

The Voter

Comprehension I.

Question 1.

Roof was a popular young man because

- (a) had not abandoned his village.
- (b) want to guide his people.
- (c) was forced to return to his village.

Answer:

- (a) had not abandoned his village.

Question 2.

Why was Marcus considered rich and powerful?

Answer:

Marcus belonged to the ruling party and was the Minister of culture. Nobody could think of opposing his leadership. He had two big cars and a bungalow called Umuofia Mansions and offered the people a grand feast. So, he was considered rich in Umuofia.

Question 3.

Marcus Ibe had earlier been?

- (a) a doctor.
- (b) a school teacher.
- (c) a politician.

Answer:

- (b) a school teacher.

Question 4.

The fact that Marcus Ibe left the good things of the capital and returned to his village whenever he could, shows,

- (a) his devotion to his people and love for the place.
- (b) he enjoyed all the comforts of the city in his village.
- (c) he wanted to improve the amenities in his village.

Answer:

(b) he enjoyed all the comforts of the city in his village.

Question 5.

After the feasting was over the villagers.

(a) praised Marcus's faithfulness and generosity.

(b) intended to demand more for their votes.

(c) realized Marcus' wealth.

Answer:

(b) intended to demand more for their votes.

Question 6.

The 'whispering campaign' is

(a) secret campaigning at night.

(b) bargaining votes.

(c) clandestine distribution of money.

Answer:

(c) clandestine distribution of money.

Question 7.

The village elder Ezenwa, tilted the lamp a little because

(a) he could not see properly.

(b) the place was too dark.

(c) he wanted to confirm the amount paid to each.

Answer:

(c) he wanted to confirm the amount paid to each.

Question 8.

"Firewood" refers to

(a) Roof taking advantage of the situation.

(b) the advantages of being a voter.

(c) the benefits the elders received.

Answer:

(b) the advantages of being a voter.

Question 9.

Roof and the leader of the POP campaign team were

- (a) friends.
- (b) strangers.
- (c) known to each other.

Answer:

- (c) known to each other.

Question 10.

Roof was mesmerized by

- (a) the red notes on the floor.
- (b) the picture of the Cocoa farmer.
- (c) the POP campaign leader.

Answer:

- (a) the red notes on the floor.

Question 11.

Roof's act of inserting the torn ballot papers in two boxes signifies

- (a) keeping his promise.
- (b) appeasing Iyi.
- (c) absolving himself of his guilt.

Answer:

- (a) keeping his promise.

Comprehension II.

Question 1.

Trace the change in the attitude of the villagers before the second election. Give reasons.

Answer:

Though the villagers were innocent, they had observed how the leader Marcus had made a lot of money, cars, and bungalows in those five years. He also had a private power plant for his house.

By observing all these, they understood that free votes would give a lot of money to Marcus and changed themselves to get more money.

Question 2.

What was the justification for the formation of the POP?

Answer:

The 'Progressive Organization Party' (POP) was formed by the tribes down the coast to save themselves from total cultural, political, social, and religious oppression and they wanted to preserve their own culture and sustain their religion.

Question 3.

The roof is an intelligent manipulator. Justify the story.

Answer:

The Roof was a very strong and intelligent person and a trustworthy follower of Marcus. He could guess the mood of the people before the elections and inform Marcus accordingly. But when the POP campaign leader came and bribed Roof with five pounds for his support to the POP, he was in a dilemma whether to support his leader or the opposition leader Maduka.

Finally, when he entered the voting booth, he tore the ballot paper into two and cast one to Maduka and the other to Marcus. But he ensured that his people had cast their votes for Marcus.

Comprehension III.

Question 1.

The POP campaign leaders' meeting with Roof shows the misuse of transparency in a democratic setup. Discuss.

Answer:

Democracy is a system where anybody can be bribed and anybody can bribe. In the same way, the POP campaign leader came to Roof and bribed him with five pounds. There is no transparency in a democratic system, as all the candidates distribute money or things to the people and buy their votes.

Currency becomes more valuable than a vote, so instead of vote value, it can be called currency value. Because currency could do anything in the world, the system of election must be changed.

Question 2.

To every human comes a time of reckoning. how does Roof's dilemma on the day of the election reflect this?

Answer:

Roof's dilemma is not only his but is universal for those who take money from the candidates. The roof is the representation of ordinary people who take money for their livelihood. It is neither completely accepted as moral nor punished as immoral. Because the system is like this, the rich are becoming richer in corruption. A man like Roof who takes a small amount of money could not be assessed as a culprit according to social justice.

Question 3.

What comment on the electoral system does the story offer? Is it relevant?

Answer:

The story comments that the electoral system is not transparent in the present democratic setup because there is a chance of running these elections with currency instead of votes. Necessary steps have to be taken by people to change the present system to elect people transparently.

If that happens, we could expect a very good and transparent election system in Democracy. And it is relevant today as it is the responsibility of every citizen to think of it.

Question 4.

‘Democracy is more than holding elections regularly.’ Do you think the story supports these statements?

Answer:

Yes, 1 agrees with the above point.

Additional Questions and Answers

Question 1.

What was the popular name of Rufus Okeke?

Answer:

Roof

Question 2.

Where was Roof born?

Answer:

Umuofia

Question 3.

Who was the chief follower of Marcus?

Answer:

Roof

Question 4.

Which is the party of Marcus?

Answer:

People’s Alliance Party (PAP)

Question 5.

Which is the Opposition party of Marcus?

Answer:

Progressive Organisation Party (POP)

Question 6.

Whom did the people support much in the election?

Answer:

Marcus' (PAP) party.

Question 7.

What is the name of Marcus's newly built house?

Answer:

"Umuofia Mansions"

The Voter Summary



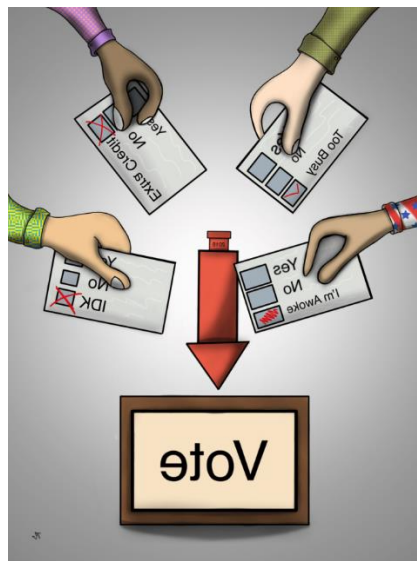
– Chinua Achebe

The Voter is a short story by Chinua Achebe, the African novelist, poet, and critic. This short story describes the advantages and disadvantages of Democracy in the newly independent African state of Nigeria. He has picturized it quite excellently how the Igbo people are cheated with a small amount of money for their votes by the political leaders. They use the innocent village youngsters to attract the other villagers to vote for them.

The roof was a popular figure in his village Umuofia. His full name was Rufus Okeke. When the other youngsters had gone to the city to earn money, he had remained in the village to guide the innocent locals. Marcus of the same village had joined the People's Alliance party, had won an election, became the minister of culture, and was called Chief the Honourable Marcus Ibe.

He was very confident of winning the coming elections, as he had no opposition in that village.

The roof was his right-hand man who could sense the mood of the people and how to manipulate it. He had warned Marcus that people were becoming aware of how he got his degrees and doctorates. Some naive villagers were still of the opinion that a doctorate means a Doctor and their minister will be able to cure their diseases.



Marcus was a missionary school teacher in Umuofia. He had joined the People's Alliance Party to avoid dismissal arising out of a complaint by a female teacher, whom he later married. After becoming a minister, he had amassed a lot of wealth including two big cars and a bungalow. But he remained devoted to his people and stayed at his native village which had no running water and electricity. It is a different matter that he had a private power plant for his exclusive use.

His new house was named Umuofia Mansion to honour Umuofia and for the opening of it, he had arranged a lavish dinner party for the villagers with five bulls and many goats. Villagers were very much satisfied with the feast but, they had also understood the power of the ballot

paper as to what a winner at the elections can take in and we're not going to part with their votes cheaply this time around. Marcus, sensing their feelings, had withdrawn his five month's salary in advance, converted to shillings for distribution to the villagers, mostly carried out during the nights. Roof was the agent managing this and he had to shell out more than the two shillings each he had initially offered the village elders.

In the meantime, the opposition party the Progressive Organisation Party (POP) had also started its campaign. Their local campaign team leader visited Roof the night before the election and offered him a bribe of five pounds for voting for the POP candidate Maduka. He also threatened Roof with a voodoo lyi from Mbanta which would cause him trouble if he were not to do so. The roof took the bribe asking them to keep it a secret.

But the real theme of the story begins when Roof enters the voting booth to cast his vote. He was in a dilemma as to his loyalty to Marcus and the threat from the lyi of Manta. A thought comes to him and he tears the paper into two, casts one for Maduka with a verbal announcement that he voted for Maduka and the other for Marcus, and comes out relieved. In this way, Achebe describes the contemporary psychological duality of the voters in the modern-day.