

EVANS TRIES AN O-LEVEL BY OLIN DEXTER

GIST OF THE LESSON

- Evans a kleptomaniac was imprisoned thrice and all the time escaped from the prison. Now he was in the prison for the 4th time and all of a sudden developed curiosity to appear in O-level German Examination which also was an effort to break the prison.
- The Governor takes utmost care to see that he would not be fooled. Every care was taken to make Evans prepare for the exam.
- He was tutored by a German tutor for 6 months. The day before the exam the tutor wishes good luck but makes it clear that he had hardly any 'chance of getting through.' But Evans gives an ironical twist to the tutor's observation by saying "I may surprise everybody."
- On the day of the exam Jackson and Stephens visited Evans cell and took away everything that may help him injure himself. Evans was insisted to take away the hat but he refused saying that it was lucky charm.
- Evans cell was bugged so that the Governor could himself listen to each and every conversation in the cell. The invigilator Rev. S. McLeery too was searched and left him to complete the task. Stephen sitting outside the cell every now and then peeped into the cell.
- The exam went on smoothly. Stephen escorted the invigilator to the main gate and took a look into Evans cell and found the invigilator (actually Evans) wounded, informed the Governor. The latter was to be hospitalized but informed that he was alright and asked them to follow Evans. Thus he escaped the prison.
- When the invigilator was not found in the hospital they went to the residence of Rev. S. McLeery only to find him 'bound and gagged in his study in Broad Street". He has been there, since 8.15 a.m. Now everything was clear to the Governor.
- Evan escaped the prison the 4th time. But by taking the hint from the question paper the Governor reached the hotel where Evans was and captured him and came to know how he planned his escape and said that his game was over. Evans surrenders himself to the Governor.
- The Governor tells Evan they would meet soon.
- The moment they are rid of the Governor, the so called prison officer-a friend of Evans-unlocks the handcuffs and asks the driver to move fast and Evans tells him to turn to Newbury. Evans, thus, has the last laugh.

SOLVED SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What kind of a person was Evans?

Evans was a 'Kleptomaniac' and had broken jail thrice. He was a master planner and was very sociable. He knew how to keep intimate contacts with people. In the words of the Governor, he was a pleasant sort of chap with no record of violence.

2. Do you think Evans' statement, 'I may surprise everybody,' has some special significance?

Evans seems to be telling his teacher that he may surprise everybody by doing well in the exam, but in reality it is a forewarning that he is going to jolt everybody by his master-minded perfect escape-plan.

3. Who were the two visitors Evans received in the morning of the day of his exam?

The two visitors --Mr. Jackson, the senior prison officer of the prison's D Wing-- man called Stephens, who had been only recently recruited.

4. What made Evans clip his hair short?

Evans' escape prison-- duplicate McLeery (in vigilate during the O-level German exam) had short hair. In order to give a practical shape to their plan Evans' hair had to look like McLeery's, hence Evans clipped them short.

5. Why did the Governor instruct Jackson to search McLeery?

The Governor asked Jackson to search McLeery, the invigilator, just in case he has brought something unwittingly which might prove to be a weapon that Evans could use and try escaping from prison.

6. Why did Evans drape a blanket round his shoulder? What did Stephens think about it?

In between intervals of Stephens' peeping into the cell, Evans was changing into the Parson's dress to look like McLeery. So, in order to conceal his effort to keep them in place, Evans draped a blanket round his shoulder. Stephens was misled into believing that Evans was feeling cold.

7. In spite of strict vigilance, how did Evans' friend manage to give the material for disguise in the cell?

Despite all vigilance, Evans' friend disguised as McLeery, the invigilator, managed to smuggle the disguised material into the cell. He came wearing two parson's dresses with black fronts and collars. Apart from it he also brought an extra pair of spectacles. All this was passed on to Evans when Stephens' vigilant eyes were away from the peep-hole.

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. What different queries does the Secretary of the Examinations Board make from the Governor before conducting the examination for Evans and why?

2. Who do you think made a call regarding a correction in the question paper? What did it really want to convey?

3. Who is Carter? What does the Governor want him to go and why?

4. How did the Governor manage to reach Evans in the hotel?

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. What impression do you form of 'Evans the Break'?

2. Comment on the ending of the play 'Evan Tries An O-Level'.

3. How far do you agree with the observation: "He was just another good-for-a-giggle, gullible governor that was all"?
4. Do you think the title 'Evans Tries an O-Level' is appropriate? Give reasons in support of your answer.
5. How did the Governor manage to reach Evans in the hotel?
6. Who do you think is the driver of the van who eventually takes Evans to freedom?

LONG ANSWER QUESTION

1. What were the precautions taken for the smooth conduct of the examination?

Since Evans had already escaped from the jail on three earlier occasions, there was always a lurking fear that he might make another attempt to escape. Therefore all possible precautions were taken to see that the O-level German examination arranged in the prison did not provide him with any means of escape. The Governor personally monitored all security arrangements and heavily guarded the Recreation Block from where he expected the prisoner to make another break. Evans cell was thoroughly checked by Jackson to ward off the possibility of the presence of an incriminating material which might hamper the smooth conduct of the examination. His nail-scissors, nail-file and razor were taken away; and to keep a strict watch on the activities of the cell during the examination, the Governor got it bugged. A police officer Stephens was posted to keep a constant vigil on his activities. The invigilator, too was frisked to make sure that he carried no objectionable material with him.