

ICSE Board
Class X English Literature
Board Paper - 2018 - Solution

Total time: 2 hrs**Total Marks: 80****Answer 1**

- (i) Morocco or the Prince of Morocco is one of Portia's suitors.
The Prince of Morocco meets Portia in Act 2 Scene 1 for the first time. He introduces himself by saying, 'Mislike me not for my complexion'. As he is aware of Portia's racist ideology, he assuages by mentioning that despite his colour of skin, his blood is as red as any other suitor of Portia; he is no less brave than any of them.
- (ii) The Prince would know that his choice is correct only when he opens the correct casket containing a miniature picture of Portia's likeness.
Finding the correct casket would allow the Prince of Morocco to marry Portia as a reward.
- (iii) The Prince of Morocco finally chooses the gold casket. He assumes that the portrait of the most desired woman could only be within the gold casket.
Morocco reviews the inscriptions and considers the lead casket not worthy of the gamble it offers. He rejects the lead casket, thinking he would neither give nor risk anything for a trivial metal like lead.
- (iv) Morocco finds a skull (a carrion Death) and a scroll that says 'all that glitters is not gold'. He bids a quick farewell to Portia by saying that his heart is 'too grieved to take a tedious leave'.
- (v) Portia responds by saying, 'Let alloo of his complexion choose me so'. Hence, exhibiting the trait of racism. Her comment 'a great riddance' also hints the fact that she disliked him.

Answer 2

- (i) The scene takes place in Belmont, near Portia's house. Portia directed Antonio to give the ring to Bassanio just before these words were spoken.
- (ii) The letter has come from Padua, from Bellario. Bassanio learns that Portia was the lawyer and Nerissa was her clerk.
- (iii) Portia hands over another letter to Antonio that states that three of his ships have suddenly arrived in the harbour loaded with wealth.
Antonio is overwhelmed to receive the news.

- (iv) Portia refers to Nerissa as 'My clerk'. The 'good comforts' refer to the document from the rich Jew. The special testament mentions that after the Jew dies, Lorenzo and Jessica would inherit all his possessions.
- (v) Bassanio was persuaded to give away the ring by Portia, disguised as the lawyer. Bassanio offers money to the lawyer as a reward for saving Antonio's life. The lawyer plays a trick and asks for the ring given to him by herself. The deep bond of friendship between Bassanio and Antonio is reflected by Bassanio's action.

Answer 3

- (i) Margaret Orme is a young society woman and a guest at Wilson's place. Margaret refers to Lady Adela's statement in the scene where she says, 'Charles and Inspector Dede is coming like the wind on the motorcycle'. She makes a chuckling remark by referring to Charles and Inspector Dede as 'the wind' when they arrive on the motorcycle.
- (ii) Canygne suggests seeing the inspector in De Levis room because that is where the theft had occurred. Wilson and Canygne are also intent on not disturbing the guests in the proceedings.
Margaret is thrilled with ongoing events in the house. She exclaims that she feels as if she is in a hotel and thrilled about the interrogation.
- (iii) Soon after, Treisure, the house butler, enters. Wilson has asked him to bring Robert upstairs and check if the ladders have been moved.
- (iv) De Levis had the large sum of money with him on that day as he sold Rosemary Filly (a horse given by Dancy) to Kentman, the bookie.
- (v) De Levis suspects Ronald Dancy of stealing his money. Canygne too suspects Dancy, as in the previous scene he mentions that Dancy's sleeves were wet as if by rain. Even though Canygne suspects Dancy, he favours him. He considers him to be an officer and a gentleman.

Answer 4

- (i) The scene is set in Dancy's sitting room. Dancy confesses to Mabel that he is guilty of stealing the thousand pounds of De Levis. He also confesses that he had to pay the amount to a man who threatened him of exposing Dancy's relationship with his daughter.
- (ii) Dancy's lawyer has suggested him to run to Morocco. As Dancy has been found guilty of the theft and a warrant has been issued for his arrest, the lawyer advised him to run to Morocco to save his life.
- (iii) Mabel shows her loyalty to Dancy by helping him to escape when the inspector has arrived. Mabel exemplifies loyalty as she is willing to accompany her husband to Morocco, and by promising him that she will stick to him forever and keep loving him till

he returns from the prison. Her loyalty is rare as she even knew that he has committed a crime and cheated on her.

At this point, Inspector Dede and the young constable knock at the door.

- (iv) Margaret Orme and Colford enter from the passage. They hear a sound of a pistol shot in the room. Mabel faints as she sees that Dancy has killed himself.
- (v) Dancy's letter was addressed to Colford stating that killing himself is the only decent thing he can do for his wife. Dancy realised his mistake at the end and felt it was unfair to have created this situation for Mabel. At the end, one can conclude that Dancy has a reckless character. The major flaw in his character is his risk-taking attitude, which leads to his pitiable end. He exhibits an unscrupulous nature by stealing the money earned out of the gift he has given to De Levis.

Section B-POETRY

Answer 5

- (i) The 'he' in the poem is in the battlefield when the narrator encounters him. The scene depicts a battleground; there are dead soldiers and bloodshed all around. It is daylight and the dying soldier is lying on the ground underneath a tree.
- (ii) The soldier asks for a sip of water. He assures the narrator that a sip of water will heal him and make him feel better, as he has been fighting day and night without rest. The soldier is reluctant to admit the pain that is killing him, instead he calls it a small pain in the chest.
- (iii) The narrator sees the brightest smile on his face as he has a smile on his face when he is undergoing so much inside. The soldier is naïve to understand that the pain that he calls 'small' is big enough to kill him. His innocence is exemplified in his words when he asks the narrator if it is getting dark, as he dies and can barely open his eyes. At this moment he shows courage of travelling and says that he should rest a while before he travels.
- (iv) The soldier describes how they climbed the hill, but as they cleared the crest, there was an explosion that caused the small pain in his heart. The soldier tried to find some help but all he could see were craters and dead bodies around. He kept firing and fought his best, but finally sat because of the small pain in his chest.
- (vi) The narrator said he could not recall what happened as he puts his arm around the soldier. As he pulls him towards himself, he could feel their wounds pressed against each other. The narrator too experiences a pain in his heart. He compares his big pain with the small pain of the soldier ironically. The narrator feels that the pain of the soldier was physical and hence small. But the pain that the narrator has in his heart is big.

The theme of the poem is the futility of war. The poem is an anti-war poem highlighted through the misery of a dying soldier. Michael Mack has showcased the horror, chaos and suffering of a soldier in the battlefield. The poet is deeply hurt to witness the agony of the soldier. The poem is a remark on the futility of warfare and consequent misery.

Answer 6

- (i) The speaker introduces himself as Professor Sheth, a retired geography teacher. The listener is a former student of Professor Seth.
- (ii) The speaker has three sons. One of them is a Sales Manager, another a Bank Manager and he calls the third one 'a black sheep'. Professor considers his two sons to be well settled in life as he boasts of them possessing cars. He is a bit sceptical of his third son, and like every other family, he also has a black sheep in his family who does not do well in his life. This is reflective of the typical Indian mindset.
- (iii) Sarala and Tarala are the two daughters of Professor Seth. He believes them to be 'well settled' in life as they are married to 'nice boys'. The anxiety of the typical Indian father is highlighted. Getting their daughters married to 'nice boys' is considered a sign of successful parenting. Parents take pride in boasting about the success of their son-in-law, which is depicted through the character of Professor Sheth.
- (iv) The speaker is sixty-nine years old. He says that his health is okay as he has no major health issues such as diabetes, blood pressure or heart attack. He explains that the condition of his health is good because of his sound habits in young age.
- (vi) The poet Nissim Ezekiel is cynical of the typical Indian mindset; hence, as an observer he depicts the anomaly through Professor Sheth's monologue. Professor Sheth brags of the success of his two sons as they have prestigious jobs and own cars, and of his daughters 'well settled' life. He is also proud of having eleven grandchildren and sceptical of the new generation who considers family planning.

Professor Sheth represents the typical Indian beliefs of judging the happiness of a person through his professional success and material gain. For him, the marriage of his daughters to 'nice boys' is an achievement and talks nothing about their education or career. The habit of speaking without a pause, explaining things which are not even asked and mocking the other person for his/her way of life are some characteristics for which the poet Nissim Ezekiel makes fun of Indian speech and thoughts.

Section C-PROSE

Answer 7

- (i) The 'boy' was Sher Singh's younger brother, Kunwar. Sher Singh was sure that his brother would die because he could see death in his eyes. The other children in the village too have died because of diseases. Carrying them to the hospital was a strenuous task. The pain in his brother's stomach was getting worse and there was no one to help. His father was out on an expedition, and the hospital was eight kilometres away.
- (ii) Sher Singh's father was a Shikari. He earned the title of Bahadur for his numerous acts of courage that he had showed. While saving a comrade from a tiger, the tiger's claws opened his flesh to the bones along his skull, back and shoulder in the tussle. He was a famous hunter, and whenever there was an expedition to shoot or photograph, Sher Singh Bahadur was sent as he was the bravest.
- (iii) Sher Singh's mother was a hill woman and knew how to carry weight. She knew how to make a sling using one of her two saris, which could be tied from back to shoulder and was convenient for carrying loads. The sling she made was strong enough to carry the load of Kunwar, her younger son.
- (iv) Sher Singh had to face several challenges in the primeval jungle. As the night fell, Sher Singh could see the bear tracks in the dust. The image of shaggy claws and paws reminded him of a man who was mauled by a bear and his face torn. He then encountered a herd of elephants coming towards him. It was difficult for him to climb or run with Kunwar tied to him; he continued praying till they passed through. The third and most difficult impediment in the journey was crossing the rivers. When he tried to cross the first river, it was colder and deeper than usual. The slime slowed down his pace and he had to struggle to walk bare foot. The second river had a 'kucha' bridge to cross, made of bamboos and thick grass. The imagery he witnessed was disappointing. The bridge was submerged in water, boulders were moving and the river was foamed. While crossing the bridge, he became deaf, blinded, frozen and almost drowned, yet he kept moving.
- (v) The doctor at the hospital called Sher Singh as Sher Singh Bahadur unknowingly for the first time. They thought it was the brave father who carried the son through the jungle. The second time, the doctors deliberately addressed him as Sher Singh Bahadur, acknowledging his act of bravery and saving the life of his brother by risking his own life.

Answer 8

T.S. Eliot asserts 'Humour is also a way of saying something serious'. This quote is demonstrated brilliantly in Stephen Butler Leacock's *The Lost Dollar*. The story is a satirical whip on the forgetfulness of borrowers. In the story, the author's friend Todd borrows one dollar from him and never returns it. The author indirectly hints by talking about the American dollar, but Todd is not willing to consider the hint. The dejected author after a point gives up the hope of regaining his dollar. He starts a 'Back to Honesty' campaign that calls for the repayment of all unpaid borrowing. This act depicts

humour and exaggeration as the lender is reluctant to ask for his money back; however, he is not hesitant to start a campaign.

The practice of borrowing and lending is presented satirically with a tinge of humour and exaggeration. There is an undertone of questioning the issue of global transactions and negotiations, which is also a similar concern of lending and borrowing.

The Lost Dollar is a tale fabricated with questions on honesty and morality. Taking a humorous tone, the author reflects upon the hypocrisy and pretence of people who have the luxury to afford a trip to Bermuda but fail to pay back a bill of one dollar. This is sheer ignorance and forgetfulness. Because of his modest attitude, the author fails to be vocal and ask for his money. Instead, he employs the tool of humour, satire and irony by starting the campaign 'Back to Honesty'.