

Dusk

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS:

Q1. What was the atmosphere at Hyde Park?

Ans: The whole atmosphere at Hyde Park was full of sadness (dusky). It was an early March evening at around 6:30 and there was not completely dark due to moonlight and street lamps. Though there was an emptiness over road and sidewalk, even some people were moving here and there while others were sitting on the benches and chairs in the Park. Their faces were hardly visible in the twilight. According to Gortsby, it was the time of dejected and disappointed people who would come to such a place to enjoy their solitariness.

Q2. Do the atmosphere and the mood at the Park justify the title of the story?

Ans: Yes, the atmosphere and the mood of the park justify the title of the story. Gortsby, the protagonist of the story, defines dusk as “the hour of the defeated.” He has appropriately portrayed the atmosphere of the story by using words like March evening, dusk, wide emptiness, half-light, gloom etc. The mood has been harmonised by comparing it to the hour of dejected. Thus, dusk is not only on the physical level but on the mental and spiritual levels as well. Fallen fortunes, dead hopes, bowed shoulders and unhappy eyes of the dejected and disappointed people present in the park. They are those who have reached the dusk (last stage) of their life. That is why these unfortunate people come to the Park in the bat-fashion which means like bats who come out only at dusk and not during the day time.

Q3. Draw a profile of the person who first sat near Gortsby on the bench?

Ans: It was an elderly gentleman who first sat near Gortsby on the bench. The man seemed to have lost interest in life. He looked dejected and disappointed but refused to admit this fact. He was not wearing entirely shabby clothes but one could not call them fine too. Even his physical appearance did not seem deceptive. It seemed that no one cared him; perhaps he was in the dusk of his life.

Q4. What, according to Gortsby, was the weak point of the young man's story?

Ans: The young man was thought to be a stranger in the town who had left his hotel to buy a cake of soap. It was the man who had forgotten the name of his hotel and the street where it was in. It was said that he had only a shilling in his pocket which he spent on buying the soap and having some drink for himself. According to Gortsby, the weak point of young man's story was that he could produce the cake of soap when he was asked to show it and it was the only thing in the whole story which could make

anyone believe his story but the young man pretended that he had lost it somewhere. Gortsby thought that the young man believed to be very intelligent but his inability to produce the cake of soap showed his weak point.

Q5. While walking back to his seat in the Park, What did Gortsby see?

Ans: While walking back to his seat in the Park, Gortsby saw an elderly gentleman who seemed to be searching for something. He was poking and peering under the bench and on all its sides. It was recognised the same old man who had been sitting by his side on the bench that March evening.

Q6. How did Norman Gortsby feel when he realized he had been fooled?

Ans: We have not been told in the story anywhere how Gortsby felt when he realized that he had been fooled. We can't say that he had been fooled but it is the weak point in the young man's story which made Gortsby fool himself. We can say it could be a lesson to him as well as we people not to be too clever in judging by circumstances.

Q7. What did Gortsby imaging about the people who visited the Hyde Park?

Ans: Dusk for Gortsby was the hour of the defeated. About the people who visited Hyde Park, Gortsby imagined that they had been defeated in their life. They were dejected and disappointed men and women who fought and lost. Their fortunes had fallen and their hopes were dead. They came to the Park in their shabby clothes with bowed shoulders and unhappy eyes at the hour of dusk in a bat like fashion in order to remain unnoticed and unrecognized.

Q8. What is irony? Bring out some elements of irony in the story?

Ans: Irony is a figure of speech which consists of a statement that appears to be praise but in real condemnation. In other words, it can be a statement which is against the expectation. It is a literary technique which has been used by Saki in his story „Dusk“. At first, when the young man remarks with a curse "You would't be in a good temper if you were in the fix I am in." Which results immediately Gortsby's reaction who seems in a fix instead of the young man. Secondly, when the same young man speaks impressively. "I suppose you think I have spun you rather an impossible yarn", but later the same false story becomes possible by the circumstances which are an irony. One more irony in the story is

that Gortsby convinced himself that it is a lesson to him not to be too clever in judging by circumstances and ultimately falls prey to his own statement.

Q9. What is “juxtaposition”? Has Saki been able to juxtapose humour and pathos in “Dusk”?

Ans: Juxtaposition means a combination or putting things together to show contrast or comparison. In literature, it occurs whenever two or more events or characters are combined so that one could be able to compare or contrast them in a better way. In the story, “Dusk” Saki has juxtaposed humour and pathos in a very subtle manner. We see pathos in the description of people who have fallen fortunes and whose hopes are dead. There is pathos in the description of the elderly gentleman to whose piping no one dances. The left of the same elderly gentleman who seemed to have lost interest in his life and coming in of the young man with a cheerful face and fairly dressed is an example of juxtaposition.

Language Work

Use the following in sentences of your own:

1. He is such a youthful figure.
2. That poor boy was shabbily dressed.
3. I know, you are a decent chap.
4. They were talking all night in the pale moonlight.
5. Let's stroll about in the market
6. He was wandering about all day in the park.