved with love intense,
For your sakes shall the tree be ever dear!
Blent with your images, it shall arise
In memory, till the hot tears blind mine eyes!
What is that dirge⁷-like murmur⁸ that I hear
Like the sea breaking on a shingle-beach?
It is the tree's lament, an eerie⁹ speech,
That haply¹⁰ to the unknown land may reach.

Unknown, yet well-known to the eye of faith!
Ah, I have heard that wail far, far away
In distant lands, by many a sheltered bay¹¹,
When slumbered in his cave the water-wraith¹²
And the waves gently kissed the classic shore
Of France or Italy, beneath the moon,
When earth lay tranced in a dreamless swoon:
And every time the music rose - before
Mine inner vision rose a form sublime,
Thy form, O Tree! as in my happy prime
I saw thee, in my own loved native clime¹³.
Therefore I fain would consecrate a lay¹⁴

⁷Dirge-like: Resembling a mournful song or lament.

⁸Murmur: A low, continuous sound, like whispering or the rustling of leaves.

⁹Eerie: Strange or ghostly; evokes a feeling of mystery.

¹⁰Haply: Perhaps or by chance.

¹¹Sheltered bay: A quiet coastal area protected from the wind.

¹²Water-wraith: A mythical spirit believed to dwell in water.

¹³Clime: A region or place, especially with reference to its climate.

¹⁴Lay: A poem or song.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

Unto thy honor, Tree, beloved of those
 Who now in blessed sleep for aye repose, -
 Dearer than life to me, alas! were they!
 Mayst thou be numbered when my days are done
 With deathless trees - like those in Borrowdale¹⁵,
 Under whose awful branches linger pale
 "Fear, trembling Hope, and Death, the skeleton,
 And Time the shadow;" and though weak the verse
 That would thy beauty fain, oh fain rehearse¹⁶,
 May Love defend thee from Oblivion's¹⁷ curse.

Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given:

- What does the poet mean when she says, "Beneath it we have played; though years may roll"?
 - The tree reminds her of childhood friends and memories
 - The tree has changed with time
 - She dislikes the tree in the present
 - The poet's friends disliked the tree
- Assertion (A): The poet hears the tree's "dirge-like murmur" in foreign lands.
 Reason (R): The sound reminds her of the friends she lost in childhood.
 - Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
 - Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
 - A is true, but R is false.
 - Both A and R are false.

¹⁵Borrowdale : A valley in England known for its ancient trees, famously described by poet William Wordsworth.

¹⁶Rehearse : To describe or recount something.

¹⁷Oblivion : The state of being forgotten.





OUR CASUARINA TREE

3. Arrange these feelings in the order they appear in the poem:

- Nostalgia for childhood companions
- Reverence for the tree's natural beauty
- Grief for loved ones now gone
- A desire to immortalize the tree through verse

Options:-

- $B \rightarrow A \rightarrow C \rightarrow D$
- $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow D \rightarrow C$
- $C \rightarrow A \rightarrow B \rightarrow D$
- $D \rightarrow A \rightarrow C \rightarrow B$

4. Case: "But not because of its magnificence
Dear is the Casuarina to my soul:"

Question: What do these lines reveal about the speaker's emotional connection to the tree?

- The speaker only admires the tree for its grand physical appearance.
- The speaker values the tree more for personal memories and emotional ties than its physical beauty.
- The speaker finds the tree unremarkable and not worth mentioning.
- The speaker is detached and indifferent to the tree's presence.

5. Match the places mentioned (Column A) with their significance (Column B):

Column A	Column B
a. Borrowdale	i. The original location of the Casuarina tree
b. France	ii. Site of classical beauty where memories arise
c. Italy	iii. A place where the poet recalled the tree abroad
d. Native clime	iv. Trees associated with memory and loss

Option:

- A-i, B-ii, C-iii, D-iv
- A-iv, B-iii, C-ii, D-i
- A-ii, B-i, C-iv, D-iii
- A-iii, B-ii, C-i, D-iv





Ulysses



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

About the Author :

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809 - 1892) was an English poet. He was the Poet Laureate during much of Queen Victoria's reign. Tennyson's early poetry, with its medievalism and powerful visual imagery, was a major influence on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Tennyson focused on short lyrics, such as 'Break, Break, Break', 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', among the most notable ones. Much of his verse was based on classical mythological themes, such as 'Ulysses' and 'The Lotus Eaters'. One of his most famous literary works, 'In Memoriam A.H.H.' was written to commemorate his friend Arthur Hallam.



About the Poem :

Ulysses was written in 1833 and was published in 1842. It is a popular example of the dramatic monologue. The mythical hero Ulysses describes his restlessness and discontent upon returning to his kingdom, Ithaca, after his numerous far-ranging voyages. Despite returning home in his old age, Ulysses yearns to be on the sea and explore new territories again. He is not overjoyed at his reunion with his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus. Ulysses is determined to transcend his age and his environment by travelling again. He does not want to be restricted by the mundane duties of his kingdom. The poem celebrates the unyielding desire for knowledge and experience even in the face of mortality.

It little profits that an idle¹ king,
By this still hearth², among these barren crags,

¹Idle : lazy.

²Hearth : the floor of a fireplace.





ULYSSES

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
 Unequal laws unto a savage race,
 That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
 I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
 Life to the lees: All times I have enjoy'd
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
 That loved me, and alone, on shore, and when
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades³
 Vext the dim sea⁴: I am become a name;
 For always roaming with a hungry heart
 Much have I seen and known; cities of men
 And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch where thro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades
 For ever and forever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
 As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me
 Little remains: but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,

³Hyades : the name of a star cluster and a group of nymphs in Greek mythology.

⁴Vext the dim Sea : a restless spirit who doesn't want to take a break from roaming the ocean in search of adventure.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
 This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle, —
 Well-loved of me, discerning⁵ to fulfil
 This labour, by slow prudence⁶ to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
 There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me —
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
 Death closes all: but something ere the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
 'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order smite
 The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths

⁵Discerning : having or showing good judgement.

⁶Prudence : the ability to act carefully and responsibly.





ULYSSES

Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
 It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
 We are not now that strength which in old days
 Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Quick Recall

Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given:

- What celestial object does Ulysses use as a metaphor for knowledge?
 - The Sun
 - The Moon
 - A Sinking Star
 - A Comet
- Assertion (A): Despite returning home in his old age, Ulysses yearns for the sea.

Reason (R): He yearns for new adventures and experiences.

- Both A and R are true and R is the correct explanation for A
 - Both A and R are true but R is not the correct explanation for A
 - A is true but R is False
 - Both A and R are False
- Ulysses compares himself to a _____ while expressing his fear of getting rusted.
 - A forgotten hero
 - A sword that is not used
 - A ship lost at sea
 - A tree shedding its leaves





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

4. Arrange the events in the order they appear in the poem:
- Ulysses beckons his friends to join him for yet another adventure.
 - Ulysses returns home in his old age
 - Telemachus becomes the ruler of the island.
 - Ulysses wishes to live multiple lives to experience everything.

Options :

- B-D-C-A
 - A-B-C-D
 - A-C-D-B
 - A-C-D-A
5. Case:

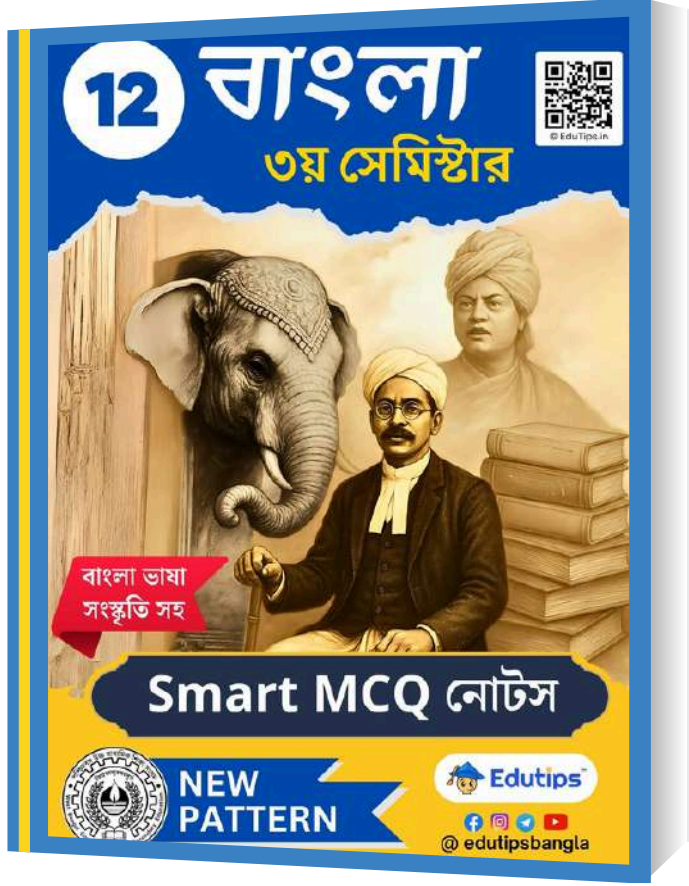
*This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle-
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and good.*

Question: Why does Ulysses think Telemachus is better suited to be the ruler?

- He has an adventurous spirit
- He has the ability to rule with patience and wisdom
- He loves battles
- He wants to abandon Ithaca.



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RIDERS TO THE SEA



JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

About the Dramatist :

John Millington Synge (1871-1909) was a pioneering Irish dramatist and poet whose work significantly contributed to the Irish Literary Revival. Synge is renowned for his vivid portrayals of rural Irish life, often drawing on local dialects, folklore, and the stark realities of island existence. His plays, characterized by lyrical dialogue and a deep empathy for his characters, explore themes of myth, tradition, and the sometimes tragic interplay between humanity and nature. Synge's innovative dramatic style, which blended naturalism with poetic symbolism, paved the way for a more authentic representation of Irish cultural identity on the stage.



About the Drama :

Riders to the Sea is one of Synge's most celebrated one-act plays. Set on a remote Aran Islands backdrop, the play centers on the relentless struggle of an Irish family against the overwhelming force of the sea. The narrative focuses on the grief and resignation of the women, particularly the elderly mother, who has already lost many of her sons to the treacherous waves. Through its stark, poetic language and atmospheric intensity, the play explores themes of fatalism¹, the indomitable power of nature, and the enduring human spirit in the face of inevitable loss.

¹Fatalism : Fatalism is the belief that all events and outcomes are predetermined and inevitable, often due to some greater force or natural law. In this view, human actions have little influence on the ultimate course of events, leading to a resigned acceptance of fate.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

PERSONS

MAURYA (*an old woman*)

BARTLEY (*her son*)

CATHLEEN (*her daughter*)

NORA (*a younger daughter*)

MEN AND WOMEN

An Island of the West of Ireland. (Cottage kitchen, with nets, oil-skins², spinning wheel, some new boards standing by the wall, etc. Cathleen, a girl of about twenty, finishes kneading cake, and puts it down in the pot-oven by the fire; then wipes her hands, and begins to spin at the wheel. NORA, a young girl, puts her head in at the door.)

NORA. [In a low voice.] Where is she?

CATHLEEN. She's³ lying down, God help her, and may be sleeping, if she's able.

[Nora comes in softly, and takes a bundle from under her shawl.]

CATHLEEN. [Spinning the wheel rapidly.] What is it you have?

NORA. The young priest is after bringing them. It's a shirt and a plain stocking were got off a drowned man in Donegal. [Cathleen stops her wheel with a sudden movement, and leans out⁴ to listen]

NORA. We're to find out if it's Michael's they are, some time herself will be down looking by the sea.

CATHLEEN. How would they be Michael's, Nora. How would he go the length of that way to the far north?

NORA. The young priest says he's known the like of it. "If it's Michael's they are," says he, "you can tell herself he's got a clean⁵ burial

²*Oil-skins : Waterproof clothing.*

³*She's : Mother.*

⁴*Leans out : Bends.*

⁵*Clean : Decent.*





RIDERS TO THE SEA

by the grace of God, and if they're not his, let no one say a word about them, for she'll be getting her death⁶," says he, "with crying and lamenting."

[The door which Nora half closed is blown open by a gust⁷ of wind.]

CATHLEEN. [Looking out anxiously.] Did you ask him would he stop Bartley going this day with the horses to the Galway fair?

NORA. "I won't stop him," says he, "but let you not be afraid. Herself does be saying prayers half through the night, and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute⁸," says he, "with no son living."

CATHLEEN. Is the sea bad⁹ by the white rocks, Nora?

NORA. Middling bad¹⁰, God help us. There's a great roaring in the west, and it's worse it'll be getting when the tide's turned to the wind. *[She goes over to the table with the bundle.]* Shall I open it now?

CATHLEEN. May be she'd wake up on us, and come in before we'd done. *[Coming to the table.]* It's a long time¹¹ we'll be, and the two of us crying.

NORA. *[Goes to the inner door and listens.]* She's moving about on the bed. She'll be coming in a minute.

CATHLEEN. Give me the ladder, and I'll put them up in the turf-loft¹², the way she won't know of them at all, and maybe when the tide turns she'll be going down to see would he be floating from the east.

⁶Death : Cry herself till death.

⁷Gust : Strong breeze.

⁸Destitute : Lonely.

⁹Sea bad : Rough.

¹⁰Middling bad : Neither rough nor calm.

¹¹long time : Likely to take long time.

¹²Turf-loft : Essentially a dedicated storage space for turf-that is, peat, which is cut from bogs and used as fuel.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

[They put the ladder against the gable¹³ of the chimney; Cathleen goes up a few steps and hides the bundle in the turf-loft. Maurya comes from the inner room.]

MAURYA. [Looking up at Cathleen and speaking querulously.] Isn't it turf enough you have for this day and evening?

CATHLEEN. There's a cake baking at the fire for a short space. [Throwing down the turf] and Bartley will want it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara.

[Nora picks up the turf and puts it round the pot-oven.]

MAURYA. [Sitting down on a stool¹⁴ at the fire.] He won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west. He won't go this day, for the young priest will stop him surely.

NORA. He'll not stop him, mother, and I heard Eamon Simon and Stephen Pheety and Colum Shawn saying he would go.

MAURYA. Where is he himself?

NORA. He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week, and I'm thinking it won't be long till he's here now, for the tide's turning at the green head, and the hooker's tacking¹⁵ from the east.

CATHLEEN. I hear some one passing the big stones.

NORA. [Looking out.] He's coming now, and he's in a hurry.

BARTLEY. [Comes in and looks round the room. Speaking sadly and quietly.] Where is the bit of new rope, Cathleen, was bought in Connemara?

CATHLEEN. [Coming down.] Give it to him, Nora; it's on a nail by the white boards. I hung it up this morning, for the pig with the black feet was eating it.

NORA. [Giving him a rope.] Is that it, Bartley?

¹³Gable : Table.

¹⁴A stool : A simple seat, typically without a back or arms.

¹⁵Tacking : Describes a scenario where a hooker boat is altering its course by turning into the easterly wind, a fundamental sailing technique to optimize navigation under varying wind conditions.





RIDERS TO THE SEA

MAURYA.

You'd do right to leave that rope, Bartley, hanging by the boards [Bartley takes the rope]. It will be wanting in this place, I'm telling you, if Michael is washed up tomorrow morning, or the next morning, or any morning in the week, for it's a deep grave we'll make him by the grace of God.

BARTLEY.

[Beginning to work with the rope.] I've no halter¹⁶ the way I can ride down on the mare, and I must go now quickly. This is the one boat going for two weeks or beyond it, and the fair will be a good fair for horses I heard them saying below.

MAURYA.

It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara.

[She looks round at the boards.]

BARTLEY.

How would it be washed up, and we after looking each day for nine days, and a strong wind blowing a while back from the west and south?

MAURYA.

If it wasn't found itself, that wind is raising the sea, and there was a star up against the moon, and it rising in the night. If it was a hundred horses, or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?

BARTLEY.

[Working at the halter, to Cathleen.] Let you go down each day, and see the sheep aren't jumping in on the rye, and if the jobber¹⁷ comes you can sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going.

MAURYA.

How would the like of her get a good price for a pig?

¹⁶Halter : Another rope.

¹⁷The jobber : Cattle dealer.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

BARTLEY. *[To Cathleen]* If the west wind holds with the last bit of the moon let you and Nora get up¹⁸ weed enough for another cock for the kelp. It's hard set we'll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work.

MAURYA. It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drowned with the rest. What way will I live and the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave?

[Bartley lays down the halter, takes off his old coat, and puts on a newer one of the same flannel¹⁹.]

BARTLEY. *[To Nora.]* Is she coming to the pier?

NORA. *[Looking out.]* She's passing the green head and letting fall her sails.

BARTLEY. *[Getting his purse and tobacco.]* I'll have half an hour to go down, and you'll see me coming again in two days, or in three days, or may be in four days if the wind is bad.

MAURYA. *[Turning round to the fire, and putting her shawl over her head.]* Isn't it a hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old woman, and she holding him from the sea?

CATHLEEN. It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?

BARTLEY. *[Taking the halter.]* I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony'll run behind me. . . The blessing of God on you. *[He goes out.]*

MAURYA. *[Crying out as he is in the door.]* He's gone now, God spare us, and we'll not see him again. He's gone now, and when the black night is falling I'll have no son left me in the world.

¹⁸Get up : Collect.

¹⁹Flannel : Flannel is known for its warm and fuzzy texture, often used in clothing like shirts.





RIDERS TO THE SEA

CATHLEEN. Why wouldn't you give him your blessing and he looking round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is on everyone in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear?

[Maurya takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round.]

NORA. *[Turning towards her.]* You're taking away the turf from the cake.

CATHLEEN. *[Crying out.]* The Son of God forgive us, Nora, we're after forgetting his bit of bread. *[She comes over to the fire.]*

NORA. And it's destroyed he'll be going till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up.

CATHLEEN. *[Turning the cake out of the oven.]* It's destroyed he'll be, surely. There's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking for ever.

[Maurya sways herself on her stool.] www.edutips.in

CATHLEEN. *[Cutting off some of the bread and rolling it in a cloth; to Maurya.]* Let you go down now to the spring well and give him this and he passing. You'll see him then and the dark word²⁰ will be broken²¹, and you can say "God speed you," the way he'll be easy in his mind.

MAURYA. *[Taking the bread.]* Will I be in it as soon as himself?

CATHLEEN. If you go now quickly.

MAURYA. *[Standing up unsteadily.]* It's hard set²² I am to walk.

CATHLEEN. *[Looking at her anxiously.]* Give her the stick, Nora, or may be she'll slip on the big stones.

²⁰Dark word : Unlucky words.

²¹Broken : Will have no impact.

²²Hard set : Unable.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

NORA. What stick?

CATHLEEN. The stick Michael brought from Connemara.

MAURYA. [*Taking a stick Nora gives her.*] In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old.

[*She goes out slowly. Nora goes over to the ladder.*]

CATHLEEN. Wait, Nora, may be she'd turn back quickly. She's that sorry, God help her, you wouldn't know the thing she'd do.

NORA. Is she gone round²³ by the bush?

CATHLEEN. [*Looking out.*] She's gone now. Throw it down quickly, for the Lord knows when she'll be out of it again.

NORA. [*Getting the bundle from the loft.*] The young priest said he'd be passing tomorrow, and we might go down and speak to him below if it's Michael's they are surely.

CATHLEEN. [*Taking the bundle.*] Did he say what way they were found?

NORA. [*Coming down.*] "There were two men," says he, "and they rowing round with poteen²⁴ before the cocks crowed, and the oar of one of them caught the body, and they passing the black cliffs of the north."

CATHLEEN. [*Trying to open the bundle.*] Give me a knife, Nora, the string's perished with the salt water, and there's a black knot on it you wouldn't loosen in a week.

NORA. [*Giving her a knife.*] I've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal.

CATHLEEN. [*Cutting the string.*] It is surely. There was a man in here a while ago-the man sold us that knife-and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond, it would be in seven days you'd be in Donegal.

²³Round : Crossed.

²⁴Poteen : An Irish term for an illicit, homemade distilled spirit.





- NORA.** And what time would a man take, and he floating?
[Cathleen opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a stocking. They look at them eagerly.]
- CATHLEEN.** *[In a low voice.]* The Lord spare us, Nora! isn't it a queer hard thing to say if it's his they are surely?
- NORA.** I'll get his shirt off the hook the way we can put²⁵ the one flannel on the other *[she looks through some clothes hanging in the corner.]* It's not with them, Cathleen, and where will it be?
- CATHLEEN.** I'm thinking Bartley put it on him in the morning, for his own shirt was heavy with the salt in it *[pointing to the corner]*. There's a bit of a sleeve was of the same stuff. Give me that and it will do.
[Nora brings it to her and they compare the flannel.]
- CATHLEEN.** It's the same stuff, Nora; but if it is itself, aren't there great rolls of it in the shops of Galway, and isn't it many another man may have a shirt of it as well as Michael himself?
- NORA.** *[Who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches, crying out.]* It's Michael, Cathleen, it's Michael; God spare his soul, and what will herself say when she hears this story, and Bartley on the sea?
- CATHLEEN.** *[Taking the stocking.]* : It's a plain stocking.
- NORA.** It's the second one of the third pair I knitted, and I put up three score stitches, and I dropped four of them.
- CATHLEEN.** *[counts the stitches]* It's that number is in it *[crying out.]* Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keen²⁶ him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

²⁵Put : Compare.

²⁶Keen : Shed tears.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

NORA. *[Swinging herself round, and throwing out her arms on the clothes.]* And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher, but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

CATHLEEN. *[After an instant.]* : Tell me is herself coming, Nora? I hear a little sound on the path.

NORA. *[Looking out.]* She is, Cathleen. She's coming up to the door.

CATHLEEN. Put these things away before she'll come in. Maybe it's easier she'll be after giving her blessing to Bartley, and we won't let on we've heard anything the time he's on the sea.

NORA. *[Helping Cathleen to close the bundle.]* We'll put them here in the corner.

[They put them into a hole in the chimney corner. Cathleen goes back to the spinning-wheel.]

NORA. Will she see it was crying I was?

CATHLEEN. Keep your back to the door the way the light'll not be on you.

[Nora sits down at the chimney corner, with her back to the door. Maurya comes in very slowly, without looking at the girls, and goes over to her stool at the other side of the fire. The cloth with the bread is still in her hand. The girls look at each other, and Nora points to the bundle of bread.]

CATHLEEN. *[After spinning for a moment.]* You didn't give him his bit of bread?

[Maurya begins to keen softly, without turning round.]

CATHLEEN. Did you see him riding down?

[Maurya goes on keening.²⁷]

CATHLEEN. *[A little impatiently.]* God forgive you; isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done? Did you see Bartley, I'm saying to you?

²⁷*Keening : Crying continuously.*





RIDERS TO THE SEA

MAURYA. *[With a weak voice.]* My heart's broken from this day.

CATHLEEN. *[As before.]* Did you see Bartley?

MAURYA. I seen the fearfulest thing.

CATHLEEN. *[Leaves her wheel and looks out.]* God forgive you; he's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him.

MAURYA. *[Starts, so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white tossed hair. With a frightened voice.]* The gray pony behind him ...

CATHLEEN. *[Coming to the fire.]* What is it ails you, at all?

MAURYA. *[Speaking very slowly.]* I've seen the fearfulest thing any person has seen, since the day Bride Dara seen the dead man with the child in his arms.

CATHLEEN AND NORA: Uah.

[They crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire.]
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NORA. Tell us what it is you seen.

MAURYA. I went down to the spring well, and I stood there saying a prayer to myself. Then Bartley came along, and he riding on the red mare with the gray pony behind him *[she puts up her hands, as if to hide something from her eyes.]* The Son of God spare us, Nora!

CATHLEEN. What is it you seen?

MAURYA. I seen Michael himself.

CATHLEEN. *[Speaking softly.]* You did not, mother; it wasn't Michael you seen, for his body is after being found in the far north, and he's got a clean burial by the grace of God.

MAURYA. *[A little defiantly.]* : I'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare; and I tried to say "God speed you," but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly; and "the blessing of God on





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

you," says he, and I could say nothing. I looked up then, and I crying, at the gray pony, and there was Michael upon it-with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet.

CATHLEEN. *[Begins to keen.]* It's destroyed we are from this day. It's destroyed, surely.

NORA. Didn't the young priest say the Almighty God wouldn't leave her destitute²⁸ with no son living?

MAURYA. *[In a low voice, but clearly.]* It's little the like of him knows of the sea. . . . Bartley will be lost now, and let you call in Eamon and make me a good coffin out of the white boards, for I won't live after them. I've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in this house—six fine men, though it was a hard birth I had with every one of them and they coming to the world—and some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they're gone now the lot of them . . . There were Stephen, and Shawn, were lost in the great wind, and found after in the Bay of Gregory of the Golden Mouth, and carried up the two of them on the one plank, and in by that door.

[She pauses for a moment, the girls start as if they heard something through the door that is half open behind them.]

NORA. *[In a whisper.]* Did you hear that, Cathleen? Did you hear a noise in the north-east?

CATHLEEN. *[In a whisper.]* There's some one after crying out by the seashore.

MAURYA. *[Continues without hearing anything.]* There was Sheamus and his father, and his own father again, were lost in a dark night, and not a stick or sign was seen of them when the sun went up. There was Patch after was drowned out of a curragh²⁹ that turned over. I was sitting here with Bartley, and he a baby, lying on my two knees, and I seen two women, and three women,

²⁸Destitute : Deprive her of all of her sons.

²⁹Curragh : Traditional Irish boat.





RIDERS TO THE SEA

and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves, and not saying a word. I looked out then, and there were men coming after them, and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it—it was a dry day, Nora—and leaving a track to the door.

[She pauses again with her hand stretched out towards the door. It opens softly and old women begin to come in, crossing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down in front of the stage with red petticoats over their heads.]

MAURYA. *[Half in a dream, to Cathleen.]* Is it Patch, or Michael, or what is it at all?

CATHLEEN. Michael is after being found in the far north, and when he is found there how could he be here in this place?

MAURYA. There does be a power of young men floating round in the sea, and what way would they know if it was Michael they had, or another man like him, for when a man is nine days in the sea, and the wind blowing in his hand, he set in his own mother would be to say what man was in it.

CATHLEEN. It's Michael, God spare him, for they're after sending us a bit of his clothes from the far north.

[She reaches out and hands Maurya the clothes that belonged to Michael. Maurya stands up slowly, and takes them into her hands. NORA looks out.]

NORA. They're carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones.

CATHLEEN. *[In a whisper to the women who have come in.]* Is it Bartley it is?

ONE OF THE WOMEN: It is surely, God rest his soul.

[Two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of Bartley, laid on a plank, with a bit of a sail over it, and lay it on the table.]

CATHLEEN. *[To the women, as they are doing so.]* What way was he drowned?

ONE OF THE WOMEN: The gray pony knocked him into the sea, and he was washed out where there is a great surf on the white rocks.





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

[Maurya has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. Cathleen and Nora kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door.]

MAURYA. *[Raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her.] : They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me....I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain³⁰, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. [To Nora]. Give me the Holy Water, Nora, there's a small sup³¹ still on the dresser. [Nora gives it to her.]*

MAURYA. *[Drops Michael's clothes across Bartley's feet, and sprinkles the Holy Water over him.] It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time surely. It's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking³².*

[She kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath.]

CATHLEEN. *[To an old man.] : Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises. We have fine white boards herself bought, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.*

³⁰Samhain : The first day of November, the day of souls.

³¹Small sup : quantity.

³²Stinking : Stale fish.





RIDERS TO THE SEA

THE OLD MAN. *[Looking at the boards.]* Are there nails with them?

CATHLEEN. There are not, Colum; we didn't think of the nails.

ANOTHER MAN. It's a great wonder she wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffins she's seen made already.

CATHLEEN. It's getting old she is, and broken.

[Maurya stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of Michael's clothes beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water.]

NORA. *[In a whisper to Cathleen.]* She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael, and would any one have thought that?

CATHLEEN. *[Slowly and clearly.]* An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening, and making grief in the house?

MAURYA. *[Puts the empty cup mouth downwards on the table, and lays her hands together on Bartley's feet.]* They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn *(bending her head)*; and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of every one is left living in the world.

[She pauses, and the keen rises a little more loudly from the women, then sinks away.]

MAURYA. *[Continuing.]* Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.

[She kneels down again and the curtain falls slowly.]





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

Quick Recall

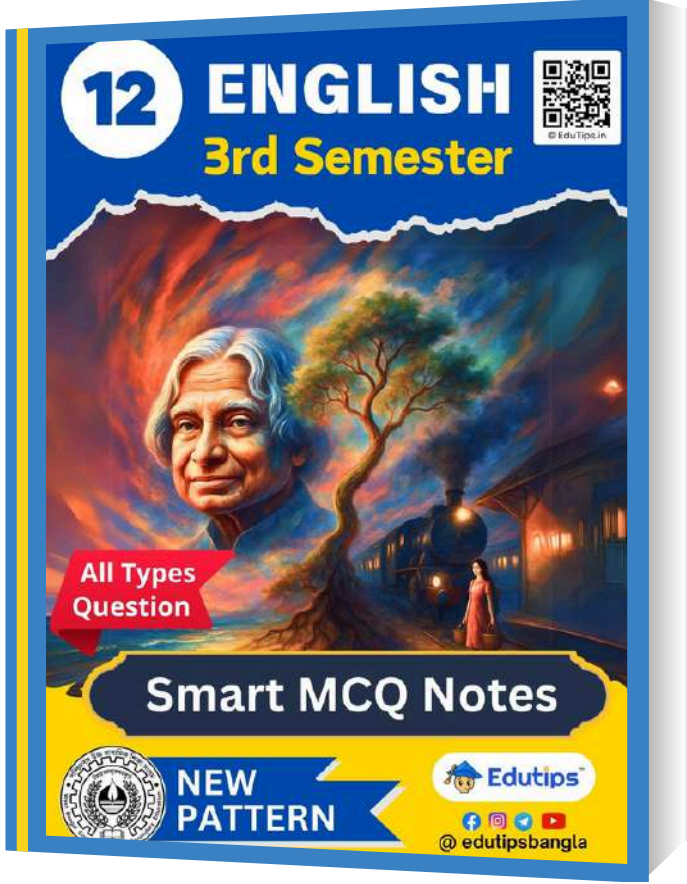
Choose the correct answer from the alternatives given :

1. Which theme is most central to *Riders to the Sea*?
 - a) The triumph of human ingenuity over nature
 - b) The inevitability of fate and the overwhelming power of nature
 - c) The struggle for political independence
 - d) The beauty of rural life
2. In *Riders to the Sea*, what does the sea primarily symbolize?
 - a) A nurturing provider of life and abundance
 - b) A benign backdrop to everyday island life
 - c) An indifferent, all-powerful force that governs life and death
 - d) A mysterious source of supernatural intervention
3. What does the play suggest about the relationship between the islanders and their environment?
 - a) The islanders can easily master the forces of nature
 - b) The isolation of the island leads to a close, harmonious bond with the sea
 - c) Human life is perpetually at the mercy of the sea's capricious power
 - d) The environment is a minor element in the islanders' daily struggles
4. Assertion (A): In *Riders to the Sea*, the sea is portrayed as an omnipotent force that determines the fate of the islanders.
Reason (R): The repeated tragic losses experienced by the family underscore a fatalistic view of life on the island.
 - a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
 - b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
 - c) A is true, but R is false.
 - d) A is false, but R is true.
5. Assertion (A): The isolation of the Aran Islands amplifies the sense of doom in the play.
Reason (R): The geographical remoteness limits any escape from the relentless forces of nature.
 - a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
 - b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
 - c) A is true, but R is false.
 - d) A is false, but R is true.



Class 12 ENGLISH 3rd Sem

MCQ, Short Read Notes



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RIDERS TO THE SEA

6. Match the items in Column A with their corresponding descriptions in Column B from the options given below.

Column A	Column B
1. Maurya (the Mother)	a) Represents the inevitable journey of those claimed by the sea.
2. The Sea	b) Embodies the sorrow, endurance, and resignation in the face of loss.
3. The Title "Riders to the Sea"	c) The philosophical acceptance that life's outcomes are predestined.
4. Fatalism	d) Symbolizes the indifferent, overpowering force that governs the fate of the islanders.

a) 1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (a) 4. (c)

b) 1. (a) 2. (c) 3. (d) 4. (b)

c) 1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (c) 4. (b) www.edutips.in

d) 1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (c) 4. (a)

7. Match the items in Column A with their corresponding descriptions in Column B from the options given below.

Column A	Column B
1. The sea	a. Represents the deep sorrow and inevitability of loss
2. Maurya's expressions of grief	b. Signifies the relentless force of nature and fate
3. The absence of her sons	c. Creates a realistic portrayal of island life
4. Use of local dialect	d. Highlights the profound impact of tragedy on family and community

a) 1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (a) 4. (c)

b) 1. (a) 2. (a) 3. (d) 4. (c)

c) 1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (c) 4. (b)

d) 1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (c) 4. (a)





A REALM OF ENGLISH (B) SELECTION

Delve Deep

1. "The sea has taken all my sons." Explain how this line represents the relentless power of nature in the play. Comment on the emotional impact this line has on Maurya's character. (2+3)
2. Discuss how Synge uses the sea as a symbol of fate, nature's indifference, and the source of inevitable loss in *Riders to the Sea*. (05)
3. Discuss how Maurya's grief, resignation, and acceptance of loss embody the theme of human vulnerability against invincible fate. (05)

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