

Chapter – 1 The Lament

Understanding The Text

Q1. Comment on the indifference that meets Iona's attempts to share his grief with his fellow human beings.

Answer. The protagonist of the story, Iona Potapav is in deep grief, the reason being his son's unexpected demise. As a general human characteristic, he also wants to talk about the hardship that he is facing, what all he felt through the entire event, but he's unable to find someone to vent out. He wants to share the flood of emotions that he has been storing inside him. But the problem resides in the fact that the people that he's surrounded by, are either in a hurry being the passengers wanting to reach the destination or are simply not interested in giving an ear to him. So whenever Iona starts sharing about the death of his son, he's ignored by everyone. Finding no other resort, Iona shared everything to his horse.

Q2. What impression of the character of Iona do you get from this story?

Answer. Iona, the protagonist of the story, is a cab driver. After the sudden death of his son, he is miserable and he wants to share his feelings but he's unable to find a person to vent out. He wants someone to hear about the loss that he has been suffering but it's observed that everyone is either busy or uninterested thus he becomes a miserable figure and in the end shares everything with his horse. In the starting of the story, it's explained that how unaware he has become of his surroundings that even the snow wasn't bothering him, all he was looking for was an individual to hear about everything that has been happening with him. He also states that death came to his son instead of him. So after the loss of his son, he has turned into a miserable man who finds earning a living difficult and is looking for support in every individual he comes across.

Q3. How does the horse serve as a true friend and companion to Iona?

Answer. Iona just wanted someone to hear about all the grief that he has been suffering from. He started talking to everyone that he came across but the problem was that no individual was either interested nor anyone had the time to hear what he was saying. Everyone was just focused on getting out to their own ways. He wanted to talk about everything, the way he died, how he went to collect the clothes of his dead son, how he has been feeling, but he was unable to find someone. This was the time when he resorted to telling everything to his horse. The horse being true to his master listens to everything and breathed over the master's hand, comforting in his own way.

Talking About The Text

Q1. Empathy and understanding are going out of modern society. The individual experiences intense alienation from the society around him or her.

Answer. This is completely true that modern society is going out from empathy and understanding. Nowadays people are present for one another only if they are receiving anything in reciprocal. No one keeps others first to his personal self. The feelings of empathy and understanding are bygone now and no individual pays attention to hearing the problems of others. Humans are just becoming the mechanised units of fulfilling own desires without considering the other person's feelings. The sharing of grief for the motive of reducing it has just become a mere saying and no one is available to pay attention to the sufferings of others. All they live for is themselves, and the values and morals are depleting.

Q2. Behind the public face of the people in various occupations is a whole saga of personal suffering and joy which they wish to share with others.

Answer. Human being always has two sides, a professional one and the personal one. It is usually observed that the professional side of the individual's personality is kept stern no matter how weak or wrecking the individual is on the personal front. Every individual holds back a story they don't share with everyone. Similar was the case with Iona, he had just lost his young son and was in deep grief in search of someone to share his feelings but despite all this, he had to work because earning a living is more important. He kept looking in every passenger, a listener to his woes, but he couldn't find one. Thus, behind his face of a cab driver was a father who had just lost his son and was worried about the situation, but a balance between the two has to be kept.

Appreciation

Q1. The story begins with a description of the setting. How does this serve as a fitting prelude to the events described in the story?

Answer. The entire story of Iona revolves around him finding an individual to talk about all his grief. The description in the starting gives the perfect prelude to the story as it has been described that there is minimum movement and the external factors are hardly having any effect on the protagonist. He's lost in his world of his own. He's in the search of someone to let out the feelings that he has contained within himself. Therefore, the setting in the initial phase has been perfectly set to suit the mood of the story that is gloomy and covered with darkness and despair.

Q2. Comment on the graphic detail with which the various passengers who took Iona's cab are described.

Answer. There were various passengers that took a ride in Iona's cab that day in which he struggled to find someone to talk with. The first one being the officer was heading towards his office and was mainly concerned with reaching the destination on time, thus paid no heed to what Iona was talking about. It shows the difference in reality as compared to the perceived image of the public figures. Another person was a drunkard

who also refused to pay attention to what Iona was saying. No one had the time and patience to hear Iona that he ultimately had to vent out to the horse.

Q3. This short story revolves around a single important event. Discuss how the narrative is woven around this central fact.

Answer. The story, 'The Lamant' by Anton Chekhov, revolves around the central idea that the can driver named Iona, has lost his son unexpectedly just about a week ago and he's in search of someone with whom he can share the feelings and the entire event that has changed his life so drastically. He tries to find a suitable listener in everyone that he finds, but fails to do so. Having no resort left, he explains everything to his horse. It was the horse that appears as the true companion and only then Iona is relieved of all the burden that he has been carrying on since days.

Q4. The story begins and ends with Iona and his horse. Comment on the significance of this to the plot of the story.

Answer. The story is basically mocking the human behaviour that has changed over time that it fails to cater to the needs of other individuals. The story is a satire on the selfishness of humans that animals are considered more trustworthy. The story starts with the description that how both the owner and the horse are irrelevant of the surroundings and the ending explains to us how the horse proved to be the true companion. That explains that on failing to find a true and considerate listener, Iona had to find a sense of security from his horse only that could not be completed by any human being.