

The Pie and the Tart

Comprehension I: The Pie and the Tart

Question 1

Pierre says, "If I stop walking, I shall freeze," while Jean replies, "I prefer to die sitting down." What does this show?

- (a) It was extremely cold in Paris on that day
- (b) Jean is quick-witted and reacts intelligently
- (c) They can laugh at and talk lightly about their miserable condition

Answer:

(c) They can laugh at and talk lightly about their miserable condition.

Question 2

Why was Pierre arrested, and how did he defend himself before Judge Gaston?

Answer:

Pierre was arrested for begging. He defended himself by saying he begged because he wanted to live.

Question 3

Judge Gaston remarks, "I don't see the necessity." What does this reflect?

- (a) The judge's insensitivity
- (b) How people felt about vagabonds in those days
- (c) The judge's sense of humour

Answer:

(a) The judge's insensitivity.

Question 4

According to Pierre, what is a sure sign of starvation?

Answer:

Squinting slightly is a sure sign of starvation.

Question 5

Who opens the cake shop door when Pierre knocks on it?

Answer:

M. Gaultier, the owner of the cake shop, opens the door.

Question 6

Identify the common response of Gaultier and Marion to the vagabond's begging.

Answer:

Both of them say, "Go away, I've got nothing for you." Gaultier mentions his wife is away, and he is busy, while Marion says her husband is away, and she is busy.

Question 7

Choose the phrases or adjectives that can describe Gaultier, Marion, and Pierre from the options given below:

Answer:

- Gaultier: Content with his lot, hypocritical, foolish, sensitive, pompous, excellent pastry cook.
- Marion: Conceited, stoutish, comely, gullible.
- Pierre: Clever, has the presence of mind, quick-witted, resourceful.

Question 8

Gaultier says, "I can't very well be seen carrying an eel pie through the streets of Paris. Can I?" What does this reveal about him?

- (a) Lazy
- (b) Wise
- (c) Too conscious and proud of his position

Answer:

(c) Too conscious and proud of his position.

Question 9

What part of the baker and his wife's conversation helps Jean with his plan?

Answer:

The baker mentions instructing the messenger to kiss his wife's hand, which helps Jean in his planning.

Question 10

Why does Jean ask Pierre to get the pie instead of fetching it himself?

Answer:

Jean had already knocked on the door once and been seen by Marion.

Question 11

How does the playwright show Pierre's nervousness when he pretends to be the messenger for the eel pie?

Answer:

Pierre mixes up his words and says, "Good morning, lady. I have come from M. Pie, who sends me to fetch the Gaultier – I should say I have come from M. Gaultier, who sends me to fetch the pie – the eel pie."

Question 12

How was Gaultier's messenger supposed to identify himself to Marion?

Answer:

The messenger was supposed to ask to kiss Marion's hand.

Question 13

Why does Jean withhold the details of the conversation between the baker and his wife from Pierre?

- (a) It is not necessary
- (b) Jean wants to play the boss
- (c) Jean wants to take advantage of the situation

Answer:

(c) Jean wants to take advantage of the situation.

Question 14

Give one comparison Pierre uses while describing how he would carry the eel pie to Marion.

Answer:

Pierre compares himself to “a shepherd with his eyes.”

Question 15

Why does Pierre think he is dreaming after Marion hands him the pie?

Answer:

In his extremely hungry state, Pierre finds it hard to believe that he received the pie so easily, making him feel as if he is dreaming.

Question 16

Why do the vagabonds return to the bakery after eating the pie?

Answer:

Pierre tells Jean that he had seen a cranberry tart at M. Gaultier's door, and he wants it for them as well. He suggests that Jean should go and ask Marion for it in the same way he received the pie.

Question 17

What does Pierre mean when he says the eels “give themselves up to Gaultier”? What does it reveal about the baker?

Answer:

Pierre implies that Gaultier is such a skilled baker that even the eels wouldn't mind being used in his delicious pies. This shows that Gaultier is an excellent baker.

Question 18

What is the only fault Pierre finds with the eel pie?

Answer:

The only fault Pierre finds is that there is only one pie instead of two.

Question 19

Who opens the door when Jean goes to fetch the tart?

Answer:

Marion opens the door.

Question 20

Does Jean succeed in getting the tart? What happens to him and why?

Answer:

No, Jean does not get the tart. M. Gaultier runs out of the shop and starts beating him, mistaking him for the person who took the pie before.

Question 21

Why does Jean lie to Pierre and send him to fetch the tart?

Answer:

Jean resented the beating he received from M. Gaultier and wanted Pierre to experience the same, as they both had eaten the pie.

Question 22

What does Jean tell Pierre to convince him to go for the tart?

Answer:

Jean tells Pierre that Marion wants the same messenger who took the pie to collect the tart as well. He also says that, no matter how many times he kissed Marion's hand, she wouldn't relent.

Question 23

Give an example that shows Marion's sense of humour.

Answer:

Marion humorously remarks that Gaultier should choose a good-looking messenger, as her hand is not for everyone to kiss.

B. Close Study:

Read the following extracts carefully. Discuss in pairs and then write the answers to the questions given below:

Question 1

Pierre: "He does not catch them. They give themselves up. No eel could resist the blandishments of such an artist as M. Gaultier."

a) What does 'them' refer to?

Answer:

The eels.

b) What does the above statement tell us about Gaultier

Answer:

It shows that Gaultier is such an exceptional baker that even the eels wouldn't mind being used in one of his pies. They "give themselves up" willingly, as if proud to be part of his masterpiece.

c) What prompts Pierre to give such a compliment to Gaultier?

Answer:

After sharing the delicious pie baked by Gaultier on an empty stomach, Pierre feels immensely grateful and praises Gaultier's baking skills.

Question 2

Gaultier: "I can't very well be seen carrying an eel pie through the streets of Paris, can I? ... Do you think you could bring it along after me?"

a) Where is Gaultier supposed to carry the pie?

Answer:

Gaultier is supposed to deliver the pie to the Mayor of Paris's house.

b) What does this passage reveal about his character?

Answer:

This shows that Gaultier is highly conscious of his social status and holds a high opinion of himself, avoiding anything that might seem beneath him.

c) Who is he addressing?

Answer:

He is speaking to his wife, Marion.

Comprehension II: The Pie and the Tart

Question 1

Jean and Pierre share many similarities, yet the dramatist skillfully differentiates them as distinct individuals.

Similarities:

Jean and Pierre are both vagabonds, struggling to survive on the streets of Paris. They face the same hardships, shivering in the cold, dressed in ragged clothes, and desperately seeking food. Despite their poverty, both maintain a sense of humour and a resilient spirit. For example, when they share the pie, they humorously compliment its taste and eagerly plot to acquire the tart as well. They refuse to wallow in self-pity, showing instead a determination to find some small joy even in their miserable circumstances.

Differences:

However, in terms of personality, Jean and Pierre are notably distinct. Pierre is the more cheerful, energetic, and optimistic of the two, showing a buoyant and almost restless energy. Jean, on the other hand, is more subdued, resigned, and at times even a bit cunning. For instance, while Pierre remains positive in the face of difficulties, Jean's approach to getting what they need often includes a touch of slyness, such as when he deceives Pierre into fetching the tart after experiencing Gaultier's anger.

Despite their differences, their friendship endures, supported by their shared humour and mutual understanding.

Question 2

Stage directions are essential components in a play, guiding actors and directors to bring the playwright's vision to life.

Answer:

Stage directions are descriptive notes included in the script to guide the actors' movements, timing, and expressions. They are crucial in helping actors know when to enter or exit, where to move, and how to deliver their lines. These directions also convey the atmosphere, mood, and physical nuances that the playwright intended, making it easier to visualize and stage the play as originally conceived.

Stage directions are especially helpful for inexperienced actors and directors, as they provide clear instructions, which can bring coherence to the performance. Although directors can adapt these instructions to suit their interpretation, the presence of stage directions helps ensure the play's pacing, rhythm, and overall impact are consistent with the playwright's vision.

Dialogue Writing:

Read the following reported speech and write a dialogue based on it.

Gaultier visits the Mayor's house, and they exchange greetings. The Mayor asks Gaultier how his business is going. Gaultier responds that it's going well and that his eel pies are in high demand. The Mayor, pleased to hear this, compliments him and mentions that he would love to try one of the famous eel pies himself. Gaultier replies that he already sent an eel pie along with a cranberry tart via a messenger.

The Mayor, looking sceptical, tells Gaultier not to joke around, as he hasn't received anything. He suggests that perhaps someone has tricked Gaultier.

Answer:

- The Mayor: *(Seated and busy with a file. There's a knock on the door)* Yes?
- M. Gaultier: May I come in, Sir?
- The Mayor: *(Looking up)* Oh! Mr. Gaultier, please come in.
- M. Gaultier: Good morning.
- The Mayor: Good morning. How are things going? How's your business, Mr. Gaultier?
- M. Gaultier: Business is good; there's quite a demand for my special eel pies.
- The Mayor: That's wonderful to hear! I'd love to try one myself.
- M. Gaultier: Well, you should be able to! I sent an eel pie and a cranberry tart for you with a messenger. You didn't receive it?
- The Mayor: Now, don't try to pull one over on me, Gaultier—I haven't received any pie or tart. If you trusted it to a random messenger, it sounds like someone may have fooled you.

The Pie and the Tart Summary



This play tells the clever tale of two vagabonds, Jean and Pierre, who manage to outwit a baker and his wife, securing a pie and a tart to survive the day. The characters of Jean and Pierre bring a lively charm to the story, as they are street-smart, witty, and quick-thinking.

On a particularly cold, windy day, Jean and Pierre find themselves starving. When Pierre goes to begin a nearby street, Jean overhears the baker, Gaultier, mentioning an eel pie he intends to send to the mayor for lunch, along with instructions to send a boy to collect it. Once the baker leaves, Jean seizes the opportunity and approaches the baker's wife, Marion, asking for the pie exactly as the baker had described. He successfully receives the pie, and both vagabonds enjoy a satisfying meal.

Later, as they sit contentedly on a bench, they start craving the cranberry tart Pierre had spotted on the shelf. Jean decides to try his luck again, returning to ask Marion for the tart "for the mayor." However, by now, Marion has realized she was tricked the first time. She stalls Jean and sends her husband out to

confront him. Gaultier, angry and ready for revenge, chases Jean off with harsh words and a cudgel.

Not to be outsmarted, Jean quickly concocts a lie and convinces Pierre to go and request the tart instead. When Pierre arrives, Gaultier threatens to call the police. Pierre, thinking fast, tells him that the mayor was not at home earlier but has since returned and now wants the tart. Trusting him, Gaultier hands over the tart, which the vagabonds happily devour. Despite the baker's best efforts to be cautious, he and his wife are tricked, allowing Jean and Pierre to enjoy a hearty meal that day.