

The Proposal

TEXTUAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Thinking about the play

1. What does Chubukov at first suspect that Lomov has come for? Is he sincere when he later says? "And I've always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son"? Find reasons for your answers from the play.

Ans: Chubukov's first suspicion was that Lomov had come to borrow money from him. Chubukov was not at all sincere when he said he loved Lomov as his own son. Because, after some time, he started fighting with Lomov. He abused Lomov badly.

2. Chubukov says of Natalya: ".....as if she won't consent! She's in love; egad, she's like a lovesick cat....." Would you agree? Find reasons for your answers.

Ans: Yes, Natalya is in love. Her behavior proves it. As soon as she learns that Lomov came to propose to her she becomes excited and asks her father to bring Lomov back. For Lomov she becomes hysteric.

3. (i) Find all the words and expressions in the play that the characters use to speak about each other. (For example, Lomov in the end calls Chubukov an intriguer; but earlier, Chubukov has himself called Lomov a "malicious, double-faced intriguer." Again, Lomov begins by describing Natalya as "an excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking, well-educated.")

Ans: Lomov calls Chubukov a grabber, an intriguer, and an old rat. He also says that Chubukov was used to be beaten by his wife and his mother was hump-backed.

Chubukov calls him, the villain, the scarecrow, blind hen, turnip ghost, the stuffed sausage, the wizen-faced frump, malicious, double-faced intriguer, pup, milksop and fool. He calls Lomov's father as a guzzling gambler and the Lombos the lunatics.

Chubukov also called Lomov 'my angel', 'my precious ' etc.

Natalya calls Lomov, Rascal and the monster.

Lomov calls Natalya, 'an excellent house keeper, not bad looking, well-educated.'

(ii) Then think of five adjectives or adjectival expressions of your own to describe each character in the play.

Ans: Lomov – assertive, suspicious, weak-hearted, stupid, cultured in dress and words etc.

Natalya-unwise, emotional, immature, proudy, quarrelsome.

Chubukov- cultured in words, assertive, abusive, insensible, stupid.

(iii) Can you imagine what these characters will quarrel about next?

Ans: The characters will go on quarrelling on petty matters.

Before you read

Activity

1. The word 'proposal' has several meanings. Can you guess what sort of proposal the play is about?

i) A suggestion, plan or scheme for doing something.

ii) An offer for a possible plan or action.

iii) The act of asking someone's hand in marriage.

Ans: iii) The act of asking someone's hand in marriage.

2. Do you think Indian and Russian weddings have any customs in common? With the help of a partner, fill in the table below. *Wedding Ceremonies in Russia and India*

Customs similar to Indian ones	Customs different from Indian ones
1. Wedding procession	1. Poster making, speech writing etc.
2. Groom's coming to bride's house	2. Fighting
3. Honey moon	3. Climbing stairs
4. Reception party	4. City tour
5. Groom's paying	5. Kissing the bride
6. Asking questions to groom	6. Stealing the bride

Thinking about Language :

I.1. This play has been translated into English from the Russian original. Are there any expressions or ways of speaking that strike you as more Russian than English? For example, would an adult man be addressed by an older as my darling or my treasure in an English play? Read through the play carefully, and find expressions that you think are not used in contemporary English expressions that also occur in the play.

Ans: Yes, there are some expressions that are more Russian than English. They are: Stephan honouritch, spit it out, my angel, she's like a lovesick cat, then smoke, five dessiatins, 300 roubles, I implore you, my foot has gone to sleep malicious, double-faced intrigued, the scarecrow, turnip _ghost, wizen _ faced frump etc.

These expressions are not used in contemporary English.

The abuses are considered with.

Pumpkin pig, seine, fool, villain etc.

2. Look up the following words in a dictionary and find out how to pronounce them. Pay attention to how many syllables there are in each word, and find out which syllables is stressed, or said more forcefully.

(palpitations interfere implore thoroughbred pedigree principle
 evidence misfortune malicious embezzlement architect neighbour
 hours accustomed temporary behaviour documents)

Ans:

palpitations-	/pælpɪ'teɪʃnz/	[(t) is stressed]
interfere-	/ɪntə'fɪər/	[(f) is stressed]
implore-	/ɪm'plə:(r)/	[(p) is stressed]
thoroughbred-	/'θʌrəbred/	[(θ) is stressed]
pedigree-	/'pedɪgrɪ:/	[(p) is stressed]
principle-	/'prɪnsəpl/	[(p) is stressed]
evidence-	/'evɪdəns/	[(e) is stressed]
misfortune-	/mɪs'fɔ:tʃu:n/	[(f) is stressed]
malicious-	/mə'lɪʃəs/	[(l) is stressed]
embezzlement-	/ɪm'bezlment/	[(b) is stressed]
architect-	/'ɑ:kɪtekt/	[(a:) is stressed]
neighbours-	/'neɪbə(r)/	[(n) is stressed]
accustomed-	/ə'kʌstəmd/	[(k) is stressed]
temporary-	/'tempərətɪ/	[(t) is stressed]
behaviour-	/bɪ'heɪvɪə(r)/	[(h) is stressed]
documents-	/'dɒkjumənts/	[(d) is stressed]

3. Look up the following phrases in a dictionary to find out their meanings, and then use each in a sentence of four own.

- i) You may take it that.
- ii) He seems to be coming round.
- iii) My foot's gone to sleep.

Ans: i) You may understand that

Take it that it's your duty.

ii) He seems to be recovering.

The patient has come round.

iii) I have fallen I'll.

I can't do anything because my foot's gone to sleep.

II. Reported Speech:

A sentence in reported speech consists of two parts : a **reporting clause**, Which contains the **reporting verb**, and the **reporting clause**. Look at the following sentences.

a) "I went to visit my grandma last week", said Mamta.

b) Mamta said that she had gone to visit her grandma the previous week. In sentences

(a) We have Mamata's exact words. This is an example of **direct speech**. In sentences.

(b) Someone is reporting what Mamata said. This is called **indirect speech** or **reported speech**. A sentence in reported speech is made up of two parts – a reporting clauses and a reported clauses.

Notice that in sentences (b) we put the reporting clause first. This is done to show that we are not speaking directly, but reporting someone else's words. The tense of the verb also changes; past tense (went) becomes past perfect (had gone).

Here are some pairs of sentences in direct and reported speech. Read them carefully, and do the task that follows:

1.(i) Lomov : Honoured Stepan Stepanovitch, do you think I may count on her consent? (Direct Speech)

(ii) Lomov asked stepan stepanovitch respectfully if he thought he might count on her consent. (Reported Speech)

2.(i) Lomov : I'm getting a noise in my ears from excitement. (Direct Speech)

(ii) Lomov said that he was getting a noise in his ears from excitement. (Reported Speech)

3. (i) Natalya : Why haven't you been here for such a long time? (Direct Speech)

(ii) Natalya stepanovna asked why he hadn't been there for such a long time. (Reported Speech)

4. (i) Chubukov : What's the matter? (Direct Speech)

(ii) Chubukov asked him what the matter was. (Reported Speech)

5. (i) Natalya : My mowers will be there this very day! (Direct Speech)

(ii) Natalya stepanovna declared that her mowers would be there that very day. (Reported Speech)

You must have noticed that when we report someone's exact words, we have to make some changes in the sentence structure. In the following sentences fill in the blanks to list the changes that have occurred in the above pairs of sentences.

One has been done for you.

1. To report a question we use the reporting verb asked (as in Sentence Set 1.)

2. To report a statement, we use the reporting verb

3. The adverb of place here changes to.....

4. When the verb in direct speech is in the present tense, the verb in reported speech is in the..... tense. (as in Sentence Set 3).

5. If the verb in direct speech is in the present continuous tense, the verb in reported speech changes to..... tense. For example,.....changes to was getting.

6. When the sentence in direct speech contains a word denoting respect, we add the adverb..... in the reported speech. (as in sentences set 1.)

7. The pronouns I, me, our and mine, which are used in the first person in direct speech, change according to the subject or object of the reporting verb such as.....,.....,..... or..... in reported speech.

Ans: 2. declared or said.

3. there.

4. past.

5. past continuous, is getting.

6. respectfully.

7. he/she, him/her, their or his.

III. Here is an expert from an article from the **Times of India** dated 27 August 2006. Rewrite it, changing the sentences in direct speech into reported speech. Leave the other sentences unchanged.

“Why do you want to know my age? If people know I am, so old, I won’t get work!” laughs 90-year-old A. K. Hangal, one of Hindi Cinema’s most famous character actors. For his age, He is rather energetic. “What’s the secret?” We ask, “My intake of everything is in small quantities. And I walk a lot,” he replies.

“I joined the industry when people retire. I was in my 40s. So I don’t miss being called a star. I am still respected and given work, when actors of my age are living in poverty and without work. I don’t have any complaints.” he says, adding, “but yes, I have always been underpaid.” Recipient of Padma Bhushan, Hangal never hankered after money or materialistic gains. “No doubt I am content today, but money is important. I was a fool not to understand the value of money earlier.” he regrets.

Ans: 90-year-old A. K. hangal, one of Hindi cinema's most famous character actors laughs and asks why they want to know his age and adds if people know he is so old, he won't get work. For his age, he is rather energetic. They ask what the secret is and he replies that his intake of every thing is in small quantities, and he walks a lot. He joined the industry when people retire. He was in his 40s. So he doesn't miss being called a star. he is still respected and given work, when actors of his age are living in poverty and without work. He doesn't have any complaints. He says, adding in the affirmative that he has always been underpaid. Recipient of the Padma Bhushan Hangal never hankered after money or materialistic gains. He regrets that no doubt he is content today, but money is important. He was a fool not to understand the value of money earlier.

Speaking and Writing

1. Anger Management : As adults, one important thing to learn how to manage our temper. Some of us tend to go angry quickly, while others remain clam.

Can you think of three ill effects that result from anger? Note them down, suggest ways to avoid losing your temper on such situations. Are there any benefits from anger?

Ans: i) Anger brings jealousy.

ii) When a man becomes angry his conscience does not work.

iii) Anger increases blood pressure. To avoid losing temper a person should leave the place immediately. He may even stop talking. Silence is a good controller of anger.

Yes, there are some benefits from anger. Order can be maintained with the help of anger. Evil force can be driven out.

2. In pairs, prepare a script based on the given excerpt from The Home and The World by Rabindranath Tagore. You may write five exchanges between the characters with other direction such as movements on stage and way of speaking etc.

One afternoon, when I happened to be specially busy, word came to my office room the Bimala had sent for me. I was started.

“Who did you say had sent for me?” I asked the messenger.

“The Rani Mother. “

“The Bara Rani? “

“No, sir, the Chota Rani Mother. “

The Chota Rani!

It seemed a century since I had been sent for by her. I kept them all waiting there, and went off into the inner apartments. When I stepped into our room I had another shock of surprises to find Bimala there with a distinct suggestion of being dressed up. The room, which from persistent neglect, had latterly acquired an air of having grown absent minded, had regained something of its old order this afternoon. I stood there silently, looking enquiringly at Bimala.

She flushed a little and the fingers of her right hand toyed for a time with bangles on her left arm. Then she abruptly broke the silence, “Look here! Is it right that ours should be the only market in all Bengal which allows foregone goods? “

“What, then, would be the right thing to do?” I asked.

“Order them to be cleared out! “

“But the goods are not mine. “

“Is not the market yours? “

“It is much more theirs who use it for trade. “

“Let them trade in Indian goods, then. “

“Nothing would please me better. But suppose they do not? “

“Nonsense! How dare they be so insolent? Are you not..... “

” I am very busy this afternoon and cannot stop to argue it out. But I must refuse tyrannise. “

“It would not be tyranny for selfish gain, but for the sake of the country. “

“To tyrannise for the country is to tyrannise over

the country. But that I am afraid you will never understand.” With this I came away.

Ans: I (startled) : Who did you say had sent for me?

The messenger : The Rani Mother.

I (confused) : The Bara Rani?

The messenger (respectfully) : No, sir, the Chota Rani Mother.

The Chota Rani (enquiringly) : Look here! Is it right that ours should be the only market in all Bengal which allows foregone goods?

I (with confidence) : What, then, would be the right thing to do?

The Chota Rani (commandingly) : Order them to be cleared out, etc.

3. In groups, discuss the qualities one should look for in a marriage partner. You might consider the following points.

1. Personal qualities

- Appearance or looks.
- Attitudes and beliefs.
- Sense of humour.

2. Value system

- Compassion and kindness.
- Tolerance, ambition.

– Attitude to money and wealth.

3. Education and professional background

Ans: Do yourself.

4. Are there parts of the play that remind you of film scenes from romantic comedies? Discuss this in groups, and recount to the rest of the class episodes similar to those in the play.

Ans: Do yourself.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. How does Lomov come to Chubukov 's house? Why does he come?

Ans: Lomov come to Chubukov's house wearing a dress jacket and white gloves. He comes to ask the hand of Chubukov's daughter Natalya Stepanovna in marriage.

2. What did Chubukov think of Lomov's coming for?

Ans: Chubukov thought that Lomov had come to borrow money from him. He decided not to give Lomov any money.

3. How did Chubukov react when he came to know the reason behind Love's coming?

Ans: When Chubukov came to know the reason behind Love's coming he became very glad. He embraced and kissed Lomov. He also she'd tear in joy. He prayed for God's blessings for the couple and went out to call Natalya.

4. What happened to Lomov when Chubukov gladly agreed to Lomov's proposal?

Ans: As soon as Chubukov accepted Lomov's proposal gladly, Lomov asked Cgubukov if she would consent. Chubukov replied in the affirmative and Lomov began to tremble as if he was going to appear in an examination. He was excited and began to think a lot.

5. How does Lomov behave in excitement?

Ans: Whenever Lomov is excited his heart beat increases, his lips tremble and there is a twitch in his right eyebrow. The worst things happens when he goes to sleep. Something pulls his left side and he jumps up like a lunatic.

6. What did Lomov do when Natalya entered?

Ans: Lomov respectfully greeted Natalya as she entered. He said that he would be brief. But he began to ramble. He wouldn't propose to her. He said that the Lomas and the Chubukos had been friendly for long. His land was near theirs. His oxen meadows touched their birchwoods.

7. What was the cause of dispute Lomov and Natalya?

Ans: Oxen meadows was the cause of dispute between Lomov and Natalya. Each of them claims Oxen meadows to be their property.

8. What does Natalya say to prove that the Oxen meadows are theirs?

Ans: Natalya says that the Oxen Meadows have been theirs for long three hundred years. These meadows are not much worth to her, only about 300 roubles. But she won't bear unfairness. Those are theirs.

9. How was Lomov excited?

Ans: Natalya did not agree to what Lomov said regarding the Oxen Meadows. She said that she believed the Lomvos to be good neighbours and lent Lomov their threshing machine and had to postpone their own threshing the previous year. But he behaved as if they were gypsies as he proposed to offer the Oxen Meadows to Chubukov. Lomov was excited as he was termed as a land grabber.

10. Why did Natalya ask her father to fetch Lomov at once?

Ans: Chubukov said Lomov had come to propose to Natalya for marriage. As soon as Natalya knew it she became excited and she eager to agree to the proposal. She asked her father to fetch Lomov at once. She also accused her father of driving him out.

11. What was the cause of dispute between Natalya and Lomov the second time?

Ans: The cause of dispute between Natalya and Lomov the second time is dogs. Lomov says Guess is better than Squeezer. But Natalya can never agree to it.

12. How does Natalya prove that her dog Squeezer is better than Lomov's dog Guess?

Ans: To prove that Squeezer is better than Guess Natalya says that Squeezer is a thoroughbred animal and it is the son of Harness and Chisels. There is no pedigree of Guess and he is old. He is also as ugly as a worn-out cab-horse.

13. How is 'the proposal' a great comedy?

Ans: 'The Proposal' is a great comedy. It is because of the subject matter and the characters and also how the characters behave. All the characters fight over foolish things and create laughter. It is humorous.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. Why did Lomov go to Chubukov's house? How did he behave? What was Chubukov's reaction?

Ans: Lomov went to Chubukov's house wearing a dress-jacket and gloves to ask the hand of Natalya stepanovna in marriage. Chubukov received him warmly. He was extremely glad to know that Lomov had come with the proposal. He embraced Lomov and kissed. In joy he shed tears also. He assured that his daughter Natalya would consent to the proposal. Then he went out happily to call Natalya.

2. How did Lomov, Natalya and Chubukov argue to prove their own dog better?

Ans: According to Lomov, his dog Guess was the best one. He bought it for 125 roubles. Natalya said that their Squeezer was far better than Guess. It heaped better. Squeezer was young and thoroughbred, the son of Harness and Chisels but Guess had no pedigree. Lomov argued saying that Guess was a dog and as for Squeezer, one could find squeezer like dog under every bush. It was overshot and a bad hunter.