

Iswaran – The Story Teller – Important Questions

Q. Describe Mahendra in 30-40 words.

Ans. Mahendra was a junior supervisor. He was a bachelor fellow, who was cared by Iswaran. He was a simple fellow and led a simple life. He had an adjustable nature, so he could adjust himself anywhere.

Q. Who was Iswaran? What all he did for his master?

Ans. Iswaran was Mahendra's cook and he was an asset to him. He cooked for him, washed his clothes and chatted away with his master at night. He often narrated stories which were very convincing.

Q. What type of life did Mahendra lead?

Ans. Mahendra, a junior supervisor has to keep moving from place to place i.e., from coal mine to railway bridge site, to chemical plant. He led a simple life. He could adjust himself in odd situations.

Q. Who was the only asset of Mahendra? How?

Ans. The only asset of Mahendra was his cook, Iswaran. He was quite attached to him. He never made any complaint. Besides cooking, he (Iswaran) washed his clothes, cleaned his house. He was well known for his culinary skills. Also, he had unconditional love for Mahendra. He travelled everywhere with him.

Q. Why did Mahendra become fond of Iswaran?

Ans. Mahendra became fond of Iswaran because he was a very resourceful person and took very good care of him. He was a trained cook and could also arrange for things at a desolate place. In addition to this, he took very good care of Mahendra.

Q. What sets Iswaran apart from other domestic helps?

Ans. Iswaran was a class in himself. He was highly resourceful and a big help to Mahendra. He was a trained cook and to top it, he narrated captivating and interesting stories to Mahendra at night.

Q. Why was Iswaran called Mahendra's asset?

Ans. Iswaran was not only a trained cook but also very attached to his master, Mahendra, as he followed him everywhere he was posted. He not only took care of him by washing his clothes and cooking food but, also gossiped with him in the night and told him various modified folk tales.

Q. Did Mahendra really see the ghost?

Ans. Mahendra didn't see the ghost because there wasn't any but Iswaran's narration had made a deep impact on him. Iswaran had described the ghost vividly. He just hallucinated the ghost.

Q. Was Iswaran a well-read man? How do you know?

Ans. Yes, Iswaran was a well-read man. He used to read the Tamil thrillers which ran into hundred pages. He had read many Tamil authors. He was influenced by the way these authors described and narrated the stories. Even while narrating the anecdote of the mad elephant, he had mentioned about Japanese art karate or ju-jitsu about which he had read somewhere.

Q. What were Iswaran's two great qualities ?

Ans. Iswaran had an amazing capacity to produce vegetables and cooking ingredients, seemingly out of nowhere, in the middle of a desolate landscape with no shops visible for miles around. Iswaran was a great storyteller. He could build suspense and a surprise ending in any story.

Q. How does Iswaran describe the story of the elephant? Does it appear to be plausible?

Ans. One day, an elephant went mad, stamping on bushes, breaking fences, smashing fruit stalls, mud pots and clothes. He even entered a school ground breaking through the brick wall. Iswaran, who was in the junior class, whacked its third toe nail with a rod and it collapsed. No, the story does not appear to be plausible.

Q. What destruction did the elephant cause in the town?

Ans. The elephant caused a lot of destruction in the town. He broke branches, fences and smashed stalls. He entered a school playground and broke a brick wall, pulled out a football goal post, tore down a volleyball net and flattened a water drum.

Q. How did Iswaran tackle the elephant?

Ans. The elephant had caused much terror, children and teachers ran here and there to save their lives. Iswaran dared it and hit it on the third toe with a rod. Thus, the mad elephant was controlled.

Q. What impact did Iswaran's story of a female ghost have on Mahendra?

Ans. Mahendra avoided looking out of the window when the moon was full. He went to bed with a certain unease and peered into the darkness to make sure that there was no movement of dark shapes outside.

Q. Do you think the ghost Mahendra saw on the night of the full moon was a real ghost?

Ans. No, I think the ghost Mahendra saw was a creation of a weak mind. Iswaran had made Mahendra's mind a little weak by telling him the ghost story. When Mahendra rebuked him for believing in ghosts, he felt offended. To prove that he was right, he himself posed as a ghost. That is why, Mahendra thought that he had seen a ghost at that full moon night.

Q. Mahendra calls ghosts or spirits a figment of imagination. What happens to him on full moon night?

Ans. Mahendra never believed in ghosts and spirits but, one night he had woken up from his sleep by a low moan near the window. He could not resist his curiosity and tried to look out. To his horror, he saw a dark cloudy form clutching a bundle. Mahendra was in cold sweat from top to bottom and fell back on the pillow, panting.

Q. What behaviour was Mahendra expecting from Iswaran when he had scolded him for telling ghost stories?

Ans. When Mahendra had scolded Iswaran for his telling of ghost stories, he was expecting Iswaran to be angry for a couple of days but he was surprised at his cheerful and talkative behaviour the very next day.

Q. What did Mahendra witness out of the window one night?

Ans. One night, Mahendra heard a low moaning very close to his window. He peeped through his window and there stood the ghost of the woman whose wailing became louder and louder. He saw a dark cloudy form, clutching a bundle. He flung himself down and found that he was often dreaming of that woman ghost.

Q. What impact did Iswaran's story of a female ghost have on Mahendra?

Ans. Mahendra avoided looking out of the window when the moon was full. He went to bed with a certain unease and peered into the darkness to make sure that there was no movement of dark shapes outside.

Q. What kind of a job did Mahendra have?

Ans. Mahendra had the job of a junior supervisor in a firm which offered on hire supervisors at various types of construction sites: factories, bridges, dams, and so on. He had to keep moving from one place to another at short notice as ordered by the head office.

Q. What did Mahendra decide after he had seen the ghost?

Ans. Mahendra was convinced that there were ghosts around his house. He was scared and did not want to live there any longer and so, he resigned his job.

Q. What made Iswaran a great storyteller?

Ans. Iswaran's stories were packed with adventure, horror and suspense. He could weave out endless stories and anecdotes on varied subjects. When he was narrating even the smallest of incidents, he would try to work in suspense and a surprise ending into the account. Enactment of some expressions or scenes made his storytelling theatrical. He had – inimitable way to tell the story.

Q. Why did Mahendra decide to leave the haunted place?

Ans. He was afraid of the haunted place after hearing and watching a ghastly experience at night. He found that he often dreamt of that woman ghost. Therefore, he wanted to leave the place.

Q. How can you say that Iswaran was a fascinating story teller?

Ans. Iswaran was a very fascinating and a dramatic story teller. He gave imaginative descriptions of various events. He used dramatic language and gestures to describe events and changed a simple event in suspense. His stories had surprise endings and unexpected narrations. He was influenced by thrilling novels and stories of Tamil authors. All stories had adventure, horror and suspense. All these elements made him a fascinating story teller and he could captivate any audience with his stories. by the Tamil authors he read. Even while narrating the smallest of incidents, he would try to make the account thrilling and full of suspense. Mahendra enjoyed listening to the stories told by Iswaran because of the way they were told.

Q. Write a brief character sketch of Iswaran.

Ans. Iswaran, Mahendra's servant, was very devoted to him. He was not only a very well trained and wonderful cook, but also a good story teller. He was an honest man and used to do his work with utmost devotion and skill. He was fond of reading thrillers and his narrations were influenced from those styles. He had to give up his job due to a practical joke played on Mahendra, his master. Life was not possible for Mahendra without him, as he was his asset, and he started living totally isolated.

Q. How did the elephant in Iswaran's anecdote wreak havoc in the school?

Ans. After smashing all the stalls selling fruits, mud pots and clothes on the main road, the elephant broke through the brick wall to enter a school ground where children were playing. All the boys ran into the classrooms and shut the doors tight. The beast grunted and wandered about, pulling out the football goalpost, tearing down the volleyball net, kicking and flattening the drum kept for water, and uprooting the shrubs. Meanwhile all the teachers had climbed up to the terrace of the school building; from there they helplessly watched the depredations of the elephant. There was not a soul below on the ground. The streets were empty as if the inhabitants of the entire town had suddenly disappeared.