

The Bishop's Candlesticks

Unit-14 : Solutions of Questions on Page Number : 128

Q1 : Copy and complete the following paragraph about the theme of the play in pairs:

The play deals with a _____ and _____ Bishop who is always ready to lend a _____ hand to anyone in distress. A _____ breaks into the Bishop's house and is _____ and warmed. The benevolence of the Bishop somewhat _____ the convict, but, when he sees the silver candlesticks, he _____ them, and runs away. However, he is _____ and brought back. He expects to go back to jail, but the Bishop informs the police they are a _____. The convict is _____ by this kindness of the Bishop and before he leaves he seeks the priest's blessing.

Answer :

The play deals with a kind and charitable Bishop who is always ready to lend a helping hand to anyone in distress. A convict breaks into the Bishop's house and is fed and warmed. The benevolence of the Bishop somewhat confounds the convict, but, when he sees the silver candlesticks, he steals them, and runs away. However, he is arrested and brought back. He expects to go back to jail, but the Bishop informs the police they are a gift. The convict is moved by this kindness of the Bishop and before he leaves he seeks the priest's blessing.

Q2 : Working in pairs give antonyms of the following words.

| | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| kind- hearted | unscrupulous | forgiving | stern | benevolent | credulous |
| generous | pious | suspicious | sympathetic | understanding | wild |
| innocent | penitent | clever | brutal | cunning | caring |
| sentimental | trusting | protective | concerned | honourable | embittered |

Answer :

- (1) Kind Hearted - nasty, unkind
- (2) Unscrupulous - ethical, moral, good
- (3) Forgiving - censure, charge, punish
- (4) Stern - cheerful, funny, lenient
- (5) Benevolent - greedy, malevolent, mean, selfish
- (6) Credulous - skeptical, suspecting, suspicious
- (7) Generous - greedy, mean, miserly
- (8) Pious - atheist, impious, irreligious
- (9) Suspicious - innocent, trustworthy, trusty
- (10) Sympathetic - callous, merciless, uncaring, unconcerned
- (11) Understanding - misunderstanding, intolerant
- (12) Wild - civilized, controlled, delicate, gentle
- (13) Innocent - bad, blamable, corrupt
- (14) Penitent - happy, unashamed
- (15) Clever - awkward, foolish, idiotic, ignorant,
- (16) Brutal - generous, humane, kind, nice
- (17) Cunning - gullible, kind, naive
- (18) Caring - disregarding, ignoring, neglecting
- (19) Sentimental - hard-hearted, indifferent, pragmatic, unemotional
- (20) Trusting - disagree, dispute, reject, renounce
- (21) Protective - attacking, harmful, hurtful, injurious
- (22) Concerned - happy, undisturbed, unperturbed
- (23) Honourable - not respectful, unhonourable
- (24) Embittered - pleasant, content, genial

Q3 : Working in pairs give antonyms of the following words.

| | | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| kind- hearted | unscrupulous | forgiving | stern | benevolent | credulous |
| generous | pious | suspicious | sympathetic | understanding | wild |
| innocent | penitent | clever | brutal | cunning | caring |
| sentimental | trusting | protective | concerned | honourable | embittered |

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- (24) Embittered - pleasant, content, genial

Q4 : Do you think the Bishop was right in selling the salt-cellars? Why/why not?

Answer :

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

No, the Bishop was not right in selling the salt-cellars. His own economic condition was not good and he should have asked for Persome's opinion before he sold the cellars, which belonged to her too.

From another point of view the Bishop was right in selling the salt-cellars as he wanted to give the money he got from selling the cellars to Mere Gringoire who could not give rent to the landlord on time and was about to face eviction. The Bishop was very broadminded as he could empathise with the condition of Mere Gringoire and chose to do away with the salt cellars. The Bishop felt that one could eat salt out of china as well.

Q5 : Why does Persome feel the people pretend to be sick?

Answer :

Persome feels that people pretend to be sick so that the Bishop calls on them. She feels that people take advantage of the simplicity and kindheartedness of the Bishop who extends his helping hand to anybody who is in distress.

Q6 : Who was Jeanette? What was the cause of her death?

Answer :

Jeanette was the convict's wife. She died of disease and hunger.

Q7 : The convict says, "I am too old a bird to be caught with chaff." What does he mean by this statement?

Answer :

By this statement he means to say that he is well experienced so that he cannot be befooled. When on asking for food by the convict the Bishop tries to call his sister for keys of the cupboard, the convict thinks that the Bishop is making a plan to nab him.

Q8 : Why was the convict sent to prison? What was the punishment given to him?

Answer :

The convict was sent to prison for stealing. He had stolen so that he could buy his wife some food. He was sentenced to ten years in a prison hulk.

Q9 : Do you think the punishment given to the convict was justified? Why/ why not? Why is the convict eager to reach Paris?

Answer :

The punishment given to the convict was not justified. It is too inhuman for someone who was caught stealing just to feed his sick wife.

The convict was eager to reach Paris to escape from the police. He thought that as Paris was a very big and densely populated city the Police would not be able to identify and arrest him in future.

Q10 : Before leaving, the convict asks the Bishop to bless him. What brought about this change in him?

Answer :

Before leaving, the convict asks the Bishop to bless him. The Bishop's kindness brought about this change in him. Understanding the circumstances in which the convict stole the candlesticks, the Bishop told the Police that the convict was his friend and the candlesticks were gifted to him. He even asked the convict to take away the candle sticks so that he could go to Paris and begin a settled life.

Q11 : Monseigneur the Bishop is a -----ahem!

Why does Persome not complete the sentence?

- (i) She used to stammer while speaking.
- (ii) She was about to praise the Bishop.
- (iii) She did not wish to criticise the Bishop in front of Marie.
- (iv) She had a habit of passing such remarks.

Answer :

- (iii) She did not wish to criticise the Bishop in front of Marie.
-

Q12 : Monseigneur the Bishop is a -----
ahem!

Why is she angry with the Bishop?

- (i) The Bishop has sold her salt-cellar.
- (ii) The Bishop has gone to visit Mere Gringoire.
- (iii) He showed extra concern for Marie.
- (iv) She disliked the Bishop.

Answer :

- (i) The Bishop has sold her salt-cellar.
-

Q13 : 'She sent little Jean to Monseigneur to ask for help,
and - '

Who sent little Jean to the Bishop?

- (i) Mere Gringoire
- (ii) Marie
- (iii) Persome
- (iv) Marie's mother

Answer :

- (i) Mere Gringoire
-

Q14 : Why did she send Jean to the Bishop?

- (i) so that he could pray for her
- (ii) as she knew that he was a generous person
- (iii) as she was a greedy woman
- (iv) as she was a poor woman

Answer :

- (ii) as she knew that he was a generous person

Q15 : 'I offered to take her in here for a day or two, but she seemed to think it might distress you.'

The Bishop wanted to take Mere Grngoire in because _____.

- (i) she was sick
- (ii) she had no money
- (iii) she was unable to pay the rent of her house
- (iv) she was a close friend of Persome

Answer :

(iii) she was unable to pay the rent of her house

Q16 : 'I offered to take her in here for a day or two, but she seemed to think it might distress you.'

Persome would be distressed on Mere Gringoire's being taken in because _____.

- (i) she did not want to help anyone
- (ii) she felt that Mere Gringoire was taking undue advantage of the Bishop
- (iii) she was a self-centred person
- (iv) she would be put to a great deal of inconvenience

Answer :

(ii) she felt that Mere Gringoire was taking undue advantage of the Bishop

Q17 : Identify the situations which be termed as the turning points in the convict's life?

Answer :

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

The term turning point means any situation which brings a decisive change in the course of events in somebody's life. The convict in the play The Bishop's Candlesticks confronts several situations that may be termed as turning point. The situations are:

The convict was a normal human being living with his wife. Once his wife got seriously ill. The convict due to unemployment could not even buy food. This led him to steal and buy food for his dying wife. This was a turning point as the police nabbed him. From an ordinary human being he became a convict.

Another turning point in the convict's life was when he managed to escape from the prison and broke into the house of the Bishop. In Bishop's house he could experience the practice of noble Christian ideals like benevolence and mercy in the conduct of the Bishop. While at the Bishop's house, he saw the silver candle sticks which he stole.

Another turning point in the convict's life was when the police caught him with the candle sticks. They arrested him and brought him back to the house of Bishop. But the Bishop asked the policemen to release the convict saying that he was his guest and the silver candle sticks had been gifted to the convict by him. The Bishop told the convict to take the candle sticks and move to Paris where he could start a new life. This event really changed his life.

Q18 : Conduct a debate in the class (in groups) on the following topic. Instruction for conducting a debate (and the use of appropriate language) are given in the unit

"Children" of the Main Course Book.

'Criminals are wicked and deserve punishment'

Answer :

Pointers have been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

Arguments in favour of the motion:

- a) Criminals deserve punishment as they are wicked. If they are not punished they will continue committing crime which will destabilise the society. Appropriate punishment will act as deterrent for the criminals to take to the path of crime.
- b) If criminals are not punished for their crimes it will be an injustice to the victims.
- c) Criminals deserve punishment as they cannot be reformed without being punished.
- d) Since the doer of good work is rewarded with appreciation then it follows that evil doer like criminals is awarded with punishment.
- e) If criminals are not punished people will not differentiate between criminal and non-criminal activities.

Arguments Against the motion:

- a) To assume that criminals are wicked and accordingly deserve punishment is wrong. Criminals are the products of the society they live in. They take to crime under unavoidable circumstances like extreme poverty. So, it is an injustice to punish criminals. The conditions for committing crimes are induced by the society that instigate people to commit crimes.
- b) There are several instances to show that criminals can be reformed. They are as normal as other human beings and are sensitive to sympathy and benevolence.
- c) We are no longer in a primitive society. So, giving punishment to the criminals is not in tune with the norms of a civilised society.
- d) Criminals do not deserve punishment as criminals are able to realise their wrong themselves in course of time.

Q19 : The Convict goes to Paris, sells the silver candlesticks and starts a business. The business prospers and he starts a reformatory for ex-convicts. He writes a letter to the Bishop telling him of this reformatory and seeks his blessings.

As the convict, Jean Valjean, write the letter to the Bishop.

Answer :

A model answer has been provided for students' reference.

It is strongly recommended that students prepare the answer on their own.

Respected Sir,

Hope you are well by the grace of God. How is your sister? I express my utmost gratitude to you for forgiving me for my act of stealing the silver candlesticks. It is because of your benevolence that I could reach Paris and start a new life. You are the pathfinder who have shown me a new way of life.

You will be elated to know that after reaching Paris I sold the silver candlesticks to a jewellery shop. I got enough money out of that and invested the money in starting a business. From a small scale venture the business has grown into a large scale business yielding huge profit. I owe my success to you.

Inspired by your ideals I have started a reformatory for ex convicts who have committed crime driven by circumstances. I seek your blessings for the success of the mission. The vision of the reformatory is to reform the ex convicts and give them a new lease of life so that they can lead life according to the teachings of the Bible. To realise this vision ex convicts are given lessons of the Bible and vocational training so that they can lead their life ethically.

I hope you will be pleased to know this and bless me for success in my reformatory work.

Convey my regards to your sister.

Yours truly

The Convict