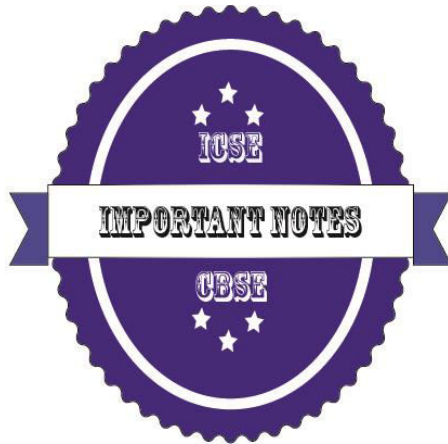


Iswaran the Storyteller- Extra Questions and Notes



ISWARAN THE STORYTELLER

By- R.K. Laxman



Introduction of the story

This is an interesting story about Iswaran, a cook. He served as a cook to Mahendra, a junior supervisor. Iswaran was devoted to his master. He was an expert cook. Another quality of Iswaran was that he was a master storyteller. He narrated even the smallest incident of his story by weaving suspense around it. One day, he told his master a story about a mad elephant. On another day, he told Mahendra that the ghost of a woman appeared around the house on the full moon night. One night, Mahendra woke up on hearing some sound. He kicked out of the window. He saw a dark cloudy figure. He began to sweat with fear. The next morning, he hurried to his office and handed in his papers for transfer from that place

(यह एक रसोइए, ईश्वरन के बारे में एक रोचक कहानी है। वह महेंद्र नामक एक कनिष्ठ निरीक्षक का रसोइया था। ईश्वरन अपने मालिक के प्रति समर्पित था। वह एक कुशल रसोइया था। ईश्वरन का एक अन्य गुण यह था कि वह कहानी सुनाने में बड़ा निपुण था। वह अपनी कहानी की छोटी से छोटी घटना को भी रहस्यपूर्ण ढंग से सुनाता था। एक दिन उसने अपने मालिक को एक पागल हाथी की कहानी सुनाई। एक अन्य दिन उसने महेंद्र को बताया कि पूर्णिमा की रात को घर के आसपास एक औरत का भूत नज़र आता है। एक रात महेंद्र कुछ आवाज़ सुनकर जाग गया। उसने खिड़की से बाहर झाँका। उसे एक काली अस्पष्ट आकृति

दिखाई दी। उसे डर से पसीना आने लगा। अगली प्रातः वह शीघ्रता से अपने कार्यालय गया और वहाँ से तबादला करवाने के कागज दे आया।)

THEME

The theme of the story is 'the art of storytelling'. A good story becomes interesting only when the narrator twists and turns the action to make the narrative surprising yet plausible. Iswaran, a master of this art told gripping stories in a graphic and dramatic manner such that his listeners listened to him in rapt attention and bewilderment. Once the story of a female ghost that he recounted so terrified his master that he quit his job and left the haunted place.

Another theme is that one must not let oneself be influenced by superstitions like ghosts or spirits unless one has a faint belief in one's own subconscious. Mahendra believed that he had seen the female ghost because his subconscious seemed to have already accepted the presence of ghosts and spirits.

TITLE

“Iswaran the Storyteller” is a perfectly suitable title for a story that deals with the character ‘Iswaran’ and his mastery of the art of storytelling. The whole story deals with the dramatic manner in which Iswaran made-up and recounted stories, which were admirable more for the style in which elements of suspense, horror, and adventure were added to them than for their contents. Hence, this title stands justified.

Justification of the Title

Mahendra, the narrator, had a servant named ‘swarm’. Iswaran entertained Mahendra by telling his many stories. Most of his stories were full of surprise and thrill. He narrated the smallest incident in detail. He was very imaginative. Mahendra always enjoyed his stories. So it is appropriate to name the lesson as ‘Iswaran the storyteller’.

CHARACTER SKETCHES

Iswaran: Iswaran is the servant of Mahendra. Iswaran cooked for Mahendra, washed his clothes and told stories to his master at night. When he told Mahendra about ghosts, Mahendra called him a crazy man. He was a good storyteller. Most of his stories were full of suspense and thrill. His stories affected

his master so much that Mahendra started feeling afraid of ghosts and left his present accommodation.

Mahendra: Mahendra was a supervisor in a firm. The nature of his job moved him from place to place. He adjusted in all types of dwellings. His servant entertained him with stories. He did not believe in ghosts initially. But after listening to Iswaran, he too seemed to experience the existence of ghosts. Once he was so frightened of a ghost that he decided to leave the present accommodation where he was staying. He appears to be a man who can easily give in to fear of things like ghosts.

Summary:

The story about Iswaran was told to Ganesh by a junior supervisor, Mahendra who used to work in a firm which offered on hire supervisors at construction sites like factories, bridges, dams etc. His work involved moving from one site to another. He was unmarried and adjusted well to odd conditions because his needs were simple.

Mahendra had a dedicated cook named Iswaran. He was like an asset because he would cook for Mahendra, wash his clothes, and also chat with him at night. Iswaran was a master storyteller and could make up innumerable stories on different subjects. Another quality of Iswaran was his ability to improvise cooking material even at the remotest place. He could cook delicious dishes quickly as if he were doing some magic.

Mahendra's daily routine started with getting up early and leaving for work after breakfast. He would also carry lunch with him. When his master was away,

Iswaran would use his time to finish off daily chores and have a leisurely bath after that. After lunch, he would read for a while and then take a nap.

Iswaran was fond of reading popular Tamil thrillers. Their imaginative descriptions and narrating styles would fascinate him. Influenced by these thrillers, he would add suspense and surprise even to the smallest incident during storytelling. Mahendra loved this style and would listen to Iswaran without interrupting him.

Iswaran would start a story with an introduction (prologue) in which he would lay the background about a character, usually negative, whose story followed. Then he would describe an elaborate incident involving that character. While describing, Iswaran would get carried away and would jump about on the floor. He would continue narrating and build up a situation that required a saviour or a hero-like character to resolve it. Here, he inserted himself in the story as that hero. He would confront the negative character and magically disarm him in a snap.

Once he told Mahendra a story about an elephant that had escaped from the jungle and destroyed everything that came its way. When it reached Iswaran's school, everyone got terrified on watching the tusker pull the football goal post and volleyball net, Iswaran told that he was a student of the junior class at that time; still, he grabbed a cane from a teacher and ran down to challenge the tusker. It tried to scare Iswaran by stamping its feet and kicking up mud. But he was so brave that he hit on the third toenail of the elephant and the animal shivered and collapsed.

Iswaran would leave this unfinished story midway and excuse himself to light the gas and warm up dinner. This would leave Mahendra hanging with suspense. On returning, Iswaran would not pick up the story right away. Mahendra would have to remind him that the conclusion was pending. Then Iswaran would wind up the story describing it as his own heroic deed. However, Mahendra would not feel satisfied and would ask Iswaran to explain how he had brought down the beast. Iswaran would attribute his success to some Japanese art, Karate or ju-jitsu, which temporarily paralyzed the nervous system.

Every day, Iswaran would recount a new story filled with adventure, horror and suspense. Mahendra enjoyed listening to these stories even if they were unbelievable. Iswaran thus entertained Mahendra like a TV.

One morning, when Mahendra was having breakfast, Iswaran sought permission to cook something special for dinner. It was an auspicious day and according to tradition, delicacies were prepared to feed the spirits of ancestors. Mahendra enjoyed a lovely meal that night and complimented Iswaran on his cooking skills. The cook seemed pleased but suddenly started narrating a horrifying account about the supernatural. He told that the factory area where they were living was once a burial ground. Mahendra was jolted out of the pleasant mood that he had got into after the satisfying meal. Iswaran continued telling that he had seen a human skull lying on the path on the first day and he still came across a number of skulls and bones. He also told that sometimes he saw ghosts at night and although he was a brave fellow who did not get easily frightened, he was afraid of one horrible ghost of a woman. She appeared off and on at midnight during the full moon. She was an ugly creature with matted hair and a shrivelled face. She looked like a skeleton and held a foetus in her arms.

Mahendra got terribly scared on hearing this description and cut Iswaran short by scolding him. He said that there was no such thing as ghosts or spirits and it was a mere figment of his imagination. Saying so, he left the room to go to bed. He expected Iswaran to sulk for some days over the scolding but to his surprise, the next morning Iswaran was as cheerful and talkative as ever. But Mahendra could not go to bed comfortably after that night. He would look into the darkness outside through the window next to his bed to make sure that there was no one nearby. But he could not see anything other than darkness and twinkling lights of the factory. Earlier, he used to admire the milky white landscape on full moon nights. But after hearing Iswaran's story of the female ghost he avoided looking out of the window on moonlit nights.

One night Mahendra was woken up from his sleep by a low crying sound close to his window. At first, he thought it to be some cat looking for mice but soon realized that it was not so. However, he stopped himself from looking out

because he was afraid. When the sound grew louder, he could not stop himself and lowering himself to the level of the windowsill, looked out at the white moonlit night. There he saw a dark cloudy form holding a bundle. Mahendra got so frightened that he fell back on his pillow, breathing heavily. When he slowly recovered from this fright, he thought rationally and convinced himself that what he saw was just a trick played by his subconscious mind.

However, he forgot everything about the previous night's experience after his morning routine. As always, Iswaran greeted him at the door with his lunch packet and his bag. Just When Mahendra was stepping out, Iswaran told him that he had come running last night when he heard a crying sound from his room. This revelation scared Mahendra so much that he went straight to his office and put in his resignation. He resolved to leave the haunted place the very next day.

MESSAGE

The story gives the message that the unnatural world of ghosts and spirits is merely a figment of our imagination. If we allow our hidden fears to take concrete shape and start believing in ghosts and spirits, our life would get disturbed. Mahendra was good at his job as a supervisor but had to quit because he allowed his fears to overpower his rational self.

EXTRACT'S

(I)

He was a bachelor. His needs were simple and he was able to adjust himself to all kinds of odd conditions, whether it was an ill-equipped circuit house or a makeshift canvas tent in the middle of a quarry.

(a) Who is 'he' in the above extract?

Ans:'He' here is Mahendra, a junior supervisor in a firm that offered on hire supervisors at construction sites.

(b) List two characteristics of this person.

Ans:He was a bachelor and had simple needs. He adjusted himself to all kinds of unusual situations at his different work sites.

(c) Which type of places did he have to live in?

Ans: He had to live in ill-equipped circuit houses or makeshift canvas tents.

(d) Why did he have to live like this?

Ans: He had to live like this because his work involved supervision of different types of construction sites at remote places.

(II)

He would miraculously conjure up the most delicious dishes made with fresh vegetables within an hour of arriving at the zinc-sheet shelter at the new workplace.

(a) Who is 'he' in the above lines? Why is he being appreciated?

Ans: 'He' in the above lines is Iswaran, Mahendra's servant. He is being appreciated because he could quickly cook delicious dishes from fresh vegetables even in a remote workplace.

(b) What was the zinc-sheet shelter?

Ans: The zinc-sheet shelter was the temporary home at the new construction site where Iswaran stayed with his master, Mahendra.

(c) Was the cook resourceful?

Ans: The cook, Iswaran, was resourceful since he could arrange fresh vegetables even in unfamiliar workplaces.

(d) What is the meaning of 'conjure up' in these lines?

Ans: 'Conjure up' means to do some magic trick. Here it means to quickly cook delicious dishes even when ingredients were not ready at hand.

(III)

It has something to do with a Japanese art, I think, sir. Karate or ju-jitsu it is called. I had read about it somewhere. It temporarily paralyses the nervous system, you see."

(a) Who speaks these lines and to whom?

Ans: Iswaran, the cook, talks to his master, Mahendra, in these lines.

(b) What is the topic of discussion?

Ans: The topic of discussion is the explanation offered by Iswaran about how he tackled the mad elephant.

(c) What explanation does Iswaran offer about the efficacy of the Japanese art?

Ans: Iswaran explains that the Japanese art was efficient as it temporarily paralyzed the nervous system and helped to overpower the opponent.

(d) Where did Iswaran learn that art?

Ans: Iswaran learnt that art by reading about it somewhere.

(IV)

Can I make something special for dinner tonight, sir? After all today is an auspicious day-

(a) Who is 'I' and who is his 'sir'?

Ans: "I" here is Iswaran, the storyteller, and his 'sir' is his master, Mahendra, the junior supervisor.

(b) What permission is the speaker seeking here?

Ans: Iswaran is seeking permission to prepare something special for dinner that night.

(c) Why was the day auspicious?

Ans: The day was auspicious as it was devoted to the memory of ancestors.

(d) What tradition was followed on this day?

Ans: The tradition of preparing various delicacies to feed the spirits of ancestors was followed on this day.

(v)

It is an ugly creature with matted hair and a shrivelled face, like a skeleton holding a foetus in its arms.

(a) What is 'it' here and who is describing 'it'?

Ans: 'It' here is the female ghost who is being described by Iswaran, the cook.

(b) Why was 'it' ugly?

Ans: 'It' was ugly because it had matted hair and shrivelled face like a typical ghost.

(c) Who had seen 'it', when and where?

Ans: It was claimed to have been seen by Iswaran at midnight during the full moon in the factory area supervised by Mahendra.

(d) What effect does this description of the ugly creature have on Mahendra?

Ans: This description made Mahendra shiver with horror although he put up a brave show by dismissing Iswaran's belief in ghosts or spirits as a figment of his imagination.

(VI)

At first he put it down to a cat prowling around for mice. But the sound was too guttural for a cat. He resisted the curiosity to look out lest he should behold a sight which would stop his heart.

(a) Who is 'he' in these lines? What is 'it' that he put down?

Ans: 'He' in these lines is Mahendra, the junior supervisor. 'It' is the strange low moan sound he heard at night near his bedroom window.

(b) How did he conclude that the sound was not of a cat?

Ans: The sound was too guttural and this made Mahendra conclude that it was not of a cat.

(c) What desire did he resist?

Ans: He resisted the desire to look out through the window at the moonlit night.

(d) Why did he resist his desire?

Ans:He resisted his desire because he was afraid that he might get to see a horrifying sight of some ghost.

CHARACTERS

Iswaran

Iswaran was Mahendra's cook and was like an asset to him. He was dedicated to his master and followed him uncomplainingly to all his postings. He would cook for him, wash his clothes, and also chat with him at night. He had the ability to improvise cooking material even at the remotest place and cooked delicious dishes in a very brief time.

Iswaran was fond of reading popular Tamil thrillers. Their imaginative descriptions and narrating styles would fascinate him. He became a master storyteller by adopting the art of storytelling from these novels. He would always add suspense and surprise even to the smallest incident and could make up innumerable stories on different subjects. While describing, he would get so involved that he would jump about on the floor. He would narrate the story in installments and would purposely leave it unfinished midway. On returning, he would not pick it up right away till Mahendra reminded him to. In this manner he would involve his listener too.

Every day, Iswaran would recount a new story filled with adventure, horror and suspense. Mahendra loved his stories and listened with rapt attention even if they were unbelievable. Iswaran thus entertained Mahendra just as TV does.

Iswaran enjoyed his job and would not sit idle when Mahendra was at work. He would use that time to tidy up the shed and wash clothes. He was also religious because he would mutter a prayer throughout his bath ritual.

This character displays a shade of comedy as well when he teasingly asks Mahendra about his reaction at having seen the female ghost.

Mahendra

Mahendra used to work as a junior supervisor in a firm which offered on hire supervisors at construction sites. His work involved moving from one site to another. He was unmarried and a simple man. He was quite accommodating and adjusted well to odd conditions that he faced at different places. He was a disciplined man and would get up early in the morning. He would leave for work after breakfast and carry lunch with him.

Mahendra was very fond of his cook Iswaran whom he considered to be an asset. He relished the food cooked by him and enjoyed listening to his stories. He was a good listener and never interrupted Iswaran even when he exaggerated. He was

very patient and would wait for Iswaran to return and complete the unfinished story. He was also curious as he would insist on knowing all the details.

Mahendra was a rational man and did not believe in ghosts or spirits but could not help getting influenced by what Iswaran told him about the female ghost. He tried to ignore the strange sounds at night but got scared when he saw the apparition. However, his rationality made him forget the previous night's experience.

Mahendra's faith in Iswaran was very strong. He was convinced about the presence of a female ghost when Iswaran told him that he had heard sounds at night.

This character appeals to the reader for his qualities as a devoted worker, a kind-hearted master and a trusting man.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Choose the correct answer.

1. Name the writer of the story, 'Iswaran the Storyteller'.

(A) Mulk Raj Anand.

(B) Ruskin Bond.

(C) Laxman.

(D) A.K. Ramanujan.

2. Who told Iswaran's story to Ganesh ?

(A) Mahendra.

(B) Mahendra's cook.

(C) Ganesh's mother.

(D) Ganesh's cook.

3. Who was Mahendra ?

(A) An engineer in a construction company.

(B) A doctor in a hospital.

(C) A cook attached to Iswaran.

(D) A junior supervisor in a firm.

4. What services were provided by the firm where Mahendra was employed ?

(A) Arranged for security officers on hire.

(B) Offered on hire supervisors at various construction sites.

(C) Provided trained men for the construction of bridges.

(D) Undertook the construction of chemical plant.

5. What had Mahendra to do as a junior supervisor ?

(A) Keep an eye on the activities at the work site.

(B) Arrange for the materials required at the work site.

(C) Distribute salaries to the workers at the work site.

(D) Keep an account of all the amount spent at the work site.

6. What had Mahendra to do every now and then as part of his job ?

(A) He had to go back to his head office to clear his account.

(B) He had to keep moving from place to place as ordered by his head office.

(C) He had to send a detailed report to the head office whenever he was asked to do so.

(D) He had to go to the market for the purchase of raw materials.

7.What was it that made life smooth for Mahendra ?

(A) He was a bachelor.

(B) His needs were simple.

(C) He could adjust himself to all kinds of odd conditions.

(D) All the above.

8.What was Mahendra's one asset ?

(A) His cook, Iswaran.

(B) His canvas tent.

(C) His stone quarry.

(D) His house in the village.

9. Who was Iswaran ?

(A) The clerk who kept Mahendra's accounts.

(B) The washerman who washed Mahendra's clothes.

(C) The sweeper who swept Mahendra's office.

(D) The cook who was attached to Mahendra.

10. What did Iswaran do for Mahendra ?

(A) Cooked food for Mahendra.

(B) Washed Mahendra's clothes.

(C) Both A and B above.

(D) Neither A nor B.

11. What was Iswaran's special quality ?

(A) He could produce delicious dishes.

(B) He could weave endless stories on varied subjects.

(C) Both A and B above.

(D) Neither A nor B.

12. When would Mahendra leave for his work ?

(A) Very early in the morning.

(B) After breakfast.

(C) After lunch.

(D) After sunset.

13. What did Mahendra carry with him to his place of work ?

(A) Some fruit.

(B) Some cooked food.

(C) Both A and B above.

(D) Neither A nor B.

14. What would Iswaran do after Mahendra had left ?

(A) Tidy up the shed.

(B) Wash the clothes.

(C) Have a leisurely bath.

(D) All the above.

15. What would Iswaran do after eating his lunch ?

(A) He would have a nap.

(B) She would read for a while and then doze off.

(C) He would tidy up the shed and wash the clothes.

(D) He would sit down and write stories in Tamil .

16. What kind of books did Iswaran usually read ?

(A) Some popular Tamil religious book.

(B) Some popular Tamil love story.

(C) Some popular Tamil thriller.

(D) Some popular Tamil folk songs.

17. What would Iswaran do while narrating even a small incident ?

(A) He would work in suspense.

(B) He would work in a surprise ending.

(C) Both A and B above.

(D) Neither A nor B.

18. Mahendra listened to Iswaran's tales

(A) unattentively.

(We-uncritically.

(C) uneasily.

(D) unendingly.

19.How did Iswaran say he brought down the mad elephant ?

(A) By hitting at its tusk.

(B) By hitting at its trunk.

(C) By hitting at its third toenail.

(D) By hitting at its back with a stick.

20.How did Iswaran say the elephant was revived?

(A) He said he gave the elephant an injection.

(B) He said he gave the elephant artificial respiration.

(C) He said a veterinary doctor was called there.

(D) He said a man from the zoo helped to revive the elephant.

21. Where did Iswaran say the elephant was taken finally and by whom?

(A) By a zoo officer to the zoo.

(B) By its mahout to the jungle.

(C) By a veterinary doctor to his clinic.

(D) By a circus manager to his circus.

22. What Japanese art did Iswaran say he had read about ?

(A) Wrestling.

(B) Yoga.

(C) Karate.

(D) Acupuncture.

23. What according to Iswaran could Karate-do?

(A) It could kill a person.

(B) It could blind a person.

(C) It could paralyse the nervous system temporarily.

(D) It could make someone mad temporarily.

24. What was it about Iswaran's bk stories that Mahendra enjoyed?

(A) The basic reality of his stories.

(B) The moral lesson of his stories.

(C) Iswaran's inimitable way of narration.

(D) Iswaran's art of prolonging his stories.

25. What did Iswaran say he often found in the factory area?

(A) Ghost.

(B) Spirit.

(C)-Human skulls.

(D) Magic lamps.

26. Iswaran said he sometimes saw at night.

(A) ghosts.

(B) ugly giants.

(C) wicked people.

(D) human skulls.

27. Iswaran said that a horrible ghost of a woman appeared.....

(A) always on a full-moon night.

(B) off and on at midnight during the full moon.

(C) every night in the moonlight.

(D) sometimes at midnight in the stormy weather.

28. On hearing Iswaran's story of the female ghost, Mahendra said :

(A) Iswaran was crazy.

(B) There was no such thing as a ghost or spirit.

(C) It was all a figment of Iswaran's imagination.

(D) All the above.

29. After hearing Iswaran's story of the female ghost, Mahendra avoided looking out of the window when

(A) the moon was full.

(B) the moon was in the sky.

(C) there was no moon in the sky.

(D) there was all dark outside.

30. When Mahendra looked out of the window, he saw.....

(A) the ghost of a woman clutching a bundle.

(B) a dark cloudy form clutching a bundle.

(C) Iswaran clutching a bundle and wailing.

(D) Iswaran talking to the female ghost.

Hints : 1.C 2.A 3. D 4. B 5.A 6.B 7.D 8.A 9.D

10.C 11.C 12.B 13.B 14.D 15.B 16.C 17. C 18.B

19.C 20.C 21.B 22.C 23.C 24.C 25.C 26. A 27. B

28. D 29. A 30. B.

Additional Questions

Q.1. Who was Mahendra? What did he do?

Ans. Mahendra was a young man. He was a junior supervisor in a firm. His firm offered supervisors hire at different construction sites. His job was to keep an eye on the activities at the work site. He had to frequently go from one place to the other. He was a bachelor and his needs were simple. He could adjust himself to all conditions.

Q.2. Describe Iswaran's 'amazing capacity to produce vegetables, etc.

Ans. Mahendra had a cook. His name was Iswaran. He was quite attached to Mahendra and went wherever Mahendra was transferred. Iswaran was a good cook. He had an amazing capacity to produce vegetables from nowhere and cook them. Even at a place where there were no shops visible for miles, he was able to

cook vegetables. He would conjure up delicious dishes made with fresh vegetables within an hour of reaching that place.

Q.3. How did Iswaran manage to make even the simplest incident interesting? Give an example.

Ans. Iswaran was a master storyteller. He narrated even the smallest of incidents by creating a loss of suspense. For example, if he had to describe a fallen tree, he would not simply say that he saw an uprooted tree on the highway. He would say, "The road was deserted and I was all alone. Suddenly I spotted something that looked like an enormous bushy beast. But as I came closer, I saw that it was only a fallen tree."

Q.4. What did Iswaran do after Mahendra had left for office?

Ans. When Mahendra left for the office, Iswaran would do his work and take a leisurely bath. While taking bath, he kept muttering a prayer. After lunchtime, he would read for a while before going to sleep. He read popular Tamil thrillers. The stories that he narrated were greatly influenced by these novels.

Q.5. How did Iswaran add a prologue to his story of an elephant?

Ans. Before starting the story, Iswaran gave a detailed description of the place. He said that the place was a richly wooded forest. The logs of wood were hauled by elephants on lorries. But sometimes, the elephants turned mad. When an elephant turned mad, not even a skilled mahout could control it.

Q.6. What did the elephant do before Iswaran controlled it?

Ans. A tusker escaped from the timber yard. It roamed here and there. Then the tusker reached the town. People ran here and there in terror. After some time, the elephant entered a school ground where children were playing. All the boys ran into the classrooms and shut the doors. The elephant pulled out the football goalpost, tore the volleyball net and broke the drum kept for water. Everyone watched helplessly.

Q.7. Why did Mahendra resolve to leave the haunted place the very next day?

Ans. Mahendra had almost forgotten the incident of the previous night. But in the morning, Iswaran told Mahendra that he had also heard the moan at night. He had come to his room. He had seen that Mahendra was looking out of the window at the ghost of the woman. Mahendra was cold with fear. As soon as he reached the office, he handed in his papers for transfer from that place

Q.8. Do you think the ghost seen by Mahendra was only a trick played by his cook, Iswaran? Give reasons for your answer.

Ans. First, Iswaran created the background by telling Mahendra that the place used to be a burial ground. Then he told the story of a ghost. One night Mahendra saw a figure outside his window. The figure looked like the ghost described by Iswaran. The next morning, Iswaran told Mahendra that he had seen Mahendra looking out of the window at the ghost. This shows that it was only a trick played by Iswaran.

Other Important Questions

1. How did the mother distract the child's mind from the toy-seller?

Ans. The mother pointed towards a flowering mustard-field. The child was attracted by the beauty of the field. He began to run after the colourful dragonflies.

2. There were some things the child knew his parents would not buy for him, so he did not ask for them. What were these?

Ans. The child wanted to have a garland of gulmohur flowers. Next, he wanted to buy the colourful balloons. But he knew that his parents would not buy these things for him. So he did not ask for these things.

3. Who rescued the child? What did he offer to buy for him?

Ans. The child ran to a temple. It was crowded with people. A man in the crowd heard his cry. He lifted him up in his arms. He offered to buy him a garland, balloons and some sweets.

4. Why did the child go towards the temple? What happened there?

Ans. The child was panic-stricken. He ran towards a crowded temple. He hoped to find his parents there. He began to cry loudly for his parents. A man in the crowd heard his cry. He lifted him up in his arms.

5. Who was Mahendra? What did he do?

Ans. Mahendra was a young man. He was a bachelor. He was a junior supervisor in a firm. Mahendra's job was to keep an eye on the activities at the work-site.

6. Describe Iswaran's 'amazing capacity to produce vegetables etc.

Ans. Iswaran could get vegetables from anywhere. He could cook them very easily. He made delicious dishes even though he could get nothing else for them.

7. How did Iswaran manage to make even the simplest incident interesting? Give an example.

Ans. Iswaran could create suspense round the simplest incident. Once he saw a fallen tree on the highway. He said he had seen a big beast lying across the road. Ongoing closer, he had found that it was only an uprooted tree.

8. How did Iswaran tackle the elephant in the school building? Does it appear to be likely?

Ans. Iswaran grabbed a cane from the hands of one of the teachers. He hit the elephant hard on its third toenail. The elephant collapsed. It is hard to believe that a huge elephant could be tackled by merely hitting on its toenail.

9. How did Iswaran describe the uprooted tree?

Ans. Iswaran said that the road was deserted. Suddenly he noticed something like a big bushy beast spread out across the road. He went closer and found that it was a fallen tree.

10. 'Iswaran would not pick up the thread of the story right away.' How did Iswaran build up his ghost story?

Ans. Iswaran would first build up the background of the story. He told Mahendra that the whole factory area used to be a burial ground. Then one day he built up his story on it. He started telling Mahendra a ghost story.

11. Mahendra did not believe in ghosts. What happened to him on the last full-moon night?

Ans. On the last full-moon night, Mahendra heard a low moan close to his window. The moan became louder. He looked out of the window. He saw a dark, cloudy form clutching a bundle.

12. What part did Mahendra's imagination play in his vision of the ghost?

Ans. The ghost that Mahendra saw was only a thing of imagination. It was a trick played by Iswaran. Iswaran enjoyed reading Tamil thrillers. His stories and activities were all influenced by these thrillers.

13. Describe Iswaran's daily routine after Mahendra left for work.

Ans. After Mahendra left for work, Iswaran would clean the shed and wash the clothes. He would then have a bath. After taking lunch he read for a while. He then slept for some time.

14. What havoc did the elephant create in the school ground?

Ans. The elephant broke through the brick wall of the school. It pulled out the football goalpost. It tore down the volleyball net. It kicked and flattened the drum kept for water. It uprooted the shrubs

Important Long

Value-based questions-

1. Iswaran was a master storyteller. Describe his amazing capacity of narrating stories and anecdotes.

Ans. Iswaran was a master storyteller. He was fond of reading popular Tamil thrillers. The stories that he narrated were greatly influenced by these novels. He narrated even the smallest of incidents by creating a loss of suspense. For example, if he had to describe a fallen tree, he would not simply say that he saw an up-rooted tree on the highway. He would say, "The road was deserted and I was all alone. Suddenly I spotted something that looked like an enormous beast. But as I came closer I saw that it was only a fallen tree." In order to make stories interesting, Iswaran added dramatic gestures to it. He would give the stories a surprise ending. Sometimes he would not end the story in order to heighten his master's curiosity. Often he was excited while telling a story. Then he would jump and stamp his feet in excitement.

Q.2. Describe Iswaran's encounter with the elephant.

Ans. One day, Iswaran told Mahendra the story of a mad elephant. One day timberyard-It roamed here and there. Then the tucker reached the town. Pete ran here and there in terror. In some time, the elephant entered a school ground where children were playing: All the boys ran into the room and shut the doors. The elephant pulled out the football goalpost, tore the volleyball net and broke that plastic drum kept for water. Everyone watched helplessly. Iswaran said that he was studying in the junior class at the time. He grabbed the stick of a teacher and came to the elephant. He struck the elephant's toenail. It shivered and fell down. A veterinary doctor was called. After two days, the elephant's mahout came and took it away. Iswaran told Mahendra that he made the elephant unconscious using the Japanese art karate or ju-jitsu.

Q.3. What did Iswaran tell Mahendra about a ghost? Describe Mahendra's horrible experience one night. Why did he resolve to leave that place?

Ans. Iswaran told Mahendra that entire factory area where he worked was once a burial ground. Iswaran told Mahendra that he often saw ghosts at night. Sometimes, there appeared a horrible ghost of a woman. She held a foetus in her arms. Hearing this tale, Mahendra shivered. But he told Iswaran that there were no ghosts in reality. From that time, Mahendra felt somewhat uneasy at night. One night, Mahendra was awakened up from sleep by a moan. The moan became louder. He looked out of the window. He saw a dark cloudy form of a woman, not very far away from a window. She was carrying a bundle in her arms. Mahendra began to sweat with fear. The next morning, Iswaran told Mahendra that he had also heard the moan at night. He had come to his room. He had seen that

Mahendra was looking out of the window at the ghost of the woman. Mahendra was cold with fear. As soon as he reached the office, he handed in his papers for transfer from that place.

4. Describe the things that attracted the child at the fair.

Ans. At the corner of the entrance to the fair, a sweetmeat-seller was calling out to the crowd. The child's mouth watered for a burfi. He murmured slowly that he wanted to have a burfi. Next, a man was selling colourful balloons. The child wanted to have them all. A snake-charmer stood to play the flute to a snake. The child went towards him. But his parents had forbidden him to hear the coarse music of snake-charmers. So he moved further. A roundabout was going on in full swing. He wanted to go on it. These were the things that attracted the child at the fair.

5. How did the man, who picked up the lost child, try to soothe him?

Ans. The man first took the child to the roundabout. But the child did not want to have a ride on it. He then took him to the place where the snake-charmer was playing his flute. But the child shut his ears with his fingers. The man then took him near the balloons. He thought the bright colours of the balloons would distract his attention and quieten him. The child did not want the balloons either. The man still tried to make the child happy. He offered to buy the child a garland. But the man's efforts proved futile. Then he took him to the sweet-shop. But the child did not want any sweets. He only wanted his parents.

Q6. How does Iswaran describe the uprooted tree on the highway? What effect does he want to create on his listeners?

(Textual)

Ans Iswaran describes the uprooted tree by first adding suspense and then a surprise ending to the account. He uses his eyes and hands quite dramatically while recounting that he was alone on a deserted road when he saw something that looked like an enormous bushy beast. Later, on a closer look, he saw that it was a fallen tree with dry branches spread out.

He adopts this style of description because he wants to catch the attention of the listener. He employs suspense and adds details so that the story captivates his audience. His style of narrating stories was influenced by Tamil thrillers that were quite long. He knew from his experience of reading that elaborate descriptions made the story enjoyable and interesting. He wanted to give the same experience to his listener.

Q7. How does Iswaran narrate the story of the tusker? Does it appear to be plausible? (Textual) Ans: Iswaran narrates the story of the tusker in his unique style. He starts by giving an introduction (prologue) in which he describes elephants that turn wild and become uncontrollable. He then gives an account of how one day a tusker escaped from the timber yard and destroyed the bushes, creepers and branches that came in its way. While describing, Iswaran gets carried away by the narrative and jumps about on the floor. He continues narrating the details regarding the forced entry of the elephant first in the town and then in his school. He builds up the suspense by describing the fear that gripped the people of his town, his teachers and the boys in his school. He then very cleverly assumes the role of a hero and goes on to narrate how he, merely a junior student, grabbed a cane from a teacher and ran down to challenge the tusker. It tried to scare him by stamping its feet and kicking up mud. But Iswaran said that he was

so brave that he hit hard on the third toenail of the elephant and the stunned animal shivered and collapsed.

The early part of this story that describes the havoc wreaked by the mad tusker is plausible. We often get to read news reports of such incidents in areas close to elephant habitats. However, the later part when Iswaran claims to disempower the elephant is impossible but hilarious. Taming a wild elephant in a snap with a cane held by a junior class student is far fetched but interesting.

Q7. Mahendra calls ghosts or sprits a figment of the imagination. What happens to him on a full-moon night? (Textual)

Ans: Mahendra claimed that he was a brave and rational man. He scolded Iswaran when the latter talked about ghosts or spirits. He told him that such things were merely a figment of the imagination. However, deep inside he got scared when Iswaran told him that he had seen a female ghost and that the entire factory area where they lived was earlier burial ground.

One full-moon night, Mahendra was woken up from his sleep by a low moan close to his window. At first, he thought it to be some cat looking for mice but soon realized that it was not the case. However, he did not look out because he was afraid that he might find a ghost. When the sound grew louder, he could not resist anymore and lowered himself to the level of the windowsill to look out. There he saw a dark cloud like form holding a bundle. Mahendra got so frightened at this sight that he broke into a cold sweat and fell back on his pillow, breathing heavily.

Q8. "Iswaran is a fascinating storyteller". Discuss. Or

Iswaran was a master storyteller. Describe his amazing narrative' skills.

Ans: Iswaran is a fascinating storyteller who could weave out endless stories and anecdotes. He acquired this talent by reading Tamil thrillers. He would read these novels every day after lunch and relate them to his master in his leisure time. He always added suspense and surprise even to the smallest incident and could make up innumerable stories on different subjects. He would use facial and body expressions to add interest to the story. He would raise his eyebrows, wave his hands, and jump about imitating the characters in his stories. He would narrate a story in instalments and purposely leave it unfinished midway. On returning, he would not pick it up right away till reminded by his listener. He would narrate a new story every day and fill it with adventure, horror and suspense, thus entertaining Mahendra as television does.

Q9. What human values form the essence of Iswaran's character?

Ans: Iswaran was a multitalented person whose character teaches us the values of dedication, cheerfulness and creativity. He carried off his duties as a cook by preparing the most delicious dishes like a .magician. He was dedicated to Mahendra and served him uncomplainingly regardless of the situation or the place. He enjoyed his job and would not sit idle when Mahendra was at work. In Mahendra's absence, he would finish off cleaning and washing tasks. Iswaran was a curious learner. He developed the art of storytelling by reading Tamil thrillers. He could narrate a story every day by mixing suspense, adventure and horror to the episodes. He was a good and loyal companion to Mahendra and entertained him more than a TV. He was large-hearted and did not sulk even after getting a scolding from Mahendra. His innumerable positive values make him memorable.

Q10. What are the qualities of a good storyteller? How can you say that Iswaran was a fascinating storyteller?

Ans. A good storyteller has the quality to put the readers in thrill. He keeps the interest of the listener lively. He must have a good imagination and good skill. Iswaran has all the good qualities of a good storyteller. Iswaran is a fascinating storyteller. He seems to be a good dramatist. His story is full of great suspense and surprise. He told his story in a dramatic manner. Instead of saying uprooted tree, he would say that he saw huge bushy beast lying across the road. He had an amazing capacity to make stories. He always tried to introduce suspense and surprise in the narration of the simplest incident. Thus according to the text, Iswaran was a good storyteller.

Q11. Iswaran, the story-teller, had a sensational way of telling his stories. Do you think he did the right things by adding sensation to his stories?

Ans. Iswaran had an inborn skill for story-telling. He would add up suspense and surprise even to an ordinary incident. Mahendra had no choice but to listen to him uncritically. Then he would jump to another incredible story. When he was in the junior class, an elephant got mad. It uprooted bushes and trees and caused terrible destruction. When everyone was running helter-skelter, he stepped forward with a stick. He hit it hard on its third toenail. The beast shivered and collapsed. A veterinary doctor had to take a long time to revive the beast. Iswaran was highly inspired and copied the popular Tamil thrillers in this art.

Q12. Storytelling is an art. Comment with reference to the story 'Iswaran the Storyteller'.

Ans. Story-telling is an art. The story-teller must have a grim tone, suitable expression of face and dramatic gestures of hands and body to leave a long-lasting impact on listeners. Stories can be made vivid by telling them in a unique style. Though stories are a figment of the imagination a perfect storyteller presents the facts. A good story has suspense in small things and has a surprise ending. Iswaran is a good storyteller. He used to read Tamil thrillers; it affected his behaviour. He used to narrate a small incident in a detailed way. He created suspense in small things and gave surprise endings. He was an expert in narrating stories in an elaborate way.

Q13. Right from childhood, we hear ghost stories. What should be our opinion about ghosts? Answer with reference to the story 'Iswaran the Storyteller'.

Ans. Since our childhood, we hear the stories of a ghost. Sometimes we become frightened and fall asleep quickly. And sometimes we think about the action of ghosts. As children, we believe in the existence of ghosts. We become confident that ghosts exist in the world and become afraid of dark even if we see any horrible sight. Our belief in ghosts deepens further. In the story, Iswaran told Mahendra that he had seen a female ghost one day. He further told him that the ghost appeared off and on at midnight during the full moon. The ghost seemed an ugly creature with thick hair and a shrivelled face and it gave the impression of a skeleton holding a foetus in its arms. Although Mahendra called Iswaran a crazy fellow, he was frightened inside. However, at night he conjured up the ghost and

started shivering. Thus, his belief in ghosts deepened and he decided to leave the place at once.

Q14. Iswaran served his master Mahendra with devotion and honesty. Do you think he was an ideal servant to his master?

Ans. Iswaran was an obedient person. He was Mahendra's cook. He was very caring and hardworking. He did all the jobs such as cooking meal, washing clothes and chatting with Mahendra at night. He obeyed his master with full dedication. So, he was an asset to Mahendra. Any ideal servant should take every care of his master. He should keep his master satisfied in every way. As Mahendra was unmarried he was leading a lonely life. There was no one in the house who could give him company. Only Iswaran was in his house. Only he was his guide and friend. He was the source of entertainment for him. Thus, he was really an ideal servant of his master.

Q15. Iswaran narrated ghost stories to his master, Mahendra, which created fear in Mahendra's mind. Was it right on the part of Iswaran to create fear in Mahendra's mind?

Ans. Mahendra's mind was influenced by the ghost stories told by Iswaran. Iswaran told Mahendra that the place was a former burial ground and he had seen a female ghost. Mahendra was influenced by this story and he too saw a similar female ghost outside his window. This made him leave the present house he was staying in. It is horrible that it was only a figment of his imagination and there was no real ghost. So he must have convinced himself that he really saw a ghost before vacating his place. Mahendra felt frightened and ran to Ms office. Further, he decided to leave the haunted place at once. It was his art of telling stories which helped him to convince Mahendra that he should believe in the ghosts.

Q16. Even an educated person sometimes realises the existence of a ghost. Illustrate this with reference to Iswaran the Storyteller'.

Ans. A well educated and well-informed person would not believe in the existence of the ghost but sometimes the fear of their heart and effect of horror tales and haunted movies make them realise the existence of the ghost. Due to a psychological effect, the horrible scene does not get out of his mind and keeps on thinking about the existence of a ghost. When one is in deep thoughts about a certain scene, the things related to the scene appear like real before our eyes. The same is the story of the ghost. In the story, the skilled storyteller, Iswaran, makes his successful effort to make Mahendra realise about the ghosts' world and he started to believe that the ghosts were really existed and decided to leave the place, taking it as haunted.

QUICK REVIEW OF THE CHAPTER

Who is the narrator of the story 'Iswaran the Storyteller'?

(A) Ganesli

(B) Mahendra

(C) Iswaran

(D) R.K. Laxman Ms.

Ans. (B) Mahendra

Whom does Mahendra narrate the story of Iswaran.?

(A) Ganesh

(B) Iswaran

(C) R.K. Laxman

(D) none of these

Ans. (A) Ganesh

What was Mahendra's job ?

(A) he was the manager of a cinema office

(B) he worked in a government office

(C) he was a supervisor in a construction company (D) he was a storyteller

Ans. (C) he was a supervisor in a construction company

What was Mahindra's marital status ?

(A) married

(B) widower

(C) engaged and going to be married soon

(D) bachelor

Ans.. (D) bachelor

What was the name of Mahendra's cook ?

(A) Iswaran

(B) Ganesh

(C) Ramu

(D) Shankaran

Ans. (A) Iswaran

Iswaran had an amazing capacity. What was it ?

(A) falling down big trees
cooking ingredients

(B) producing vegetables and

(C) telling lies

(D) cheat shopkeepers

Ans.. (B) producing vegetables and cooking ingredients

What books did Iswaran read ?

(A) Tamil thrills

(B) Urdu stories

(C) Hindi novels

(D) Punjabi stories

Ans.. (A) Tamil thrills

What was the special feature of his stories ?

(A) light humour

(B) satire on system

(C) tragic ending
ending

(D) suspense and a surprise

Ans.. (D) suspense and a surprise ending

How does Iswaran describe a fallen tree ?

(A) a huge mountain

(B) a huge building

(C) an enormous bushy beast

(D) a small thing

Ans.. (C) an enormous bushy beast

In Iswaran story from where the tusker escaped ?

(A) cage

(B) timber yard

(C) forest

(D) circus

Ans.. (B) timber yard

How was the mad elephant breaking the walls ?

(A) like toys

(B) like kettles

(C) like matchsticks

(D) like puppets

Ans.. (C) like matchsticks

Why did the people run helter-skelter in panic ?

(A) to see the tiger

(B) to see a giant

(C) to see a giant

(D) none of these

Ans.. (B) to see the mad elephant

When the elephant entered the school ground in which class was Iswaran studying ?

(A) junior

(B) senior

(C) 10th

(D) 12th

Ans.. (A) junior

From where was Iswaran watching this incident

(A) from a room

(B) from the cupboard

(C) from a tree

(D) from the rooftop

Ans.. (D) from the rooftop

What did Iswaran do to tackle the wild elephant ?

(A) hit on his trunk

(B) hit on his third toenail

(C),sit on his neck with an iron goad
needle

(D) pricked his trunk with a

Ans.. (B) hit on his third toenail

What happened to the elephant when Iswaran hit on the third toenail of the elephant ?

(A) grunted loudly and collapsed on the
ground

(B) ran away from there

(C) caught Iswaran in his trunk and threw him away (D) made friendship with Iswaran

Ans.. (A) grunted loudly and collapsed on the ground

Why was a veterinary doctor summoned ?

(A) to treat Iswaran

(B) to treat the elephant

(C) to take the elephant away from there

(D) all the options are correct

Ans.. (B) to treat the elephant

Where did the school boys hide themselves to see the mad elephant ?

(A) on trees

(B) in their houses

(C) in their classrooms

(D) in the Headmaster's room

Ans. (C) in their classrooms

Who is a mahout ?

(A) a labourer

(B) an elephant's driver

(C) a cook

(D) a writer

Ans.. (B) an elephant's driver

Which art helped Iswaran to bring down the beast ?

(A) boxing

(B) wrestling

(C) ju-jitsu

(D) yoga

Ans. (C) ju-jitsu

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

Q1. Describe Mahendra's character in about 30 – 40 words.

Ans: Mahendra was a simple man with simple needs. He was a junior supervisor in a firm which offered to hire supervisors at construction sites like factories, bridges, dams etc. His work involved moving from one site to another as per the orders by his head office and keeping an eye on the activities at the work site. He was a devoted employee and a kind master.

Q2. Who was Iswaran? What did he do for his master?

Ans: Iswaran was Mahendra's cook and a master storyteller. He cooked and washed for his master. He also enjoyed chatting and narrating interesting and convincing stories to Mahendra in leisure time.

Q3. What type of life did Mahendra lead?

Ans: Mahendra was an unmarried man with simple needs. He made his living by supervising construction work at different sites as per orders from his head office. He was always accompanied by his cook Iswaran who served him faithfully.

Q4. In what way is Iswaran an asset to Mahendra?
(Textual)

Or

Why was Iswaran called Mahendra's asset?

Ans: Iswaran was called Mahendra's asset because of his complete dedication and devotion to his master. He followed Mahendra to all his postings uncomplainingly and looked after his needs. He cooked excellently by improvising

material even at the remotest place, washed clothes and also chatted with his master at night, often narrating interesting anecdotes and stories.

Q5. What sets apart Iswaran from other domestic help?

Or

How was Iswaran more than a cook to Mahendra?

Ans: Iswaran was different from other domestic bits of help because, in addition to cooking delicious dishes, tidying up their makeshift shed, and washing clothes, he would also entertain Mahendra like a TV by narrating interesting stories. He would chat with him at night and give him company thus making up for his lonely, bachelor life.

Q6. Why does the author say that Iswaran seemed to more than make up for the absence of T.V. in Mahendra's living quarters?

(Textual)

Ans: The author says so because Iswaran was a fascinating storyteller who entertained Mahendra more than a TV could. Every day he narrated a new story packed with drama, adventure, horror and suspense.

Q7. How did Iswaran pass his time in Mahendra's absence?

Ans: In Mahendra's absence, Iswaran would tidy up the lodgings and wash the clothes. Then he would bathe leisurely and pray at the same time. This would be followed by his mid-day meals (lunch). Thereafter, he would read Tamil thrillers before taking a nap.

Q8. How did Iswaran manage to make even the simplest incident interesting? Support your answer with an example.

Ans: Iswaran managed to make even the simplest of incidents interesting by employing dramatic gestures and movements while narrating. He would always add suspense and a surprise ending to the account. For example, he would describe the branches of a fallen tree as an enormous bushy beast that lay sprawled across the road.

Q9. What influenced Iswaran's style of storytelling? How?

Ans: Tamil thrillers that were very long and descriptive influenced Iswaran's style of storytelling. He would be enthralled by such narratives and read them every day after lunch. He would sprinkle his tales with the imaginative descriptions that he read in these thrillers.

Q10. How did Iswaran begin his story of an escape of tusker from the timber yard?

Ans: Iswaran had the habit of setting up his stories in a dramatic manner with elaborate prologues. He narrated the story of a tusker's escape from the timber yard in a similar manner. He described how the tusker roamed about, stamped on bushes, tore up wild creepers and broke branches as if he had gone mad.

Q11. What destruction did the elephant cause in the town?

Ans: The elephant entered the town by breaking down the fences like matchsticks. It came into the main road and smashed all the stalls selling fruits, mud pots and clothes. People ran here and there in fear and panic.

Q12. How did the elephant wreak havoc in the school?

Ans: The tusker entered the school ground by breaking through the brick wall. It wreaked havoc by pulling out the football goal-post, tearing down the volleyball net, kicking and flattening the water drums and uprooting the shrubs.

Q13. How did the children and the teachers react when the mad elephant entered the school ground?

Ans: The children who were playing in the ground at once ran into the classrooms and shut the doors tight. The teachers climbed up to the terrace of the school building and watched helplessly. the destruction caused by the elephant.

Q14. How did Iswaran give a personal touch to the anecdote of the elephant?

Ans: In order to give a personal touch to the anecdote of the elephant, Iswaran excitedly got up from the floor while narrating. He jumped about stamping his feet as he had seen the mad elephant doing while kicking up mud and dust.

Q15. How did Iswaran claim to have tackled and controlled the mad elephant?

Ans: Iswaran tackled the elephant by grabbing a cane from a teacher and challenging the tusker. This angered the beast and it tried to frighten Iswaran by trumpeting loudly and stamping its feet, kicking up a lot of mud and dust. However, Iswaran mustered all his force and quickly whacked the third toenail of the tusker. The beast looked stunned for a moment, shivered from head to foot and collapsed.

Q16. Why did the elephant collapse at merely being hit with a cane stick?

Or

What special technique or power helped Iswaran in making the mad elephant calm and quiet in no time?

Ans: Iswaran told Mahendra that the elephant collapsed because of Japanese art called karate or ju-jitsu. It had temporarily paralysed the beast's nervous system. Iswaran said that he had read about this art somewhere and used it to bring down the beast.

Q17. Why did Mahendra become fond of Iswaran?

Ans: Iswaran's style of storytelling made Mahendra fond of him. In his inimitable style, Iswaran would add elements of suspense, thrill, horror and adventure to his stories. Mahendra enjoyed them a lot and they made up for the absence of a television in his living quarters.

Q18. Why did Iswaran seek permission to cook a special dinner?

Ans: Iswaran sought Mahendra's permission to cook a special dinner because it was an auspicious day and according to tradition, delicacies had to be prepared to feed the spirits of ancestors. Actually, he was laying the background for a ghost story.

Q19. What did Iswaran tell Mahendra about the factory area where they lived?

Ans: Iswaran told Mahendra that the entire factory area where they lived was once a burial ground. He added that he had seen a number of bones and human skulls lying on the path. He claimed to have seen a female ghost as well.

Q20. How did Iswaran build up his ghost story?

Ans: Iswaran built up the ghost story by first preparing a special dinner meant to feed the spirits of ancestors on an auspicious day. When Mahendra had just finished the delicious meal, he suddenly started to narrate how he sometimes saw ghosts at night. He told details about having seen an ugly female ghost holding a foetus in her arms.

Q21. How does Iswaran describe the female ghost?

Or

What picture of the female ghost did Iswaran paint?

Ans: Iswaran claimed that he had seen the ghost of a woman that appeared off and on at midnight during the full moon. He described it as an ugly creature with matted hair and a shrivelled face. It looked like a skeleton holding a foetus in its arms.

Q22. What was Mahendra's suggestion to Iswaran when the latter continued narrating accounts about ghosts?

Ans: Mahendra admonished Iswaran for his insane and nonsense description of ghosts and advised him to get his digestive system and his head tested. He told him that ghosts and spirits did not exist and were merely a figment of the latter's imagination.

Q23. What behaviour was Mahendra expecting from Iswaran when he had scolded him for telling ghost stories?

Ans: Mahendra expected Iswaran to sulk for a few days after getting a scolding for telling ghost stories. However, the next morning he found the uncomplaining Iswaran to be as talkative and cheerful as always.

Q24. What impact did Iswaran's story of a female ghost have on Mahendra?

Or

What effect did Iswaran's description of the female ghost have on Mahendra's mind?

Ans: After hearing from Iswaran about a female ghost, Mahendra became uneasy. Before going to bed, he would look into the darkness outside from his window to ensure that there weren't any ghosts outside. He avoided looking out of his window particularly on full moon nights.

Q25. Do you think the ghost Mahendra saw on the night of the full moon was a real ghost?

Ans: No, the ghost seen by Mahendra was not real. Mahendra even reasoned with himself that the ghost-like figure seen by him was due to the fear that arose in his subconscious after he had heard about it from Iswaran.

Q26. When did Mahendra believe that the factory site was really haunted by ghosts?

Ans: When Mahendra saw the female ghost on a moonlit night, he reasoned with himself that it must have been a figment of his imagination. However, the next morning when Iswaran told him that he too had heard loud moans the previous night, Mahendra believed that the place was a haunted one.

Q27. What did Mahendra decide after he was convinced that he had seen the ghost?

Or

Why did Mahendra decide to leave the haunted place?

Ans:A chill went down Mahendra's spine when Iswaran asked him in the morning if his opinion about the presence of ghosts had changed after witnessing one the previous night. Convinced that he had seen a ghost, Mahendra left immediately for his office to hand over his resignation and decided to leave that haunted place the next day.

Q28. Can you think of some other ending for the story?
(Textual)

Ans:The other ending of the story could be that Mahendra sees this as a trick played on him by Iswaran to settle scores for scolding him. He does not resign but catches the truth behind the supposed horror. Iswaran apologises and mends his ways and gives up storytelling.

Q29. How was Iswaran's style of storytelling interspersed with his childhood influences?

Ans: Iswaran had spent his childhood near thick forests where timber was procured with the help of elephants. He must have seen activities of beasts like elephants used in the transportation of timber logs. His childhood experiences thus came in handy while adding details to his stories.

Q30. Why was there never an end to Iswaran's tales?

Ans: Iswaran's tales never ended because he drew his stories from the Tamil thrillers that he read every day after lunch. These thrillers were imaginative, descriptive and narrative. The more he would read, the more stories he had to narrate to Mahendra, his master.

Q31. In what way is Iswaran an asset to Mahendra? (NCERT)

Ans. Iswaran was an obedient person. He was Mahendra's cook. He was very caring and hardworking. He did all the jobs such as cooking meal, washing clothes and chatting with him at night. He obeyed his master with full dedication. So, he was an asset to Mahendra.

Q32. Why does the author say that Iswaran seemed to more than makeup for the absence of a TV in Mahendra's living quarters? (NCERT)

Ans. Iswaran was an expert in telling adventurous and mysterious stories in a dramatic way. It was his daily routine to entertain Mahendra at night. Mahendra would like to sit and watch the development of the story. Thus Iswaran seemed to move up for the absence of a TV.

Q33. How does Iswaran describe the uprooted tree on the highway? What effect does he want to create in his listeners? (NCERT)

Ans. Iswaran was greatly influenced by the Tamil authors. He was in the habit of creating suspense. He had the quality of narrating even the smallest incident in an impressive way. He presented the incident related to the uprooted tree on the highway in a dramatic way. He was alone and the road was deserted. He saw something that looked like an enormous beast lying across the road. But as soon as he came closer, he found there nothing but a fallen tree. His main purpose was to create suspense and surprise.

Q34. Why did Mahendra have to keep moving from place to place?

Ans. Mahendra worked as a junior supervisor in a 'Supervisors on Hire Firm'. His job sites kept on changing from place to place as ordered by his head office. So, he had to keep moving from place to place.

Q35. What did Iswaran do for Mahendra?

Ans. He cooked food for Mahendra, washed his clothes, cleaned the house and talked to him at nights. He used to tell him interesting stories and anecdotes and thus, entertained him.

Q36. How did Mahendra see the female ghost?

Ans. One full moon night, Mahendra heard the sound of mourning and wailing near the window. He looked out of his window. He saw a dark cloudy form clutching a bundle. He thought it to be a female ghost. He sweated and fell back on the pillow.

Q37. How did Iswaran entertain Mahendra?

Ans. Iswaran was a good storyteller. He was fond of reading books on thrill and mystery. He used to tell various stories to Mahendra. His stories were full of suspense, horror and adventures. He compared things with something imaginative.

Q38. Who was Mahendra? What was his job?

Ans. Mahendra was a young man. He was a bachelor and his needs were simple. But he had the ability to adjust himself to all types of condition. Mahendra was a junior supervisor in a firm. His job was to supervise the activities at the work site. As per his nature of the job, he had to move from one place to the other.

Q39. Why did Mahendra expect Iswaran to be angry?

Ans. One day, Mahendra interrupted Iswaran from telling a useless story. He scolded him badly. So, he expected him to be angry for some days. But Iswaran did not mind that and was before him, as usual, the next day.

Q40. What was the reason Iswaran gave to leave the story unfinished?

Ans. Iswaran often left the story unfinished to create curiosity in the listener about its end. He took the plea that he has to warm and serve the dinner.

Q41. How did Iswaran often make even the simplest incident interesting?

Ans. Iswaran was influenced by Tamil authors. He often read Tamil thrilling stories. Whenever he narrated even the smallest of incidents, he used to create lots of suspense. For example, he never described a fallen tree as he had seen an uprooted tree on the highway. Instead, he would say, "The road was deserted and

I was all alone. Suddenly I spotted something that looked like an enormous bushy beast. But as I came closer, I saw that it was only a fallen tree”.

Q42. After Mahendra left for work, what was Iswaran’s usual routine?

Ans. After Mahendra left for work, Iswaran used to tidy up the shed and wash the clothes. Then, he would have a bath. After lunch, he would read for a while before dozing off. Its imaginative descriptions and narrative flourishes would hold him in thrall.

Q43. How did Iswaran control the wild elephant?

Ans. Iswaran controlled the wild elephant. He took a stick in his hand, moved forward and with all his might, whacked the elephant’s third toenail. The elephant looked stunned for a minute. Finally, it shivered and collapsed.

Q44. Mahendra calls ghosts or spirits a figment of the imagination. What happens to him on a full moon night? (NCERT)

Ans. Mahendra calls ghosts or spirits a figment of the imagination as he did not believe in ghosts. One day Iswaran told him about a female ghost holding a foetus in her arms. On a full-moon night, he woke up from his sleep and looked outside

the window. He was shocked to see the same figure and began to sweat profusely.

Q45. How did Iswaran build up his ghost story?

Ans. Iswaran did not give the proper beginning to his stories. He was also in the habit of leaving the story incomplete in between. He prepared the background of the ghost story by saying 'he saw a human skull lying on the path'. After this, he told the ghost story.