

5 Princess September

Comprehension Check (Page 38)

Questions:

1. How many daughters did the royal couple have?
2. Why were they named after the months of the year?
3. The King had a peculiar habit. What was it? Why is it called peculiar?
4. (i) What was Princess September's reaction to the loss of her parrot?
(ii) What was her Mother's reaction to it?
(iii) What do the reactions indicate about the nature and temperament of each?
5. What pulled the Princess out of her gloom?
6. How did the Maids of Honour come to know that the Princess and the bird had become intimate friends?
7. The new bird was full of new songs but the old parrots always repeated themselves. What did they say?
8. What is the king's opinion about his Councillors? Why did he form that opinion?
9. (i) The eight Princesses made an offer to Princess September. What was it?
(ii) Why, in your view, did they do it?
10. What did the sisters advise the Princess to do about her bird?

Answers:

1. The Royal couple had nine daughters.
2. They were named after the months of the year because the queen could not recall their names easily.
3. The peculiar habit of the king was to give gifts on his birthday rather than receive them. Usually people get gifts on their birthdays.
4. (i) Princess September took the loss of her parrot to heart. She wept continuously. She was put to sleep without supper.
(ii) Her Mother said that Princess September's weeping was simply nonsense. She asked the maids to put the child to sleep without supper.
(iii) The princess was very simple-hearted and sensitive. She was stricken with grief when her parrot died. But the Queen mother was not moved at all. She had nothing to console the child.
5. The coming of a little song bird into her room comforted Princess September. She was so enchanted that she forgot about her loss.
6. The Maids of Honour brought in the princess's breakfast. The song bird ate rice out of the princess's hand and then sang sweetly. The Maids were surprised to find September so much happy. They were convinced that the two had become good friends.
7. The old parrots only repeated what they had been taught. They could only say 'God save the King' and "Pretty Polly".
8. The King had a low opinion about his Councillors because like parrots, they too repeated the same thing differently.
9. (i) They offered their pocket money to Princess September to buy another parrot,
(ii) They did that because they felt jealous of the song bird's friendship with Princess September.
10. The sisters advised the Princess to put the little bird into the cage lest it should fly away for ever.

Comprehension Check (Page 43)

Questions:

1. In the following sentence elaborate the parts given in bold. Under the circumstances it was a very unfortunate remark for the bird to make.
2. (i) What did Princess September do to ensure the safety of her pet?
(ii) How did the bird react to it?
3. Why did the bird refuse to be taken out in her cage?
4. (i) What persuaded Princess September to give the bird his freedom again?
(ii) How did the bird react to it?
5. Princess September kept her window open day and night.
(i) How did it help the bird?
(ii) How did it help the Princess herself?
6. The eight sisters kept their windows shut. How did it affect them?

Answers:

1. The circumstance was that the bird hadn't come back because of the party at his father-in-law's house. The princess was naturally worried. The remark of the sisters added to her worry.
2. (i) Princess September put the bird into a cage to ensure his safety.
(ii) The bird disliked his imprisonment. He stopped singing.
3. The bird said that he won't be really happy and normal if he was taken out in her cage. The rice-fields and the lake looked quite different and dull when seen through the cage bars.
4. (i) The Princess freed the bird lest he should die in captivity.
(ii) The Princess kept the window open so that the bird might fly in and out making fresh air charming. Freedom helped the bird to sing and enjoy himself.
5. (i) The bird opened his wings and flew away.
(ii) It helped the Princess herself by providing her fresh wind and natural light. It helped her make her beautiful.
6. The eight sisters who kept their window shut all night became extremely ugly and disagreeable. They were married to the councillors.

Exercise (Page 44)

Discuss the following questions in small groups. Write their answers later.

Question 1:

Are the sisters unkind and cruel? Find evidence in the text to support your idea.

Answer:

Yes, the eight sisters of the princess were unkind and cruel. They were jealous too. They advised her to encage the bird. This suggestion might have killed the bird.

Question 2:

Which, to you, is the most important idea in this story, and why?

(i) importance of music (ii) value of freedom (iii) beauty of nature

Answer:

(i) value of freedom.

MORE QUESTIONS SOLVED

I. SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Question 1:

What did the King of Siam give his daughters one year on his birthday?

Answer:

One year on his birthday, the King of Siam gave each of his daughters a green parrot in a golden cage.

Question 2:

What happened to Princess September's parrot one day? How did the princess react to it?

Answer:

One day, Princess September found her parrot lying dead at the bottom of its golden cage. She burst into tears suddenly. She cried so much that the Queen got angry and told her to go to bed without any supper.

Question 3:

What made Princess September act upon her sister's advice?

Answer:

After the death of her lovely parrot; Princess September got the company of a little song bird. He comforted her with his sweet songs. One day, her sisters advised her to put the bird into a cage lest he should fly. Princess September loved the bird too much to take chances. So, she acted upon their advice.

Question 4:

Why was the little song bird surprised?

Answer:

The little song bird was surprised to see how ruthlessly Princess September treated him one day. She carried him over to a cage, popped him in and shut the door on him. He became speechless. For a moment he could think of nothing to say.

Question 5:

Who was Princess September married to? Why?

Answer:

Princess September was married to the King of Cambodia, because she was extremely beautiful.

II. LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Question 1:

Suppose you are Princess September. Give a brief account of your heart breaks, sufferings and eventual happiness.

Answer:

I am the ninth daughter of the royal couple of Siam. My father, - the King, used to give gifts to us on his birthdays. One year, on his birthday he gave each one of the princesses a green parrot in a golden cage. I also got a parrot in a golden cage. All other sisters taught the bird to say 'God save the King' and 'Pretty Polly'. But I was different from them. Unfortunately my parrot died one day. I wept and wept. I slept without supper. At night a small song bird flew into my room. It sang so sweetly that I forgot the loss of my parrot. I showed it to my sisters. They grew jealous of my happiness. They advised me to put the bird in a cage. And I acted foolishly upon that advice. The bird stopped singing. It appeared to be dead. So I set it free. I then had the last laugh. I was married to a Prince of Cambodia while my sisters were ugly and were married to my father's councillors.

Question 2:

Compare and contrast the characters of Princess September and her other eight sisters.

Answer:

Princess September was different from her elder sisters. She was sweet-natured and simple-hearted. She cried bitterly when her parrot died. A little bird made her happy with his song. Her sisters were jealous, mean and wicked. They made a plan to rob her of her happiness. They told her to put the bird in a cage. Their wicked plan worked for a while. The bird stopped

singing in captivity. Princess September cared more for the bird's life than her own happiness. So she let him off. She was duly rewarded for her goodness.