

Name: _____

Date: _____

Grade: _____

English Literature

Poetry – Night of The Scorpion

Questions

Exercise A: Read the following extract carefully and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option from those given below. (3 Marks)

1. My father, sceptic, rationalist, trying every curse and blessing powder, mixture, herb and hybrid. He even poured a little paraffin upon the bitten toe and put a match to it

(a) The poet's father was a sceptic because he

- (i) did not believe in the peasants' theory of sin and regeneration
- (ii) tried only scientific methods to save his wife
- (iii) did not believe in God
- (iv) took the mother to a doctor to cure her.

(b) A hybrid is a kind of

- (i) herb
- (ii) poison
- (iii) powder
- (iv) mixture of powder, herbs and other medicines

(c) The poet's father poured a little paraffin on the mother's toe because

- (i) he was very angry with the mother
- (ii) the holy man had told him to do so
- (iii) the peasants wanted him to burn his wife's toe to help her get rid of her sins
- (iv) he wanted to neutralise the effect of poison by burning the toe

2. The peasants came like swarms of flies and buzzed the name of God a hundred times to paralyze the Evil one.

(a) The poetic device used in line 1 is

- (i) a metaphor
- (ii) an irony
- (iii) a simile
- (iv) a paradox

(b) The peasants came like swarms of flies because

- (i) there was a function in the poet's house
- (ii) the poet was not feeling well
- (iii) the poet's mother was bitten by a scorpion
- (iv) the poet's father was in trouble

(c) The peasants wanted to paralyze the Evil one because

- (i) he was responsible for the mother's pain
- (ii) they wanted to punish him for his deed
- (iii) they wanted him to suck his poison back from the mother's blood
- (iv) they believed that with every movement of the scorpion, the poison would spread in the mother's body

3. May the poison purify your flesh of desire, and your spirit of ambition, they said, and they sat around on the floor with my mother in the centre, the peace of understanding on each face.

(a) The peasants are

- (i) educated people
- (ii) hard-hearted people
- (iii) illiterate, and ignorant people
- (iv) comprehensive and intellectual people

(b) May the poison purify your flesh of desire, and your spirit of ambition suggests that

- (i) the mother was ambitious by nature
- (ii) the desires of the mother were unlimited
- (iii) poison in the body leads to purification
- (iv) the past sins of the mother would be washed away and all her desires would vanish.

(c) There was peace of understanding on each face because the peasants

- (i) were able to find the scorpion
- (ii) had cured the mother
- (iii) could understand that the mother was in pain and was suffering
- (iv) were fatalists and they thought that the mother was suffering because of her past sins.

4. Ten hours of steady rain had driven him to crawl beneath a sack of rice, parting with his poison - flash of diabolic tail in the dark room

(a) Him refers to the

- (i) snake
- (ii) rat
- (iii) mongoose
- (iv) scorpion

(b) Him took refuge under a sack of rice

- (i) to protect himself from his enemies
- (ii) to eat rice
- (iii) to bite the poet's mother
- (iv) to protect himself from rain

(c) Diabolic means

- (i) long
- (ii) devilish
- (iii) dark
- (iv) shining

5. "I watched the holy man perform his rites to tame the poison with an incantation. after twenty hours it lost its sting. My mother only said
Thank God the scorpion picked on me and spared my children.

(a) The poet is only standing and watching because

- (i) he is shocked to see all this
- (ii) he is too young to be of any help
- (iii) he was attracted by the way the holy man performed his rites

(b) According to you, the scorpion lost its sting because

- (i) of the prayers of the peasants
- (ii) the poison lost its effect after twenty long hours
- (iii) of the father's treatment
- (iv) of the holy man's incantation

(c) The last line suggests that the mother was a

- (i) selfish and self-centred lady
- (ii) rationalist lady
- (iii) rude and loud lady
- (iv) selfless and self-sacrificing lady