

Chapter – 7

The Open Window

Comprehension Check

Q1. Why had Framton Nuttel come to the “rural retreat”?

Answer. Framton Nuttel had come to the “rural retreat” to undergo a nerve cure.

Q2. Why had his sister given him letters of introduction to people living there?

Answer. His sister had given him letters of introduction to people living there as he did not know anyone there. She knew that he would not speak to anybody and his nerves would be worse from moping. That is why she gave him letters of introduction to all the people she knew there.

Q3. What had happened in the Sappleton family as narrated by the niece?

Answer. The niece told Nuttel that about three years ago Mrs. Sappleton’s husband and her two younger brothers had gone for their day’s shooting through the open French window. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favourite shooting spot, they were all engulfed in a piece of bog. It was a wet summer and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered.

Q4. What did Mrs Sappleton say about the open window?

Answer. Mrs. Sappleton said that she hoped Framton did not mind the open window. She told him that her husband and her brothers would be coming home directly from their shooting, and they always came that way.

Q5. The horror on the girl’s face made Framton swing around in his seat. What did he see?

Answer. When Framton turned around, he saw in the deepening twilight three figures walking across the lawn towards the window. They all carried guns under their arms and one of them also had a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. They neared the house noiselessly, and then a hoarse young voice said, “I say, Bertie, why do you bound?”

Q6. Why did Framton rush out wildly?

Answer. Framton rushed out wildly because he was in a “chill shock of nameless fear”. He was scared and shocked to see the three men, who he thought were dead, walking towards the open window.

Q7. What was the girl’s explanation for his lightning exit?

Answer. The girl said that the spaniel was the reason for his lightning exit. She said that he had a horror of dogs. She explained that he was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of dogs. He had to spend the night in a newly dug grave, with the creatures snarling, grinning and foaming just above him.

Exercise

Discuss in small groups.

Q1. Is this a mystery story? Give a reason for your answer.

Answer. While explaining the mystery behind the open French window, the events narrated by Mrs. Sappleton's niece manage to create a sense of foreboding. Later, when the three men approach the open window, the reader (like Framton) can only logically conclude that they were ghosts. Hence, one can say that this story does contain elements of the mysterious.

Q2. Discuss in small groups. You are familiar with the 'irony' of the situation in a story. (Remember The Cop and the Anthem in Class VII Supplementary Reader!) Which situations in "The Open Window" are good examples of the use of irony?

Answer. Framton Nuttel had retired to the country and was visiting different people in order to heal his bad nerves. However, his visit to Mrs. Sappleton's house did just the opposite. This visit made him lose his nerves completely. This is the most ironic part of the story. When Mrs. Sappleton told him that she was waiting for her husband and her three brothers, who were to arrive anytime, Nuttel felt that she was in delusion. However, ironically, it was he who was in delusion when he mistook the three men as ghosts. When Nuttel ran away, Mrs. Sappleton said that the way he had rushed out wildly, it seemed as if he had seen a ghost. Ironically, he did run away because he thought he had seen ghosts.

Q3. Which phrases/ sentences in the text do you find difficult to understand? Select a few and guess the meaning of each. Rewrite a simple paraphrase of each.

Answer. This question requires you to use your own perspective as well as your analytical skills. The answer to the question would vary from one person to another. It is suggested that you read the text carefully and try attempting it on your own.