



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (2025-26)
CLASS – XI
QB ON MOTHER’S DAY

KEY POINTS

- Mrs. Pearson, the play's central character, shows the struggles of an undervalued housewife. Despite being a devoted wife and mother, she feels constantly overworked and unappreciated.
- This frustration builds as the play unfolds on Mother's Day, a day meant to celebrate mothers, yet Mrs. Pearson feels anything but celebrated.
- Mrs. Pearson confides in her neighbour, Mrs. Fitzgerald, about her situation. Recognising Mrs. Pearson's plight, Mrs. Fitzgerald suggests an unconventional solution. This desperate measure highlights the depth of Mrs. Pearson's frustration and her desire for a change.
- Doris, Mrs. Pearson's daughter, is the first to face this new assertive mother. Accustomed to making demands and receiving immediate attention, Doris is taken aback by her mother's newfound boldness.
- Mrs. Pearson critiques Doris's choice of boyfriend and criticises her overall behaviour, highlighting the daughter's selfishness and lack of appreciation.
- Cyril, Mrs. Pearson's son, experiences a similar shock. He expects his mother to readily cater to his needs and is bewildered when she refuses to automatically prepare tea or iron his clothes.
- Seeking a more balanced family dynamic, Mrs. Pearson (now assertive) declares a 40hour workweek for everyone, including herself.

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CHARACTER SKETCHES:

Character	Traits	Role in the Play
Mrs. Pearson	Gentle, kind, overworked, initially timid, later firm and assertive	A devoted mother who feels neglected by her husband and children. With Mrs. Fitzgerald's help, she learns to assert herself and demands respect at home.
Mrs. Fitzgerald	Bold, strong-willed, practical, confident, dominating	The neighbor who guides Mrs. Pearson. By exchanging personalities, she empowers Mrs. Pearson to confront her family and change their behavior.
George Pearson	Ignorant, indifferent, selfish, somewhat foolish	Mrs. Pearson's husband. He spends most of his time at the club, neglects his wife, and is embarrassed when told people mock him there.
Doris Pearson	Self-centered, demanding, careless, rude at first	Mrs. Pearson's daughter. She takes her mother for granted, but is shocked when her mother refuses to serve her. Eventually, she realizes her mistake.
Cyril Pearson	Casual, thoughtless, dependent, careless	Mrs. Pearson's son. He expects his mother to serve him and is surprised when she refuses. Learns to respect her by the end of the play.

MESSAGE OF THE MOTHER'S DAY STORY

- **Respect mothers:** They are not servants but equal members of the family.
- **Share responsibilities:** Household chores should not be the mother's burden alone.
- **Value emotional labour:** A mother's love and effort deserve appreciation.
- **Do not take women for granted:** Treating mothers as invisible or secondary is unfair.
- **Self-respect is essential:** Mothers must assert themselves to gain recognition.
- **Humour can teach lessons:** Light drama can effectively highlight social issues.
- **Family unity depends on equality:** Mutual respect strengthens family bonds.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. This play, written in the 1950s, is a humorous and satirical depiction of the status of the mother in the family. What are the issues it raises?

The play, written by J.B. Priestley, highlights several serious issues prevalent in the society. One of the major problems it highlights is how homemakers are treated poorly by their own family members. . Even though they give their every hour for the sake of their

families, they do not get the respect they deserve. Even their children take them for granted. So, the homemaker running the household turns into a machine fulfilling demands of all the family members. The second major issue is family members do not have enough time for each other. They want to socialise outside rather than giving their time and company to their own family members. In the play, we can see how Mrs Pearson wants her family to stay late at night and play Rummy together. It portrays how distant the people are mentally from each other. Another big issue it highlights is how people can't appreciate confident women. Mrs Fitzgerald is a very independent and strong woman. But Mrs Pearson's family don't like her. Even her son calls the elderly neighbour a silly old bag. Thus, the play highlights several issues which are prevalent in contemporary society.

2. Do you think it caricatures these issues, or do you think the problems it raises are genuine?

The play raises problems that are genuine. Though the play was written in the context of the 1950s, it is equally important and relevant today. Women were never given respect for doing household chores. Even nowadays, we take our mothers for granted. The amount of effort and energy they invest for us goes completely unnoticed. We rarely acknowledge them for what they do. But they are the most hardworking people in the world. Every working person gets a holiday in a week. But housewives never get holidays. They do not get paid, do not get any help and even sometimes do not get the dignity and respect they deserve. It is a serious issue. We should thank and appreciate them for their exemplary work and give them love and support. They long for our company and time. We must remember it. We should ensure they do not feel lonely after doing their best for us. But in most cases, we forget this and completely ignore what they want. So, we must behave well and support them in doing their household chores and errands.

3. How does the play resolve the issues? Do you agree with the resolution?

The play suggests that housewives should stand for their rights. We see that Mrs Fitzgerald advises Mrs Pearson to behave firmly with her family members. Only this way can they understand her value and respect her. When Mrs Pearson was unable to do so, Mrs Fitzgerald shared her plan to change each other's personalities. Thus, she enters Mrs Pearson's body and starts behaving boldly and coldly with the family. The members get a good lesson, and they begin to obey Mrs Pearson.

I completely agree with the resolution presented by the drama. Indeed, a homemaker rarely protests. She tries to act according to the demands of the family members. It sends the wrong message in return. They take the housewife for granted. They don't realise that she has opinions, longing and, most importantly, independence and freedom. They ignore the fact that she wants to rest awhile too. Hence, it is important to make them realise her value. In doing so, the members of the family become aware of the fact how a mother sacrifices her entire life to keep them happy and comfortable and she should be treated with utmost regard and recognition.

4. How did Mrs Fitzgerald help Mrs Pearson to realise her value in the family?

Mrs Fitzgerald was an older woman who was strong, bold, aggressive and independent. She knew fortune telling and witchcraft too. One day she was called by her neighbour Mrs Pearson to see her fortune. She told Mrs Pearson that her fortune was neither good nor bad

but would depend on her. Mrs Pearson was a beautiful woman in her mid-forties who was constantly worried about her family. She knew her husband and children did not care for her much but couldn't say anything. Mrs Fitzgerald understood this and stated that she could help by switching bodies with her. After doing so, Mrs Fitzgerald, confined in the body of Mrs Pearson, started to behave rudely with the family members. She refused to obey them but made them realise how dependent they were on her. Her sudden change in behaviour surprised her family, and slowly they got used to her aggressive behaviour. Then she again switched her body with Mrs Pearson and entered her own body. She advised Mrs Pearson to behave firmly with her family; otherwise, they would disrespect her again. Mrs Pearson obeyed this, and her family members also realised this and gave her the respect and dignity she deserved.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How did Mrs Fitzgerald deal with Doris?

Doris was the first-person Mrs Fitzgerald dealt with after exchanging bodies with Mrs Pearson. Doris was a very spoiled child, and she asked her mother to iron her dress. In reply, Mrs Fitzgerald, confined in Mrs Pearson's body, denied it. That surprised Doris. Then, Mrs Fitzgerald rudely behaved with Doris and made fun of the guy she was going out with. It made Doris cry, and her confidence was broken.

2. What plan did Mrs Fitzgerald make to give Mrs Pearson's family a good lesson?

Mrs Fitzgerald knew witchcraft. She stated that they should exchange their bodies. Thus, Mrs Fitzgerald would be confined in Mrs Pearson's body and vice versa. In this way, she would live with Mrs Pearson's family and give her husband and children a good lesson.

3. What were Doris and Cyril's reactions after seeing her mother acting differently?

Doris and Cyril started to talk about their mother's sudden change in behaviour. Doris feared their mother could hit her head and suffer a concussion, but Cyril denied it. Doris noticed differences in how she looked and talked, but Cyril didn't understand that. They started giggling after thinking about what would be their father's reaction after seeing their mother behaving differently.

4. What lesson does Mrs. Pearson's behaviour teach Doris and Cyril?

Her behaviour teaches them the importance of respecting their mother, recognizing the work she does, and taking responsibility for themselves. They learn that they cannot expect her to be a servant and must learn to be independent and considerate adults.

5. What picture of Mrs. Pearson emerges in the opening of the play?

EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1. Mrs. Pearson is portrayed as a submissive and neglected housewife who is taken for granted by her family, performing all household chores without any appreciation. She is eager to please her husband and children, who treat her as an unpaid servant.

Mrs. Pearson: I might. Who d'you think?

Doris [Staring at her]: Mum—what's the matter with you?

Mrs. Pearson: Don't be silly.

Doris: [Indignantly] It's not me that's being silly—and I must 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?

Mrs. Pearson: No. Don't you like it now? I never did.

Doris [Indignantly]: Of course I like it. And I'm going to wear it tonight. So I want it ironed.

Mrs. Pearson: Want it ironed? What d'you think it's going to do—iron itself?

1 Identify the tone in which Mrs. Pearson talks.

- (A) Cool and incisive
- (B) Flattering and apologetic
- (C) Brave and strong
- (D) Taunting and angry

Ans. (A) Cool and incisive

2 Why is Doris consistently reacting 'indignantly' towards her mother Mrs. Pearson?

- (A) The mother is not listening to her
- (B) The mother is angry at her as well
- (C) The mother is acting unusual
- (D) All of the above

Ans. (C) The mother is acting unusual

3 Choose the words that describe Doris's personality, on the basis of the passage.

I. Spoilt

II. Independent

III. Bad tempered

IV. Kind

- (A) I and II
- (B) I and III
- (C) II and IV
- (D) II and III

Ans. (B) I and III

4 What does the passage reflect upon the relationship between Doris and Mrs. Pearson?

- (A) Doris only talks to her mother to get her work done
- (B) Doris cherishes her mother and likes to spend time with her
- (C) Doris uses her mother's dresses to look better
- (D) Both (b) and (c)

Ans. (A) Doris only talks to her mother to get her work done

5 Mrs. Pearson is Doris for getting over dependent on her.

- (A) taunting
- (B) scolding
- (C) hinting
- (D) comical

Ans. (B) scolding

‘2. *[As she is about to rise, Mrs. Fitzgerald reaches out across the table and pulls her down.]*

Mrs. Fitzgerald: Let ’em wait or look after themselves for once. This is where your foot goes down. Start now. [She lights a cigarette from the one she has just finished.]

Mrs. Pearson: [Embarrassed]

Mrs. Fitzgerald—I know you mean well—in fact, I agree with you— but I just can’t—and it’s no use trying to make me. If I promise you I’d really have it out with them, I know I wouldn’t be able to keep my promise.

Mrs. Fitzgerald: Then let me do it.

Mrs. Pearson [Flustered]: Oh no—thank you very much, Mrs Fitzgerald—but that wouldn’t do at all. It couldn’t possibly be somebody else— they’d resent it at once and wouldn’t listen— and really I couldn’t blame them. I know I ought to do it—but you see how it is? [She looks apologetically across the table, smiling rather miserably.]

Mrs. Fitzgerald [Coolly: You haven’t got the idea.”

1 What is the contrast in the personalities of the two women?

- (A) Polite vs Assertive
- (B) Gentle vs Sensible
- (C) Scared vs Brave
- (D) They have nothing to contrast

Ans. (A) Polite vs Assertive

2 Which of the following explains “This is where your foot goes down”?

- (A) To physically fix your foot down to the floor
- (B) To restraint yourself against a strong person
- (C) To adopt a firm policy when faced with opposition or disobedience
- (D) To give into what is expected

Ans. (C) To adopt a firm policy when faced with opposition or disobedience

3 Who are the women talking about in the passage above?

- (A) About a neighbouring family
- (B) About Mrs. Fitzgeralds’s family
- (C) About a group of their friends
- (D) About Mrs. Pearson’s family

Ans. (D) About Mrs. Pearson’s family

4 What does Mrs. Fitzgerald mean by ‘let me do it’? Select the option that explains it.

- (A) She wants to confront Mrs. Pearson’s family
- (B) She has an unusual solution to the problem
- (C) It is unclear that she wants to help
- (D) She wants to teach confrontational skills to Mrs. Pearson

Ans. (B) She has an unusual solution to the problem

5 Why does Mrs. Fitzgerald’s idea embarrass Mrs. Pearson?

- (A) Because she knows her family will disrespect her
- (B) Because she knows that it would be useless
- (C) Because she doesn’t want anything to change
- (D) Because she hadn’t expected such a solution

Ans. (B) Because she knows that it would be useless

REASONING AND ASSERTION BASED QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

Question 1

Assertion (A): The character of Mrs. Pearson is initially portrayed as timid and submissive.

Reason (R): Her family dominates her because she never asserts her own needs or opinions.

Options:

- A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- B. Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- C. (A) is true, but (R) is false.
- D. (A) is false, but (R) is true.

Answer: A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).

Explanation: Mrs. Pearson is initially shown as someone who quietly bears the burden of her family's inconsiderate behaviour. Her submissiveness allows the others to take her for granted.

Question 2

Assertion (A): Mrs. Fitzgerald is a mystical character with supernatural powers.

Reason (R): The body-swapping scene in the play is an example of magical realism.

Options:

- A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- B. Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- C. (A) is false, but (R) is true.
- D. Both (A) and (R) are false.

Answer: C. (A) is false, but (R) is true.

Explanation: Mrs. Fitzgerald is not portrayed as overtly mystical—her role serves more as a plot device. However, the body-swapping does introduce a magical element into an otherwise realistic setting, a trait of magical realism.

Question 3

Assertion (A): The play promotes the idea that women should take control of their lives.

Reason (R): Mrs. Pearson's transformation encourages the audience to question traditional gender roles.

Options:

- A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- B. Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- C. (A) is true, but (R) is false.
- D. (A) is false, but (R) is true.

Answer: A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).

Explanation: The central message of the play is empowerment. Mrs. Pearson's journey shows that change begins with self-respect, and the play clearly critiques how women are traditionally expected to serve silently.

Question 4

Assertion (A): The ending of the play suggests that lasting change is guaranteed in the Pearson household.

Reason (R): The family members apologize sincerely and pledge to behave better.

Options:

- A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- B. Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- C. (A) is false, but (R) is true.
- D. Both (A) and (R) are false.

Answer: C. (A) is false, but (R) is true.

Explanation: While the family members do show signs of change, the play ends on a note of uncertainty. There is no guarantee that the change will be permanent, making the assertion inaccurate.

Question 5

Assertion (A): The play is primarily a satire on family relationships.

Reason (R): It uses exaggerated situations and humour to highlight everyday injustices within the home.

Options:

- A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- B. Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- C. (A) is true, but (R) is false.
- D. Both (A) and (R) are false.

Answer: A. Both (A) and (R) are true, and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).

Explanation: *Mother's Day* uses satire to expose the casual cruelty and thoughtlessness within the family, making its social commentary accessible through humour.