

Comprehension Questions
UNIT II
THE BLUE BOUQUET

Here are some possible passages from Unit II. Hope this would help you to comprehend the story well.

Read the following Passages from The story 'The Blue Bouquet' and Answer the Questions that follow.

(I) When I woke up..... with his eyes half closed. (Page 48,Para-1)

1. Why,do you think the narrator walked bare foot across the room?
2. “being careful not to step on a scorpion if one had come out”.What impression do you get about the room from these words?
3. What was the hotel-keeper doing?
4. The narrator describes a series of actions in the above passage. Suppose your mother tells you how she made tea for you in the morning. Could you describe it in the manner above?

You may begin like this: I went to the kitchen,.....

(Hints: boils water in the kettle, adds tea-leaves, strains, adds sugar, serves in a glass)

ANSWERS

1. It was too hot in the room and the narrator got out of the hammock to feel the coolness of the floor..
2. It was too hot except the floor.
3. The hotel-keeper was sitting on a rush chair and smoking a cigarette.
4. I went to the kitchen and took a kettle, washed it and boiled water in it. When the water boiled, put tea leaves. Then strained it and added boiled milk and sugar. Finally served it in glasses.

(II) Without turning my head.....they're light brown.

1. Which line in the excerpt tells you that the stranger was not at all confident in placing his demand?
2. Would you agree to the statement that the stranger is a passionate lover?Why?
3. How does the narrator try to save himself from the stranger?
4. Read the conversation between the narrator and the stranger and answer the questions that follow:

Narrator: What do you want my eyes for?

Stranger: It's my sweetheart's idea.

- a) What did the narrator ask the stranger?
- b) What was the stranger's reply?

ANSWERS

1. His voice was strangely gentle, almost embarrassed
2. Yes, he is a passionate lover because he remarks that 'It's my sweetheart's idea' and dared to go in search of blue eyes.
3. He promised the stranger that he would give everything he had with him.
4. (a) The narrator asked the stranger what he wanted his eyes for.
(b) The stranger replied that it was his sweetheart's idea.

(III) My eyes? What are you.....glittered in the moonlight

1. What is the stranger going to do with the narrator's eyes?
2. How did he try to escape from the stranger?
3. Complete the following sentence suitably. If I had got a little money,.....
4. Pick out an expression which means 'to become frightened'.
5. Describe the stranger when the narrator meets him in the street at night.

ANSWERS

1. **Make a bouquet of blue eyes..**
2. **By promising to give all the money/the little money he had with him.**
3. **If I had got a little money, I would have given you.**
4. **Scared**
5. **He was short and slight, with a palm sombrero half covering his face.**

(IV) I shrugged my shoulders.....of only one word.(Page49,Para-2)

1. Who are engaged in the dialogue referred to in the passage?
2. 'I was only one syllable,of only one word' What does it signify?
3. What quality of the night is felt quite striking for the narrator?

ANSWERS

1. **The narrator and the stranger.**
2. **In this vast universe human beings has very little significance.**
3. **That night he felt that the whole universe was a grand system of signals, a conversation among enormous beings.**

(V) 'My eyes?.....they're light brown.

1. Why did the stranger try to pluck the narrator's eyes?
2. What offer did the narrator make to save himself from the stranger?
3. Complete the following sentence suitably: If the man let the narrator go,he.....
 4. Do you think that the stranger's sweetheart really asked for a bouquet of blue eyes? Why?

ANSWERS

1. **To make a blue bouquet for his sweetheart.**
2. **The narrator offered all the money he had to save himself..**
3. **If the man let the narrator go, he would give him all the money he had.**
4. **No, No women will ever say her lover to make a bouquet of blue eyes. She might have meant a bouquet of blue eye flowers.**

(VI) Read the extract from the story 'The Blue Bouquet' and answer the questions that follow:

I shrugged my shoulders, mumbled, 'I'll be right back,' and went out into the darkness. At first couldn't see anything at all. I groped my way along the stone-paved street. I lit a cigarette. Suddenly the moon came out from behind a black cloud, lighting up a weather-beaten white wall. I stopped in my tracks, blinded by that whiteness. A faint breeze stirred the air and I could smell the fragrance of the tamarind trees. The night was murmurous with the sounds of leaves and insects. The crickets had bivouacked among the tall weeds. I raised my eyes: up there the stars were also camping out. I thought that the whole universe was a grand system of signals, a conversation among enormous beings. My

own actions, the creak of a cricket, the blinking of a star, were merely pauses and syllables, odd fragments of that dialogue. I was only one syllable, of only one word.

1. Who are engaged in the dialogue referred to in the passage?
2. 'I was only one syllable, of only one word.' What does it signify?
3. What quality of the night is felt quite striking for the narrator?
4. Classify the following group of words into two heads as shown below.

**the moon, came out from behind, a faint breeze,
my own actions, raised my eyes, shrugged my shoulder**

The moon	came out from behind

ANSWERS

1. The Hotel keeper and the narrator.
2. The narrators voice/ the narrator himself.
3. The stars that were camping out.
4. The moon came out from behind
A faint breeze raised my eyes
My own actions shrugged my shoulders
(Classify as Noun Phrase & Verb Phrase)

THE METHOD OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

(I) Read the following Passages from The story 'The Method of Sherlock Holmes' and Answer the Questions that follow.

Homes was sitting 'Perfectly sound!' said Holmes

1. How did Holmes know what Watson was doing?
2. Pick out a word from the passage which means reputed/famous.
3. What did Watson conclude about the stick and its owner?
4. 'I can hardly imagine a town practitioner carrying it' Why does Watson thinks so?

ANSWERS

1. Though Holmes was sitting back to Watson he saw the reflection of what Watson doing through the silver plated coffee pot in front of him.
2. Esteemed
3. Watson concluded that the owner of the stick was a country practitioner who does a great deal of visiting on foot.
4. Though originally the stick was a handsome one, the iron ferrule was worn down due to frequent use.

THE HIMALAYAS

Read the following lines from the poem 'The Himalayas' and the question that follow.

(I) One day he tells me..... as a metaphor.

1. Who is 'he' referred here?
2. Why did the speaker stop reading her poem?
3. What idea do you get about her poem?
4. Pick out one word for 'a similarity between two dissimilar objects has been suggested but not clearly stated'.

ANSWERS

1. Swami Anand
2. She thought that Swami Anand was sleeping.
3. She was budding poet.
4. Metaphor

(II) Suddenly I am ashamed...bare foot.

1. Who was ashamed?
2. Why was the person ashamed?
3. Who walked through the ice and snow?

ANSWERS

1. The poet (Sujata Bhatt)
2. Because to speak about the Himalayas (imaginary one) to a man who walked through it.
3. Swami Anand – a veteran

(III) At that timeas a metaphor.

1. What change can you notice in the speaker on the days referred to in these lines?
2. What purpose do the glasses serve for Swami Anand?
3. Why did the speaker stop reading her poem?
4. The narrator reads out a poem before Swami Anand. What idea do you get about her poem?

ANSWERS

1. The poet (Sujata Bhatt) was a budding poet she was improving herself as poet.
2. Because to speak about the Himalayas (imaginary one) to a man who walked through it/ She was ashamed to present her poem before Swami Anand who stands before her an epitome of experience and maturity.
3. She becomes doubtful of her poetry and is hesitant to read out her poem before Swami Anand.
4. Sujata is a budding poet. The poem is in the form of a personal reminiscence of a young poet's association with an elderly ascetic, Swami Anand.

(IV) At that time in which the Himalayas rise as a metaphor.

1. What change can you notice in the speaker on the days referred to in these lines?
2. What purpose do the glasses serve for Swami Anand?
3. Why did the speaker stop reading her poem?
4. The narrator reads out a poem before Swami Anand. What idea do you get about her poem?

ANSWERS

1. She has just started to wear a sari. She has just started to experiment creative writing.
2. The glasses only magnified his cloudy eyes.
3. Thinking that Swami Anand was sleeping and not listening to her poem, she stopped.
4. Sujata is a budding poet. The poem is in the form of a personal reminiscence of a young poet's association with an elderly ascetic, Swami Anand.

SKIMBLESHANKS: THE RAILWAY CAT

Read the following lines from the poem 'Skimbleshanks: The Railway Cat' and answer the question that follow.

- (I) He gives one flash of glass-green eyes When Skimbleshanks is abroad.
1. What is the relevance of the the glass-green eyes.?
 2. How does Skimbleshanks take control over the train?
 3. Why no one can play pranks with Skimbleshanks?
 4. Name the train which the cat take control over?

ANSWERS

1. The train is waiting for the green signal to start its journey. The flash of the glass-green eyes of the cat resembles the 'All Clear' green signal of the train.
2. He establishes control by a regular patrol.
3. The cat is very alert, quiet intelligent and clever.
4. Northern mail.

- (II) There's a whisper down the line at 11.39 He's been busy in the luggage van!
1. When does the Night Mail arrive at the station?
 2. What do you think Skimbleshanks doing in the luggage van?
 3. How does the poet create a locomotive rhythm in the poem.?
 4. Pick out instances of alliteration from the above line.

ANSWERS

1. At 11.39.
2. Skimbleshanks might be searching for some mice among the luggage van.
3. By the use of repeated alliterative lines like: 'Saying "Skimble where is Skimble, for unless he's very nimble."'
4. Saying "Skimble where is skimble has to gone to hunt the thimble?"

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