

## **Class-VIII**

### **Subject- English**

#### **Chapter- The last bargain and Bepin Babu's lapse of Memory**

##### **Stanza 1**

"Come and hire me," I cried, while in the  
morning I was walking on the stone-paved road.  
Sword in hand the king came in his chariot.  
He held my hand and said,  
"I will hire you with my power,"  
But his power counted for naught,  
and he went away in his chariot.

**Explanation** The poem opens with a man crying in the morning to be hired by someone, "Come and hire me." While he was walking on a stone-paved road looking for someone to hire his services, he came across the king who was coming in his chariot.

The king immediately took the man's hand in his hand and offered to buy his services with his power. The man, however, didn't find much worth in the offer. He didn't want to get suppressed under a mighty man's power, and therefore moved on.

##### **Stanza 2**

In the heat of the mid-day the houses stood with shut doors.  
I wandered along the crooked lane.  
An old man came out with his bag of gold. He pondered and said, "I will hire you with my money." He weighed his coins one by one,  
but I turned away.

**Explanation:** The man kept walking, it was almost mid-day and it was quite a hot day. He only came across houses with doors that were shut. Wandering along the crooked lane, he soon came across an old man who was holding a bag full of gold. The old man offered to pay the man with his gold in return for his services. The offer of wealth didn't lure the man, so he turned away.

##### **Stanza 3**

It was evening. The garden hedge was all a flower.  
The fair maid came out and said,  
"I will hire you with a smile."  
Her smile paled and melted into tears, and she went  
back alone into the dark.

**Explanation:** Now, the evening has set in. Yet, the man was unable to find a person whose offer would attract him. He came across a garden full of beautiful flowers. He came across a beautiful maid standing there. The lady offered to hire the man with her smile. The man realised that her beauty or smile was also not forever. Her smile faded away and tears replaced it. The man moved on leaving the lady all by herself.

#### **Stanza 4**

The sun glistened on the sand, and the sea  
waves broke waywardly.

A child sat playing with shells.

He raised his head and seemed to know me and said, "I hire you with nothing." From henceforward that bargain struck in child's play made me a free man.

**Explanation:** Finally, the man reached the seashore. The sun was almost setting down; it shone brightly on the sand. He saw a child playing with shells. The child looked up at the man. It seemed as if the child understood the man. The child offered to hire the services of the man, but didn't offer to pay anything in return. That was the bargain that perhaps the man was looking for. There were no demands, no conditions, no payments or repayments. In playing with the child he continued to hold on to his freedom. He was still a free man.

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Question 1:

Who is the speaker in the poem?

ANSWER:

The speaker in the poem is a man who is looking for work.

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Question 2:

"The king, sword in hand" suggests

(i) wealth

(ii) power

(iii) more power than wealth

Mark the appropriate item in the context of stanza 1.

ANSWER:

"The king, sword in hand" suggests power.

Question 3:

The old man offered the speaker a lot of money.

Why did he turn down the offer?

ANSWER:

The old man offered the speaker a lot of money. However, he turned it down because he realised that money cannot give him what he actually desires. He had not till then realised that what he actually desired was happiness. When the old man was counting the gold coins, the speaker realised that once the money was finished or the work the old man wanted to hire him for was done, he would again be out of work. More than that, he would be bound in this bargain. It did not satisfy him and therefore, he turned it down.

Question 4:

Find in the poem, lines that match the following. Read both one after another.

(i) I have nothing to give you

Except goodwill and cheer.

(ii) Her happiness was no more

Than sorrow in disguise.

(iii) The king's might was not worth much.

ANSWER:

(i) 'I hire you with nothing.'

(ii) 'Her smile paled and melted into tears'.

(iii) 'But his power counted for naught'.

Question 5:

How did the speaker feel after talking to the child on the beach?

ANSWER:

The speaker felt free after talking to the child on the beach. The child was playing with shells and he 'hired' the speaker for nothing. This showed that he did not want any work from the speaker. In turn, he offered to give him nothing but happiness and cheer. This bargain brought him what he could not find with the king, old man, or the fair maid. This was because power, money, and beauty all go away, but happiness is something that stays and does not cost anything either. Happiness is the true asset of any human being. Power, money, and beauty cannot buy everlasting happiness. That is why the speaker was not bound with the child by any terms or conditions. Hence, he felt free after striking that bargain with the child

Extra important questions:-

A. Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

"The sun glistened on the sand, and the sea  
waves broke waywardly  
A child sat playing with shells

He raised his head and seemed to  
know me and said, 'I hire you with nothing.  
From henceforward that bargain  
struck in child's play  
Made me a free man."

1. Who is the speaker of these lines?

- (a) The king
- (b) The poet
- (c) The child
- (d) The man

Ans. (d) The man

2. Where did the speaker meet the child?

- (a) At the seashore
- (b) At the stone-paved road
- (c) In the garden
- (d) Near the crooked lane

Ans. (a) At the seashore

3. What was the child doing when the speaker met him?

- (a) Playing with a sword
- (b) Playing with the sea shells
- (c) Plucking flowers
- (d) Counting coins

Ans. (b) Playing with the sea shells

4. Did the child know the speaker?

Ans. The speaker felt that the child seemed to understand him.

5. What did the child tell the speaker?

Ans. The child told the speaker, "I hire you with nothing."

6. What was the reaction of the speaker?

Ans. The speaker felt relieved and happy on striking this deal.

B. Directions (Q. Nos. 1-6) Read the extract given below. and answer the following questions.

"In the heat of the mid-day  
the houses stood with shut doors.  
I wandered along the crooked lane.  
An old man came out with his bag of gold  
He pondered and said,  
'I will hire you with my money'  
He weighed his coins one by one,  
but I turned away.

1. Who is the speaker of these lines?

- (a) The king
- (b) The poet
- (c) The child
- (d) The man

Ans. (d) The man

2. Where did the speaker meet the child?

Ans. At the seashore

3. What was the old man carrying?

- (a) A bag of money
- (b) A flower
- (c) A sword
- (d) Sea shells

Ans. (a) A bag of money

4. What was the weather on that day?

Ans. The day was quite warm.

5. What was the offer that the old man made?

Ans. The old man said, "I will hire you with my money."

6. Does the speaker accept the offer?

Ans. No, the speaker does not accept the offer. He was not lured by money.

### **Short questions:-**

1. Who all had the man encountered till the evening?

Ans. The man encountered the king in the morning. Towards mid-day, he met the old man. In the evening, he came across the fair maid.

2. Did the man compromise? Ans. No, the man did not compromise. He didn't accept the offers made by the king, the old man and the fair maid because none convinced him.

3. What was the child doing when the speaker met him? Jasoos for apply Ans. The child was playing with shells when the speaker met him on the seashore.

4. Why did the man turn down the offers made by the king, the old man and the fair lady?

Ans. The man turned down the offers made by the king, the old man and the fair lady because neither wealth nor power nor beauty attracted him. The man was looking for a job, but not at the cost of his freedom. He desired goodwill and happiness.

5. What do the sword, the gold and the smile of the fair lady signify?

Ans. The sword signified power. The gold signified wealth. The smile of the fair lady signified beauty. None of these were capable enough to give the man everlasting happiness. Nor did any of these assure the man of his freedom.

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### **Extra important questions from unit 4 story.**

1. Why does Dr Chanda call Bepin Babu's case a peculiar case?

Ans. Dr Chanda had heard of people losing their partial memory. But he had never known someone forgetting only a particular incident of his life and remembering everything else without any difficulty. That's why he called Bepin Babu's case a 'peculiar case' .

2. What role does Dinesh Mukherji play in the story?

Ans. Dinesh Mukherj's confirmation of Bepin Choudhury's Ranchi visit is a turning point in the story. Only after receiving this piece of information, he gets convinced that something was the matter with him and he begins to consider Parimal Ghose's claims seriously.

3. What were Bepin Choudhury's biggest fears concerning his present condition?

Ans. Bepin Choudhury begins to believe that he was losing his sanity and was going mad. His biggest fear was that he might end up in a lunatic asylum. His brother had died of insanity and he hated going to a mental hospital, but he feared that his fate might be the same. He also feared losing his job and reputation

4. With what intention does Chunilal reveal the truth in the end?

Ans. Chunilal reveals the truth in the end and showcases himself as the mastermind of the entire game to teach Benin Choudhury a lesson He lets Bepin Babu know that he had played this prank on him to seek revenge and reduce Bepin Choudhury to as pitiable a situation as he himself was in

5. Discuss the theme of revenge as it emerges from this story.

Ans. The treatment of the revenge theme in this story is fairly unusual. The revenge in this case is neither murdering the opponent nor robbing his valuables or in any way physically abusing him, but trapping him in a way that his escape becomes difficult. The revenge is executed in a very subtle way. Chunilal manages to take his revenge along with teaching a lesson to Bepin Choudhury for not having tried enough to help his age-old friend.