

POETRY

1

THE FROG AND THE NIGHTINGALE

By Vikram Seth

SUMMARY

In a bog, which was called Bingle Bog, there lived a frog, who was crazy about his singing and incessantly sang from the evening to the morning light. All the creatures living in the bog found his songs to be most unpleasant and they tried to beat and insult him, but the frog was very insensitive and boastful. The frog kept singing with extreme passion because this was his way of expressing his heart-felt elation.

One day the creatures of the bog were pleasantly surprised to hear a very melodious and soothing song sung by a nightingale. The frog was shocked and felt jealous. He wanted to be the undisputed singer of the bog. The nightingale's song created a sensation and all the creatures praised it tremendously.

The frog was very cunning and he introduced himself as the owner of the tree, on which the nightingale sang. He also boasted that he was a music critic, who wrote for 'Bog Trumpet'. The nightingale was impressed that a musician like Mozart was taking interest in her. When the frog offered to train her for a modest fee, the nightingale felt that her dream had come true. The exploitation of the nightingale began. The frog would organise musical concerts and mint money. He would make the nightingale practise even in adverse weather. He instructed her to sing passionately and with full force, since that was what the public wanted. Initially a number of creatures flocked to listen to her, but later the crowd dwindled because the nightingale's songs became routine, lustreless and her voice was tired. The frog would scold and humiliate her for no reason. One day, out of sheer stress and fatigue, the nightingale's vein burst and she died.

The frog called the nightingale 'stupid', 'nervous' and 'without originality'. His ego was satisfied and he again became the 'unrivalled singer' of the bog.

सारांश

बिंगल नामक एक दलदल में एक मेढक रहता था जिसे गाने का उन्माद था वह सायंकाल से उषाकाल तक गाता ही रहता था। सभी जीव-जंतुओं को जो उस दलदल में रहते थे, उसका गाना अप्रिय लगता था। वे उसे पीटने और उसका अपमान करने का प्रयत्न करते परंतु मेढक बहुत ही संवेदनहीन और बड़बोला था। वह भावावेश में गाता ही रहता।

दिल के उद्गार और उल्लास व्यक्त करने का उसके पास यही एक विकल्प था।

एक दिन दलदल वासियों ने एक मधुर और सुरीला गीत सुना जो एक कोयल गा रही थी। गीत सुनकर मेढक को गहरे सदमे और द्वेष का अनुभव हुआ। वह दलदल का अकेला और अविवादित गायक बना रहना चाहता था। बुलबुल के गीत ने एक हलचल मचा दी थी। दल-दल के सभी प्राणी बढ़-चढ़कर उसकी प्रशंसा कर रहे थे।

मेढक बहुत चालाक था। उसने कोयल को अपना परिचय उस वृक्ष के मालिक के रूप में दिया, जिस वृक्ष पर बैठकर बुलबुल गाती थी। उसने शेखी बघारी कि वह एक संगीत आलोचक है जो "दलदल तुरही" के लिए गीत लिखता है।

बुलबुल अत्यंत प्रभावित हुई कि मोजार्ट जैसा प्रतिभाशाली संगीतज्ञ इसमें रूचि ले रहा है। जब मेढक ने बहुत ही साधारण फीस के बदले उसे संगीत प्रशिक्षण देने का प्रस्ताव रखा तो बुलबुल को लगा उसके सपने साकार होने जा रहे हैं और बुलबुल का शोषण शुरू हो गया। मेढक ने संगीत समारोह आयोजित करने शुरू कर दिए। खराब मौसम में भी वह बुलबुल को गाने के लिए बाध्य करता। वह उसे भावमग्न होकर गाने को कहता क्योंकि जनता को यही पसन्द था। आरम्भ में कुछ जीव-जंतु सुनने को जमा हुए परन्तु धीरे-धीरे भीड़ कम होती गई क्योंकि बुलबुल का गीत नित्यक्रम बन कर रह गया था जिसमें कोई रस न था और उसकी आवाज़ भी थकी सी हो गई थी। मेढक उसे डाँटता और अपमानित करता। एक दिन अत्यंत दबाव व तनाव में बुलबुल की नस फट गई और उसकी मृत्यु हो गई।

मेढक ने बुलबुल को मूर्ख और उतेजना का शिकार बताया और कहा उसके पास मौलिकता नहीं थी। उसका अहंभाव शांत हो गया था और वह दोबारा दलदल का बेजोड़ गायक बन गया था।

WORD-MEANINGS

- **dusk** : late evenings
- **blared** : loud & irritable sound
- **stilled** : reduced
- **dumbstruck** : as if under a spell
- **waded** : came through water
- **twitched** : moved, shook
- **wield** : use
- **Mozart** : a great musician from Austria
- **twittering** : talking with great excitement
- **mid-flight** : In the middle of changing notes
- **frills** : embellished musical compositions
- **precision** : accuracy
- **bounced** : just went on
- **addicted** : used to, become habitual
- **prone** : used to

LITERARY DEVICES

SYMBOLS

- The Frog :symbolises opportunistic and cunning people who exploit others for their own benefits
- The Nightingale : represents naturally talented artists who fail to achieve fame due to their innocence.

METAPHORS

- a solitary loon ● Mozart in disguise ● Foghorn

ALLITERATION

- Bingle Bog ● dawn, awn

EXPLANATION OF SOME EXPRESSIONS

1. Croaked away in Bingle **Bog**..... (line 2)

Explanation ...

Bog is a wet and marshy land. The poet has deliberately used 'Bingle' for alliteration.

2. He croaked **awn** and awn and awn..... (line 4)

Explanation ...

It means 'on and on'. These words are phonetically selected and also rhyme with dawn.

3. And the crass **cacophony**..... (line 7)

Explanation ...

'Crass' means meaningless and cacophony is a very loud and unpleasant noise. Here it is used to refer to the unpleasant voice of the frog.

4. To display his heart's **elation**..... (line 14)

Explanation ...

Elation means happiness. In this context, it means that the frog sang to express the happiness of his heart.

5. Stared toward the **sumac**, rapt..... (line 21)

Explanation ...

Sumac is a tree with cane-shaped fruits. When the nightingale sat on a sumac tree and sang her melodious song, all the creatures of the bog were mesmerised and were curious to know who the singer was.

6. For my splendid **baritone**..... (line 44)

Explanation ...

The frog gets a complex after hearing the nightingale and the praise she has got. But he is very boastful and calls his unpleasant voice as 'baritone', which is good for male singers.

7. The **technique** was fine of course.

But it lacked a certain force..... (line 50)

Explanation ...

The frog is jealous so he gives a negative complement in a very tactful manner. He cannot find any fault, so admits that the 'technique' is flawless but the song is not full of passion.

8. I don't think the song's divine

But -oh-well-at least it's mine..... (lines 55-56)

Explanation ...

The nightingale is trying to be very modest since the creatures of the bog had already declared her song to be 'too divine'. She is overawed by a great critic like frog, so she says in a timid manner that she is proud of the originality of her song. Ironically, she is chastised in the end for not being original.

9. Breathed: "This is a fairy tale -

And you're Mozart in disguise" (lines 64-65)

Explanation ...

The nightingale cannot believe her luck, since dreams only materialise in fairytales. Moreover, she is too impressed and overawed by the frog's offer to train her. So she compares him to the famous German musician Mozart.

10. Flushed with confidence, and fired

with both art and adoration (lines 70-71)

Explanation ...

The nightingale is greatly inspired. She has already received praise and appreciation from the creatures of the bog, so she is full of confidence and is ready to create ripples in the world of art.

11. Journeyed up and down the scale (line 84)

Explanation ...

The frog persuades the nightingale to sing in rainy weather, which is not suitable to her. He makes her practise at various pitch-levels, tries many musical notes, and as a result the nightingale is too tired.

12. Owl of Sandwich, Duck of Kent.....

Mallard and Milady Trent

Martin Cardinal Mephisto

And the Coot of Monte Cristo..... (lines 90-94)

Explanation ...

The poet wishes to create humour so this refers to the titled crowd, which are authentic royal titles.

Earl of Sandwich, Duke of Kent

My lord and Milady of Trent

Martin and Cardinal from Mephisto

Count of Monte Cristo.

13. “We must aim for better *billings*
You still owe me sixty shillings”..... (line 109-110)

Explanation ...

The frog’s greed is insatiable. He coaxes the nightingale to sing more passionately, so that more creatures come to hear her and he can mint more money. Moreover, he exploits her further by charging her for giving music training.

14. *And, my dear, “lay on more trills,
 Audiences enjoy such frills.....”* (lines 105-106)

Explanation ...

The frog wants to tire the nightingale, so he asks her to sing very fast-paced musical notes, repetitively, which will prove to be very exhausting. He gives the logic that the audience prefer very fast, sensational embellishments in a song.

15. *Night on night her tired song
 Zipped and trilled and bounced along.....* (lines 113-114)

Explanation ...

The nightingale is thoroughly exhausted; her voice has lost its freshness and magic. The melody of her voice has been replaced by musical notes that are repetitive but not pleasant to hear. The songs just appear to drag on. So the creatures of the bog lose interest.

16. “*Use your wits and follow fashion
 Puff your lungs out with passion*”..... (lines 125-126)

Explanation ...

This piece of advice from the frog proves to be the nightingale’s undoing. She tries to perform as instructed by the callous frog and tries to infuse more energy and force in her song. Unfortunately, this results in bursting a vein and the nightingale succumbs to her death under pressure.

17. *But she was a stupid creature -
Far too prone to influence.....* (lines 132-134)

Explanation ...

These lines reveal how malicious and hard-hearted the frog is. He starts criticising the nightingale the moment she dies. Instead of a worthy tribute, he calls her stupid, vulnerable and too nervous. Basically he wants to be rid of any blame that may be heaped on him, for her death. He is right in calling the nightingale ‘too prone to influence’ because it was her vulnerability that led to her death.

18. “*That your song must be your own
 that’s why I sing with panache*”

Explanation ...

Nightingale was proud of her originality and the frog had earlier also criticised her that it was not enough reason to boast about. He continues in his conceited manner, telling everyone that no one could imitate his confident and elegant style.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

Ans. 1. Listed below are a few character traits of people. Some are positive qualities, while others are not. Tick mark the ones you feel are desirable qualities in a person.

Characteristic	Tick Mark	Characteristic	Tick Mark	Characteristic	Tick Mark
Insensitive		High-headed		Manipulative	
Humorous	3	Egoistic		Patronising	
Naive		Humble	3	Submissive	3
Opportunistic		Foolish		Arrogant	
Creative	3	Original	3	Conniving	
Disapproving		Helpful	3	Innocent	3
Commanding		Calculative		Condescending	
Benevolent	3	Crafty		Scheming	
Simple	3	Wise	3	Rude	
Overbearing		Generous	3	Boastful	
Sly		Gentle	3	Proud	
Territorial	3	Aggressive		Servile	

6. Complete the table given below. You can use the words in the box given below.

Character	Extract	Personality traits
Nightingale	Sorry - was that you who spoke?	polite, timorous
Frog	Yes, ... you see, I'm the frog who owns this tree In this bog I've long been known For my splendid baritone.	boastful conceited
Nightingale	Did you ... did you like my song?	submissive, meek, innocent, naive
Frog	Not too bad - but far too long The technique was fine, of course, But it lacked a certain force.	arrogant conniving crafty
Frog	Without proper training such as I And a few others can supply You'll remain a mere beginner, But with me you'll be a winner.	manipulative clever scheming dominating
Nightingale	But I can't sing in this weather.	meek, submissive timid, nervous
Nightingale	... This is a fairy tale- And you're Mozart in disguise Come to earth before my eyes.	innocent naive humble foolish
Frog	Come, my dear - we'll sing together.	manipulative patronising
Frog	We must aim for better billing You still owe me sixty shillings.	mercenary manipulative opportunistic
Frog	Brainless bird - you're on the stage Use your wits and follow fashion. Puff your lungs out with your passion.	dominating superior insensitive patronising rude
Frog	... I tried to teach her, But she a was stupid creature.	arrogant crafty insensitive

Dismissive	Nervous	Timid	Presumptuous
Superior	Fawning	Shy	Polite
Meek	Possessive	Dominating	Mercenary

8. On the basis of your understanding of the poem, complete the sentences given below by choosing the appropriate option.

1. The frog's aim was to

- (a) make the nightingale a sensation
- (b) make the nightingale as good a singer as him
- (c) maintain his supremacy in the bog
- (d) make a lot of money

2. The animals reacted to the nightingale's song with

- (a) hatred
- (b) admiration
- (c) indifference
- (d) suggestions for improvement

3. The nightingale accepted the frog's tutelage as she

- (a) was not confident of herself
- (b) wanted to become as good a singer as the frog
- (c) wanted to become a professional singer
- (d) was not a resident of Bingle Bog

4. The nightingale was sorrowful and pale because

- (a) she had been practising in the rain
- (b) she had been performing all night
- (c) she was losing confidence in herself
- (d) she was falling ill

5. The audience was tired of her song because

- (a) they had heard it many times
- (b) it had become mechanical
- (c) she sounded tired
- (d) she had added trills to her song

6. She no longer enjoyed singing alone as

- (a) she wanted to sing only for the titled crowd
- (b) she was now used to the appreciation she got
- (c) the frog was no longer with her

(d) she had become proud of herself

Answers : 1. (c) 2. (b) 3. (a)

4. (b) 5. (b) 6. (b)

10. Answer the following questions briefly.

(a) How did the creatures of Bingle Bog react to the nightingale's singing ?

Ans. The creature of Bingle bog were surprised to hear the melodious and soothing voice of the Nightingale. Her singing created a sensation and won tremendous praise.

(b) Which are the different ways in which the frog asserts his importance ?

Ans. The frog pretended to be a great singer and he also said that he was the reporter of Bog 'Trumpet'. He boasted that he was a music critic and a musician like Mozart and was ready to train her.

(c) Why is frog's joy both sweet and bitter ?

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans. Frog was happy to charge money for Nightingale's song but was unhappy at the popularity of the nightingale in the bog. Financially he was happy to make profit but he did not like the competition and the applause that the nightingale was giving him.

(d) Why was the frog angry ?

Ans. The nightingale's songs became dull, listless and routine due to exertion and stress. The crowds dwindled and stopped coming for the nightingale's songs. He was not making money so he was very unhappy.

(e) How did the frog become the unrivalled king of the bog again? [C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

Ans. The frog insulted and humiliated the nightingale. He made her practice continuously in rain and thunder. He instructed her to sing at very high notes. So out of sheer fatigue and stress, nightingale's vein burst and she died. So the bog had to tolerate the frog's singing once again.

SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

1. Why does the frog persist in singing though no one in the bog wishes to hear him?

Ans. The frog is too conceited and has an exaggerated opinion of himself as a singer. He thinks that his voice is a 'splendid baritone'. He wishes to remain the unrivalled singer of the bog. The frog is loud and most unmusical. All the creatures of the bog tried all the tricks

to drive him away. But the frog is too thick-skinned and continues to sing his 'crass cacophony' from the sumac tree. The frog was so passionate about his singing that he would sing incessantly from evening till morning light. This was his way of expressing his heart-felt joy, he claimed. The frog is a hypocrite, who only lives for himself. He is least concerned for the discomfort he is causing to others.

2. Do you think the nightingale was responsible for her own exploitation? Why/Why not?

[C.B.S.E. 2012 (T-2)]

Ans. The nightingale is a singing 'genius' but she is not worldly-wise. Her serenade in the bingle bog leaves the creatures mesmerised but she does not have the foresight or the cleverness to cash upon her asset. She knows that she is a great sensation for the bog music lovers but gets exploited by the manipulative frog. The frog makes her practise again and again, exhausts her and she loses her star status. The nightingale is too vulnerable and becomes susceptible to fan following. She is a poor judge of psychology and does not see through the frog's clever plans. So she ends up paying with her life. Her end is a great tragedy, a sad culmination of an unfulfilled artist, who dies prematurely.

3. What does the poet wish to convey in the poem 'The Frog and the Nightingale'?

Ans. This is an allegorical poem by Vikram Seth and reveals a deeper meaning beneath the emotional story line. The frog is a living symbol of cunning and conniving

people, while the nightingale represents innocence and vulnerability to the extreme. Artists like the frog are shams without substance and thrive on the misfortune of others. They are loathed, hated and have little worth themselves, so they derive sadistic pleasure in tormenting and exploiting others. Naturally talented singers are sometimes not worldly-wise, so they fall prey to scheming 'touts'.

The poet ridicules such music organisers who mint money by cheating and exploiting others. There is a hint of satire evident, when the poet talks about money making people, who make false promises and destroy natural talent.

The poet also highlights the significance of public adulation in the life of an artist like the nightingale. She is innocent to praise and admiration but gradually, she also becomes addicted to it. So it can be said that even modest artists wish to perform before power-packed audience and the jingle of cash-counters gives them an emotional high.

The poet concludes that success is a game like tug-of-war, in which the clever survive and the innocent and vulnerable succumb to bitter defeat.

REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – MCQs

Read the following and choose the most appropriate option from the ones provided to you.

1. *Other creatures loathed his voice,
But, alas, they had no choice,
And the crass cacophony
Blared out from the sumac tree
At whose foot the frog each night
Minstrelled on till morning light*
- (i) **Where did this creature live?**
(a) It lived near the pond
(b) It lived on the mountain
(c) It lived under the sumac tree
(d) It lived in a deep valley
- (ii) **Why is his voice referred to as 'crass cacophony'?**
(a) It was boring
(b) It was unmusical and loud
(c) It had a weak voice
(d) It had no control over his voice
- (iii) **Why did he sing all night? How did his singing affect others?**
(a) They were indifferent
(b) They felt cheerful
(c) They encouraged him all the more
(d) They were irritated and felt a lot of discomfort

Answer : (i) (c) (ii) (b) (iii) (d)

2. *And a solitary loon
Wept, beneath the summer morn
Toads and teals and tiddlers, captured
By her voice cheered on, enraptured
'Bravo!' "Too divine!" "Encore!"
So the nightingale once more.
Quite unused to such applause
Sang till dawn, without a pause.*
- (i) **How did the nightingale reciprocate their compliments?**
(a) She was indifferent
(b) She was afraid of the fog
(c) She was so happy that she sang till morning
(d) She went back to her nest
- (ii) **How did the solitary loon behave differently from others?**
(a) he went to sleep
(b) he clapped loudly
(c) he gave lot of compliments
(d) he wept
- (iii) **Who are 'toads, teals and tiddlers'?**
(a) insects
(b) big animals
(c) amphibians like ducks and fish
(d) animals which live in water

Answer : (i) (c) (ii) (d) (iii) (c)

3. "Yes" the frog replied. "You see,
I'm the frog who owns this tree
In this bog I've long been known
For my splendid baritone
And, of course, I wield my pen
For Bog Trumpet now and then."

(i) **What bits of information does the frog give to the listener?**

- (a) he was a leader
- (b) he was a writer and a singer
- (c) he was an agent
- (d) he was a trainer

(ii) **Give two reasons why the frog wants to make an impression on the nightingale.**

- (a) It is his nature, he wants to help her
- (b) He wishes to impress and exploit her
- (c) He wants to impress her and other animals of the bog
- (d) He is jealous of her popularity and wants to exploit her

(iii) **What does the frog's speech reveal about his character?**

- (a) proud and conceited
- (b) a clever fellow
- (c) jealous and a cheat
- (d) appreciative of the nightingale's talent

Answer : (i) (b) (ii) (d) (iii) (c)

4. "You'll remain a mere beginner
But with me you'll be winner."
"Dearest frog," the nightingale
Breathed: "This is a fairy tale
And you're Mozart in disguise
Come to earth before my eyes"
"Well, I charge a modest fee"
"Oh!" "But it won't hurt, you'll see."

(i) **How does the frog plan to make the nightingale a winner?**

- (a) by projecting her as a good singer
- (b) by training her
- (c) by publicity
- (d) by charging tickets

(ii) **Who was Mozart?**

- (a) a famous artist
- (b) a famous composer of music
- (c) writer of 'Bog Trumpet'
- (d) owner of tree

(iii) **Which character-trait of the frog is evident here?**

- (a) clever (b) deceitful
- (c) shy (d) humble

Answer : (i) (b) (ii) (b) (iii) (b)

5. "And my dear, lay on more trills
Audiences enjoy such frills
You must make your public happier
Give them something sharper, snappier.
You must aim for better billings
You still owe me sixty shillings."

[C.B.S.E. 2011 (T-1)]

(i) **What is the speaker's advice to the listener?**

- (a) to sing loudly
- (b) to add repetitive quick-paced notes
- (c) to be more musical
- (d) to sing during storm

(ii) **Explain 'better billings.'**

- (a) better notes (b) better music
- (c) more money (d) more training

(iii) **Why does the listener owe sixty shillings to the speaker?**

- (a) for encouragement
- (b) for guidance and training
- (c) for appreciation
- (d) for promoting her in the bog

Answer : (i) (b) (ii) (c) (iii) (b)

6. "Use your wits and follow fashion.
Puff your lungs out with your passion."
Trembling, terrified to fail,
Blind with tears, the nightingale
heard him out in silence, tried,
Puffed up, burst a vein and died.

(i) **The speaker appears to be angry. What is the reason for his anger?**

- (a) Nightingale is too tired
- (b) No one likes her singing
- (c) Income from the concert has fallen sharply
- (d) It is his nature

(ii) **Why is she terrified?**

- (a) She is afraid of failure
- (b) She is afraid of the frog's scolding
- (c) She has become weak physically
- (d) She cannot sing during rainy weather

(iii) **What caused the death of the nightingale?**

- (a) She was unhappy
- (b) Her throat got choked

REFERENCE TO CONTEXT – NON-MCQs

Read the following extracts and answer the following questions.

- (1) *And the whole admiring bog
Stared towards the sumac, rapt
And when she had ended, clapped
Ducks had swum and herons waded
to her as she serenaded*

(a) **What was the reaction of the nightingale's song?**

Ans : All the residents near the sumac tree clapped, praised and felt ecstatic at the nightingale's song.

(b) **Explain 'serenaded' and 'rapt'.**

Ans : 'Serenaded' means sang beautifully and 'rapt' means totally mesmerised.

(c) **How did the nightingale sing and make a difference to the frog's songs?**

Ans : She sang very musically and with great emotion which was very different from the frog's loud and harsh voice.

- (2) *"Not too bad - but far too long
The technique was fine of course
But it lacked a certain force".*

(a) **Why is the frog making the above comments?**

Ans : The frog wishes to impress the nightingale as if he is an expert and get her to train.

(b) **What defects does he point out in the nightingale's songs ?**

Ans : The frog states that her song lacked energy and was too long.

(c) **What was the reaction of the nightingale to the above comments ?**

Ans : The nightingale was impressed as she was very vulnerable and innocent.

- (3) *Flushed with confidence and fired
with both art and adoration
song and was a huge sensation
... And the frog with great precision
counted heads and charged admission*

(a) **How had nightingale changed after her success?**

Ans : The nightingale became confident and enjoyed her success.

(b) **How did the frog make use of this situation?**

Ans : The frog arranged concerts for her and minted lot of money.

(c) **What do the above lines reflect about the nightingale and the frog's temperament?**

Ans : The nightingale was a true artist who thrived on the adulation of the crowd. The frog was a shrewd businessmen, and was very materialistic.

- (4) *For six hours, till she was shivering
and her voice was hoarse and quivering
Though subdued and sleep deprived
In the night her throat revived*

(a) **Why had the nightingale come to this state?**

Ans : The nightingale had sung for six hours at a stretch, so she was very tired.

(b) **How did she revive?**

Ans : At night her throat healed after rest.

(c) **What would be the future of this kind of exertion?**

Ans : She would succumb to such pressure and exertion and that is what happened.

- (5) *"And my dear, lay on more trills
Audiences enjoy such frills
You must make your public happier
Give them something sharper, snappier
We must aim for better billings."*

(a) **What are the suggestions given by the frog for improvement?**

Ans : The frog wanted more embellishments and fast-paced notes from the nightingale.

(b) **Do you believe the frog's suggestions are justified?**

Ans : No, the frog wanted to tire and exploit the nightingale.

(c) **What objective is there for the frog in giving the suggestions?**

Ans : The frog wanted money and be the undisputed singer of the bog.

- (6) *At a voice so uninspired
And the ticket office gross
Crashed and she grew more morose
For her ears were now addicted
to applause quite restricted.*

(a) **Why did the crowd stop listening to the nightingale?**

Ans : The nightingale's songs became dull, routine and uninspiring due to continuous singing.

(b) How did it affect the nightingale?

Ans : She was depressed because she had become addicted to praise and adulation.

(c) The nightingale is a typical artist. What character-trait of hers is being reflected here?

Ans : She thrives on the adulation and praise of her fans, and had become addicted to it.

**(7) Well, poor bird - she should have known.
That your song must be your own
That's why I sing with panache**

(a) How does the frog express his sympathy?

Ans : The frog pretends to be sympathetic by saying that the nightingale should have restricted herself to her own style.

(b) What character-traits are reflected by the frog's comments?

Ans : He is inhuman, manipulative and cruel.

(c) Explain 'panache'.

Ans : It means 'elegant style', grand manner

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. How was the frog in the poem, 'The Frog and the Nightingale' responsible for the death of the nightingale?

Ans : The frog was very manipulative and inhuman. He took full advantage of the nightingale's innocence and vulnerability. He was clever to exploit the nightingale's weakness for, fame and adoration of the fans. He made her sing in rough weathers, in rain and storm, continuously for hours together. He forced her to pack more energy and sing fast-paced notes. So sheer exertion made the nightingale burst a vein and die.

2. "Artists thrive and flourish due to the admiration of their fans." Do you think this statement proves true in case of the nightingale? Discuss.

Ans : Yes, the nightingale did get addicted to praise and fan-following. It is natural for any artist to look for fame

and popularity because they not only thrive on it but also derive inspiration to perform better. The nightingale was no different. She did not enjoy singing when the residents of the bog stopped coming to listen to her concerts.

3. In spite of the frog's singing the whole night, why did the creatures in the Bingle Bog hate him?

OR

How did the Bingle Bog creatures react to frog's song and the nightingale's song?

Ans : The creatures of Bingle Bog were very irritated by the loud, brash singing of the frog. The frog was totally insensitive to their discomfort and no amount of threats, beating could stop the frog. The nightingale's songs were a pleasant relief. She was musical, melodious and never disturbed the creatures of Bingle Bog for no reason.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. The nightingale was foolish and could be exploited. Explain in 100-125 words.

[C.B.S.E., 2011 (T-1)]

Ans : The nightingale had a typical temperament of an artist. She was very musical and her melody not only earned her great appreciation but also made some creatures cry. The crowd of her concerts consisted of some with titles and creatures from far also flocked to listen to her. She quickly became addicted to their praise but lacked acute business sense. She was not practical or worldly wise and got very foolishly trapped by the clever frog. She never realised that he was making money and cheating her. She never saw through his manipulations that he wanted her to overexert. He criticised her needlessly and made her

lose confidence. So it was the nightingale's fault to succumb to the clever frog's tricks. She never realised her own interest and welfare till the end. Her end was inevitable.

2. The frog was too boastful and conceited. The nightingale was too modest and unaware of her latent talent. The frog was insensitive to public reaction. The nightingale thrived solely on public adulation. Compare and contrast the singing of the frog with that of the nightingale in the light of the above statements.

Ans : The frog was conceited and self-centred. He sang loudly, brashly all through the night, thus disturbing all the creatures of the Bingle Bog. The frog was rude, arrogant and too boastful. The bog-creatures were so fed up that

they prayed, resorted to beating but nothing could stop his irritating and noisy singing. The frog basically lived and sang to please himself. He was egoistic and self-centred.

In contrast the nightingale was too sensitive and polite. She was innocent and very gullible. Despite being an excellent singer, she loses confidence because of the frog. So she is an artist who has no confidence in herself and needs others to either boost her morale or break it. The nightingale was most pleasant and the frog was most irritating and unmusical.

3. Vikram Seth has used irony and symbols with great dexterity in the poem ‘The Frog and the Nightingale.’ Discuss by giving examples.

Ans : The poet has incorporated a large variety of meanings beneath the emotional storyline. The poem is allegorical in nature for the frog is a symbol of very clever and manipulative people who exploit young artists and abort their careers. The nightingale represents true and innocent artists who are taken for a ride by the people like frog in the guise of organisers who harm the blooming careers of great ‘geniuses’ in the making. It is ironical that nightingale enchants and pleases everyone, but does not understand her own strength or talent. The poet also highlights the importance of public applause and the importance of blooming careers. It is ironical that many times a good talent is nipped in the bud, like that of the nightingale.

4. How did the Frog break the nightingale’s spirit and destroy her? (100 to 125 words)

Ans : The frog wanted to be the undisputed king of Bingle Bog. He sang to his delight and could not stand any kind of rivalry. Even though he was hated by all but there was no one to compete with. He is extremely passionate about his loud and unmusical voice and has an exaggerated opinion about himself. When the nightingale arrives, she mesmerises everyone with her politeness and musical voice. The frog senses competition. So he forcibly becomes her tutor and mentor and strategically plans, not only to finish her career but also to end her life. He makes her sing in rough weather, endlessly and advises her to exert more and more. As a result, the nightingale succumbs to pressure and the frog emerges as the king of Bingle Bog again.

5. Do you think that ‘The Frog and the Nightingale’ is a humorous poem or a tragic one? Give arguments to support your answer.

Ans : The basic storyline of the poem is humorous. The poet has added lot of humorous touches like the pun of words like “owl of Sandwich” etc. The frog’s exaggerated opinion of himself is really funny and the fact that he is compared to ‘Mozart’, a great musician, is quite hilarious. There are bits of humour here and there but the message and essence of the story is tragic. The poem is a tragic tale of a great singer whose flourishing and thriving career is ended prematurely. The nightingale is too innocent, too gullible and her succumbing to her death is a masterpiece of great tragedy. Her end arouses sympathy for her and hatred for such conniving cheats who exploit natural talent and destroy it for their own selfish interests.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1. Lata Mangeshkar’s achievements are a saga of bitter struggle and survival. Her accomplishments are enough to set an example for others. Research facts about her life and make a project on the topic “LATA MANGESHKAR—THE NIGHTINGALE OF INDIA.”

2. Make a powerpoint presentation on the poems of Vikram Seth.

3. Read the screenplay version of ‘My Fair Lady’ or arrange for the screening of the movie ‘My Fair Lady.’

Later discuss with your friends the kind of relationship that should exist between a mentor and a student.

4. Debate “Should there be mentor system in the school curriculum?” Agree / Disagree.



Lata Mangeshkar