



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR  
Department of English- (2023-24)

**Question Bank & Notes: Mother's Day**

**GRADE XI**

**Subject: English**

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**Characters in the play:**

- Mrs. Annie Pearson (Mother to Doris and Cyril; pleasant but meek and submissive)
- Mr. George Pearson (proud husband of Mrs. Pearson)
- Doris Pearson (20 year old daughter)
- Cyril Pearson (demanding son)
- Mrs. Fitzgerald (Mrs. Pearson's neighbour; strong willed and bold)

**About the Play:**

The play written by J.B. Priestly reveals how a mother's efforts are ignored by her family. It narrates how the family members who work eight hour shifts a day look upon her although she works for the whole day and all week. After all she does for them, they take her for granted. They make her feel obligated to provide for them and do not even appreciate her efforts. It revolves around how her friend Mrs. Fitzgerald who is a fortune teller helps her earn the place and respect she deserves as the woman of the house.

**Other Important Elements:**

Theme: Status of women in the family, importance of prioritizing oneself, not allowing oneself to be exploited.

Message: One must stand up for oneself

Genre- Satire

**I. Answer in Brief:**

1. How was the experience of the two women after the change of bodies?

Ans: The real Mrs. Pearson (now Mrs. Fitzgerald) had not enjoyed the experience as she had seen her family being treated roughly and rudely by Mrs. Fitzgerald. On the other hand, Mrs.

Fitzgerald enjoyed the experience, as she had been able to teach Doris, Cyril and Mr. George Pearson a lesson to value Mrs. Pearson.

2. What was Mrs. Fitzgerald's advice to Mrs. Pearson after she had put back the family members in their proper place?

Ans: Mrs. Fitzgerald advised Mrs. Pearson not to be soft as she felt that this would waste all the effort which she had put in to change the attitude of her family for the better. Mrs. Pearson on the other hand is unsure how she would explain her behaviour. But Mrs. Fitzgerald warns her not to yield.

3. What was the change that came over the Pearson family in the end?

Ans: When Mrs. Fitzgerald left, Mrs. Pearson's family was relieved to see her smile. Mrs. Pearson decided to stay home for a family game of rummy and have the children prepare dinner. They readily agreed and gathered around Mrs. Pearson at the end of the play.

4. What were the two slips that could have let out the real identity of Mrs. Fitzgerald?

Ans: Mrs. Fitzgerald, in her nervousness, addresses Mr. Pearson as 'George'. But Mrs. Pearson is soon to cover up for Mrs. Fitzgerald. Later, when Mrs. Fitzgerald attempts to slap George, following an argument, the real Mrs. Pearson exclaims and calls out to her 'Mrs. Fitzgerald', which confuses George.

## **II. Long Answers:**

1. Write in your words the conversation between Mrs. Pearson and Mrs. Fitzgerald at the beginning of the play. What is the outcome of the meeting?

Ans: Mrs. Fitzgerald predicts her friend Mrs. Pearson's fate and tells her that it was high time she asserted herself as the head of the family. Mrs. Pearson says that it was not easy because she loves her family although they are very thoughtless and selfish. But Mrs. Fitzgerald insists that they ought to learn to appreciate her and treat her appropriately. She tells her not to run after them and oblige. Mrs. Pearson agrees with Mrs. Fitzgerald, but wonders if anything would affect them.

She is afraid of creating unpleasantness in the family. As Mrs. Pearson is about to rush off to prepare dinner for her family, Mrs. Fitzgerald comes up with an idea. She tells, Mrs. Pearson that they could exchange their bodies. She then holds her hand and asks her to keep quiet for a minute. They stare at each other and Mrs. Fitzgerald mumbles 'Arshtatt dum-arshtatta lam-arshtatta lamdumbona...' and they assume each other's personality.

2. What does Mrs. Pearson have to say to Doris that disturbs her?

Ans: When Mrs. Pearson's daughter Doris returns and tells Mrs. Fitzgerald, in the body of Mrs. Pearson, to iron her yellow silk dress as she would like to wear it that night, her mother continues playing patience. Doris asks her what she is doing and she answers her smugly that she was not

whitewashing the ceiling. She also says that there is no law against smoking. She informs Doris that she had already had her tea but had not made tea for the others. She had not cooked dinner either and would have her meal at the Clarendon. She tells Doris that she worked twice as hard as the others and got no wages or thanks for it. She then inquired from Doris where she wanted to wear the yellow dress. Doris tells her that she was going out with Charlie Spence. Mrs. Pearson tells her to find someone better than the buck-toothed and half-witted man. Doris is offended and runs out.

3. Describe Mrs. Pearson's conversation with Cyril when he walks in and his reaction.

Ans: Mrs. Pearson's son Cyril walks in and insists on Mrs. Pearson getting the tea and his clothes ready. He reminds her of the promise she made the same morning to mend his clothes. He is surprised to hear that she does not like mending and that she would not do anything that she did not want to do. Cyril could not believe his ears. Cyril again asks for tea, telling her that he had been working for an eight-hour day, to which Mrs. Pearson says that she had done her eight hours and henceforth she would work for only forty hours a week. On weekends, she would have her two days off. She might make a bed and do a bit of cooking as a favour but that would be conditional to the fact that they asked her very nicely and thanked her for everything and generally made a fuss of her. Cyril and Doris are surprised and wait for their father to arrive.

4. 'Sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt.' Who says this and what does she say to hurt Mr. Pearson?

Ans: When Mr. Pearson announced that he did not wish to drink tea, after he returned from work, the real Mrs. Fitzgerald informs him that his tea was not ready. He is angry and she reminds him that he was annoyed because he did not get the tea that he did not want in the first place. She adds that if he did that at a bar-went up to the bar at the club and told them he did not want a glass of beer but got irritated because they had not already poured it out for him, they would laugh at him even more than they did already. George was indignant and she added that he was one of their standing jokes and was called 'Pompy-ompy Pearson' because they thought that he was slow and pompous. George checks with Cyril on the truth of the matter, and Cyril accuses his mother of not being fair and sensitive. To which, she replies that sometimes it does people good to have their feelings hurt.

### **III. Reference to Context: Extract 1**

*You think it does 'em good when you run after them all the time, take their orders as if you were the servant in the house, stay at home every night while they go out enjoying themselves? Never in all your life. It's the ruin of them as well as you.*

- i. Who is the speaker in the above lines?
  - a. Mrs. Pearson
  - b. George
  - c. Cyril
  - d. Mrs. Fitzgerald

- ii. What message is the speaker trying to convey here? Tick the correct statement.
- A mother should take full responsibility of every household chore without thinking about herself because she is the epitome of sacrifice.
  - A mother should stay at home and take orders from the family members because being a housewife she is inferior to them.
  - A mother should get the same rights and privileges as other family members because she is supporting the family by working selflessly for them.
  - Family members need not be thoughtful about the feelings, desires and needs of the mother as she is a mature enough to look after herself.
- iii. What kind of a person is the speaker?
- Bold and confident
  - Docile and subservient
  - Both (a) and (c)
  - None of the above
- iv. Which word in the passage means the same as “something that leads to serious trouble”?
- Orders
  - Servant
  - Ruin
  - enjoying

**Extract 2:** *It's not me that's being silly- and I mist say it's a bit much when I've been working hard all day and you can't even bother to get my tea ready. Did you hear what I said about my yellow silk?*

- Identify the speaker
  - Mrs. Fitzgerald
  - b. Mrs. Pearson
  - Cyril
  - Doris
- What do you learn about the speaker's behaviour from these lines?
  - Speaker is very hard- working and diligent
  - Speaker is very soft-hearted and caring
  - Speaker is kind and generous
  - Speaker lacks empathy and understanding

iii. Who is the speaker speaking to?

- a. Cyril
- b. George
- c. Annie Pearson
- d. Charlie Spence

iv. Which word in the passage is the antonym of “rational”?

- a. Silly
- b. bit
- c. hard
- d. bother

**IV. MCQ’s and competency-based questions:**

Q1. How does Mrs. Fitzgerald plan to help Mrs. Pearson?

- (a) By talking to Mrs. Pearson’s family
- (b) By listening to Mrs. Pearson’s complaints
- (c) By swapping personalities with Mrs. Pearson
- (d) Both (a) and (b)

Q2. Mrs. Pearson was \_\_\_\_\_ about Mrs. Fitzgerald's plan.

- A. excited B. hesitant
- C. sure D. envious

Q3. “Buck teeth and half-witted...” Who has been described here?

- A. Cyril Pearson E. George Pearson
- C. Charlie Spence D. Mrs. Fitzgerald

Q4. What are the ‘changes’ that Mrs. Pearson referred to Cyril?

- A. Change in the way she is treated by the family
- E. Changes in her daily routine
- C. Changes related to her work
- D. None of the above

Q5. Mrs. Pearson tells George that he is being \_\_\_\_\_ at the club.

- A. respected B. laughed upon
- C. called names D. Both (b) and (c)

Q6. What personal and family values are dear to Mrs. Pearson? How do they create problems for her?

Value points:

- Mrs. Pearson loves her family
- A dedicated mother and housewife
- Takes orders from everyone including her children
- Tries hard to complete all their work
- She is disrespected

Q7. Do you think the title of the play ‘Mother’s Day’ is appropriate? Give reasons for your answer.

Value points:

- Each day is a Mother’s day
- The whole play revolves around the mother, Mrs. Pearson
- Problems faced by mothers are discussed
- The play teaches us to be thoughtful and respectful towards our mothers

Q8. A Mother’s work is never done. Do you agree? Explain on the basis of the play and day to day life.

Value points:

- A mother works endlessly from morning till night as does Mrs. Pearson
- Mrs. Person works endlessly for her family without any expectations from them
- She does all the household chores
- She takes orders from all the family members

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