

**I B.A English**

**(II Semester)**

**Fiction**

**16ACCEN4**

**Brave New World**

**By**

**Aldous Huxley**

## SUMMARY

*Brave New World* is a distopian or anti-utopian novel. The title of the novel is taken from Shakespeare's The Tempest, in which the heroine, Miranda, breaks into praise of the world as she saw many people first time in her life. In her astonishment she says, "How beauteous mankind is! O Brave new world That has such people in it!". Huxley's 'Brave New World' has conditioned people, not 'beauteous mankind'.

This novel opens with an introduction of the Central London Hatchery and conditioning centre given to the students by the Director of Hatcheries and conditioning. The Director takes the students to various departments of the Hatchery, explains to them that embryos are engineered, eggs are hatched according to the demands received from different centres. The Director shows the incubators, test tubes, etc. in which eggs are hatched. Then he explains the fertilizing process. The eggs are conditioned to bring forth men of different classes, Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas, Epsilons, etc. through Bokanovsky process. 'Bokanovskification consists of a series of arrests of development'. There is Predestination Room in which the character of each class of eggs is conditioned according to the necessity. There aren't any fathers, mothers or families, since everybody is engineered through scientific process which is akin to the cloning of the modern times.

The Director brings the students to the Infant Nurseries and Conditioning Rooms. The Director asks the nurses to expose Delta children to books and roses and subject them to electric shocks to inculcate instinctive hatred of books and roses. The Director chooses not to answer the question as to what is the

necessity of making psychologically impossible for Deltas to like books and nature.

The instance of a boy, Reuben Robinovitch, gives the process of hypnopaedia, teaching in sleep. The Alpha children are given lessons on Elementary Sex and Elementary Class Consciousness. The lessons are given when the children are asleep. The Director asks the nurse to repeat the lessons a little louder by the trumpet.

The society is well-classified and classes are identified by dresses. Delta children, for example, wear Khaki, while Alpha children wear grey. Epsilons are stupid and wear black. They have different characteristics. Beta children don't want to work hard and don't want to play with Gammas and Deltas. Epsilons are worst. Thus the children are well-classified and identified.

In the *Brave New World* economy is also equally well-planned. The first thing that is encouraged is consumerism. The children do not play with such toys as balls or sticks which cost very little. They now play with apparatuses to increase consumption. 'Ending is better than mending' is the principle that is followed.

• Children are taught to pursue their partners in the erotic play. When a boy did not respond to the advances of the girl, Polly Trotsky, she is advised to go after some other boy. The Director condemns the earlier generations which considered erotic play between children as abnormal and immoral. In the *Brave New World* children are left to play in the shrubs and bushes.

*Brave New World's* Ford thinks that history is bunk. Therefore history is not taught to children. They see erotic films. Bible, poetry, likewise are shunned. 'Everybody belongs to everybody' is the principle of the *Brave New World* so that no woman remains too long with any one person. Ford has revealed the appalling dangers of family life. Naturally nobody speaks of fathers or mothers. Mustapha Mond, The Resident Controller for Western Europe, repeats the proverb, "Everybody belongs to everyone else". Fanny warns Lenina that it is not good for her not to have anyone except Henry Foster for four months at a stretch—"It's such horrible bad form to go on and on like this with one man...and you know how strongly the DHC objects to anything intense or long drawn. Four months of Henry Foster,

without having another man—why, he'd be furious if he knew....". The family ties are abhorred. Mother, monogamy, romance are contemptible as they arouse strong feelings which threaten the stability of the society. The controller held, "Stability, no civilization without stability." Efforts are made to make life emotionally easy, or even emotionless.

Lenina doesn't feel very keen on promiscuity. Fanny too has similar feelings, yet she tells Lenina, "One's got to play the game. After all, everyone belongs to everyone else." The controller was aghast when one boy told him that he had to wait four weeks for a girl he wanted because the boy had strong emotions for her. These principles are inculcated through hypnopaedia (teaching during sleep).

Bernard Marx, a specialist in hypnopaedia, wants to see a Savage Reservation where the culture of the Brave New World is unknown. Lenina has a desire to go with him, showing her indifference to Henry. Lenina and Bernard go to the roof, where Benito says all in good humour that Lenina is beautiful. The remark acts upon Bernard's mind. When Lenina says that she wants to go with him, he feels shy like a girl. Bernard, being shorter than other Alphas, fails to use his authority over persons of lower castes. Lenina leaves Bernard at the roof to meet Henry. Bernard sends for Helmholtz Watson, a lecturer at the College of Emotional Engineering. Helmholtz is a powerfully built handsome man, every inch an Alpha-plus. He is generally surrounded by girls asking him to have a picnic or supper with him. But there is a common feature in Bernard and Helmholtz. Both of them have the knowledge that they are individuals—"whereas the physically defective Bernard had suffered all his life from the consciousness of being separate, it was only quite recently that, grown aware of mental excess, Helmholtz Watson had also become aware of his difference from the people who surrounded him".

When Helmholtz meets Bernard he tells him that he has a queer feeling that he has something important to say, but he does not know precisely what he is burning to say. Bernard says that people grow suspicious about Helmholtz and he grows suspicious about them when he talks of his queer feelings.

Henry and Lenina fly over the slough crematorium from which smoke is coming. Henry explains that more than a kilo and a half of phosphorous is recovered when an adult corpse is

burnt, and about four hundred tons of phosphorus comes from England alone. It's purely utilitarian attitude that is reflected when Henry says that people are thus socially useful even when they are dead. Phosphorus recovered from the dead bodies makes plants grow.

Commenting upon conditioning of different classes of people Henry tells Lenina that every caste, even Epsilons, perform useful service to the society and people of lower castes, including Epsilons, are conditioned in such a way that they are thankful to be what they are, because they don't know or feel what it is to be of higher caste. Henry and Lenina have their doses of Soma which make them asleep. They sing in praise of Soma which raises "a quite impenetrable wall between the actual universe and their minds". In iron-curtain social order, like that of communists, people are not allowed to know the realities of life in other countries lest they should rise in revolt against authoritarian regime.

On the Solidarity Service day (Alternate Thursdays), Bernard fails to achieve atonement. He joins a group to make it a perfect solidarity group, circle of twelve. They all come together 'to be fused, to lose their twelve separate identities in a larger being'. Nobody in the Brave New World is allowed to have a separate identity. In a communist regime as also in industrial civilization nobody is allowed to think independent of the state policy. In Brave New World people are given Soma with the formula "I drink to my annihilation", the annihilation of individual identity and personality". The next formula they repeat is 'I drink to the eminence of His coming', to make everybody submit to the authoritarian rule. The formulas are repeated in accompaniment with music and dance. When Bernard is asked whether he has liked the service, he lies that he has liked it. Bernard is different from the rest.

Lenina expresses her desire to go to Savage Reservation, which is outside the pales, with Bernard, who being an Alpha-plus psychologist, is allowed to go there. Bernard is considered as a cynic since he wants to pass afternoon in Lake District alone with Lenina, in walking and talking, which Lenina considers dull and tiresome. She, however, succeeds in persuading him to go to Amsterdam to see Women's Weight Wrestling Championship but Bernard remains obstinately gloomy the whole afternoon. He refuses to take any drugs, to cure himself

of gloominess. Lenina puts on the radio, but Bernard evinces no interest in it. He wants to look at the sea in peace, which he thinks is not possible while the radio is on. Bernard says, "It makes me feel as though I were more me if you see what I mean. More on my own, not so completely a part of something else. Not just a cell in the social body." Lenina is horrified by such an unsocial attitude. In *Brave New World* "Everybody is for everybody", nobody for his own self. Nobody is supposed to be different. Lenina asks Bernard to take Soma to make himself free of notions of individuality. Lenina thinks he is odd in his view, yet she likes him.

As Bernard is to go to Savage Reservation, he gets a permit from Mustapha Mond, and goes to the Director to get it signed. The Director had also gone to the Savage Reservation with a girl who had gone missing. The Director assures Bernard that he was not indecent with girl. But the Director tells Bernard that he is not pleased with the reports he has received about Bernard's behaviour. He warns Bernard for trying to be different from others. But Bernard goes out with a swagger. When Helmholtz hears the account of this meeting, he does not make any comment. He likes Bernard but does not like some of his habits, such as boasting or self-praise.

The permit to the Savage Reservation is to be signed by the warden. The warden gives him information about life in Reservation, but Bernard is too worried to listen to him because he has left the Eau-de-Calone tap running. He wants, therefore, to ring up to Helmholtz to turn off the tap. But Helmholtz informs him that the Director has decided to send him to Iceland. This information distracts him. His desire to be subjected to some great trial, some pain, some persecution or even affliction evaporated. But soon he flew to the Malpais in the Reservation.

The pueblo (town) of Malpais stands on a naked rock. Lenina does not like the place. Her Indian guide is hostile, sullenly contemptuous and stinks. People of Malpais remain naked from throat to navel, daub their faces scarlet, black and ochre. Malpais has piles of rubbish, with lots of flies and dogs. Bernard tells Lenina that the people in Malpais aren't civilized. They find a man wrinkled and black and toothless. Lenina is surprised or rather shocked to see him because people in *Brave New World* do not grow old. Bernard explains that people in the civilized world are preserved from diseases, their internal

secret: ns are artificially balanced at a youthful equilibrium and their magnesium-calcium ratio is maintained at the level it is at thirty. At the same time most people die long before they reach this old creature's age. Lenina blushes to see women giving breasts to their babies, but Bernard is happy to see mothers' care and affection for the children. He says to Lenina, "Perhaps you have missed something in not being a mother, Lenina. Imagine yourself sitting there with a little baby of your own."

Lenina and Bernard see a ghastly troop of monsters, tramping out of strange bumping dance. One of them tosses the snakes to others. Then they fling down the snakes in the middle of a square. An old man sprinkles them with corn meal and a woman sprinkles them with water. A boy of about eighteen steps out of the crowd, walks round the writhing heap of snakes. He is whipped repeatedly but he makes no sound though he begins to bleed. After some time people go away, leaving the boy lying prone. Lenina begins to cry as she has never seen such a horrible scene. She sits with her face in her hands. After some time a boy comes to them to say that people don't give him a chance to be whipped though they could have twice as much blood from him because they dislike him for his complexion. He is ready to be lashed to make the rain come and the corn grow. Lenina is happy to see "such a nice-looking boy, with a beautiful body, and the boy is also taken by Lenina's beauty.

This boy informs that he is the son of Linda who had come from the civilized world with a man who was his father. Linda had gone walking alone in the mountains in the north, and had fallen down a steep place. The man left her, never to return. Thus he was born in Malpais. Linda is living in abject poverty. She never had a bath, so she reeked of that beastly stuff. Narrating her tale of woe, she reveals that she was a Beta, worked in the Fertilizing Room. Explaining the difference between the two worlds, she says that 'everybody is for everybody' is the rule in the civilized world, but nobody is supposed to belong to more than one person in the Reservation. Therefore the women in the Reservation hate her.

This boy John narrates frightful experiences of his life. A man came to his mother at night. He took him by his arm and left him crying in the open to be with his mother. Linda was beaten by women when she broke something while trying to learn weaving blankets. His mother was beaten before him again

because they said that the men who visited Linda were their men. In her desperation she slaps John, saying that she is not his mother to save him from humiliation. She advised her son to run away from Reservation, tells him how beautiful the Brave New World is. She begins teaching him. After some time he begins reading about conditioning of the people. He is shocked so much that he calls it beastly. Then, he comes by 'The Complete Works of Shakespeare' and learns from Shakespeare, "A man can smile and smile and be a villain", as Pope is. One day he sees Pope and Linda in a compromising state. He says like Hamlet that she will kill Pope when he is drunk or in rage or in the incestuous pleasure in the bed. He is taught to make clay pots by Mitisma. He has the chance to see marriage of Kothlu and Kiakme wherefrom he learns about the institution of marriage, but he is hurt emotionally since he loves Kiakme ardently. He is sixteen. John goes to Kiva to join the group of boys but he is stoned for joining them. They say that son of a bitch as he is not allowed to be with them. He feels that he is alone because he is different, and one who is different is bound to be alone. He tells Bernard that once he went into mountains, stood there with arms outstretched like Jesus to feel how Jesus must have felt when he was crucified, but he fell down each time and got a cut on his face. He agrees to go to London with Bernard but he wants to take Linda also with him.

Bernard gets permission of Mustapha Mond to take Linda and John to London with him. John goes to the rest house to meet Bernard. He is dismayed when he does not get response of the calls he makes. Therefore he breaks the glass of the window and enters the room. He looks into Lenina's suitcase. He is surprised to see various things of fashion in it. But a greater surprise is there in store for him. He comes to see Lenina's sleeping beauty. He almost adores her thinks that he has met Shakespeare's Miranda. He does not touch her lest her beauty should be sullied by his touch.

When Bernard returns to London, the Director charges him with the offence of leading people astray, unorthodoxy of his sex life and heretical views about Soma, and proposes to send him to Iceland where he will have none to lead astray. When Bernard is asked whether he has to say anything in defence, he produces Linda, who recognizes the Director as her Tomakin, who had fathered John. This 'obscenity' brings forth howls of laughter and



the Director feels so much humiliated that he covers his face and leaves the place straight. The Director sends his resignation.

It is an obscenity to be a mother in the Brave New World. Therefore nobody speaks to Linda and Linda does not speak to anybody. Linda's return to civilization is her return to Soma. She remains lying in bed as if she had done something so shamefully anti-social that she could never hold up her head again. The doctor says that Soma will take away her few years, but Soma holiday is according to the ancestors a bit of eternity. Contradicting the doctor, John thinks that 'eternity is in our lips and eyes', not in the drugs. Linda's becomes a hopeless case.

Success goes to Bernard's head. Therefore he refused to forgo the privilege of criticizing the order, and even parades his unorthodoxy. People say behind his back that he will come to a bad end as he will not find another Savage to help him out a second time. He says that the Savage should be acquainted with the various departments of the civilized world.

The Savage is given a bird's eye-view of the Bombay Green Rocket which, he is told, goes twelve hundred and fifty kilometres an hour. The Savage is not much impressed since Ariel of 'The Tempest' could go round the earth in forty minutes. He is shown Bokanovsky group Deltas, Epsilons, etc. working in different processes. The savage repeated Miranda's words 'O Brave New World that has such people in it' with a tinge of malice. Therefore he is taken to Eton where the Headmistress informs him that Eton is reserved exclusively for upper caste boys and girls, but she adds that girls are free martins (sterile) so that population remains in check. The Savage is further informed that nobody is allowed solitary amusements, such as reading Shakespeare. They can go to the feelies (cinema) for amusement. The Savage sees a long queue of workers waiting to get their ration of Soma.

Lenina says to Fanny that she likes the Savage. She takes him to a film showing a gigantic Negro and a golden haired young brachycephalic (having relatively broad, short skull) locked in arms. The Negro had a helicopter accident which knocked his conditioning. Therefore he grew mad with passion. The girl protested. There were struggles, pursuits, an assault on a rival, and finally a sensational kidnapping. The film had all the paraphernalia of romance. Lenina makes advances but the savage does not respond because he thinks he is unworthy of

her—she is his Miranda. The dejected Lenina takes three half-gramme tablets of Soma to control her passion.

Bernard has sent invitation to the Arch Community Songster on the occasion of the Ford's Day celebrations, promising that the Savage will appear on the occasion, but the Savage is so much disgusted with the mechanical, emotionless order of the civilized world that he shuts himself in the room and refuses to come out. The Arch community Songster of Canterbury, women and all feel outraged by the arrogance of the Savage. The Arch Community Songster warns Bernard to mend his ways. Lenina alone has not resented. She feels that the Savage loves her. Bernard is in the lowest spirits, when Bernard says to the Savage that his friends had turned against him due to his refusal to come to meet them, but the Savage retorts that his friends are worthless fellows, since they can turn against a friend on a petty issue.

Helmholtz has also come into conflict with the authorities, because in one of his lectures he read out his poem to the students to arouse emotions through imagination of beautiful arms, bosoms and posteriors of women. He is against solitude and sleep teaching. Helmholtz and the Savage become friends. The Savage reads Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. He is surprised to find that parents want to marry away their daughter with a man whom she does not want. Helmholtz laughs at words like 'sweet mother', and the reference to Tybalt lying dead uncremated resulting in loss of phosphorus. Helmholtz thinks that it is not exciting if one gets a girl or does not get her. The remark is not welcomed by the Savage. However, Helmholtz feels that they need some other kind of madness and violence.

Lenina is madly in love with the Savage, though Fanny tells her that it is against the rules of the civilized world to remain stuck with only one man. Lenina goes to meet the Savage, and tries to undress herself to attract him, but this act of hers repulses and shocks him since he had never expected his Miranda to act so coquetishly. She goes out insulted and dejected.

The Savage gets the information that his mother, Linda, is in the Park Lane Hospital for Dying. When he reaches there, he finds Linda lying in the bed, watching the semi-finals of Tennis championship, with an expression of imbecile happiness. The Savage becomes emotional as he recalls those times when she sat him on her knees with her arms about him and sang to him

to rock him to sleep. Linda recognizes him as her son, John. All of a sudden Linda breathes her last. The Savage repeated 'God, God' in grief.

When the Savage goes out of the hospital, he finds Deltas jostling one another for their ration of Soma. The Savage is in such an exasperated state that he goes through the crowd and advises the Deltas not to take that stuff as it is poison. Bernard and Helmholtz get the news on phone that the Savage has gone mad—he has thrown away the pill-boxes of Soma tablets. Police arrives to control the riotous situation. The Savage, Bernard and Helmholtz are arrested by the police.

Mustapha Mond comes to talk with the three prisoners. The Savage tells him that he has not liked the civilization. Mustapha Mond tells the Savage that Shakespeare is prohibited because it is old and beautiful. He adds that the civilization does not want that people should be attracted by old things. He dislikes *Othello* for it is old, and at the same time people are too well-satisfied without passion and they have got no wives. The Savage discards the view that *Othello* and other plays of Shakespeare are 'The tale told by an idiot'. He asks Mustapha Mond why they don't make all people Alpha-Double Plus. Mustapha Mond tells him that once they had specially prepared twenty thousand Alphas. The result was that there were strikes in all the factories, and nobody worked on the land. Finally, there was a civil war, which took a toll of nineteen persons. Mustapha Mond explains that "The optimum population is planned on the iceberg principle—eight-ninths below the water and one-ninth above. And they're happy below the water." Mustapha Mond's description of the diversion of labour, working hours, etc. exasperated the savage. Mustapha Mond finally announced the verdict that Bernard should be sent to the island where people are 'too self-consciously individual to fit into community life'. Mustapha Mond says in answer to Helmholtz's question that he has divorced science and truth for the sake of happiness of the society and his own though he is a physicist. In the civilized world enquiries are discouraged and emphasis is shifted from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness. Bernard and Helmholtz are exiled to Folkland Islands.

Mustapha Mond opens before the Savage a large safe containing religious books like *The Holy Bible*, *The Imitation of*

*Christ, The Varieties of Religious Experience* but he says, "God is in the safe and Ford on the shelves", meaning thereby that Ford is the necessity of the times. He ridicules authorities such as Cardinal Newman because he thinks, "You can only be independent of God while you've got youth and prosperity, independence won't take you safely to the end." He adds, "God is not compatible with science and technology. In a way he is right since God does not permit conditioning or imprisoning human beings in doctrines, to deny them opportunities to rise above their class or caste of birth. It is cruel to keep people tethered to a particular way of life, and give them Soma to make them incapable to think. Mustapha Mond further explains that one can think of God when he is alone, but not when one is in the society, when one has other people around him to think about. In his succinct style, he says, "Providence takes its cue from men", and "It would upset the whole social order if men started doing things on their own." He brushes aside the idea of self-denial on the plea that modern economics needs self-indulgence not self-denial.

The Savage is not convinced by Mustapha Mond's arguments. He wishes he had been sent to the Island with Bernard and Helmholtz.

He is in a depressed state of mind. In order to be rid of the civilized world, he goes to the lonely lighthouse to live like a hermit. He stretches his arms as if he were on the crucifix to feel the excruciating agony that Christ must have felt. He cries often 'Oh, forgive me ! Oh, help me to be good!'. To repent for his failure to be of help to his mother, Linda, he lashes himself. A few Delta-Mine workers observe him lashing himself. The news spread and journalists arrive to see him lashing himself. He is annoyed to see that his loneliness is violated. He attacks them. Soon another group arrives, with Lenina. Lenina goes to him with outstretched arms but he lashes her, saying that she is a strumpet. Later, he is found hanging on a tree.

# Short answers

1. To which great poet and critic was Huxley's related?

Huxley's mother was the niece of the great writer Mathew Arnold.

2. How did Huxley die?

Huxley died of Cancer on 22 November 1963, the day on which John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

3. From where was the phrase 'Brave New World' taken?

The phrase 'Brave New World' was taken from Shakespeare's Romantic play 'The Tempest'.

4. What is the name of the centre?

The name of the centre is London Hatcheries and Conditioning Centre.

5. How many identical twins of brothers and sisters can be produced through Bokanovskification?

Nearly eleven thousand identical twins of brothers and sisters can be produced through Bokanovskification.

6. Why are the Epsilons given less oxygen?

Less oxygen is given to stunt their growth and push them down to the lowest rung of the social order.

7. Why is Ivan Pavlov famous?

Ivan Pavlov is famous because of his principles of Classical Conditioning.

8. What is Mustapha's view about History?

According to Mustapha Mond History is bunk.

9. Who is the first catch of Lenina?

Lenina's first catch is Bernard Marx who holds a responsible position in the world state.

10. Where does John commit suicide?

John commits suicide in a lighthouse.