

Chapter – 6

I Want Something in a Cage

Comprehension Check I

1. Write 'True 'or' False 'against each of following statements.

(i) Mr Purcell sold birds, cats, dogs and monkeys.

(ii) He was very concerned about the well-being of the birds and animals in his shop.

(iii) He was impressed by the customer who bought the two doves.

(iv) He was a successful shop owner, though insensitive and cold as a person.

Answer:

(i) True

(ii) False

(iii) False

(iv) True

2. Why is Mr Purcell compared to an owl?

Answer:

Mr Purcell wore large glasses which magnified his eyes and gave him the appearance of a wise and genial owl.

3. From the third paragraph pick out

(i) words associated with cries of birds,

(ii) words associated with noise,

(iii) words suggestive of confusion and fear.

Answer:

(i) Cheeps, whispered twitters

(ii) Rustling, squeals, cheeps, squeaks

(iii) Bewildered, frantic, frightened, blindly seeking

4. "...Mr Purcell heard it no more than he would have heard the monotonous ticking of a familiar clock." (Read para beginning with "It was a rough day...")

(i) What does 'it' refer to?

(ii) Why does Mr Purcell not hear 'it' clearly?

Answer:

(i) It refers to the sound of the bell over the door that jingled whenever a customer entered.

(ii) He could not hear it clearly because his pet shop was always full of chirping, squeaking and mewling of the birds and pets he kept in his shop.

Comprehension Check II

1. Do you think the atmosphere of Mr Purcell's shop was cheerful or depressing? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer:

The atmosphere of Mr Purcell's shop was depressing because the birds and the animals were caged. Though they kept it lively by making noises, the depressing environment can be inferred by the author's words like moving around in frantic circles, frightened, bewildered, blindly seeking all.

2. Describe the stranger who came to the pet shop. What did he want?

Answer:

The stranger who came to the pet shop wanted something that was small but in a cage. He wore shiny shoes which squeaked forward and his suit, though new, was cheap and ill-fitting. He had a shuttling glance and close-cropped hair.

3.

(A) The man insisted on buying the doves because he was fond of birds. Do you agree?

Answer:

No, I do not agree that the man was fond of birds. Had it been so, he would have asked for birds the very moment he entered the shop. He was not very clear about what he wanted. He just wanted something which was small and flew but was in a cage.

(B) How had he earned the five dollars he had?

Answer:

Though nothing is explicitly stated in the passage but we can infer that the man had just got freed from the prison. He told the pet shop owner that he had earned the five dollars after doing ten years of hard labour. He further said that he had been given five dollars and a cheap suit and was told not to get caught again.

4. Was the customer interested in the care and feeding of the doves he had bought? If not, why not?

Answer:

No, the customer freed the birds from the cage which means that he was not interested in the care and feeding of the doves he had bought.

Exercises

1. Why, in your opinion, did the man set the doves free?

Answer:

As can be inferred from the man's words, he had spent the last ten years of his life in jail and he knew the pain of being locked up and the importance of freedom. He sympathized with the creatures in cages who were designed by the God to fly high but were kept in cages by the owner.

2. Why did it make Mr. Purcell feel "vaguely insulted"?

Answer:

Mr. Purcell felt vaguely insulted because the man freed the doves he had bought from his shop for five dollars. The man had only five dollars with him and he spent them entirely on purchasing the birds just to let them free. This made Mr Purcell feel insulted as he had caged the birds and sold them.