



QUESTION BANK ON ISHWARAN THE STORYTELLER (2020-21)

Class: 9

Sub: ENGLISH

**MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS**

1. Who is the narrator of the story?
  - a) Iswaran
  - b) Ganesh
  - c) Mahendra
  - d) R.K. Laxman

Ans: C

2. What is the name of the cook?
  - a) Ganesh
  - b) Iswaran
  - c) Laxman
  - d) Mahendra

Ans: B

3. How did Iswaran amuse Mahendra?
  - a) By cooking
  - b) By telling stories
  - c) By tidying the house
  - d) By producing vegetables

Ans: B

4. What kind of books did Iswaran usually read?
  - a) Popular Tamil thrillers
  - b) Tamil religious books
  - c) Biographies
  - d) None of the above

Ans: A

5. What would Iswaran add to his narration of stories?
  - a) Tragic elements
  - b) Religious stories
  - c) Morals
  - d) Suspense and a surprising ending

Ans: D

6. How did Iswaran 'bring down the beast'?
  - a) He killed the elephant

- b) He applied a Japanese art, Karate or ju-jitsu.
- c) He amused the elephant by his story narration
- d) All of the above

Ans: B

7. According to Iswaran, what was the after-effect of Karate?
- a) It could temporarily paralyze the nervous system
  - b) It could make a person mad
  - c) It might make someone go blind
  - d) It could kill a person

Ans: A

8. What did Iswaran find in the factory area on the first day itself?
- a) Ghost
  - b) A dead body
  - c) Human skull
  - d) A black cat

Ans: C

9. What horrible scene did Iswaran see at night?
- a) So many ghosts roaming around on a full moon
  - b) Ghost of a woman which appears off and on at midnight during the full moon
  - c) Spirit of a black cat
  - d) Human skulls hanging on the trees

Ans: B

10. What did Mahendra see when he looked out of the window?
- a) A dark cloudy form clutching a bundle
  - b) A black cat prowling around for mice
  - c) Iswaran holding a human skull
  - d) None of the above

Ans: A

### **REFERENCE TO CONTEXT QUESTIONS**

1. *He was a bachelor. His needs were simple, and he was able to adjust himself to all kinds of odd conditions.....But one asset he had was his cook.*
- a) Who is the 'bachelor'?
  - b) What is his profession?
  - c) What is the name of his cook?
  - d) Why was the cook an asset for Mahendra?

Ans: a) Mahendra

- b) Mahendra was a junior supervisor in a firm.
- c) Iswaran

d) Iswaran the cook, cooked delicious meals, washed Mahendra's clothes, produced vegetables and cooking ingredients and chatted away with his master at night. He could also weave out endless stories and anecdotes on varied subjects.

2. *"There is a richly wooded forest all around. The logs are hauled on to the lorries by elephants. They are huge well-fed beasts. When they turn wild even the most experienced mahout is not able to control them."*

- a) Who said this to whom?
- b) What was the anecdote about?
- c) How did Iswaran narrate the anecdote?
- d) How did Iswaran bring down the beast?

Ans: a) Iswaran said this to Mahendra

b) The anecdote was about a tusker which escaped from the timber yard and began to roam about, stamping on bushes, tearing up wild creepers and breaking branches at will.

c) Iswaran would get so caught up in the excitement of his own story that he would get up from the floor and jump about, stamping his feet in emulation of the mad elephant.

d) Iswaran whacked its third toenail on the quick. The beast looked stunned for a moment; then it shivered from head to foot -and collapsed. He says that it had something to do with a Japanese art, Karate or ju-jitsu.

3. *He seemed very pleased but, unexpectedly, launched into a most garish account involving the supernatural.*

- a) Who seemed very pleased?
- b) What was the pleasing thing that happened?
- c) What was the garish account?
- d) Who narrated the garish account?

Ans: a) Mahendra

b) Iswaran cooked the most delicious dinner that night. Mahendra was very much pleased and complimented Iswaran on his culinary skills.

c) The garish account was that the entire factory area that they occupied was once a burial ground and Iswaran had come across several skulls and bones on the path.

d) Iswaran

4. *As he gradually recovered from the ghastly experience, he began to reason with himself, and finally concluded that it must have been some sort of auto suggestion, some trick that his subconscious had played on him.*

- a) Who recovered from the ghastly experience?
- b) What was the ghastly experience?
- c) After the ghastly experience what happened to Mahendra?
- d) What did Iswaran witness before?

Ans: a) Mahendra

- b) Mahendra heard a wailing and looked out of the window and saw in the moonlight a dark cloudy form clutching a bundle.
- c) Mahendra after the ghastly experience broke into a cold sweat and fell back on the pillow, panting. He reasoned with himself and concluded that his subconscious had played on him.
- d) Iswaran had seen ghosts at night especially a female ghost with a foetus in its arms.

## **Long Answer Question**

### **1. Throw light on the character of Ishwaran and Mahendra.**

Ans. **Iswaran** was Mahendra's cook and was like an asset to him. He was dedicated to his master and followed him uncomplainingly to all his postings. He would cook for him, wash his clothes, and chat with him at night. He had the ability to improvise cooking material even at the remotest place and cooked delicious dishes in a very brief time.

Iswaran was fond of reading popular Tamil thrillers. Their imaginative descriptions and narrating styles would fascinate him. He became a master storyteller by adopting the art of storytelling from these novels. He would always add suspense and surprise even to the smallest incident and could make up innumerable stories on different subjects. While describing, he would get so involved that he would jump about on the floor. He would narrate the story in instalments and would purposely leave it unfinished midway. On returning, he would not pick it up right away till Mahendra reminded him to. In this manner he would involve his listener too.

Every day, Iswaran would recount a new story filled with adventure, horror and suspense. Mahendra loved his stories and listened with rapt attention even if they were unbelievable. Iswaran thus entertained Mahendra just as TV does.

Iswaran enjoyed his job and would not sit idle when Mahendra was at work. He would use that time to tidy up the shed and wash clothes. He was also religious because he would mutter a prayer throughout his bath ritual.

This character displays a shade of comedy as well when he teasingly asks Mahendra about his reaction at having seen the female ghost.

**Mahendra** used to work as a junior supervisor in a firm which offered on hire supervisors at construction sites. His work involved moving from one site to another. He was unmarried and a simple man. He was quite accommodating and adjusted well to odd conditions that he faced at different places. He was a disciplined man and would get up early in the morning. He would leave for work after breakfast and carry lunch with him.

Mahendra was very fond of his cook Iswaran whom he considered to be an asset. He relished the food cooked by him and enjoyed listening to his stories. He was a good listener and never interrupted Iswaran even when he exaggerated. He was very patient and would wait for Iswaran to return and complete the unfinished story. He was also curious as he would insist on knowing all the details.

Mahendra was a rational man and did not believe in ghosts or spirits but could not help getting influenced by what Iswaran told him about the female ghost. He tried to ignore the strange sounds at night but got scared when he saw the apparition. However, his rationality made him forget the previous night's experience.

Mahendra's faith in Iswaran was very strong. He was convinced about the presence of a female ghost when Iswaran told him that he had heard sounds at night.

This character appeals to the reader for his qualities as a devoted worker, a kind-hearted master and a trusting man.

### **SHORT ANSWER QUESTION**

**1. Describe Iswaran's amazing capacity to produce vegetables, etc.**

**Ans.** Mahendra had a cook. His name was Iswaran. He was quite attached to Mahendra and went wherever Mahendra was transferred. Iswaran was a good cook. He had an amazing capacity to produce vegetables from nowhere and cook them. Even at a place where there were no shops visible for miles, he was able to cook vegetables. He would conjure up delicious dishes made with fresh vegetables within an hour of reaching that place.

**Q.3. How did Iswaran manage to make even the simplest incident interesting? Give an example.**

**Ans.** Iswaran was a master storyteller. He narrated even the smallest of incidents by creating a lot of suspense. For example, if he had to describe a fallen tree, he would not simply say that he saw an uprooted tree on the highway. He would say, "The road was deserted, and I was all alone. Suddenly I spotted something that looked like an enormous bushy beast. But as I came closer, I saw that it was only a fallen tree."

**Q4. How did Iswaran add a prologue to his story of an elephant?**

**Ans.** Before starting the story Iswaran gave a detailed description of the place. He said that the place was a richly wooded forest. The logs of wood were hauled by elephants on lorries. But sometimes, the elephants turned mad. When an elephant turned mad, not even a skilled mahout could control it.

**Q.5. What did the elephant do before Iswaran controlled it?**

**Ans.** A tusker escaped from the timber yard. It roamed here and there. Then the tusker reached the town. People ran here and there in terror. After some time, the elephant entered a school ground where children were playing. All the boys ran into the classrooms and shut the doors. The elephant pulled out the football goalpost, tore the volleyball net and broke the drum kept for water. Everyone watched helplessly.

**Q.6. Why did Mahendra resolve to leave the haunted place the very next day?**

**Ans.** Mahendra had almost forgotten the incident of the previous night. But in the morning, Iswaran told Mahendra that he had also heard the moan at night. He had come to his room. He had seen that Mahendra was looking out of the window at the ghost of the woman. Mahendra was cold with fear. As soon as he reached the office, he handed in his papers for transfer from that place.

**Q.7. Do you think the ghost seen by Mahendra was only a trick played by his cook, Iswaran? Give reasons for your answer.**

**Ans.** First, Iswaran created the background by telling Mahendra that the place used to be a burial ground. Then he told the story of a ghost. One-night Mahendra saw a figure outside his window. The figure looked like the ghost described by Iswaran. The next morning, Iswaran told Mahendra that he had seen Mahendra looking out of the window at the ghost. This shows that it was only a trick played by Iswaran.

**Q.8. 'Iswaran would not pick up the thread of the story right away.' How did Iswaran build up his ghost story?**

**Ans.** Iswaran would first build up the background of the story. He told Mahendra that the whole factory area used to be a burial ground. Then one day he built up his story on it. He started telling Mahendra a ghost story.

**Q.9. Mahendra did not believe in ghosts. What happened to him on the last full-moon night?**

**Ans.** On the last full-moon night, Mahendra heard a low moan close to his window. The moan became louder. He looked out of the window. He saw a dark, cloudy form clutching a bundle.

**10. What sets apart Iswaran from other domestic help?**

**Or**

**How was Iswaran more than a cook to Mahendra?**

**Ans:** Iswaran was different from other domestic bits of help because, in addition to cooking delicious dishes, tidying up their makeshift shed, and washing clothes, he would also entertain Mahendra like a TV by narrating interesting stories. He would chat with him at night and give him company thus making up for his lonely, bachelor life.

**11. How did Iswaran claim to have tackled and controlled the mad elephant?**

**Ans:** Iswaran tackled the elephant by grabbing a cane from a teacher and challenging the tusker. This angered the beast and it tried to frighten Iswaran by trumpeting loudly and stamping its feet, kicking up a lot of mud and dust. However, Iswaran mustered all his force and quickly whacked the third toenail of the tusker. The beast looked stunned for a moment, shivered from head to foot and collapsed.

**12. Why did Mahendra become fond of Iswaran?**

**Ans:** Iswaran's style of storytelling made Mahendra fond of him. In his inimitable style, Iswaran would add elements of suspense, thrill, horror and adventure to his stories. Mahendra enjoyed them a lot and they made up for the absence of a television in his living quarters.

**13. Why did Iswaran seek permission to cook a special dinner?**

**Ans:** Iswaran sought Mahendra's permission to cook a special dinner because it was an auspicious day and according to tradition, delicacies had to be prepared to feed the spirits of ancestors. He was laying the background for a ghost story.

**14. How was Iswaran's style of storytelling interspersed with his childhood influences?**

**Ans:** Iswaran had spent his childhood near thick forests where timber was procured with the help of elephants. He must have seen activities of beasts like elephants used in the transportation of timber logs. His childhood experiences thus came in handy while adding details to his stories.

**15. Why was there never an end to Iswaran's tales?**

**Ans:** Iswaran's tales never ended because he drew his stories from the Tamil thrillers that he read every day after lunch. These thrillers were imaginative, descriptive and narrative. The more he would read, the more stories he had to narrate to Mahendra, his master.