

FLAMINGO (PROSE)

1. The Last Lesson: Alphonse Daudet

Gist of the lesson:

- Franz is afraid of going to school as he has not learnt participles.
- He wants to enjoy beauty of nature. The bright sunshine, the birds chirruping in the woods, Prussian soldiers drilling but resisted.
- Bulletin board: all bad news, lost battles, the drafts and orders of the commanding officers: wondered what it could be now
- The changes he noticed in the school.
 - Instead of noisy classrooms everything was as quiet as Sunday morning
 - The teacher does not scold him and told him very kindly to go to his seat
 - The teacher dressed in his Sunday best.
 - Villagers occupying the last benches- To pay tribute to M. Hamel for his 40 yrs of sincere service and also to express their solidarity with France.
- M. Hamel making the announcement that that would be the last French lesson; realizes that, that was what was put up on the bulletin board.
- Franz realizes that he does not know his own mother tongue
- Regretted why he had not taken his lessons seriously.
- Also realizes the reason why teacher was dressed in his Sunday best and villagers sitting at the back.
- M. Hamel realizes that all three, the children, the parents and he himself are to be blamed for losing respect and regard for the mother tongue.
- Always keep the mother tongue close to your heart as it is the key to the prison of slavery.
- Atmosphere in class: teacher teaching sincerely and patiently, students and others studying with utmost sincerity.
- Franz wonders sarcastically if Prussians could force pigeons to coo in German.
- M. Hamel overcome with emotions could not speak and wrote on the black board "Long Live France".

SOLVED QUESTIONS:

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS:

1. What was the narrator's greatest fear as he moved towards the school?

Franz had started late for school and thus was afraid of being scolded. His fear gripped him further for he was also unprepared. He had not learnt his lesson regarding the rules of participles and thus dreaded the teacher's anger.

2. What was more tempting to Franz rather than going to school?

The weather was pleasant, warm and bright. The chirruping birds were inviting him, the soldiers drilling in the field were also outdoors and Franz was not prepared with participles.

3. What was the news which was put up on the bulletin board?

For the last two years all bad news – the lost battles, the orders of the commanding officer was displayed on the notice board. That day, the news that only German would be taught in school of Alsace and Lorraine was displayed on the notice-board which made the crowd gather there to read the news.

4. What was so unusual about the school on that day?

Usually there would be a great bustle of opening and closing of the desk, lesson repeated loudly and the teacher's ruler rapping on the table but that day was very calm and quiet like Sunday morning. The back benches which were usually empty were occupied by the village people and M. Hamel wore his special dress and was pacing up and down with a ruler under his arm.

5. Why were the villagers seated on the back benches?

All the village elders were seated on the back benches as a tribute to the teacher who had put in 40 years of sincere service. It was also their way of expressing regret for not learning their mother tongue when they had the chance. They were also expressing their patriotism and solidarity with France.

6. Franz didn't learn French whom did M. Hamel blame?

M. Hamel didn't blame Franz for not learning but his parents who were not anxious to have him learn. Instead they wanted him to work on a farm or at the mill to earn money. Even M. Hamel was also to be blamed for sending him to water the flowers instead of learning and when he wanted to go fishing he declared holiday.

8. What did M. Hamel say about French language?

He said that it is the most beautiful language in the world- the clearest, the most logical. He requested them to guard it so that they can be united and fight back for their freedom.

9. What happened when the church clock struck 12?

The moment the church clock struck 12 the Prussian army came to take over and M. Hamel stood up, wanted to tell something but his voice was choked. He gathered his strength and wrote on the black board as large as he could – ‘Vive La France’ and dismissed the school.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Justify the title of the story “The Last Lesson”.

Value Points

People always feel there is plenty of time to learn—so also in Alsace—now no time—parents not keen—preferred children , work in farms, mill—Franz looked opportunity to escape school—never serious—receive orders from Berlin—people realize importance of their language—attend the last lesson by M. Hamel.

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

Short Answer Questions.

1. Why was Franz unwilling to go to school?
2. Why didn't M. Hamel punish Franz, even though he was late?
3. Mention the three changes that Franz noticed in the school?
4. What announcement did M. Hamel make and what was its impact?
5. What do you think was written on the bulletin board?
6. Why did M. Hamel say about knowing one's language is a key to prison?
7. Whom did Mr. Hamel blame for not learning the French?
8. What changes have taken place in the school in the last forty years?
9. What did he mean by “Viva La France”?
10. Do you think that the story touches upon the brutalities of war? Explain
11. How does Hamel arouse patriotism in the people of Alsace?
12. What does Franz mean when he asks: “ Will they make them sing in German, even the pigeons”

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS 125 -150 words.

1. Write a note on the character of M. Hamel as a teacher?
2. Do you think the story touches upon the brutalities of war? Comment.
3. What thunderbolt did the narrator receive on reaching the school? How was it affect him ?
4. At the end of the last lesson M. Hamel wrote, 'Viva La France' on the board in bold letters. Why do you think he wrote that and how did he expect the people of Alsace – Lorraine to keep their identity intact?
5. What were Franz' feelings about M Hamel and his French lessons? How did they undergo a complete change?

Value Based Question: Answer the following in about 100 words. 5

M Hamel 'The Last Lesson' says to the people of Alsace about the necessity of their mother tongue- French: " We must guard it among us and never forget it because when a people are enslaved, as long as they hold fast to their language it is as if they had the key to their prison".

'Mother tongue is the language of one's thoughts and ideas. Rejecting one's mother tongue is denying one's own culture and identity.' Do you think so? Write your reflections on the above statement in the form of an article to be published in your school magazine , encouraging your friends to the need for learning and protecting their mother tongue.