

I WANT SOMETHING IN A CAGE

Comprehension Check

Question 1. Write ‘True’ or ‘False’ against each of following statements.

- (i) Mr Purcell sold birds, cats, dogs and monkeys.
- (ii) He was very concerned about the well-being of the birds and animals in his shop.
- (iii) He was impressed by the customer who bought the two doves.
- (iv) He was a successful shop owner, though insensitive and cold as a person.

Answer:

- (i) True
- (ii) False
- (iii) False
- (iv) True

Question 2. Why is Mr Purcell compared to an owl?

Answer: Mr Purcell is compared to an owl because of the large glasses which used to magnify his eyes like an owl’s eyes.

Question 3. From the third paragraph pick out

- (i) words associated with cries of birds,
- (ii) words associated with noise,
- (iii) words suggestive of confusion and fear.

Answer: (i) words associated with cries of birds: whispered, squeal, cheeps, twitter, squeaks
(ii) words associated with noise: rustling, stir, scampered
(iii) words suggestive of confusion and fear: blindly seeking, bewildered

Question 4. “...Mr Purcell heard it no more than he would have heard the monotonous ticking of a familiar clock.” (Read para beginning with “It was a rough day...”)

- (i) What does ‘it’ refer to?
- (ii) Why does Mr Purcell not hear ‘it’ clearly?

Answer: (i) ‘It’ refers to the noise produced by the birds around him.

(ii) Mr Purcell doesn’t hear ‘it’ quickly because he was so used to hearing those sounds that it was normal to him like a clock’s ticking.

Comprehension Check

Question 1. Do you think the atmosphere of Mr Purcell’s shop was cheerful or depressing? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer: I think the atmosphere of Mr Purcell’s shop was depressing. It was lifeless. It was full of the strange sounds made by the birds chirping and moving. Mr Purcell was used to the sound but the customers used to wonder how he put up with such disturbing noises.

Question 2. Describe the stranger who came to the pet shop. What did he want?

Answer: The stranger who came to the shop was wearing a cheap new suit. He was a prisoner earlier. He came to Mr Purcell’s shop and asked for “something in a cage”. He wasn’t clear about what he exactly wanted but said it should have wings and should be in a cage.

Question 3. (i) The man insisted on buying the doves because he was fond of birds. Do you agree?
(ii) How had he earned the five dollars he had?

Answer: (i) No, the man insisted on buying the doves not because he was fond of birds. He just wanted birds in a cage.

(ii) He had earned five dollars he had in a prison where he had to work very hard. He used to get only 50 cents per year.

Question 4. Was the customer interested in the care and feeding of the doves he had bought? If not, why not?

Answer: No, the customer was not interested in the care and feeding of the doves he had bought because he did not want to actually keep them as pets. He did not even listen to what Mr Purcell was saying about feeding the doves. He spent his hard-earned money on the doves just to set them free from their cages.

Exercises

Discuss the following topics in groups.

Question 1. Why, in your opinion, did the man set the doves free?

Answer: The man set the doves free because being a prisoner earlier, he understood what it feels like to be caged. He knew the value of freedom. He spent all his 10 years’ hard-earned money on buying two doves and then he set them free into the sky.

Question 2. Why did it make Mr Purcell feel “vaguely insulted”?

Answer: It made Mr Purcell feel “vaguely insulted” because he reduced the price of the doves only because he could still earn profit whereas the stranger, who only had that money, spent it all just to set the two birds free from the cage.

