

A NINCOMPOOP – Anton Chekhov

I. Fill in the blanks:

1. Nincompoop means stupid person
2. _____ is the governess in "A Nincompoop" Julia Vassilyevna
3. Kolya was sick for four days.
4. A tea cup and saucer is the heirloom of the master.
5. The master told Julia that they agreed thirty rubles a month.

(Kolya, stupid person, heirloom, thirty rubles, Julia Vassilyevna)

II. Choose the best answers:

1. The Master played a little joke on _____
a) Vanya b) Merci c) Julia vassilyevna d) kolya
2. Anton Chekhov was a _____ writer.
a) Russian b) American c) Indian d) British
3. Finally the Master gave _____ rubles to Julia.
a) eighty b) sixty c) Eleven d) Three
4. On 10th of January the master gave _____ rubles to Julia.
a) Nine b) Ten c) Eleven d) Three
5. The master subtracts _____ from Julia's working days.
a) Nine Sundays b) Three Sundays c) Four Sundays
d) Six Sundays

III. State whether the following statements are true or false :

1. At the end of the story, Julia decides to leave her job. false
2. The narrator wishes to cheat the governess. false

3. The governess does not speak a word of protest. *True*
4. For the carelessness of Julia the master charged twenty more rubles. *false*
5. Julia remains dumb founded with her eyes filled with tears. *True*

IV. Synonyms :

1. Nincompoop - *A stupid person*
2. Spineless - *Timid*
3. Subtract - *deduct*
4. Perspiration - *Sweat*
5. Heedless - *Playing no attention.*

V. Answer the following in one or two sentences:

1. What kind of a person was Julia?

Julia Vassilyevna is a spineless person, she is such a nice lady that she had not asked for her wage so far.

2. What was the actual wage agreed between the master and the governess Julia?

The actual wage agreed between the master and the governess Julia is forty rubles for a month.

3. What was the wage told by the master at the time of payment?

At the time of payment, the master told that they agreed thirty rubles for a month.

4. How did Julia react to the reduction of her salary?

Julia's left eye was reddened and filled with moisture. Her chin trembled, she coughed nervously and blew her nose, but not utter a word.

5. Why did the master decide to settle the account of Julia?

The master expected Julia to demand her salary. But she did not ask the salary even after two months. So he decided to settle the account of Julia himself.

6. What was Julia's work in master's house?

Julia was the governess of the two children of the master.

7. How many children did the master have?

The master had two children, Kolya and Vanya.

8. How much money did Julia borrow from master's wife?

Julia borrowed three rubles from master's wife.

9. Why did the master reduce two rubles from Julia's salary?

The master reduced two rubles. Since Julia had broken a tea cup and saucer.

10. Why did the master reduce Julia's salary for seven days?

The master reduced Julia's salary for seven days. Since she had toothache and there was no work when the master's daughter was ill.

11. After the deduction, how much amount did the master give Julia?

After the deductions, the master gave Julia, eleven rubles after subtracting the amount on various grounds.

12. Why was the master angry with Julia?

The master was angry with Julia, since she did not demand her salary.

13. Why did Julia say "merci" to her master?

Julia said merci, since her master gave at least eleven rubles as her salary whereas, in other places, she was not given any money at all.

14. Why did the master give Julia, the entire salary?

Julia The master gave the entire salary, since he wanted to realize how she could be exploited.

15. What was the pleasant shock for Julia?

The pleasant shock for Julia is that her master gave her the entire salary of eighty rubles.

16. What was the Lesson learnt by the master?

The master learnt the lesson that, it is easy to crush and exploit the weak and the poor.

17. What was the wonder of the master?

The Master wondered whether it is possible to be a Nincompoop like Julia

18. Why did the master's wife give the governess, three days permission

not to work in the afternoon?

The master's wife gave the governess three days permission not to work in the afternoon, because she had toothache.

19. Who is a governess?

A governess is a woman employed to teach young children in a family.

20. Who tore his own jacket, when climbing a tree?

When climbing a tree, Kolya tore his jacket.

ESSAY

Anton Chekhov (1860 – 1904), the renowned Russian writer took his degree in medicine, and then gave it up in favour of literature. He has written novels, plays and short stories. He portrays the Russian people realistically, giving importance to atmosphere and suggestion rather than events.

A Nincompoop is an extremely short story that presents a bit of conversation between the master and the governess of a family, which suddenly and unexpectedly turns the whole serious situation into a humorous one.

In this story the master asked the governess of his children Julia Vasilyevna to come and meet him in his study room. He wanted to settle her wages even though she had not asked for it. The agreement made between the governess and the master was 40 rubles a month. The master told her that he had to give sixty rubles for two months. Julia replied that her salary was forty a month but when her master protested she remained calm. When her master told in that he would subtract the salary for nine Sundays and three holidays, she didn't reply but her face showed her distress. Further the master told that he was reducing her salary for seven more days since there was no work when his daughter was ill and also when she had toothache. Julia's eyes filled with tears. In a trembling voice she told her master that his wife had given her three rubles. After all the deductions the master gave her eleven rubles. She whispered 'Merci' and there was no trace of anger on her face.

The master was very much surprised to see such a nincompoop who never protested when the eighty rubles due to her was reduced to eleven. In spite of all his harsh treatment she was thankful and blessed him merci. When the master asked Julia why she blessed him, though he was cruel to her. The governess replied that she was not paid in other places and so far no one had given her any money. The master told her that he played only a joke to teach her and gave her entire eighty rubles. The governess was very much surprised and repeated the word 'Merci' several times. Thus the author brings out the truth that in this world it is very easy to crush the weak people.

PARAGRAPHS

1. What was the reaction of the governess when her salary was reduced on various charges?

When her master told that he would subtract the salary for nine Sundays and three holidays, she didn't reply but her face showed her distress. Further the master told that he was reducing her salary for seven more days since there was no work when his daughter was ill and also when she had toothache. Julia's eyes filled with tears. In a trembling voice she told her master that his wife had given her three rubles. After all the deductions the master gave her eleven rubles. She whispered 'Merci' and there was no trace of anger on her face.

2. How did the master turn the whole serious situation into a humorous one?

The master was very much surprised to see such a nincompoop who never protested when the eighty rubles due to her was reduced to eleven. In spite of all his harsh treatment she was thankful and blessed him merci. When the master asked Julia why she blessed him though he was cruel to her. The governess replied that she was not paid in other places and so far no one had given her any money. The master told her that he played only a joke to teach her and gave her entire eighty rubles.

THE DIAMOND NECKLACE – Guy De Maupassant

I. Fill in the blanks:

1. Guy De Maupassant was a famous French novelist.
 2. Mr. Loisel was a petty clerk in the Ministry of Education
 3. Mathilde dreamt that she was born for all delicacies and luxuries in the world.
 4. Mme. Forestier is the rich friend of Mathilde.
 5. Loisel gave Mathilde four hundred francs to purchase a decent dress.
- (Delicacies and Luxuries, French, Mme. Forestier, Ministry of Education, Four hundred francs)

II. Choose the best answers:

- Loisel gave his wife his savings of _____ to buy a nice dress.
a) four hundred rupees b) four hundred dollars
c) four hundred francs d) five hundred rupees
- Mathilde went away with her treasure. 'The treasure' refers to _____
a) A pearl necklace b) A diamond necklace c) A bracelet d) A Venetian cross
- Despite hard work and frugal living it took _____ to clear the debts.
a) 10 years b) 10 months c) 5 years d) 5 months
- The necklace, Mathilde borrowed was not worth more than _____
a) 500 francs b) 500 dollars c) 500 pounds d) 500 yen
- The husband bought her a dress with the money he had saved for buying a _____
a) gun b) guitar c) watch d) shirt

III. State whether the following statements are true or false:

- Loisel got the invitation without any difficulty for the ball. *False*
- Mathilde was very happy to receive the invitation. *True*
- She got flowers for ten francs. *True*
- The necklace Mathilde borrowed was a false one. *True*
- Monsieur Loisel was working in the Ministry of Education. *True*

IV. Synonyms :

1. Petulantly
2. Intimate
3. Broth
4. Exultant
5. Oriental

- Cranky
- familiar,
- fluid.
- joyful
- gerontogous.

V. Answer the following in one or two sentences :

1. Why was Mathilde unhappy?

Mathilde Loisel is a pretty and charming lady but she has a feel that she has been born in a family of unfavourable economic status. Mathilde feels the burden of her poverty intensely.

2. Why did Mathilde refuse to visit her friend?

Mathilde Loisel had a rich friend called Mme. Forestier, her schoolmate, but she did not visit her often as it increased her despair.

3. Who hosted the party?

The Minister of Education and Madame Ramponneau hosted the party.

4. Why was Mathilde not pleased with the invitation?

Mathilde was not happy with the invitation since, she has nothing beautiful to wear for the party.

5. Why did Mathilde's husband save four hundred francs?

Mathilde's husband saved four hundred francs to buy a gun for shooting.

6. How was Mathilde regarded at the party?

At the party, Mathilde is the most beautiful woman in attendance, noticed by everyone.

7. What changes come over Mathilde after the loss of the necklace?

Mathilde had to toil for ten years to repay the loan. She bought for to replace the necklace, she made heroic sacrifices, denied herself even tidy dress and food. She had lost her charm, youth, liveliness and good temper.

8. What excuse did Mathilde give her friend for the delayed return of the necklace?

Mathilde told Mme. Forestier that she had broken the clasp of the necklace and it gets late to mend the clasp.

9. When did Mathilde find out that her necklace was missing?

After Mathilde returning home from the party, Mathilde removed her wrap, and discovers that her necklace is missing.

10. How did Loisel arrange for the money to purchase the necklace?

Monsieur Loisel spend a week scraping up money from all kind of sources, mortgaging the rest of their existence.

ESSAY

Guy de Maupassant (1850 – 1893), was a French short story writer and novelist. He was a clerk in the Naval Ministry for a few years, but was keenly interested in writing and apprenticed himself to the celebrated novelist. He published about 300 stories and six novels.

The subject matter of his stories is varied, but most of the stories are based on his personal experiences of the world of the minor civil servant and of the Norman peasant. He observed the human scene with a sense of humour but never failed to notice the ironies of life. In the Diamond Necklace, Mathilde borrowed a diamond necklace from a friend and attended a fashionable dance party and in the excitement of dancing, lost the borrowed necklace and suffered a life of poverty to buy a diamond

necklace as a substitute. And then came the discovery, that the necklace borrowed from the friend was a cheap one with artificial stones.

Mathilde Loisel was a pretty young lady. She was married to a petty clerk. She regretted the life of poverty that destined to lead. Her husband was, on the other hand, satisfied with their economical life. Mathilde desired for exquisite food, frocks and jewels. She wanted to be pleased and to be adored.

One evening, her husband came home with a large envelope in his hand. It was an invitation to a party thrown by the Minister of public instruction and his wife at their residence. But Mathilde was not delighted. She had no proper dress to wear for the occasion. Her husband gave her four hundred francs for ordering a new dress. Even then, she was not satisfied. She had no jewels to put on. Her husband suggested getting a jewel from her rich friend, Madame Forestier.

Mathilde borrowed a diamond necklace from Madame Forestier. She was the toast of the Minister's party. She was the prettiest and the most well dressed woman. After the party was over, she rushed home with her husband. At home, she was shocked to discover that the diamond necklace was missing.

The Loisels made hectic efforts to replace the missing jewel. They found a similar jewel in a shop. It costs forty thousand francs. Loisel had eighteen thousand francs. He borrowed the rest. The new jewel was bought and delivered to Madame Forestier.

Mathilde's life had changed now. She did all the household chores. Loisel undertook a part time job. They saved enough money for ten years to pay off their debts. One day Mathilde met Madame Forestier on the way. She told her, how they had suffered due to her diamond necklace. Madame Forestier gave her the shock of her life telling her that her necklace was only an imitation. It was only worth about five hundred francs.

PARAGRAPHS

1. What kind of person was Mathilde Loisel?

The protagonist of the story, Mathilde has been blessed with physical beauty but not with the affluent life style. She yearns for she feels deeply discontented with her lot in life. When she prepared to attend a ball, she borrows a diamond necklace from her friend Madame Forestier. She loses the necklace and works hard for ten years to pay off the debt. She bought for the replacement of the necklace. Her one night of radiance cost her no chance for future happiness.

2. Write a short note on Monsieur Loisel.

Mathilde's husband Monsieur Loisel is content with the small pleasures of his life. He does his best to appease Mathilde's demands and assuage her complaints. He loves Mathilde immensely, but does not truly understand her, and he seems to underestimate the depth of her unhappiness. When Mathilde loses the necklace, Monsieur Loisel sacrifices his own future to help her to repay the debt.

3. Sketch the character of Madame Forestier.

Mathilde's wealthy friend, Madame Forestier treats Mathilde kindly, but Mathilde is bitterly jealous of Madame Forestier. She lends Mathilde the necklace for the party and does not inspect it, when Mathilde returns it. She is horrified to realize that, Mathilde has wasted her life to repay the debt for the replacement of the necklace, when the original necklace had actually been worth nothing.

4. What are the circumstances that led to Mathilde's borrowing of the diamond necklace?

Guy de Maupassant (1850 – 1893), was a French short story writer and novelist. He was a clerk in the Naval Ministry for a few years, but was keenly interested in writing and apprenticed himself to the celebrated novelist. He published about 300 stories and six novels.

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5. Describe Mathilde's life after she had lost the necklace?

Mathilde Loisel was a pretty young lady. She was married to a petty clerk. She regretted the life of poverty that destined to lead. Her husband was, on the other hand, satisfied with their economical life. Mathilde desired for exquisite food, frocks and jewels. She wanted to be pleased and to be adored.

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