

Understanding the Text

1. What is the consistency one finds in the old man's madness?

Answer: The old man is in search of his lost son. He loses control when someone comments and makes fun of him or about his son. The old man keeps advertising about his son in the hope that his son will return home someday.

2. How does Captain Hagberd prepare for Harry's homecoming?

Answer: When Captain Hagberd met a stranger who was actually his own lost son, he was unaware of it. However, the stranger knew about the relationship and told the Captain that he knew about his missing son and would give all the information about his lost son. The Captain refused to accept the stranger's words. However, with this information, the Captain was assured that his son was still alive and would return someday. In this way, Captain Hagberd prepares for Harry's homecoming.

3. How did Bessie begin to share Hagberd's insanity regarding his son?

Answer: The stranger contacted Bessie and asked her about the old man's insane behaviour. In the conversation with the stranger, Bessie started sharing the reason for the insanity of Captain Hagberd, which was owing to his missing son. The captain had lost his son somewhere at sea, and he hoped his son was alive and would return someday. He kept advertising and roaming here and there in search of his son.

4. What were Harry's reasons for coming to meet old Hagberd?

Answer: Harry's reasons for coming home were the following:

He wanted to know the whereabouts of the old Hagberd, where he lives right now.

He wanted to know whether the information he heard about himself from the barber was true or not.

5. Why does Harry's return prove to be a disappointment for Bessie?

Answer: Harry and Bessie had been very closely attached to each other. When Harry went away, Bessie was heartbroken, was left disheartened and broke into tears every time she remembered Harry. She could not persuade Harry to remain at home, he was a vagabond sort of person who would trick anybody for their money. This led her to drown in a sea of grief and disappointment.

Talking about the Text

Discuss in small groups or pairs

1. 'Every mental state, even madness, has its equilibrium based upon self-esteem. Its disturbance causes unhappiness'.

Answer: Yes, it is true that "Every mental state, even madness, has its equilibrium based upon self-esteem. Its disturbance causes unhappiness". A person who is disturbed at some point of time in life causes unhappiness even though he is aware of his capabilities. The same happened in the story. The old Hagberd reached a state of equilibrium based on his self-esteem and respect, and when he lost control over his mind, he was unhappy, owing to which he suffered a lot.

2. Joyce's 'Eveline' and Conrad's 'Tomorrow' are thematically similar.

Answer: 'Eveline' is one of the shortest stories, a part of James Joyce's collection Dubliners. 'Tomorrow' is a story written by Joseph Conrad. The thing that makes these two stories similar is that both stories are short, and the narration of the plot in the story is brief. Both "Eveline" and "Tomorrow" explore the idea that the choices we make can have a profound impact on our lives and the lives of those around us. They also suggest that the decision-making process is often difficult and that it can be difficult to know what the right choice is.

Appreciation

1. Comment on the technique used by the author to unfold the story of Captain Hagberd's past.

Answer: The technique used by Joseph Conrad in unfolding the story of Captain Hagberd's past was very skilful. The author designed the plot in such a manner that it had elements of suspense. Captain Hagberd's history was the main plot of the story, which was full of anticipation. Later in the story, the deep secrets unfold, and only at the end do the readers get answers to the questions that torment the reader throughout the story.

2. Identify instances in the story in which you find streaks of insanity in people other than Hagberd. What implications do they suggest?

Answer: Insanity refers to irrationality. Other instances in the story in which we find streaks of insanity in people other than Hagberd are:

1) I found insanity in the barber as he was making comments on old Hagberd without knowing the whole truth, and the barber was wrong in his judgement.

2) The second was, the insanity in Mr Carvil's nature, as he would overreact when he needed something and would shout if he required anything.

TASK

Now complete the columns below and mark the syllable that receives primary stress.

Verb	Noun
present
examine
.....	production
calculate
.....	distribution
specialise

Answer.

Verb	Noun
'present	presen'tation
e'xamine	exami'nation
pro'duce	pro'duction
'calculate	calcu'lation

'distribute	distri'bution
'specialise	speciali'sation

Stop and Think

1. What brought Captain Hagberd to Colebrook?

Answer: The barber sitting inside the New Inn's tap room near the harbour laughed at Captain Hagberd when he went out of the tap-room. As soon as the door shut, the barber said: "The old one and the young one will be strolling arm in arm to get shaved in my place presently." The barber, who noticed a stranger listening to him with a silly smile, explained that this queer old Hagberd, a retired coasting skipper, was waiting for his son to return home. The Captain believed Colebrook was the only place in the United Kingdom for his long-lost son, whispered the barber in a low voice. So, he sold up his old home in Colchester. This brought Captain Hagberd to Colebrook.

2. Why did the people of Colebrook not have a favourable opinion of Captain Hagberd?

Answer: People of Colebrook did not have a favourable opinion of Captain Hagberd because people thought he was mad and in a state of shock as he lost his son somewhere at sea, and he hoped his son was alive and would return someday. Later he lost his wife too.

Stop and Think

1. What sort of a seaman had Captain Hagberd been?

Answer: Captain Hagberd had been one of those sailors that continued their calling within sight of land. Of course, many sailors feel and confess a clear-headed dislike for the sea, but this was a heartfelt and touching animosity.

2. Captain Hagberd constantly hinted at something that made Bessie blush. What was it?

Answer: Every time Captain Hagberd winked, it made Bessie blush. In their intimacy of the backyard and front garden, he talked with her paternally, reasonably, and dogmatically, with a touch of arbitrariness. They met on the ground of unreserved confidence, which was authenticated by an affectionate wink now and then. Bessie had come to look forward to these winks. Afterwards, she learned to laugh at them. She felt there was no harm in him. Now she was aware of an unacknowledged, pleasurable, incredulous emotion, expressed by a faint blush. His wink was not in the least vulgar.

Stop and Think

1. What were Bessie's reactions to old Hagberd's ravings?

Answer: While talking about his son, Hagberd seemed hopeful that his son would come home soon. She once had tried pityingly to throw some doubt on that hope resulting in disappointment. But the effect of her attempt had scared her very much. All at once over that man's face, there came an expression of horror and disbelief, as though he had seen a crack open out in the sky. "The sea can't keep my son, and there's nothing to prevent him from coming back!" said the old Captain. His eyes began to wander. But the next day, Bessie humoured him in silence, listening patiently by the fence.

2. What sort of a person was Mr Carvil?

Answer: Mr Carvil was an insane widowed boat-builder whose blindness had set in years before in the full flush of business. He was a man of an evil reputation as a domestic tyrant. He had a bad temper and would get uncontrollable very soon and would start shouting with a pouty face.

Stop and Think

1. What was the point of similarity between Captain Hagberd and old Mr Carvil?

Answer: Both Captain Hagberd and old Mr Carvil are impatient people who have no patients. They both overreact on a particular issue as their power to control things is nil. Captain Hagberd's love for his son makes him go mad and lose his mind when he listens to something about his son. Both are in the same boat but in different situations. Old Mr Carvil, a fat blind man who had given himself up to the very lust of laziness, calls Bessie when he wants something and throws up his voice like he is not in control.

2. Why did Bessie sometimes show signs of irritation and disgust?

Answer: Captain Hagberd advertised his missing son, Harry Hagberd, in the Sunday papers. These sheets were read in foreign parts to the end of the world. He informed Bessie about the advertisements he made. At the same time, he seemed to think that his son was in England, so near to Colebrook, and he was waiting for his son to turn up the next day or someday. Bessie, without committing herself to that opinion, argued in that case, the expense of advertising was unnecessary. It would be better if Captain Hagberd spent that weekly half-crown on himself. Miss Bessie referred to it as Captain's outbreaks. She shook her finger at him angrily. These acts of Captain Hagberd sometimes make Bessie feel irritated and disgusted.

Stop and Think

1. Who was the stranger who met Captain Hagberd? What was the Captain's reaction to the meeting?

Answer: The stranger who met Captain Hagberd was his son, Harry Hagberd. At first, Captain felt nervous and ignored the stranger as that stranger was talking about his son. The Captain suddenly lost his control when a stranger said, 'The devil he is!' The stranger marvelled greatly, and Captain started yelling, his feet squelched in the puddles left by his industry. He stumbled in the holes of the ruined grass plot. He ran blindly against the fence.

2. What did young Hagberd think it meant when old Hagberd said that his son would be coming home 'tomorrow'?

Answer: Young Hagberd got a bit concerned over the old Hagberd, and he was confused whether the old Hagberd had identified him or not. And that's when he changed his tone and told the old Hagberd that 'You've grown a beard like Father Christmas himself.' The reason for changing the tone was to check if the old Hagberd could not recognize young Hagberd or not.

3. What reasons did Bessie give for encouraging old Hagberd in his insane hopes?

Answer: The reasons that Bessie gave to encourage old Hagberd in his insane hopes are:

1) Firstly, she told Harry that he should try convincing old Hagberd that he was his only son who went missing from the sea and should get the old Captain back into his normal state.

2) Secondly, Harry Hagberd said, 'He isn't frisky—is he? I would be afraid to lay hold of him'. Then to encourage old Hagberd's insane hope, Bessie tells Harry that "Old Hagberd was the most harmless creature that ever lived".

Stop and Think

1. What makes Bessie convinced that the young man is indeed Harry?

Answer: When Bessie swiftly asked Harry, 'Are you Harry Hagberd?' 'Can you prove it?' Harry replied confidently with a yes. He could prove it by sticking a fancy beard on his chin and asked Bessie if he resembled old Hagberd or not? Bessie murmured, 'It's true'. After that, Harry discussed every other possible detail with Bessie to prove he was Harry. "His mother nagged at him for being idle, and the old man said he would cut his soul out of his body rather than let him go to sea". Well, it looked as if he would do it too. These memory-based details told by Harry convinced Bessie that the young man was indeed Harry.

2. What kind of life had Harry lived after he left home?

Answer: Harry lived his life to his most packed, and the world was his home. He told Bessie that he had been everything one could think of, almost, but a tailor or soldier. He had been a boundary rider. He had sheared sheep, humped his swag, and harpooned a whale. He had rigged ships, prospected for gold, skinned dead bullocks, and turned his back on more money than the older man would have scraped in his whole life.

Stop and Think

1. What does Bessie tell Harry about his father's plans for him?

Answer: Bessie told Harry that his father, old Hagberd starved himself for Harry's sake, and all he has in the world is for Harry. Bessie discussed all his father's plans with Harry when they talked about Captain Hagberd at the morning breakfast.

2. What did Captain Hagberd call out to Bessie from the window?

Answer: Captain Hagberd couldn't bring himself to believe that the young man was, indeed, his son. From the window, Captain Hagberd calls out to Bessie, saying, 'Send him away, my dear. He's only a vagabond. What you want is a good home of your own. That chap has no home, and he's not like Harry. He can't be Harry. Harry is coming tomorrow. Do you hear? One day more,' Captain Hagberd said excitedly and added: 'never have you feared, Harry shall marry you.'