

CHAPTER 02

The Browning Version

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Chapter Sketch

This extract, from the play 'The Browning Version', highlights the attitude of a teenaged student towards his teacher. His comments are shocking because they are very close to the truth. He calls the teacher almost inhuman, though not a sadist. He is mortally afraid of his teacher because his promotion depends on his teacher's goodwill. When another teacher encourages him, the student becomes more frank. It appears that the teacher was strict and seemed to hate people who like him. This reflects on the teacher's quality.

Chapter Summary

Mr Frank Converses with Taplow

The scene of the play is set in a school. The play opens with a sixteen year old boy, Taplow, who has been detained by his teacher to compensate for one day's absence. He is waiting for his teacher, Mr Crocker-Harris, who has not yet arrived. Another teacher, Frank, finds Taplow waiting in the room and starts talking to him.

Taplow introduces himself and informs him that he is a student in the lower fifth grade. He adds that he would specialise next term if he got promoted. He also tells Frank that Mr Crocker-Harris does not tell the students their results beforehand like the other teachers. Frank is surprised.

Frank admits that there is a rule that results should be announced on the last day only by the principal but no one follows it. Taplow remarks that only Crocker-Harris follows the rule.

Then Frank asks Taplow which specialisation would he take. Taplow readily tells him that he will take science as he is extremely interested in science. Frank tells Taplow that he is not interested in the science he teaches. But Taplow retorts that it must be better than the 'Agememnon' written by Aeschylus. Seeing Frank's reaction, Taplow clarifies that he likes the plot of the book but not the way it is taught.

Taplow's Extra Work

Frank thinks that Taplow sounds a little bitter as he has not been promoted. Taplow informs him that he is there for extra work. Frank is more than surprised to hear that Taplow is doing extra work on the last day of the term.

Taplow informs him that he had missed a day of school the previous week due to illness and so Mr Crocker-Harris had asked him to do extra work to make up for that. Mr Frank tries to calm him by telling him that he would certainly get his result the next day for taking extra work. But Taplow feels that such things do not work with Mr Crocker-Harris, as he is not like other teachers who appreciate students who do extra work.

Taplow's Criticism of Mr Crocker-Harris

Taplow adds that when he had asked Mr Crocker-Harris about his result, he had told him that he had given him what he deserved, no less and no more. Taplow feels that Mr Crocker-Harris would have rather marked him down for doing extra work.

He believes that Mr Crocker-Harris is hardly human. When he realises that he had gone too far, he apologises to Frank. Frank had been listening to Taplow in seriousness and asks Taplow to repeat it. He then gets more serious and asks Taplow to read Aeschylus. When Taplow expresses his dislike, Frank asks Taplow to leave for Crocker-Harris is 10 minute late.

Frank's suggestion shocks Taplow. He tells Frank that he wouldn't do it for the fear of Crocker Harris's reaction. Frank admits that he envies how students are scared of him. Taplow informs him that Crocker-Harris is not a sadist as he does not beat anyone.

Mr Crocker-Harris's Personality

However, Taplow believes that it would have been better if Crocker-Harris were a sadist, as it would mean he had some feelings. He feels that Crocker-Harris hates that people like him. Taplow finds it funny that in spite of all the crankiness, he likes Mr Crocker-Harris.

He feels that Crocker-Harris knows it but it makes him more hard and strict.

Taplow recalls an incident when Crocker-Harris made a joke. No one laughed at it as no one understood it. Out of sheer courtesy, Taplow laughed. Instead of understanding his intention, Crocker-Harris asked Taplow to explain the joke to the class for only he could understand the advanced Latin.

As this conversation was going one, Millie Crocker-Harris entered the scene unnoticed.

Millie Crocker-Harris Brings Relief to Taplow

Millie Crocker-Harris, Crocker-Harris' wife, is a thin woman in her late thirties. She is smartly dressed, unlike other schoolmasters' wives. Taplow was still imitating Crocker-Harris when Frank noticed her and suddenly broke off. Taplow gets scared and asks Mr Frank if Millie Crocker-Harris could have heard their conversation.

Mr Frank thinks that she did. Taplow fears that if she tells anything to Mr Crocker-Harris, then he will surely not get promoted.

Millie Crocker-Harris asks Taplow if he was waiting for her husband. She further informs him that her husband is busy at the Bursar's and might get late. She asks him to leave. Taplow is doubtful and says Mr Crocker-Harris had particularly asked him to come.

She tells him that she will take the blame and advises him to go away for a quarter of an hour. Taplow is scared if so, she gives him a prescription and sends him to the chemist to get it filled. Convinced, Taplow accepts the proposal and leaves.

Word Meanings

The given page numbers correspond to the pages in the prescribed NCERT textbook.

Word	Meaning
Page 50	
excerpt	a short extract from a piece of writing
remove	promotion
Page 51	
form	class
muck	rubbish
kept in	detained
Page 52	
got carried away	got excited and lost control
Page 53	
cut	go away without permission
sadist	person who gets pleasure from inflicting pain or suffering on others
all shrivelled up	having no feelings
Page 54	
shrivel him up	reduce his feelings
general run	normal group
cape	a shawl or stole
Page 55	
frantically	in a hurried way
It made up	prepare or put together

Chapter Practice

PART 1

Objective Questions

• Multiple Choice Questions

1. What is Taplow doing on the last day of school?

- (a) Extra work (b) Can't say
- (c) Passing time (d) Doing his homework

Ans. (a) On the last day of school, Taplow is doing his extra work as he waits for Mr Crocker-Harris.

2. Why is Taplow waiting for his teacher, Mr. Crocker-Harris?

- (a) To apologise to him (b) To talk about Frank
- (c) To receive his result (d) To give him a present

Ans. (c) Taplow was waiting for Mr. Crocker-Harris to receive his remove, i.e. his result.

3. How is Mr. Crocker-Harris different from other teachers?

- (a) As he is not biased (b) As he is strict
- (c) As he is old (d) As he is rude

Ans. (a) Mr Crocker-Harris is an unbiased teacher who does not favour any child. He gave results according to the academic performance of his students.

4. Select the suitable option for the given statements, based on your reading of 'The Browning Version'.

- (i) Taplow did not really hate the play 'Agamemnon' by Aeschylus.
- (ii) Taplow disliked the way Crocker Harris taught the play.
- (a) (i) is false but (ii) is true.
- (b) Both (i) and (ii) are true.
- (c) (ii) is a fact but unrelated to (i).
- (d) (i) is the cause for (ii).

Ans. (b) Taplow states that he liked the story of Agamemnon but he disliked the way it was taught to him by his teacher Mr. Crocker-Harris.

5. Why does Taplow have to do extra work?

- (a) Because he missed a day previous week as he was sick
- (b) Because he didn't performed well in his studies
- (c) Because he was there to help his teacher
- (d) Because he was called by his teacher

Ans. (a) Taplow had to do extra work because he missed a day previous week as he was sick.

6. "Yes, sir, and I might be playing golf. You'd think he'd have enough to do anyway himself, considering he's leaving tomorrow for good — but oh no, I missed a day last week when I was ill — so here I am — and look at the weather, sir."

In the given lines, Taplow sounds

- (a) Despairing (b) Disdainful
- (c) Bitter (d) Regretful

Ans. (c) In the given lines, Taplow sounds bitter because instead of enjoying the weather and playing golf, he had to stay back in the school and study.

7. Frank asks Taplow to imitate Crocker-Harris again. Select the option that explains it.

- (a) Frank is envious of Crocker-Harris.
- (b) Frank doesn't think Taplow sounds anything like Mr. Crocker Harris while imitating him.
- (c) Frank is stupefied by the student's opinion for Crocker Harris.
- (d) Frank dislikes Crocker-Harris.

Ans. (b) Franks asks Taplow to repeat his imitation because he doesn't think that Taplow sounds anything like Mr. Crocker-Harris.

8. Classify (1) to (4) as Fact (F) or Opinion (O), based on your reading of 'The Browning Version'.

- 1. Frank cannot understand why students are afraid of Crocker Harris.
- 2. Taplow knows that if he leaves without meeting Crocker Harris he wouldn't get his remove.
- 3. Frank does not believe in the school system.
- 4. Taplow is a very rational child.

- (a) F-1, 2, 4; O-3 (b) F-2, 3; O-1, 4
- (c) F-2; O-1, 3, 4 (d) F-3, 4; O-1, 2

Ans. (a)

9. Why did Taplow call Mr. Crocker – Harris 'hardly human'?

- (a) Because he is a sadist
- (b) He does not show any emotions
- (c) He is very rude to everyone
- (d) He finds peace in failing students

Ans. (b) He calls his professor 'hardly human' as he is all shriveled up and does not show any emotions.

10. What was Frank's reaction when Mrs Crocker-Harris entered the classroom?

- (a) He was happy
- (b) He was nervous
- (c) He was relieved
- (d) Nothing unusual

Ans. (c) Frank seemed relieved to see Mrs. Crocker-Harris as she entered the classroom.

11. Why was Taplow worried that Mrs. Crocker-Harris might have heard what they were saying?

- (a) As she had been standing for a few minutes when they were busy talking
- (b) As she interrupted them talking about her husband
- (c) As she heard them talking about the Principal
- (d) It is unclear why he was worried

Ans. (a) Taplow was worried that Mrs Crocker-Harris might have heard what they were saying about her husband as she had been standing there for a few minutes while they imitated Mr. Crocker-Harris.

12. Select the option that correctly describes Frank.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| I. Friendly | II. Lenient |
| III. Humorous | IV. Disrespectful |
| V. Uninterested | |
| (a) All but IV | (b) I, II and III |
| (c) III and V | (d) All but II |

Ans. (b) Frank seems to be friendly and his approach towards education is lenient. He is also humorous and entertains Taplow with a conversation.

13. Which of the following statements is TRUE about the play?

- I. Frank is curious about Taplow's opinion of Mr. Crocker-Harris.
 - II. Taplow is confused about choosing a subject to study.
 - III. Taplow is waiting for Mr. Crocker-Harris.
 - IV. Mrs. Crocker-Harris asks Frank about Taplow's education.
- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| (a) I and III are true | (b) I and IV are true |
| (c) II and III are true | (d) None of these |

Ans. (a) Frank is curious to know about Mr Crocker-Harris and what Taplow thinks about him, which is why he strikes up a conversation with Taplow. It is while Frank arrives that Taplow is waiting for Mr Crocker-Harris to arrive.

14. Select the central thematic concern of the play, from the given options.

- I. The uniqueness of Mr. Crocker-Harris
 - II. The bad behaviour of Taplow
 - III. Mrs. Crocker Harris's shopping list
 - IV. The play 'Agamemnon'
- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| (a) II and III | (b) II and I |
| (c) Only I | (d) III and IV |

Ans. (c) The central thematic concern of the play is the uniqueness of Mr. Crocker-Harris.

15. Select the option that lists the characteristics displayed by Taplow.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| I. Obedient | II. Strange |
| III. Unempathetic | IV. Straight Forward |
| V. Respectful | |
| (a) All but V | (b) I, IV and V |
| (c) II and III | (d) All but II |

Ans. (b) Taplow is obedient, straightforward and respectful as he is dedicated to his professor, expresses himself well and respects his teacher's orders.

● Extract Based Questions

1. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

“Frank What's your name?

Taplow Taplow.

Frank Taplow! No, I don't. You're not a scientist I gather?

Taplow No, sir, I'm still in the lower fifth. I can't specialise until next term — that's to say, if I've got my remove all right.

Frank Don't you know if you've got your remove?

Taplow No sir, Mr Crocker-Harris doesn't tell us the results like the other masters.

Frank Why not?

Taplow Well, you know what he's like, sir.

Frank I believe there is a rule that form results should only be announced by the headmaster on the last day of term.”

(i) What does 'remove' mean in this context?

- (a) A division in British schools
- (b) Take away something
- (c) Unfasten
- (d) Get rid of

Ans. (a) 'Remove', in this context, means a division in British schools.

(ii) Select the statement(s) that can be inferred from the above extract:

- I. Frank is meeting Taplow for the first time.
 - II. Taplow is a new student of Frank.
 - III. Mr. Crocker-Harris is a rather unique teacher.
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| (a) I and II are true | (b) Only II is true |
| (c) I and III are true | (d) I, II and III are true |

Ans. (c) The extract does not inform the reader whether Taplow is a new student of Frank or not.

(iii) What is Frank's reaction when he asks Taplow as to why he does not know about his remove yet?

- | | | | |
|---------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| (a) Sad | (b) Surprising | (c) Angry | (d) Happy |
|---------|----------------|-----------|-----------|

Ans. (b) It is surprising to Frank that Taplow has not received his remove yet.

(iv) What does Frank mean to say when he states that Crocker-Harris is unlike other teachers?

- (a) He follows rules
- (b) He does not favour any child
- (c) He is not flexible
- (d) He is strict

Ans. (c) When Frank says that Crocker-Harris is unlike other teachers, he wishes to highlight that Crocker-Harris follows rules. He waits for the headmaster to tell the results as per the rule which other teachers do not follow.

(v) By stating the rule, Frank is
Mr. Crocker-Harris.

- (a) trying to understand (b) defending
- (c) negating (d) clarifying

Ans. (b)

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

“Frank Well, he’s ten minutes late. Why don’t you cut? You could still play golf before lock-up.

Taplow (really shocked) Oh, no, I couldn’t cut. Cut the Crock — Mr Crocker-Harris? I shouldn’t think it’s ever been done in the whole time he’s been here. God knows what would happen if I did. He’d probably follow me home, or something ...

Frank I must admit I envy him the effect he seems to have on you boys in the form. You all seem scared to death of him. What does he do — beat you all, or something?

Taplow Good Lord, no. He’s not a sadist, like one or two of the others.”

(i) What makes Mr. Crocker-Harris different from other teachers?

- (a) He might be a sadist
- (b) He treasures his students
- (c) He values other teachers
- (d) He has a special influence on students

Ans. (d) Mr. Crocker-Harris is different from other teachers as he has a special effect on his students.

(ii) Frank asks Taplow to cut. He means that Taplow should

- (a) leave (b) wait
- (c) contact (d) forget

Ans. (a) Frank suggests that Taplow ‘cut’ i.e. leave, as Mr. Crocker is ten minutes late.

(iii) Why does Taplow correct himself immediately after calling his professor Crock?

- (a) Because Mr. Crocker-Harris arrived
- (b) Because he is with another teacher
- (c) Because he forgot his teacher’s actual name
- (d) Because he is sad

Ans. (b) As Frank is another teacher, it is important for Taplow to show his respect towards Mr. Crocker-Harris. Thus, he immediately corrects himself after calling his professor Crock.

(iv) Taplow says that Crocker-Harris is not a sadist. Select the option that explains this.

- (a) To negate Frank’s belief that Crocker-Harris beats them.
- (b) To state why they are afraid of Crocker-Harris.
- (c) To justify why students are afraid of Crocker Harris.
- (d) To claim that Crocker-Harris was not strict.

Ans. (a) Taplow says that Crocker-Harris is not a sadist to clarify that Crocker-Harris does not beat them as Frank misunderstands.

(v) How does Taplow come out in the given extract?

- (a) Rational
- (b) Matter of fact
- (c) Frank
- (d) All of the above

Ans. (d)

PART 2

Subjective Questions

• Short Answer Type Questions

1. “We get all the slackers!” What did Mr Frank mean?

Ans. Mr. Frank means that he thinks that most studies who opt for science are poor in studies and the subject frequently attracts ‘slackers’.

He further goes on to admit that he himself doesn’t like the science he teaches.

2. What did Taplow consider ‘muck’? Why?

Ans. Taplow considered the Greek tragedy ‘Agamemnon’ as ‘muck’. Even though he liked the plot of the play, Taplow disliked the way it was taught by Mr Crocker-Harris. Besides, a number of Greek words were to be learnt and if a student went wrong, he had to write each word fifty times as punishment.

3. Why was Taplow bitter?

Ans. Mr Frank found Taplow waiting for Mr Crocker- Harris and they got into a conversation. While talking, Taplow called the ‘Agamemnon’ rubbish. Mr Frank detected some bitterness in Taplow’s voice. Taplow said that he was certainly bitter. The weather was good and he could have been out playing golf but here he was, in the school, doing extra work on the last day of the term.

4. Why would Taplow not get any ‘comfort’ as mentioned by Mr Frank?

Ans. Mr Crocker-Harris gave no benefit to his students for being good boys in taking up extra work. He gave marks as per the performance and not for doing any extra work. In fact,

Taplow was afraid that his teacher would have rather marked him down for doing extra work.

Hence, he doesn't think he would get any 'comfort'.

5. What did Mr Frank call 'bad luck'?

Ans. The weather was fine and Taplow wanted to go and play golf. But Taplow had been given extra work to do by Mr. Crocker-Harris. He was waiting for his teacher and couldn't dare to defy him. Mr Frank considered Taplow's situation 'bad luck' as he could not go out to play on such a wonderful day.

6. Why did Taplow say that Mr Crocker-Harris was hardly human?

Ans. Taplow could not believe that Mr Crocker-Harris was a normal human being for a number of reasons. Mr Crocker-Harris was extremely strict while teaching. He followed the headmaster's rules of announcing results on the last day of term. He never told the students their results beforehand. He frightened the students in every possible way. He was a man who hated even those who liked him.

7. Did Taplow come to the school only because Mr Crocker-Harris had asked him to?

Ans. Taplow was present at the school on the last day of the term as he had missed a class of Mr Crocker-Harris the previous week and Mr Crocker-Harris had asked him to make amends for it. It is true that Taplow was there because he was scared to death of Mr Crocker-Harris, but he also had another motive. He was waiting for his result and feared that if he did not obey Mr Crocker-Harris then his result would suffer.

8. Why is Taplow worried about his 'remove'? What did Mr Crocker-Harris reply to him?

Ans. Taplow is in the lower fifth class. He can't specialise until he goes into the next class. He is worried about the 'remove' i.e. his result, because much depends on how he performed in the examination.

At the same time, he is very anxious to know his result. So, he had gone to Mr Crocker-Harris and asked him if he had passed him. However, the teacher gave a very mysterious answer and told him that he had given him exactly what he deserved, not less and certainly not more.

9. Why does Mr Frank ask Taplow to 'cut'? How does Taplow react?

Ans. When Mr Frank finds Taplow waiting, he asks him to 'cut' as Mr Crocker-Harris had not arrived even after ten minutes. However, Taplow cannot even imagine doing such a thing. According to him, there is probably not a single student who has insulted Mr Crocker-Harris in his career.

10. Mr Crocker-Harris is not a sadist. Still his students are scared of him. Comment.

Ans. Taplow says that Mr Crocker-Harris is not a sadist. If he had been a sadist then he wouldn't have been so frightening. It would mean that he had some feelings. But Mr Crocker-Harris was devoid of any feelings. He seemed to hate that people liked him and Taplow couldn't think of any teacher who didn't like being liked by his students.

11. What kind of a teacher and a human being is Mr Crocker-Harris, according to Taplow?

Ans. Mr Crocker-Harris appears to be a disciplinarian. Students are scared to death of him. He follows rules and believes in them. He tells Taplow that he will mark him according to what he deserves, neither less, nor more. Taplow thinks that Mr Crocker-Harris is not a sadist, but hates being liked. He is all shrivelled up and without any feelings.

He has a wonderful hold over his students. No student has ever refused any punishment given by Mr Crocker-Harris in his entire career. He appears frightening to his students.

12. What happened when Mr Crocker-Harris made one of his classical jokes?

Ans. One day, Mr Crocker-Harris made one of his classical jokes in class. Nobody understood it and hence nobody laughed. However, Taplow knew that Mr Crocker-Harris meant something funny and he laughed out of sheer courtesy. Mr Crocker-Harris said that he was impressed by the progress made by Taplow as he understood what others in his class couldn't and then asked Taplow to explain to the whole class what he had understood.

13. How does Taplow react to Millie Crocker-Harris' arrival?

Ans. Taplow is nervous on seeing Millie Crocker-Harris. He is unable to control his emotions and whispers to Mr Frank whether he thinks she has heard their conversation. Taplow feels that if she tells Mr Crocker-Harris about what they were talking about, he would surely be failed.

14. How does Millie Crocker-Harris send Taplow away?

Ans. On seeing Taplow, Millie Crocker-Harris points out that her husband was at the Bursar's and would take some time to get back. She suggests him to go away for a quarter of an hour. However, Taplow does not do so due to fear of the teacher. Millie Crocker-Harris assures him that she would take the blame. She given him prescription and requests him to bring some medicines from the chemist. Taplow accepts the proposal and leaves.

15. What do you gather about Mr Frank from the play?

Ans. Mr Frank is a young science teacher. He does not like the subject he teaches. He also admits that he tells results to the students before they are officially announced. He envies Mr Crocker-Harris for the effect he has on the students.

● Long Answer Type Questions

1. Taplow does an imitation of Mr Crocker-Harris.

Do you think respect for one's teacher is fast disappearing in the modern world? Give reasons in support of your answer.

Ans. It is true that respect for one's teacher is fast disappearing in the modern world. Improper parenting, lack of restriction in schools and no fear of teachers are some of the reasons why teachers are not being adequately respected. Too often parents these days blame the teachers for the slightest bit of strictness in schools. No wonder the children have no respect for the teacher when they know they can get away with indiscipline.

Moreover, these days teachers seem to lack the passion to teach. As a result, teachers do not have good knowledge of their subject and are thus not respected by their students.

Moreover, there are teachers who are biased and prejudiced in their approach. Students do not appreciate such teachers and thus lose respect for them. Further, it is rightly said that respect is never demanded but earned. It is the responsibility of the teacher to earn the students' respect. If a teacher comes across students who are disrespectful, he/she should think over it and try to understand where he/she has gone wrong and lost the respect.

- 2.** Do you feel it is proper for students to present their teacher the way Taplow does? What in your opinion should the relation between teacher and student be like?

Ans. It is improper for students to present their teacher the way Taplow does. He should not have criticised his teacher and his ways in front of another teacher. Moreover, Taplow's bitterness arises out of the fact that he is detained by his teacher for extra work when he wanted to play golf. Further, Mr Crocker-Harris is the only one who follows the rules strictly. Had other teachers been like him, Taplow might not have been so critical of his teacher.

The relation between a teacher and his students should be of mutual understanding, respect and cooperation. They should work as a team, as neither is complete without the other. Both should try and create an interactive space where problems can be talked about and brought to a conclusion.

Moreover, it is the duty of the teacher to gain the trust of the students and create a friendly atmosphere where students are not scared of sharing their problems.

- 3.** Comment on the attitude shown by Taplow towards Mr Crocker-Harris. (NCERT)

Ans. Mr Crocker-Harris is a middle-aged schoolmaster. He is a teacher in the traditional mould. He is a strict man who is more feared than respected. He follows rules and regulations with all sincerity.

Taplow is in the lower fifth standard. His attitude towards Mr Crocker-Harris is mixed. He recognises his sense of discipline, sense of devotion and stoic nature. But he has a personal feeling of ill-will against Mr Crocker-Harris. He is given extra work on the last day of the term as punishment because he missed a day the previous week when he was ill. Mr Crocker-Harris is a hard taskmaster. That's why he gave extra work to Taplow. He doesn't bother that it is the last day of the term.

Taplow feels that Mr Crocker-Harris is devoid of feelings, is strict and can never be flattered. In spite of everything, Taplow rather likes him. Mr Crocker-Harris doesn't tell the results like the other masters before they are formally announced. Hence, Mr Crocker-Harris is different from other teachers.

Taplow doesn't consider Mr Crocker-Harris a sadist. He doesn't get pleasure out of giving pain to others. In his view, a sadist shows some feelings but Mr Crocker-Harris has none.

- 4.** Does Mr Frank seem to encourage Taplow's comments on Mr Crocker-Harris? (NCERT)

Ans. Yes, Mr Frank seems to encourage Taplow's comments on Mr Crocker-Harris. Mr Frank is a young school teacher. He teaches in the same school in which Mr Crocker-Harris, his senior colleague, teaches. Actually, he is jealous of Mr Crocker-Harris. He frankly admits that Mr Crocker-Harris enjoys a wonderful hold over his students. They all seem scared to death of him. He is jealous of Mr Crocker-Harris's authority and 'effect' on his students.

He relishes all adverse comments against Mr Crocker-Harris. Not only that, he even encourages Taplow to criticise him. But he doesn't do it openly. He pretends not to like any adverse comments against Mr. Crocker-Harris like when Taplow calls him 'Crock'. However, when Taplow imitates Mr. Crocker-Harris in his throaty voice, Mr Frank relishes it. He even asks Taplow to repeat it. He enjoys Mr Crocker-Harris being ridiculed by his own student.

Mr. Frank also asks Taplow to go away without meeting his teacher. But Taplow can't even imagine doing such a thing. He also encourages Taplow to share Mr. Crocker-Harris's jokes with him. Mr. Frank pretends to have no jealousy against Mr. Crocker-Harris and warns Taplow that he has gone much too far in his criticism of Mr. Crocker-Harris.

- 5.** What do you gather about Mr Crocker-Harris from the play? (NCERT)

Ans. Mr Crocker-Harris is a middle-aged schoolmaster. He is quite reserved and a disciplinarian. He follows rules very strictly. He is a devoted teacher who can't tolerate any relaxation among his students. He is a hard taskmaster. He doesn't leak the results like other masters before they are formally announced. He is very conscious of his duty and he never spares a child who absents himself. He can give extra work to a student even on the last day of the term.

He is quite unpredictable. It is very difficult to read his mind. For instance, when Taplow asked him if he had given him a promotion, Mr Crocker-Harris replied mysteriously that he has given him exactly what he deserves, no less and certainly no more. His junior colleague feels jealous of the effect Mr Crocker-Harris has on the students.

Students seem to be scared to death of him. Taplow says that Mr Crocker-Harris has no feelings. It is quite correct, as he doesn't like flattery, nor does he like anyone who likes him. Sometimes he also cracks jokes but his classical jokes lack humour. In spite of everything, Taplow likes him.

● Extract Based Questions

- 1.** Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

“**Taplow** Well, I'm not so sure, sir. That would be true of the ordinary masters, all right. They just wouldn't dare not to give a chap a remove after his taking extra work. But those sort of rules don't apply to the Crock — Mr Crocker-Harris. I asked him yesterday outright if he'd given me a remove and do you know what he said, sir?

Frank No. What?

Taplow (imitating a very gentle, rather throaty voice) “My dear Taplow, I have given you exactly what you deserve. No less; and certainly no more.” Do you know sir, I think he may have marked me down, rather than up, for taking extra work. I mean, the man’s hardly human. (He breaks off quickly.) Sorry, sir. Have I gone too far?

Frank Yes. Much too far.

Taplow Sorry, sir. I got carried away.”

- (i) What is Taplow not sure of?
- (ii) Why does Taplow say that ‘those kind of rule don’t apply to the Crock’?
- (iii) Do you think Taplow is bitter about not knowing whether he got his remove?
- (iv) Why does Taplow call Crocker-Harris ‘Hardly Human’?
- (v) Why does Taplow feel that he got carried away?

- Ans.**
- (i) Taplow is not sure of whether he would get his remove from Crocker Harris.
 - (ii) Taplow says that those kind of rules does not apply to the Crock because if it would have been some other teacher he would have gotten his remove but Mr. Crocker-Harris would not do so.
 - (iii) No, Taplow is not bitter about not knowing whether he got his remove because this was expected of Crocker-Harris.
 - (iv) Taplow calls Crocker-Harris hardly human because he felt that Crocker-Harris did not have any emotions.
 - (v) Taplow feels that he got carried away because he was talking about another teacher disrespectfully in front of Frank who was a teacher himself.

2. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

“Anyway, the Crock isn’t a sadist. That’s what I’m saying. He wouldn’t be so frightening if he were — because at least it would show he had some feelings. But he hasn’t. He’s all shrivelled up inside like a nut and he seems to hate people to like him. It’s funny, that. I don’t know any other master who doesn’t like being liked —”

- (i) Who is the speaker of the given lines?
- (ii) Why does he say that Crock isn’t a sadist?
- (iii) Do you think Taplow dislikes Crocker-Harris?
- (iv) Taplow states that Crocker Harris is shriveled up like a nut. Explain.
- (v) Why does the extract end with ‘-----’ ?

- Ans.**
- (i) Taplow, a 16 year old boy, is the speaker of the given lines.
 - (ii) Taplow says that Crock isn’t a sadist to clarify to Frank that he does not beat children and boys are afraid of him for some other reason.

- (iii) No, I don’t think that Taplow dislikes Crocker-Harris because he, in his description of the teacher, does nowhere state so or show any resentment towards him.
- (iv) Taplow says that Crocker-Harris is all shriveled up like a nut to highlight that Crocker-Harris does not seem to have any emotions and even if he has any he hides it.
- (v) The extract ends with ‘-----’ to show that the speaker of the given lines was interrupted in between.

3. Read the extract given below and answer the questions that follow.

“**Millie** He’s at the Bursar’s and might be there quite a time. If I were you I’d go.

Taplow (doubtfully) He said most particularly I was to come.

Millie Well, why don’t you run away for a quarter of an hour and come back? (She unpacks some things from the basket.)

Taplow Supposing he gets here before me?

Millie (smiling) I’ll take the blame. (She takes a prescription out of the basket.) I tell you what — you can do a job for him. Take this prescription to the chemist and get it made up.

Taplow All right, Mrs Crocker-Harris. (He crosses towards the door up right.)”

- (i) Why does Millie tell Taplow that if she were him she would leave?
- (ii) Why is Taplow hesitant to leave without seeing Crocker-Harris?
- (iii) Do you think Millie Crocker-Harris wanted Taplow to leave her and Frank alone?
- (iv) How do you think is Mrs. Millie Crocker-Harris different from what Taplow thought about her?
- (v) What can you say about Taplow’s feeling’s for Crocker-Harris?

- Ans.**
- (i) Millie tells Taplow to leave because she knows that Crocker-Harris would take his time to reach school.
 - (ii) Taplow is hesitant to leave without seeing Crocker-Harris as he feels that if he does so, he would not get his remove.
 - (iii) Yes, I think that Millie Crocker-Harris wanted Taplow to leave her and Frank alone for some time.
 - (iv) When Taplow sees Mrs. Millie Crocker Harris he thinks that she would tell everything to Crocker Harris and then he would not get his remove. However, contrary to his opinion, Millie tells Taplow to leave and that she would take the blame on herself.
 - (v) From the given extract, we can gather that Taplow is respectful towards Mr Crocker-Harris and is afraid of him and dare not cut the extra work even on the last day of the term.