

Question 1:

Discuss in pairs and answer each question below in a short paragraph (30 – 40 words).

1. "The sound was familiar one." What sound did the doctor hear? What did he think it was? How many times did he hear it? (Find the places in the text.) When and why did the sounds stop?
2. What two "important" and "earth-shaking" decisions did the doctor take while he was looking into the mirror?
3. "I looked into the mirror and smiled," says the doctor. A little later he says, "I forgot my danger and smiled feebly at myself." What is the doctor's opinion about himself when: (i) he first smiles, and (ii) he smiles again? In what way do his thoughts change in between, and why?

Answer:

1. The doctor heard a familiar sound caused by the movement of something on the beam. He thought that the sound was being made by the movement of rats. He heard the sound thrice. After the third time, the sounds stopped. Suddenly, he heard a dull thud as if a rubber tube had fallen to the ground. When he turned, he saw a snake that wriggled over the back of the chair and landed on his shoulder.
2. The first important decision that he took while looking into the mirror was that he would shave daily and grow a thin moustache to look more handsome. The second earth-shaking decision he took was that he would always keep his attractive smile on his face to look more handsome.
3. When the doctor first smiled in front of the mirror, he was appreciating his attractive smile. He decided to keep that smile on his face to look more handsome. His opinion about himself at that point of time was that he was a bachelor and a doctor too. Later, when he smiled feebly at himself, he had forgotten his danger. He knew that the snake would strike him and that he had no medicines in his room. At that moment, his opinion about himself was that he was but a poor, foolish, and stupid doctor. His thoughts had changed because of the lurking danger. Earlier, he

had thought that the noise was created by rats. However, later he had a snake sitting on his shoulder and that is when he realized the gravity of the situation.

Question 2:

This story about a frightening incident is narrated in a humorous way. What makes it humorous? (Think of the contrasts it presents between dreams and reality. Some of them are listed below.)

1. (i) The kind of person the doctor is (money, possessions)
(ii) The kind of person he wants to be (appearance, ambition)
2. (i) The person he wants to marry
(ii) The person he actually marries
3. (i) His thoughts when he looks into the mirror
(ii) His thoughts when the snake is coiled around his arm

Write short paragraphs on each of these to get your answer.

Answer:

1. The story presents a contrast between dreams and reality. This contrast has been depicted in a humorous manner. The doctor had just started his practice. His earnings were therefore meagre. He lived in a small rented room, which was not electrified. He had only sixty rupees in his suitcase. Apart from a few shirts and *dhotis*, he had one solitary black coat. His house was full of rats. However, his dreams and ambitions were in contrast to this. He was a great admirer of beauty and he believed in making himself handsome. He laid great emphasis on the fact that he was unmarried and a doctor. He was too pleased with his appearance. He decided to shave daily and grow a thin moustache to look more handsome. The manner in which he decided that this decision is an 'important' one is quite funny. Later, he also made an 'earth-shaking decision' to always keep smiling in order to look more handsome. This contrast between the kind of person he was and the kind of person he wanted to be makes the story humorous.

2. He had thought about the kind of person he would want to marry. He wanted to marry a woman doctor who had plenty of money and a good medical practice

would make a mistake his wife would not be able to catch him. However, the woman he married was a thin and slender person who could run like a sprinter. This contrast between the kind of wife he wanted and the kind of wife he ends up marrying adds to the humour of the story.

3. When he looked into the mirror, he was full of appreciation for his good looks. He was a great admirer of beauty and believed in making himself look handsome. He took a close look at his face and decided that he would shave daily and grow a thin moustache to look even more handsome. Then, he looked into the mirror and smiled. He decided to keep smiling as he considered his smile very attractive. However, later when the snake was coiled around his arm, he turned into a stone. At this moment, he felt the presence of God near him. In his imagination, he tried to write 'O God' in bright letters. He felt pain in his left arm where the snake was coiled. He realized that if the snake struck him, then he did not even have any medicines in his room for the same. That was when he thought that he was a poor, foolish, and stupid doctor. In this way, his thoughts changed from calling himself an unmarried doctor who looked very handsome to calling himself a poor, foolish, and stupid doctor. This sequence of events also provided humour to the story.

Question 1:

Here are some sentences from the text. Say which of them tell you, that the author:
(a) was afraid of the snake, (b) was proud of his appearance, (c) had a sense of humour, (d) was no longer afraid of the snake.

1. I was turned to stone.
2. I was no mere image cut in granite.
3. The arm was beginning to be drained of strength.
4. I tried in my imagination to write in bright letters outside my little heart the words, 'O God'.
5. I didn't tremble. I didn't cry out.
6. I looked into the mirror and smiled. It was an attractive smile.
7. I was suddenly a man of flesh and blood.
8. I was after all a bachelor, and a doctor too on top of it!
9. The fellow had such a sense of cleanliness...! The rascal could have taken it and used it after washing it with soap and water.
10. Was it trying to make an important decision about growing a moustache or using eye shadow and mascara or wearing a vermilion spot on its forehead?

Answer:

1. Was afraid of the snake
2. Had a sense of humour
3. Was afraid of the snake
4. Was afraid of the snake
5. Was afraid of the snake
6. Was proud of his appearance
7. Was no longer afraid of the snake
8. Was proud of his appearance
9. Had a sense of humour
10. Had a sense of humour

Question 2:

Can you find the expressions in the story that tell you that the author was frightened? Read the story and complete the following sentences.

1. I was turned _____.
2. I sat there holding _____.
3. In the light of the lamp I sat there like _____.

Answer:

1. I was turned to stone.
2. I sat there holding my breath.
3. In the light of the lamp I sat there like a stone image in the flesh.

Question 3:

In the sentences given below some words and expressions are italicised. They variously mean that one

- is very frightened.
- is too scared to move.
- is frightened by something that happens suddenly.
- makes another feel frightened.

Match the meanings with the words/expressions in italics, and write the appropriate meaning next to the sentence. The first one has been done for you.

1. I knew a man was following me, I was *scared out of my wits*. (very frightened)
2. I *got a fright* when I realised how close I was to the cliff edge.
3. He *nearly jumped out of his skin* when he saw the bull coming towards him.
4. You really *gave me a fright* when you crept up behind me like that.
5. Wait until I tell his story — it will *make your hair stand on end*.
6. *Paralysed with fear*, the boy faced his abductors.
7. The boy hid behind the door, *not moving a muscle*.

Answer:

1. I knew a man was following me, I was *scared out of my wits*. (Very frightened)
2. I *got a fright* when I realised how close I was to the cliff edge. (Frightened by

3. He *nearly jumped out of his skin* when he saw the bull coming towards him. (Very frightened)
4. You really *gave me a fright* when you crept up behind me like that. (Frightened by something that happens suddenly)
5. Wait until I tell his story — it will *make your hair stand on end*. (Makes another feel frightened)
6. *Paralysed with fear*, the boy faced his abductors. (Too scared to move)
7. The boy hid behind the door, *not moving a muscle*. (Too scared to move)

Question 4:

Report these questions using *if/whether* or *why/when/where/how/which/what*. Remember the italicised verbs change into the past tense.

1. Meena asked her friend, "Do you *think* your teacher will come today?"
2. David asked his colleague, "Where *will* you go this summer?"
3. He asked the little boy, "Why *are* you studying English?"
4. She asked me, "When *are* we going to leave?"
5. Pran asked me, "Have you finished reading the newspaper?"
6. Seema asked her, "How long *have* you lived here?"
7. Sheila asked the children "Are you ready to do the work?"

Answer:

1. Meena asked her friend if she thought her teacher would come that day.
2. David asked his colleague where he would go that summer.
3. He asked the little boy why he was studying English.
4. She asked me when we were going to leave.
5. Pran asked me if I had finished reading the newspaper.
6. Seema asked her how long she had lived there.
7. Sheila asked the children if they were ready to do the work.